Bringing *The Woods in Your Backyard* to New Audiences

IUFRO Extension & Knowledge Conference
Christchurch, NZ. September 1—13, 2018

Andrew A. Kling ~ Jonathan S. Kays / Woodland Stewardship Education

University of Maryland Extension

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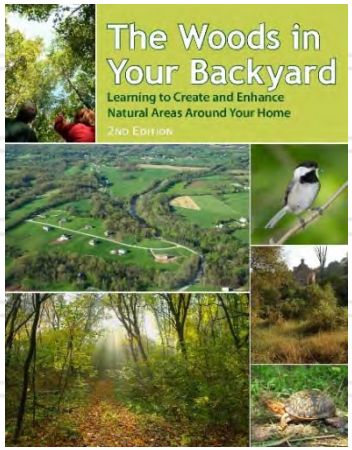
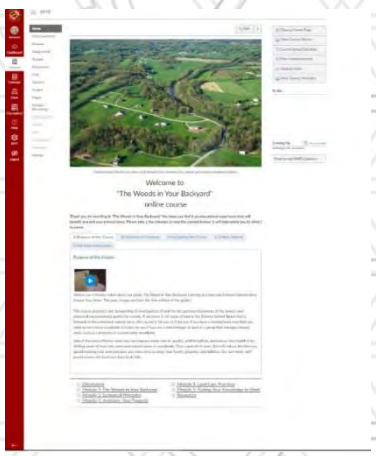
Bringing *The Woods In Your Backyard* to New Audiences



Face-to-face (Print)



Online course

- Beyond traditional audiences
- Diverse age groups
- Apply technology

Most Woodland Parcels Under 10 Acres

Mid-Atlantic States

Nationally:
61% of PFL's parcels are 1-9 acres.

Mid-Atlantic States:
- *60% in PA*
- *84% in MD-NJ*

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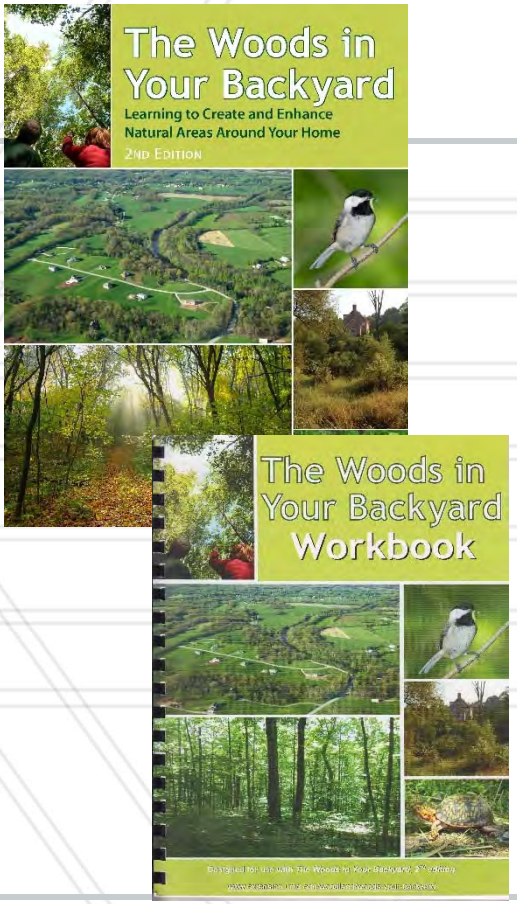
I. Program overview

The Woods in Your Backyard

- Printed Guide & Workbook
  - First edition 2006; second edition 2015
  - Over 13,000 sold over both editions
- Evening and weekend workshops to thousands in Mid-Atlantic area
  - For small-property owners
  - Converting lawn to woodland
  - Enhancing current woodlands



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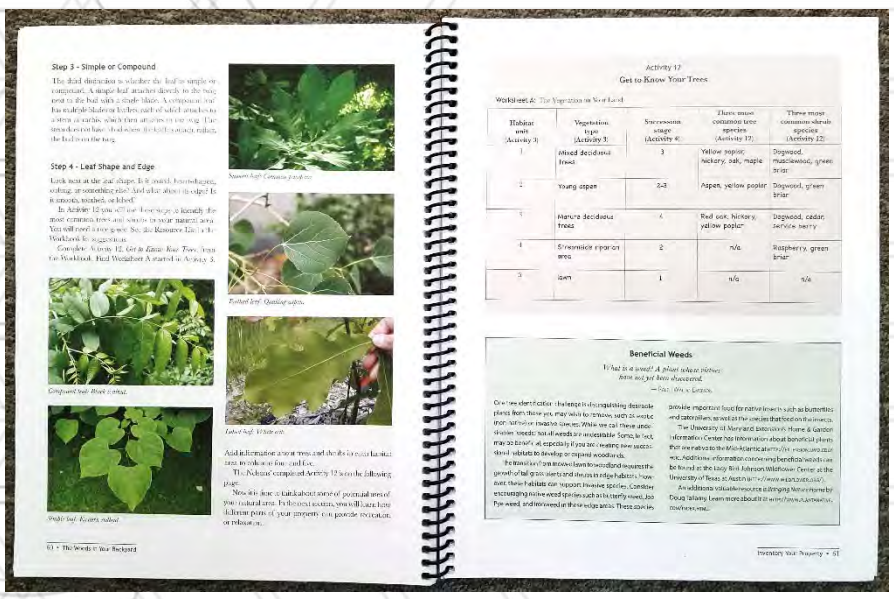
I. Program overview, contd.

