



FORESTRY News

A Newsletter of the Virginia Department of Forestry

MISSION:

"We Protect and Develop Healthy, Sustainable Forest Resources for Virginians."

HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF – DOF ANSWERS THE CALL

In the last edition of Forestry News, we published a summary of the extraordinary work DOF employees performed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In reading that article and looking at the accompanying photos, you got just a sliver of the enormity of the devastation. What you didn't get is the "human" side of the storm and its aftermath. In this edition, you will find all that and more.

There are stories – personal accounts – from four individuals who gave their all to help their fellow countrymen in a time of need. The stories are their stories; written in their own words by those who were there to help. We did very little editing so that you what you read is as close as possible to what they wrote. The stories provide the intimate details that are often left out of a regular news story. The pictures they paint with their words are as compelling as any photograph could ever hope to show.

We are grateful to the four authors (Mike Womack, Randy Short, David Stone and Rick Butler) who not only took the time to write these stories, but were so willing to share their stories with the rest of us. We would also like to thank them and the other 111 full- and part-time DOF folks who answered the call. You brought help and hope to thousands of storm victims, and you brought great credit to yourself and to this agency. Thank you for a job well done!

A PERSONAL ACCOUNT...

MIKE WOMACK, TECHNICIAN, STATE FORESTS



On August 31, 2005, a Virginia Department of Forestry crew, Virginia-07, assembled in Roanoke at the USDA Forest Service office to head to Louisiana in response to Hurricane Katrina. Our crewmembers consisted of 19 full- and part-time DOF personnel and four USDA Forest Service drivers. We were given no information on what our assignment would be – just report to Camp Beauregard, an Army National Guard Base in Alexandria, LA. We were given three vans, a rental truck to haul our gear, some MREs, water and a map of the area around Camp Beauregard.

After the usual flurry of paperwork was completed and the TV interviews taken care of, we set out for Lebanon, TN, where we spent the first night.

We also picked up our next two "crewmembers" in Lebanon - a photographer and reporter from the Roanoke Times. They had graciously volunteered to come with us to provide pictures and stories both in the paper and on the Internet so our friends and families could keep up with where we were going and what we were doing. The reporter had one problem. I didn't know where we were going to be assigned to work or what we were going to do when we got there. This seemed to bother him greatly as he asked me every time we stopped and

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Message

FROM THE STATE FORESTER



As I write to you today, there is great sadness in my heart. At this very moment in Southwest Virginia, a funeral is being held for a man who paid the ultimate price in service to his fellow citizens. Oakwood Volunteer Fire Department Chief Max Willard was killed earlier this week trying to suppress one of the largest wildland fires we've had this year. Chief Willard was the first to arrive at the scene and raced into the woods with a fire rake to protect a home and its occupants. Unfortunately, the fire jumped the line he was building and quickly overcame him on the steep terrain. The 68-year-old had been a firefighter for more than 30 years. He was well known in Buchanan County and well respected across the state. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his family.

If any good can come from this tragedy, it serves as a reminder to us all just how dangerous our job can be. We must be ever vigilant. We have to wear our full complement of personal protective equipment. We must maintain communication with others. We have to assess the situation before taking action. And we must identify an appropriate escape route. I cannot stress enough just how important these actions are. We can't completely eliminate the risk we face, but, by employing these basic principles to every situation every day, we can increase the odds of survival. We owe nothing less to Chief Willard and all the other firefighters who've given their lives to protect the lives of others.

Lastly, our new Integrated Forest Resource Information System (IFRIS) will be debuted in a series of informational meetings across the state. The purpose of these meetings is to further your understanding of what IFRIS is; what it isn't, and what changes it will bring to everyone's work flow. Each session will involve a demonstration of IFRIS and be followed by a completely open question and answer session. Training on how to use IFRIS will come later. I encourage you to be open-minded and urge you to bring forth any "fears" and questions you may have. Only through this open dialogue, will we be able to address your concerns, allay your fears and answer your questions! I am very much committed to and excited about IFRIS. DOF **will** move into the 21st century with this action. IFRIS will change the way we operate, and your understanding of this will go a long way toward its successful implementation. This is not an option-use program; it **will** be the information management system that the agency will use. IFRIS will enable DOF to grow, be more efficient, provide accountability for the agency, and improve the utility of informational use in the field.

