

WARREN WILSON FOREST

Conserving, Producing, Providing Real-life Lessons

The 640 acres of Warren Wilson forest represent well over half of all College property. The keepers, protectors, and managers of these precious forestlands are members of the Forestry Crew. They follow the model of German community forests, where community use happens side-by-side with sustainable production. Students work in the forests and, since the Forestry Crew is the field operations complement to Warren Wilson's Sustainable Forestry Concentration, they learn in the forests. Few colleges or universities offer a comparable integrated approach to academics and field technical training in forestry/silviculture.



The mushroom operation flourishes in a shaded, moist location in one of the College's pine forests.



Trail-building and maintenance keep the College forests accessible for research and recreation.

Sustainable Practices

Invasive species control includes cut-stem applications of herbicide, mechanical removal, and prescribed fire. Bittersweet, tree-of-heaven, ditch rose, common privet, Japanese honeysuckle, and other exotics alter the ecology of the forest and threaten the forest's ability to provide multiple benefits.

Trail building and maintenance provide recreational space for the College community and the public.

Regeneration of native hardwoods and understory species involves thinning of white pines to allow healthier growth and the operation of a native hardwood tree seedling nursery. These practices help the forest resemble what the woodlands in this area looked like over a hundred years ago.

Sustainable logging practices call for skilled work by Crew sawyers, who use wedges and an open-face cut to control the fall of the tree. Belgian draft horses pull logs out of the woods, causing far less damage to the residual stand than conventional methods.

Mushrooms, propagated by inoculating sourwood, tulip poplar, or white oak logs with a mix of purchased shiitake and oyster spores and sawdust from the College sawmill, are tasty and nutritious. They are available for purchase on campus and at local tailgate markets, at reasonable prices.

High quality firewood provides a sustainable source of heating fuel for the campus community and the public.



Prescribed burning helps control the invasion of non-native plant species and promotes native hardwoods.



Belgian draft horses remove logs with minimal harm to the College forests.



The Forestry Crew operates a College-owned sawmill for preparing timber harvested from its forests. The sawmill produces thousands of board feet of lumber each year for campus projects and public sale.

Saw timber is bucked and limbed in the forest, and then milled into lumber at the College sawmill. This lumber has been used in the construction of buildings such as the EcoDorm and the Orr Cottage.