- Each guide's lesson is followed by hands-on activities
- Collect data, use case studies & project ideas.
- Develop basics of a stewardship plan
- Participants create a "stewardship journal" to record their projects & progress



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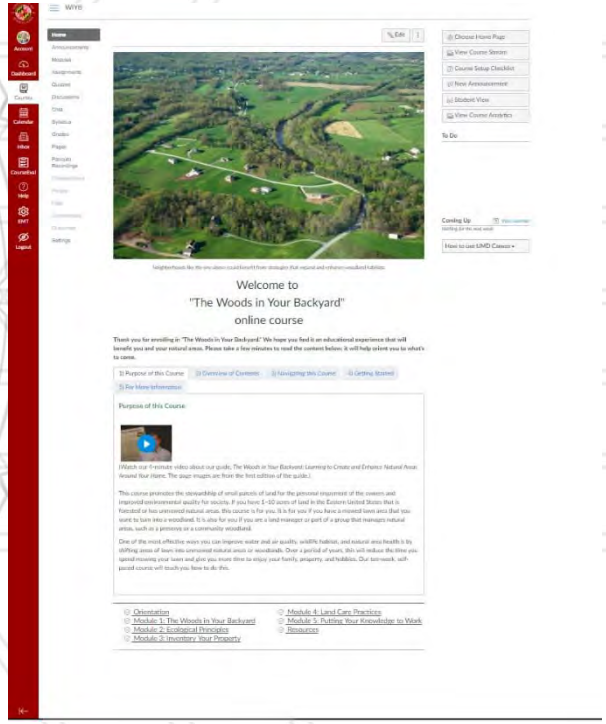
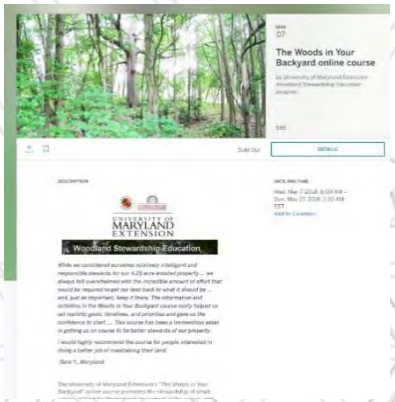
II. Course history & application

- Built on Canvas ELMS
- Debuted Fall 2016
- Intent: 2x a year (Spring & Fall)
- 25 participants



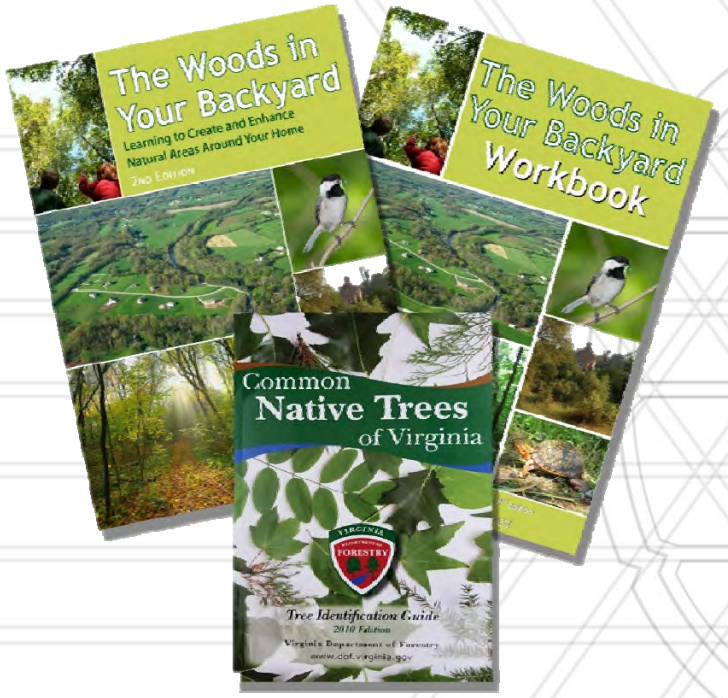
Publicity through digital & social media

- Distribution of quarterly newsletter & listservs
- Pinned Facebook posts
- Partners – MG, MN, Env. Org., Volunteers



Registration through Eventbrite.com

- Enables participants to enroll with credit card
- Eventbrite handles all processing and disburses at end of session



Sent with paid $85 registration

The Woods in Your Backyard, 2nd edition

The Woods in Your Backyard Workbook

Common Native Trees of Virginia Identification Guide

II. Course history & application

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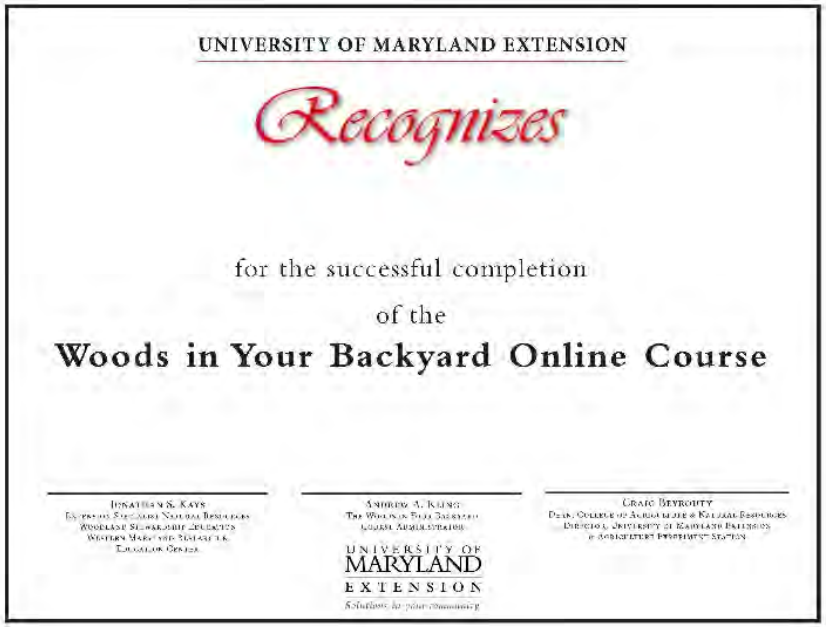
Short videos to illustrate concepts

- Developed in-house
- Landowner interviews, safety reviews, equipment demonstrations

