

William N. Grafton

(1938 – 2009)

William N. Grafton, son of a West Virginia logger, was born in Fayette County, W.Va., November 20, 1938. He attended West Virginia University (WVU), earning a B.S. in forestry and wildlife management. After serving with the U.S. Army, he earned a M.S. in forest management at WVU.

Mr. Grafton then joined the WVU Extension Service as a forestry specialist in Beckley, W.Va.; later serving as director for an 11-county area in southern West Virginia. He worked closely with forest and wood industries, concentrating on forest fire prevention and helping produce "Time Is Running Out," an award-winning film on fire prevention.

While in Beckley, he discovered the location in West Virginia of the endangered plant, "running buffalo clover." He has become a recognized authority on the flora of West Virginia, especially in the New River Gorge area.



Throughout his Extension career, Mr. Grafton has given of his time to promote forest management education to all citizens in the state. He has been a major contributor to youth education in West Virginia, helping to organize the Youth Science Camp in Wyoming and Raleigh Counties. He has been an annual instructor at the Forest Industries Camp for high school students.

Since his return to Morgantown as a wildlife specialist in the 1980s, he has worked extensively on deer herd management. He has worked with farmers, foresters and politicians, trying to find reasonable and sustainable recommendations on deer herd management in West Virginia.

Mr. Grafton has held leadership positions with the Society of American Foresters, and has been recognized by many organizations for his contributions to forest management in West Virginia. In 1993, he was enshrined as an honorary member of the West Virginia FFA. In 1994, he was honored with a faculty award by Gamma Sigma Delta, the Honors Society for Agriculture.

He has been an officer and leader in the Nature Conservancy, which promotes the protection of unique ecological sites. He has also been an officer and leader in the West Virginia Plant Society. For over 20 years, he has been a forest management instructor at the Conservation Education Camp for teachers in Webster County. He also provides information and organizational input for a similar camp held each summer at Blackwater Falls State Park.