

The Webinar Portal

Webinar Provider Services

Foresters, conservationist, climate and natural resource professionals, landowners, farmers, educators, policy makers and others are increasingly turning to webinar technology to stay abreast of new information and connect with colleagues all over the world. Webinars (web-based seminars) offer a number of advantages over traditional face-to-face seminars such as time, travel and energy savings; carbon footprint reductions, live and on-demand viewing; rating systems, and direct or indirect interaction with experts and fellow participants.

For the inexperienced, producing webinars however can be tedious, time consuming and fraught with technology issues. Producers often struggle to increase viewership, manage their time, produce engaging webinars and appropriately archive webinars for on demand viewing. The team who has produced the *forestrywebinars.net* webinar Portal and its affiliated Portals have developed the experience, tools, technology, and marketing technology that makes webinar delivery simple and effective. This Webinar Portal service, with over 1,100 live and on-demand webinars and over 604,199 webinar participants since 2008, is a product of several university and federal partners. It is easy to use and the results have been no less than astounding.

The Webinar Portal (Portal) features include:

- **E- marketing to over 28,000 natural resource professionals in the US and across the world.** This list of subscribers is constantly updated, and includes members from across the US and the globe. The Portal has reached webinar participants in all 50 states, US territories, Europe, Canada, and South America.
- **Issue continuing education credits for one year or more following the initial live broadcast.** The Portal has the ability to award Continuing Education Credits up to 1 year or more when participants watch live and on-demand webinars. Accrediting agencies include, but are not limited to, the Society of American Foresters, International Society of Arboriculture, Georgia master Timber Harvester, Society of Range Management, and the Wildlife Society. The Portal also generates certificates of completion for those participants that request them. The Portal partners with many of Educational Accrediting organizations to provide an automated CEU approval process and automated attendance reporting back to the CEU organizations.
- **Allows the flexibility to choose the most appropriate webinar software.** The Portal has been developed to accommodate direct links to various live webinar hosting software such as Blackboard Collaborate®, AT&T Connect®, Adobe Connect®, Live Meeting®, Webex®, GotoMeeting®, Zoom®, and most other systems.
- **Participant ratings and comments.** The Portal allows participants the ability to rate and comment on the webinars they've viewed using a 5-Star rating system. The 5-Star rating is publicized to help perspective viewers gauge the benefits of viewing each on-demand webinar.
- **Support for success.** Support is available for Portal users to help resolve portal-based technical issues. The Portal contains an FAQ section for participants that can be customized. The Portal has dedicated staff that are service oriented and while the Portal staff cannot provide technical assistance related to the actual webinar service (such as Collaborate® or Adobe®), they are available to point subscribers in the right direction.
- **Savings.** Conducting on-line training via webinars vs. face-to-face seminars saves money and time for webinar hosts and participants. And, it provides an opportunity for professionals who cannot attend training away from work the ability to continue and enhance their education without the

cost of travel and time away from work. To help quantify the savings for participants, the Portal features a unique Green Savings calculator that details participant savings in terms of money, time, fuel and Co2. In 2025, 13,650 participants saved over \$3,833,800, that's an average savings of \$280.87 per participating.

The Portal also provides the opportunity to:

- **Automate marketing, registration, evaluation and awarding of continuing education credits.** The Portal provides several automated features associated with publicizing webinars, registering participants, evaluating participants, and requesting and awarding continuing education credits. The Webinar Portal is work-flow based and allows webinar hosts the ability to define/setup optional workflow steps such as a pre-survey, post-webinar quiz and post-webinar survey. In 2025 the Portal handled over 32,753 webinar views and distributed over 7,100 continuing education certificates via both live and on-demand experiences.
- **Brand webinars.** Customizable sub-banner (sub-brand) can be created to identify webinar series, organizational sponsors or hosting partnership programs. This can include logo or other identifying information such as website links, etc.
- **Broadcast "on demand" webinars.** The Portal has been developed for easy, search and retrieval of on-demand webinars for replay via multiple search criteria including replay media, text, credits offered, subject, brand or category. Links to webinars from partner organizations can be advertised on the Portal's home page.

What's in store for the Portal's future? The Portal is constantly growing not only in the number of webinars available for viewing but also with the viewership of live and on-demand webinars. With this growth comes the necessity to improve the Portal's user interface and functionality for both the end-user, participants, and the webinar hosts. A number of updates and features are currently in the works, most notably:

- Customizable impact surveys to help quantify participant benefits gained from viewing a webinar;
- Ability for participants to earn CEUs who have viewed a webinar as a group;
- A redesigned Portal website that incorporates more dynamic content and statistical data to make the Webinar Portal an even better platform for hosting and viewing relevant leading edge webinars.