II. Course history & application



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Recognizes

for the successful completion

of the

Woods in Your Backyard Online Course

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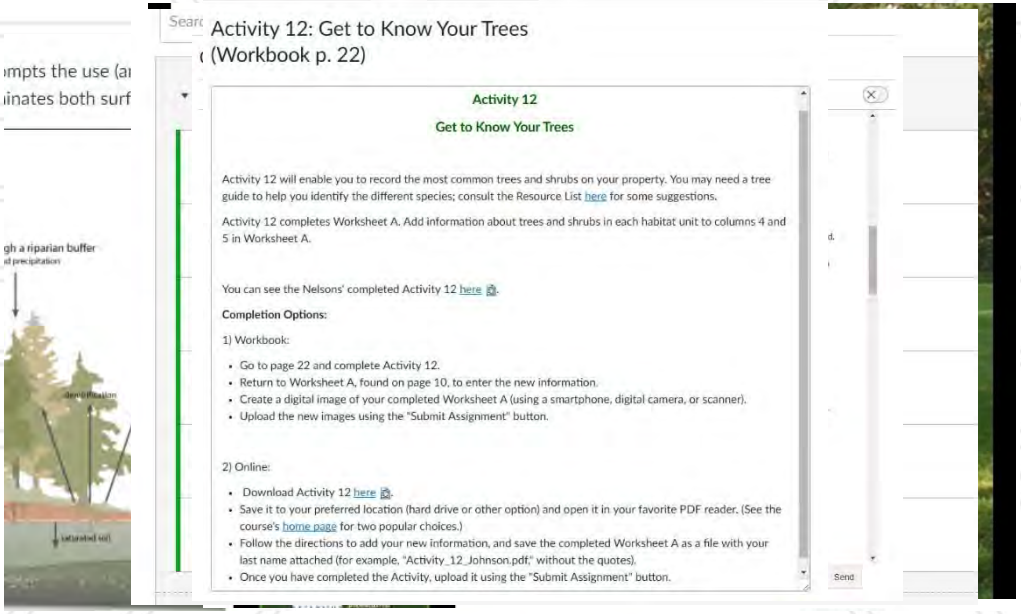
Session 1 (Fall 2016) – 20 Participants

We didn't expect it to be perfect, but …

- ✓ 30% submitted no activities
- ✓ 70% completed all activities & quizzes in Module 1
- ✓ 50% completed 2/3 of the course
- ✓ 45% completed course-received certificate

III. Continued development

Since that first session …



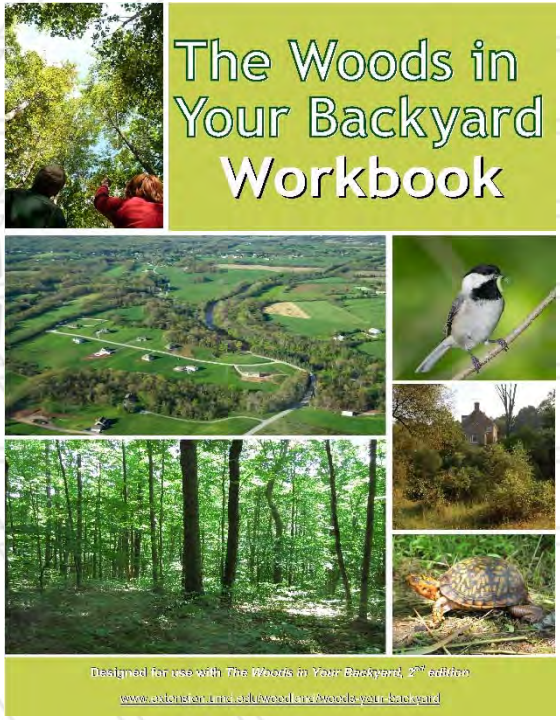
Enhancing the “Asynchronous Learning”

“Revised and expanded download & upload instructions”:

Fill in downloaded PDF forms

or

Complete blank activity sheets in Workbook and submit photos



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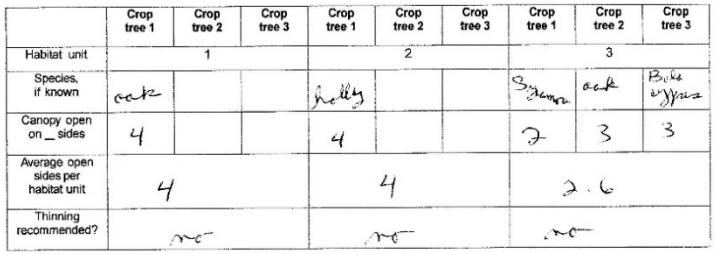
Workbook options

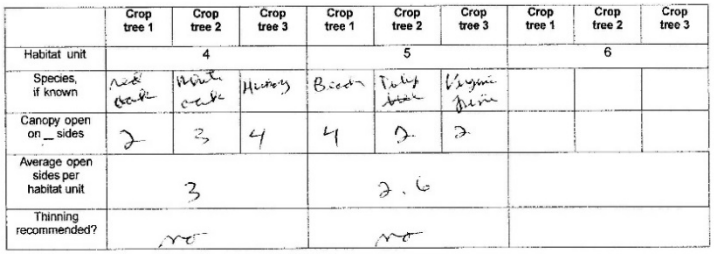
PDF …

	Crop tree 1	Crop tree 2	Crop tree 3	Crop tree 1	Crop tree 2	Crop tree 3	Crop tree 1	Crop tree 2	Crop tree 3
Habitat unit	1			2			3		
Species, if known	white oak	loblolly pine	hickory	white oak	red oak	white oak	white oak	loblolly pine	beech
Canopy open on _ sides	1	1	1	4	3	3	2	2	0
Average open sides per habitat unit	1			3			1		
Thinning recommended?	yes			no			no		

