**Forest Types of Virginia Glossary**

Biome – a complex ecological community characterized by its location, climate, and plant types

Canopy – the leafy parts of forest trees, sometimes consisting of several layers

Climate - the general weather conditions of an area, averaged over many years

Conifer – a needle-leaved tree that produces seeds in cones and is usually, but not always, evergreen

Deciduous – losing leaves in winter

Ecology – study of how living things relate to each other and their environment

Erosion – the removal and transportation of soil from the land, by processes such as flowing water or blowing wind

Evergreen – keeping green leaves or needles year-round

Fertile (as applied to soil) – capable of producing crops or other plants

Fragmentation – the creation of islands of forest surrounded by other forms of land use

Hardwood – a broad-leaved tree, or its wood; in Virginia, most hardwoods are deciduous

Hydrology – science dealing with water’s occurrence, movement, and properties

Parcelization – the division of forest land into multiple ownerships

Pioneer – plant that colonizes an area in the earliest stages of succession

Riparian – pertaining to land next to a stream or river

Silviculture – the practice of establishing, growing, and managing forests to produce desired benefits

Softwood – a needle-leaved tree, or its wood; in Virginia, most softwoods are pine species

Species – group of organisms alike in form and capable of reproducing viable offspring

Stand – a group of trees that can be considered a unit, because of similarity in species, age structure, condition, and/or growing site

Succession – predictable changes in a plant community over time

Understory – the part of a forest growing beneath the canopy layer(s)

Water Table – the depth below which water saturates the soil