The *Webinar Portal* is a service of the North Carolina State University Extension Forestry, the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Office, and Texas A&M Forest Service with participation and input from many partners including the US Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service and land grant universities in the southern United States.

For questions or additional information, contact:

Southern Regional Extension Forestry

contact@sref.info

Please Include "Webinar Hosting Inquiry" in the subject line.

Frequently asked questions from those who are considering using the portal:

Is the Webinar Portal only focused on forestry?

No. The Portal currently has several topic-based sub-portals or “skins”: *forestrywebinars.net*, *conservationwebinars.net*, *climatewebinars.net*, and *bioenergywebinars.net*. Through these affiliated Portals, a vast majority of forestry professionals, natural resource professionals, scientists, landowners, farmers, and bioenergy enthusiasts are being reached with cutting edge information and research results.

What type of organizations can utilize the Webinar Portal services?

It is available to universities, Cooperative Extension, federal and state natural resource agencies, private nonprofits, and others engaged in natural resources education.

Can I continue to use my current webinar service provider or do I need to switch to your provider?

You can use your current webinar provider. The portal has been developed to accommodate direct links to various live webinar hosting software such as Blackboard Collaborate®, AT&T Connect®, Adobe Connect® and most other systems. The portal acts as a frame around your webinar that directs the flow of participants to your webinar.

What if I don't have a webinar service provider?

We can assist you in finding a provider that fits your needs. We have experience with using several webinar services and can assist you in deciding the type of options and other features you may want from a provider. You are also more than welcome to use NCSU's Webinar Portal that is the standard used for most webinars on our portals.

Can I use my own contact lists to publicize my webinar?

Yes, you can market through your own list of contacts or you can rely on the Portal to publicize your webinar through its direct email feature. The Portal allows you to upload your contact list so you can use the automated direct email feature. When you upload your contact list you can have the Portal send invitations to the individuals on your list asking them to confirm they want to join and select areas of interest.

How often does the Portal send out an announcement about new webinars?

The Portal automatically sends e-mails announcing new webinars up to 45 days in advance. A reminder email is sent to subscribers on the day of the webinar. This is the preferred method of webinar participants to learn about webinar opportunities.

How do I get my webinar approved for continuing education credits and track who received them?

The Portal provides an automated request to accrediting agencies. In order to request continuing education credits, you will need to provide a brief description of the webinar and select the accrediting agency and type of credit desired. A partial list of accrediting agencies include: Society of American Foresters, International Society of Arboriculture, Society of Range Management, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Georgia Master Timber Harvester and the Wildlife Society to name a few. Additional accrediting agencies can be added as desired. The Portal tracks program participation by individual and provides certificates to those who complete a webinar and the associated evaluation requirements such as quizzes and surveys. The Portal automatically sends participant attendance lists to partnering accrediting agencies on a monthly basis for all CEUs awarded for all live and on-demand webinars.

How do webinar participants know which webinar offers continuing education credits? The Portal has built-in automatic features to publicize which type and how many CEUs are offered for each webinar. This is prominently displayed next to the webinar of interest.

How do I find out about customer satisfaction and the impact of the webinar?

The Portal allows for pre- and post-webinar evaluations that can be automatically included in each webinar. If desired, post evaluation impact data can also be gathered through SurveyMonkey® or other similar web-based survey system. Data is collected, summarized and delivered to key partners. As part of the webinar workflow process, at the conclusion of each webinar, participants are asked to rate the webinars content via an automated 5-Star rating and comment process. The ratings are publicized on the webinar detail page and the participant comments are available for webinar hosts to evaluate their webinar content and presentation. Another unique feature of the Portal is the ability to calculate Green Savings. Green Savings is the benefit associated with a participant’s ability to participate in a webinar without traveling. The Portal automatically estimates the savings related to fuel consumption, time, personal carbon emissions, and societal cost of carbon by participants who participated in the webinars presented through the webinar Portal. The following is a graphic design mock-up for reporting success.



*Each reporting period is based on the fiscal year, July 1 – June 30.

PROFESSIONAL CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS EARNED

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How much does the webinar Portal cost? The cost to produce a webinar or webinar series is dependent on a number of factors. Please email Southern Regional Extension Forestry at contact@sref.info with the subject line “Webinar Hosting Inquiry” for a free consultation discussion.

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