Carl Harrison

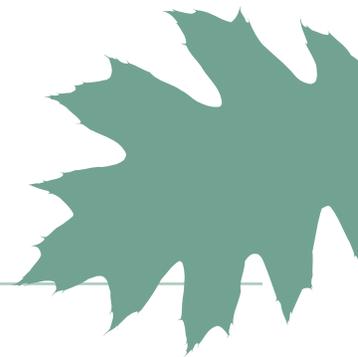
A RARE EVENT IN PATRICK COUNTY

Submitted by Chuck Hutsell, regional forester, Region 5

For the first time in history, a helicopter logging job was done on private forestland in Patrick County, Region 5. Cutting began in early April of this year with saw crews hiking in and out everyday on this 140-acre tract near the Dan River located in Kibler Valley. It took about a week for the helicopter to move some 800,000 board feet from the tract to a loading deck for truck transport to the mill. Pictured is an S61 Sikorski owned by Carson Helicopter. Carson has been in the logging and aerial suppression business for a number of years. Helicopter logging is not new, but seems to be more frequent in Virginia as logging on public and company-owned land is becoming unavailable. We are glad to see modern techniques being used, particularly on steep and in environmentally challenged areas, which should not be logged by conventional methods.



Youth EDUCATION



“AUGUSTA SPRINGS WETLANDS”

Written by Joshua McLaughlin, forester, Augusta Forestry Center

Staunton City second graders experienced a learning experience in the wetlands of Augusta Springs. They were learning about the watersheds, wetland animals and wetland vegetation. Augusta Springs is located in Augusta County in the George Washington National Forest. Joshua McLaughlin, forester at Augusta Forestry Center, represented DOF at Augusta Springs.

McLaughlin worked with the kids to identify different types of wetland animals and insects, by sight and/or call.

Virginia Tech, USDA Forest Service, Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District and DOF worked together to obtain a grant to provide conservation education to local students on watersheds. McLaughlin was contacted to be the service forester on the year-long project. For any more information, please visit Augustasprings.org.



YOUNG SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN GET A FORESTRY WALK IN THE WOODS

Submitted by Karen Stanley, forester, Region 5, Rockbridge County

A warmer than normal early November in Rockbridge County saw more than 200 boys and girls congregate for a weekend of hunter safety and education. The annual Wild Turkey Federation Jakes event in Rockbridge County has been ranked the top event in the nation for three consecutive years. And, ironically, that's at least how long the Department of Forestry has been involved with the program.

Jakes ranging in age from about 4 years to 18 years participated in a walk in the woods where Karen Stanley taught them how forest management can help meet wildlife and forest health objectives. They learned the difference between red and white oak species, how to identify them, and why it's important to have both for mast production. Karen also spoke on fire prevention and safety while in the woods. But for most, the highlight was letting them root around on the ground and find a “meal” for a deer by filling a paper cup the approximate size of a deer's stomach. It showed them how valuable the forest is for finding food and how hard it might be when certain mast crops are poor.

Other cooperators for the program included the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for hunter safety and the USDA Forest Service, who brought a brush truck, fire gear and Smokey Bear. Ken Mohler was absent this year from the Rockbridge event to be part of the Fire Prevention Team in Southwest Virginia, which was also a great success. Karen prevailed in teaching all 12 classes during the weekend event without losing all vocal ability. Everyone involved hopes that the 2005 Jakes event will once again go on to become the best in the United States for the fourth year in a row.



Hurricane Katrina

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every half hour while we staged if I knew anything yet. He didn't have anything to report on other than we were driving and awaiting further instructions for three days. He also couldn't get over that not knowing didn't seem to concern me or the crewmembers at all (a big thanks to the crew for that). We were going to help the people of Louisiana affected by Hurricane Katrina and that was good enough for us.

On September 1, we finally arrived at Camp Beauregard at 10 p.m. There was no check-in open, so we bedded down for the night in a warehouse - it had cots, AC and showers. After getting situated, we ran into Jim Bowling who flew in - must have been nice - and was assigned as a Strike Team Leader (STCR). At check in the next morning, we requested for Jim to be our STCR and what do you know, it worked. While at check-in, I ran into a woman on the Incident Management Team (IMT) from New Mexico who checked us in on the South Grizzly Fire in Colorado in 2000 - at 2 a.m. she reminded me. Small world!