	Crop tree 1	Crop tree 2	Crop tree 3	Crop tree 1	Crop tree 2	Crop tree 3	Crop tree 1	Crop tree 2	Crop tree 3
Habitat unit	4			5			6		
Species, if known	beech	maple	dogwood	white oak	white oak	laurel			
Canopy open on _ sides	1	0	1	4	4	4			
Average open sides per habitat unit	1			4					
Thinning recommended?	yes			no					

Or by hand…





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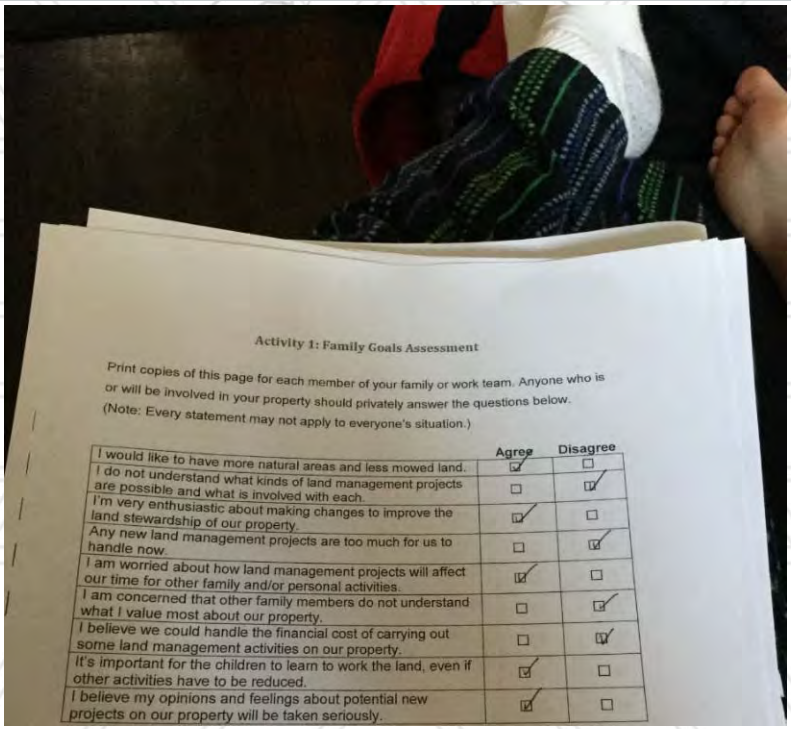
Upload the digital photo…



Activity 1: Family Goals Assessment

Print copies of this page for each member of your family or work team. Anyone who is or will be involved in your property should privately answer the questions below.

(Note: Every statement may not apply to everyone's situation.)

	Agree	Disagree
I would like to have more natural areas and less mowed land.	☑	☐
I do not understand what kinds of land management projects are possible and what is involved with each.	☐	☑
I'm very enthusiastic about making changes to improve the land stewardship of our property.	☑	☐
Any new land management projects are too much for us to handle now.	☐	☑
I am worried about how land management projects will affect our time for other family and/or personal activities.	☑	☐
I am concerned that other family members do not understand what I value most about our property.	☐	☑
I believe we could handle the financial cost of carrying out some land management activities on our property.	☐	☑
It's important for the children to learn to work the land, even if other activities have to be reduced.	☑	☐
I believe my opinions and feelings about potential new projects on our property will be taken seriously.	☑	☐

Impact of revised instructions

Previous Sessions vs Spring 2018

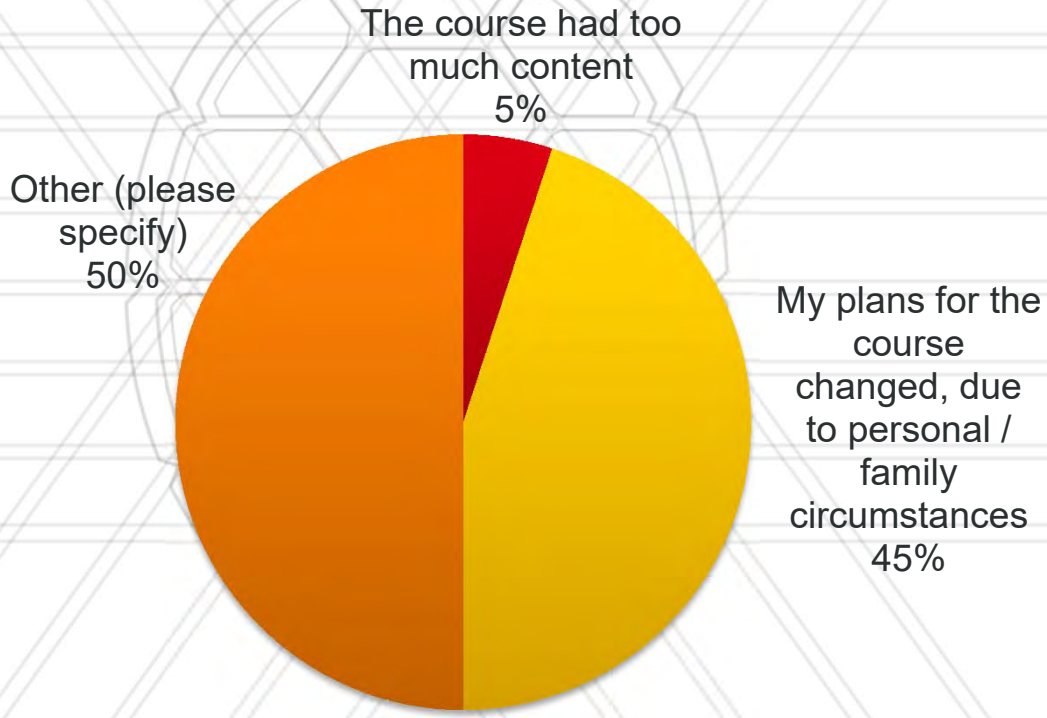
	Previous Sessions	Spring 2018
PDF's	96%	83%
Scanned Hand Entry from workbook	4%	-
Digital Image of Hand Entry from workbook	-	17%
Completion Rate	45%	70%

