



**APPALACHIAN BEGINNING
FOREST FARMERS COALITION**
Growing Opportunities Beneath the Canopy



Planning, Managing, and Growing Your Forest Farming Business
A Rural Action and Appalachian Beginning Forest Farmer Coalition Multi-day
Intensive

Friday, March 23

4:00pm Registration Opens

6:00pm Dinner

Keynote presentation:

7:00 – 8:30 Discussion and Film Screening: “The Sanctity of Sanctuary: Paul Strauss and the Equinox Farm” – Paul Strauss | Equinox Botanicals

This documentary provides a snapshot into the life of Paul Strauss, creator and owner of Equinox Botanicals, and is described as an inspiring Appalachian love affair between a man, his farm, and his desire to make the world a better place. Discussion session with Paul Strauss following screening.

8:30 – TBD Social Time/Free Time/Meet and Greet/BYOB

Saturday, March 24

7:30am Breakfast

8:30am Introduction to the Appalachian Beginning Forest Farmer Coalition – John Munsell | Virginia Tech University

9:00 – 10:00 Forest Botanical Crops and Current Market Prices – RootReport | Virginia Tech University

RootReport is a project of the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech University, and is designed to assess market trends and volumes traded for the most commonly collected forest botanical species. This session will discuss current market conditions and prices for selected forest botanical crops.

10:00 – 10:45 Small Farm Planning and Developing NTFP Enterprise Budgets – Tanner Filyaw | Rural Action

Forest Farming is a long-term endeavor. Having a plan to help guide you from seed to sale can be an invaluable asset. This session will discuss the basic elements of a farm business planning and budgeting, and will examine existing enterprise budgets for select NTFP species.

11:00 – 12:00 Good Agricultural Practices for Small Herbal Products Businesses – Margaret Bloomquist | NC State Extension

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP's) are a useful set of tools to help producers maintain the highest product quality, and help ensure that raw materials meet buyer specifications. This session will discuss GAP's that will be applicable to producers of all levels.

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 2:00 Wholesale Production of Herbal Medicines: Experiences and Lessons Learned – Lonnie Galt-Theis | Equinox Botanicals

Lonnie began working as a medicine maker, manager, and product developer for Equinox Botanicals in 2013. In this session she will discuss what it means to be a small-scale herbal products manufacturer, and key lessons learned as a new herbal entrepreneur.

2:15 – 3:15 Hands-on Forest Session – Wild-Simulated Planting Demonstrations with Discussions of Site Selection and Evaluation – Rural Action Staff & Guest Speakers

This session will provide a hands-on opportunity for participants to identify, discuss, and evaluate potential forest farming production sites, as well as an opportunity to participate in planting demonstrations.

**Note: This session will involve a moderate to lightly strenuous walk in the woods.*

3:30 – 4:15 **Experience from the Field: Growing and Managing Your Natural Products Business – Maureen Burns | The Herbal Sage Tea Co.**

As the owner and operator of The Herbal Sage Tea Co., Maureen has many years of hands-on experience in small business development, and product development. This session will draw upon her direct experiences and expertise to help participants to successfully grown and manage their own natural products business.

4:15 – 5:15 **Mushrooms, Herbs, Roots & More: Perspectives from a Small Scale Farm to Market Enterprise and Considerations for New Producers – Janell Baran | Blue Owl Hollow & Blue Owl Garden Emporium**

Janell uses a diversified whole-farm approach to fuel her farm to market business. In this session she will draw upon her experiences to help participants better understand how to make informed decisions when managing a diversified farm enterprise.

5:15 – 6:00 **Break, Clean Up, Social Time (BYOB)**

6:00 – 7:00 **Dinner**

7:00 – 8:00 **Informal Roundtable Discussions**

Potential Topics: Good Agricultural Practices, Marketing Strategies, Crop Management (Planting/Maintenance/Budgeting), Industry Buying Practices/Meeting Buyer Specifications

This session will help pull together the vast amount of information discussed throughout the day, and to further elaborate on topics of participant interest.

Sunday, March 25

7:30 – 8:30 **Breakfast**

8:30 – 9:30 **Developing Business Goals, Land Management Plans, & Tracking Farm Finances – John Wood | Homecoming Farm**

This session is designed as an interactive discussion to help participants identify and develop goals for their farm or business, developing management strategies to fulfill those goals, and how to evaluate the success using farm finance and budgeting tools.

9:45 - 10:45 **Forest Grown Verification – Benefits and Requirements of Enrollment, and the Structure of Third-Party Certification – Tess Weigand | Pennsylvania Certified Organic**

This session will provide participants with an overview of Pennsylvania Certified Organics Forest Grown Verification Program, a sustainable branding and marketing initiative developed to support the production of American ginseng and other forest botanical crops.

11:00 – 12:00 **Group Discussion and Wrap Up**

12:00pm **Adjourn**
Optional Lunch (cost \$8)