On September 2, we headed toward Baton Rouge to stage at a camp being set up in Port Allen. We got to enjoy the fine Louisiana weather sitting under the bridge over the Mississippi River watching the boats go through the locks. Our reporter friend is still bugging me about not having anything to report on yet, but the crew was glad for a chance to rest and stretch our legs after the long drive. We were sure that whatever awaited us was going to involve long days and hard work. There was not much overhead in place here yet, but a caterer showed up and was ready to serve by supper time. There were also portable showers and air conditioned tents with cots. But wait! As soon as we got settled in the tents and started to hit the showers, we were told we couldn't stay here and headed off to stay the night in the Baton Rouge American Legion Hall on the dance floor with a bunch of other crews. Our reporters are really having fun now.

We got to the Target POD (Point of Distribution) and got to work. The local National Guard had set up the day before and had started handing out commodities. We worked at this location with Texas Forest Service overhead, Buddy Chandler and Steve Smestad from the George Washington Jefferson National Forest, Jim Bowling, the Los Diablos crew from Big Bend, Texas, the South Pueblos crew from New Mexico, and a Park Service crew from Virginia. Our POD was tasked with handing out MREs, bottled water and ice to the people of the area affected by the hurricane. We got set up with the National Guard directing traffic,

the Los Diablos keeping trash and pallets picked up and stacked (they had a pile of more than 4,000 pallets when we left) and the remaining crews handing out commodities. We soon realized that we needed a staging manager receiving the tractor trailers of goods, staging them, and coordinating getting them unloaded. DOF part-time firefighter Brad Wright stepped up to the plate and got volunteered for the job.



The distribution line was set up like a big drive through with the crews set up in stations with two cars stopping at a station to be loaded. The trucks were positioned behind the crews with forklifts setting pallets of goods out at each station along the line. There were signs out telling people to have their trunks open, and each car received a case of MREs, a case of water and a 40 pound sleeve of ice. We did our best to accommodate people who requested more (such as picking up for their neighbor whose car was destroyed or they had a lot of people staying at their house) as the idea was to meet the needs of the people while serving as many vehicles as we could safely during the operational period.

We were fortunate enough to be located in front of a Belk store and next to a Target store. The employees were very helpful and generous. They let us use the restrooms in the stores and use their AC for break time. The Target employees brought us cold drinks. The Belk employees had coffee and snacks for us in the morning and bought pizza one day and brought us food for lunch a couple of times. In return, the crews bought almost all the store's shorts. It was a little hot out in the parking lot in fire pants. They really looked out for the crews even though they had no power at home, damage to their houses, and unaccounted for family members. The crews' positive attitude and smiling faces helped lift the spirits of the store employees. This, along with being able to assist us, helped keep them going.

The new hurricane response uniform is cargo shorts, T-shirt,

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fire boots and a straw cowboy hat from Texas.

The nights of September 2nd and 3rd we got to spend at yet another location. We pitched tents on the lawn of an old school turned into a city athletic center in the City of Plaquemine, which is south of Baton Rouge. There, we were brought fried catfish and Jambalaya from "the best restaurant around." The next place we got to call home was the "Penney Dome" in Hammond. The Lone Star IMT secured use of a closed J.C. Penney store in the mall and built enclosed showers on the sidewalk under the overhang. The first night we got beef brisket, Texas style. The next day a caterer showed up and, a few days later, a shower unit and laundry. Everyone was glad to have a place to sleep with air conditioning as we had expected to use our tents the whole time – but you can imagine 650 people on squeaky cots in one big room.

The Lone Star IMT did an excellent job considering the magnitude of the operation, and everyone we dealt with was great to work with. The area around Covington reminded me of home (Rural VA) and the people there were glad to see us and peaceable despite some having lost everything in the storm. It was nothing like what they were showing on the news in New Orleans. The storm affected everyone the same. We saw cars from clunkers to Cadillacs and all were put in the same situation. For most, it was hard to come get food and water from the government to sustain their families. The positive attitude and actions of all the crewmembers at our location did more to help the local people than anything we could have given to them.



After a few days, we started getting cars backed up on the interstate and decided to expand our operation. Brad organized a duplicate set up in front of Target, and we received additional crews from Tennessee and Snake River Valley in Oregon. I got moved into STCR duties, and Jim took over the half of the operation in front of the Belk Store. Heather

Manson, crew boss trainee, and Kevin Painter, assistant crew boss, took over the crew. This helped reduce the line and the wait times. On one day – September 10 – the Target POD where we worked distributed three tractor trailer loads of bottled water, two of ice and two of MREs and served 4,615 cars. Thanks to all for doing whatever needed to be done to make the operation successful.