IV. Course impact

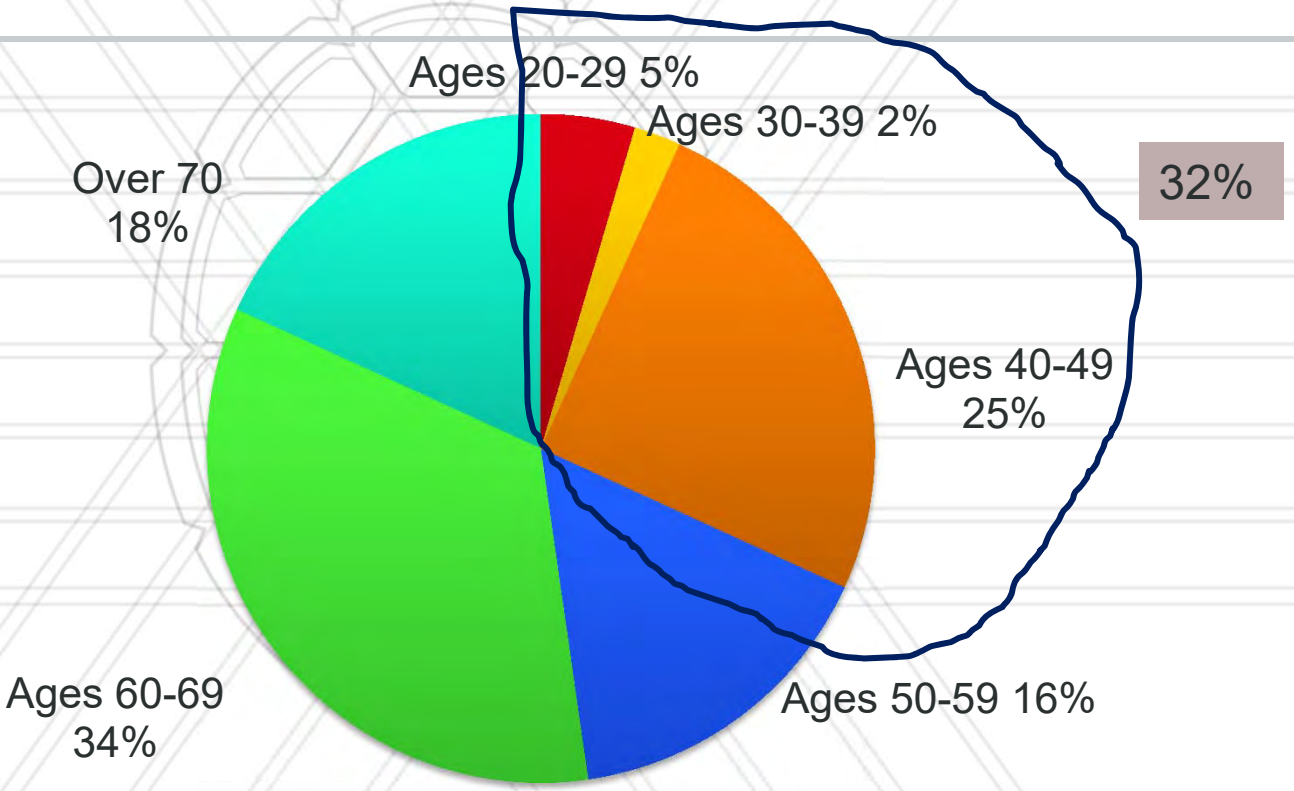
Qualtrics followup survey - March 2018

- All paid participants (69) invited to reply
- 65% response rate
- Asked to share opinions and demographics

“What were the barriers that kept you from completing the course?”



Demographics through Session 3



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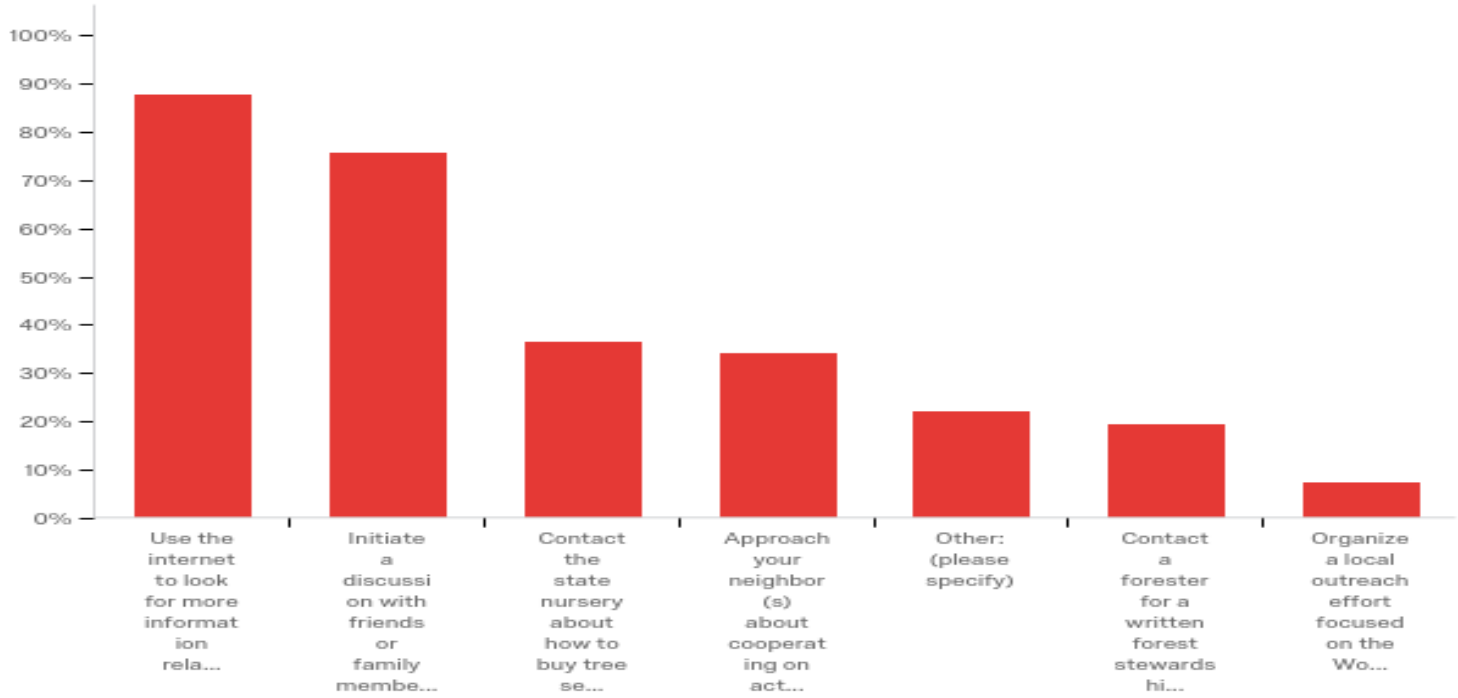
“Did the course motivate you to …?”



