Reading Your Land

Adapted from the Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program, *Dylan Jenkins*

instructions

1. Suggested tools to bring with you: camera, pen, paper and tree ID guide. (a great pocket version is *Tree Finder* (May Theilgaard Watts), $3.50 from www.naturestudy.com.
2. Take a walk through the forested and open land of your property. As you walk look for evidence of human use and natural disturbances. Record your observations even if they are obvious. Your record will be helpful if you decide to harvest or make land improvements. It will also assist your family or future owners in carrying out management plans.
3. Use the back of this sheet or another piece of paper or draw a rough map of your property. When you record disturbance or land use in the table below, also note the location on your map. Also note water bodies, roads, caves or significant land features. When you're finished, you will have a rough timeline of your property and its past use.
4. You may want to combine the information and photos you collect here with a topo map or aerial photo. Affix photos or your notes to the corresponding area on the topo map. It may be an activity the entire family wants to participate in. With a little guidance, kids can learn a lot about the surrounding forest. Their curiosity is particularly useful for observing nature's clues.

past land use and disturbance

| | human use/disturbance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | natural disturbance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |