



## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **Virginia Department of Forestry Supports Southwest Virginia Trail System**

Friday, July 27, the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority (SRRA)/Spearhead Trails will receive two wildland firefighting bulldozers and an FL80 transport from the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF). These pieces of equipment actively protected the natural resources and citizens of Southwest Virginia from destructive wildfires for nearly three decades. The equipment has been retired from firefighting service and will now help enhance recreational opportunities provided through the Spearhead trail system.

VDOF received funding from the Virginia General Assembly to replace a significant number of its fleet of firefighting dozers during the past couple of years. Consequently, the agency was able to provide two gently used dozers and transport to Spearhead Trails

“We are excited to see this equipment support an organization that shares our commitment to Virginia forests,” said Virginia State Forester Rob Farrell. “Southwest Virginia offers some of the state’s most breathtaking natural scenery, and as a result of this equipment transfer more people will be able to enjoy the recreational and health benefits that come from getting out on the trails.”

SRRA/Spearhead Trails’ yearly economic impact is currently around \$15 million and growing rapidly as the organization creates more trails. “We are excited to receive this equipment which enables us to build more trails and helps us sustain our current trails while safe guarding the environment through installation of best management practices,” said Spearhead Trails Director Shawn Lindsey.

- more -

**Equipment**  
**Page 2**

With this equipment over the next five years the group expects to have up to 1,000 miles of trails including ATV, SUV, mountain bike, equestrian and waterway access points for kayaks and canoes. “Our economic impacts will more than double during this time thanks to the support we receive from the Commonwealth and our federal, local, and private partners. The Virginia Department of Forestry is a valuable partner in protecting one of our most valuable resources that brings thousands of tourists to our area,” said Lindsey.

**-end-**

The Virginia Department of Forestry protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. Headquartered in Charlottesville, the Agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it’s been doing now for more than 100 years. VDOF is an equal opportunity provider.

With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$21 Billion annually.