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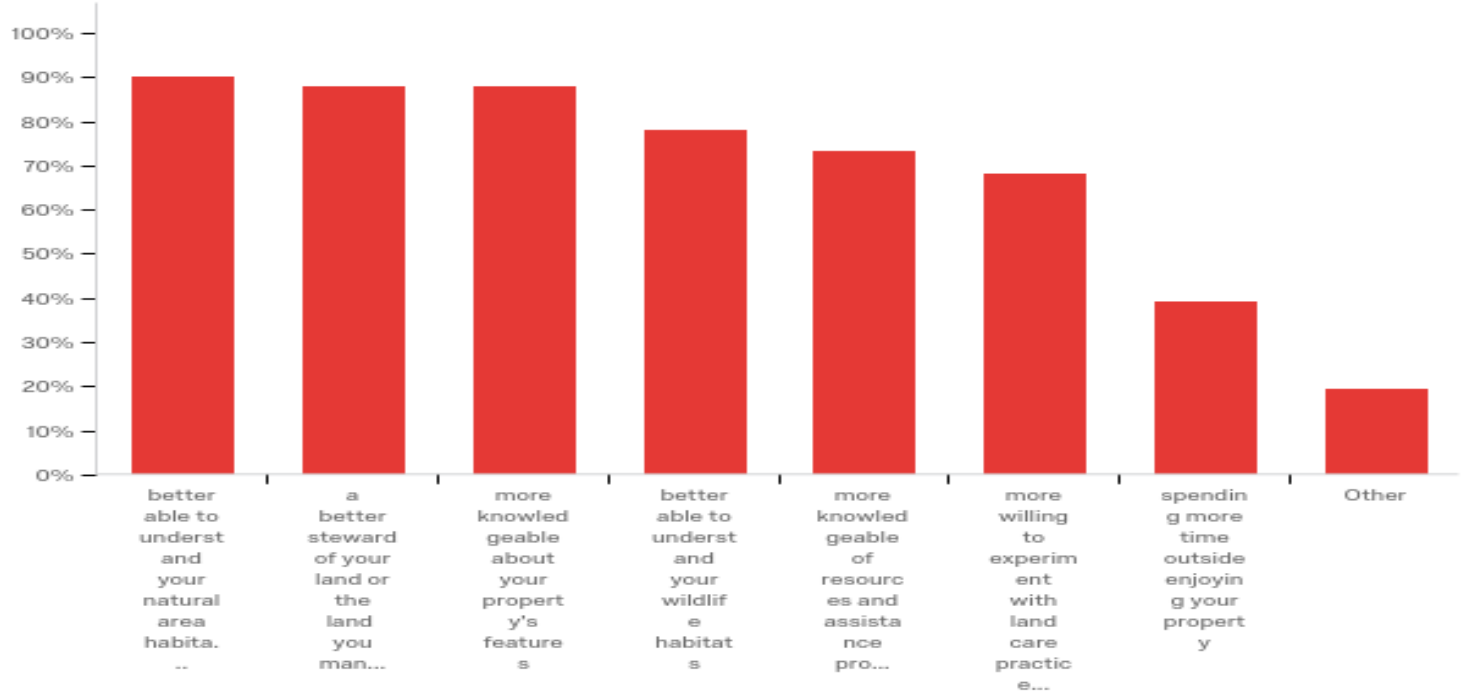
“As a result of this course, do you feel that you are …?”



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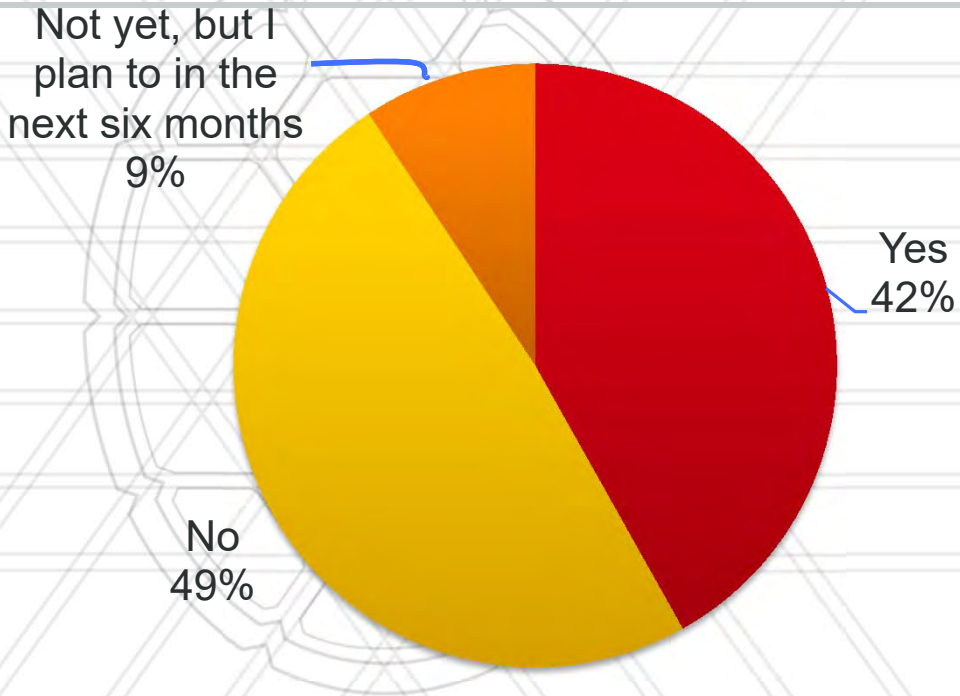
“As a result of this course, do you feel that you are …?”

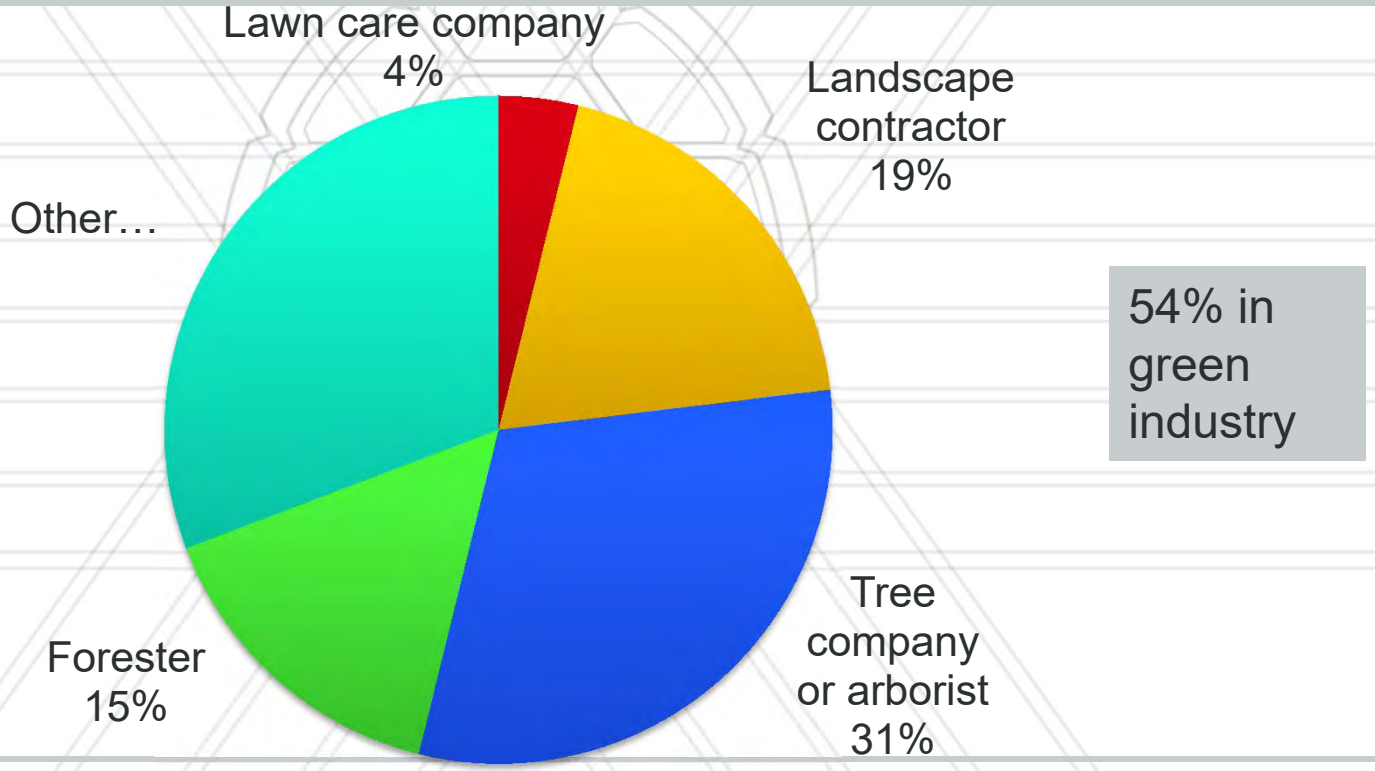
“Other” included:

- “More opportunities to spent time with and teach my kids about the world”
- “Got children more engaged in the environment in our yard and managing it”
- “I learned about some of the questions I didn't know how to ask. Also, the process of defining & naming different areas has made to projects less intimidating - it's easier to get started.”

“Have you contacted a service provider?”



“How would you describe the service professional(s) you contacted?”



54% in green industry

Land care practices for natural areas

- Asked to choose from a list of 17 practices shared in the course
- Option to show projects completed / in progress with paid or unpaid labor

Land care practices for natural areas

Top 5 Unpaid Labor projects:

Planting trees and shrubs

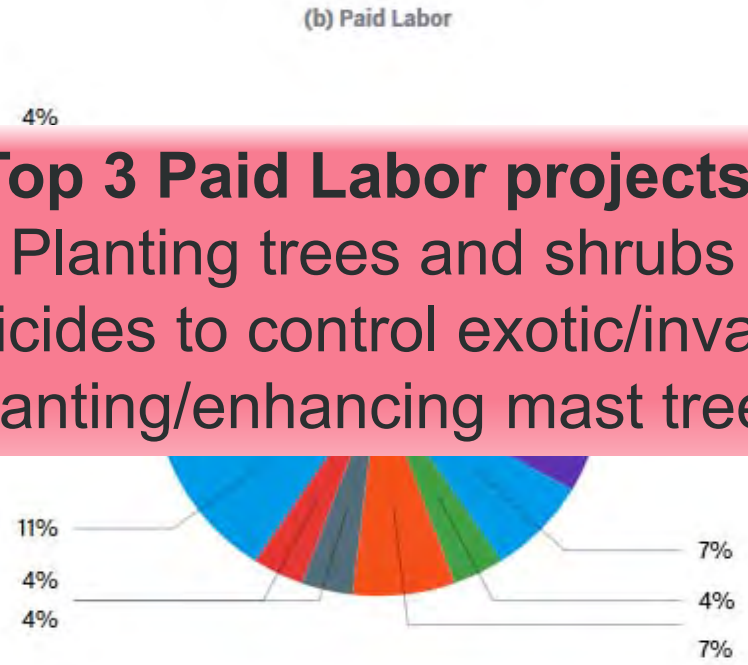
Creating wildlife brush piles

Reducing/eliminating mowing

Using herbicides to control exotic/invasive plants

Pruning trees

Land care practices for natural areas



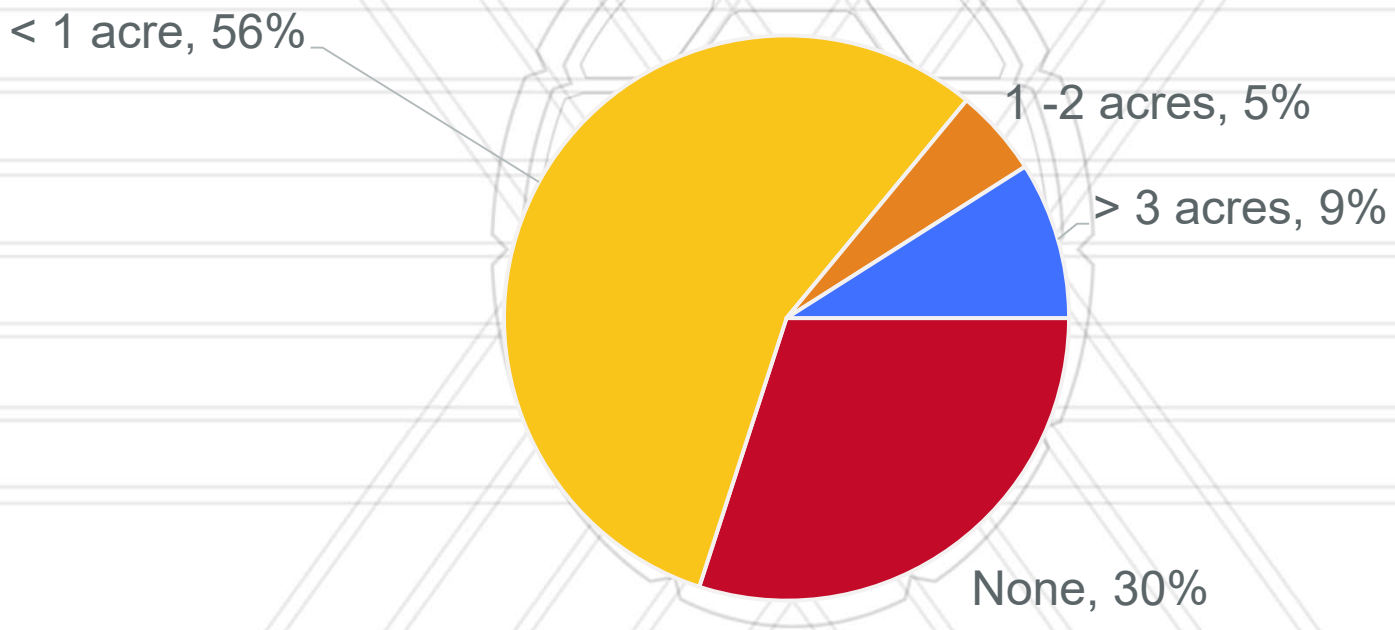
Top 3 Paid Labor projects:

Planting trees and shrubs

Using herbicides to control exotic/invasive plants

Planting/enhancing mast trees

Acres of Existing Lawn Turned into Natural Area – 36 acres



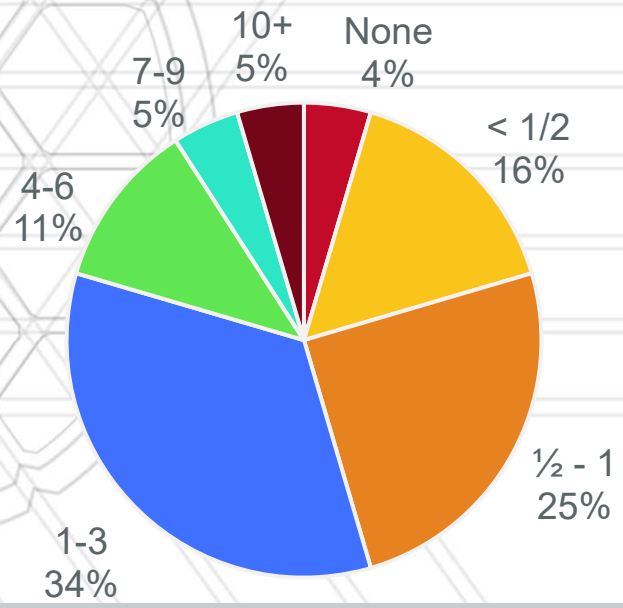
Ownership & Natural Area Impacted

Acres Owned/Managed

Total of 444 (660) acres

- < 1 ac. – 26%
- 1-9 ac. – 31%
- > 10 ac. - 33%

Acres Impacted – 123



Conclusions, so far …

- Course reaches those who can't / couldn't attend workshops
- Course content and features need to keep evolving to meet participants' interests
- Continue development of "Asynchronous Learning" techniques
- Participants get out of it what they put into it

Conclusions, so far …

- Need to work with green industry to expand services – develop directory.
- Need to continue marketing to younger landowners
- Nearly all are pursuing one or more land care practice on their properties
- Pursue peer-to-peer program

Questions?
Comments?

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