It's now September 11 and we have been asked to take a new assignment – survey some POD locations in areas around New Orleans. Who could turn that down? So we got our tetanus shots and headed out.

Next, we moved and set up camp on a ball field in Harahan on the bank of the Mississippi beside the levee. Harahan is part of metropolitan New Orleans. If I hadn't seen them spray for mosquitoes, I wouldn't believe it. They looked more like hummingbirds and felt like getting stuck by a pin. I don't know how they play a ball game on that field after dark. We spent only one night there and two days working at a POD in Kenner, which is a small city next to the New Orleans International Airport. This was a lot different from where we had been up to now. There was evidence of past looting in Kenner, and the wind had blown trash everywhere. The crew worked hard for two days and got the place as organized as we could. We did what we could while working with the local politics, and, if nothing else, the place looked better when we left.

Now it's time to head back to Virginia. We spent one last night in the Penney Dome; checked out, and hit the road. We headed back up through Mississippi as the power was back on along the interstate and we could get gas.

The crew did an excellent job and had a good attitude during the whole assignment. They worked hard and made my job as crew boss easy – although I had a hard time getting people to stop and take a break. It was different from anything we had done before. We got to meet crews from all over the country and, unlike a fire assignment, were working right next to them and taking breaks together so we got more time to get to know other folks. The hardest part of the assignment was knowing that in two weeks we were going to go back to our families and homes and these people would still be here. I guess that just made you work harder.

I ask that everyone pray for the people of Louisiana and do what you can. A lot of everyday people just like you and me were affected by Katrina outside of New Orleans – and you just don't see that on TV.

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Hurricane Katrina

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DAVID STONE, FORESTER, REGION 3

Two days after Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, I was asked to lead a 20-person crew – that would become known as Virginia-10 – to help with disaster relief. We were told to bring tents, sleeping bags and enough food and water for two days to spike-camp upon arrival.

We left Virginia the Saturday of Labor Day weekend for the city of Ocean Springs, MS, just east of Biloxi on the Gulf. As we traveled south by bus, we joined other personnel and disaster relief supplies, such as generators and portable lights on flatbed trucks, military convoys, church groups, insurance disaster relief trailers and heavy equipment all placarded for Katrina disaster relief. At one point, we counted more than 50 New York City transit buses heading southwest.

Crossing into Mississippi from Alabama, we began to see evidence of Katrina's damage: cleared downed trees along the interstate, uprooted trees lying on roofs of houses. Our bus driver, Jerry, was getting the word on his CB radio that there was no diesel available below Laurel, MS.

In Laurel, approximately 110 miles north of the Gulf, we stopped to get what we thought would be our last hot meal for awhile.

The wind damage increased as we drove the last 70 miles south on US 49. Trees were bent or snapped east to west reflecting the counterclockwise motion of Katrina's winds. Road signs were twisted or destroyed.

Heading east on Interstate 10 from Gulfport, we saw our first evidence of the flooding with heavy debris and the high-watermark. Entering the Gulf Islands National Seashore at Davis Bayou in Ocean Springs – our home for the next 15 days – the road through the park was barely passable, serpentine with jack-strawed trees and debris cleared to the width of a dozer blade.

We spike-camped within 100 yards of the Gulf. It was strange to be sleeping under leafless live oaks where the week before there had been 25 feet of water from the storm-surge. We were hot and sweaty the first night and every night until we left for home. Thankfully, there were

no mosquitoes. It was as though Katrina had scoured the nearby bayous so completely that the insects were gone.

For a number of days in camp, there were no portable toilets, and we had to use nearby woods. Breakfast and dinner were provided by the overhead using recently purchased propane grills. We took care of lunch with the supplies we brought.

Within five days, a large fire and police base camp with a portable kitchen and showers had opened at a high school in Gaultier, 15 miles away. From then on, we would rise each day at 5 a.m. to drive to Gaultier for breakfast and to get a box lunch, and return in the evening for dinner and showers to finish our day back at camp around 9 p.m. (That first shower was great!) In about a week, a much-needed laundry service was set up.

Our assignment was to go out into the communities to provide whatever assistance we could for National Park Service employees and their families, and anyone who worked at the park as volunteers or concessionaires. This included dropping and removing hazard trees, repairing and tarping roofs, removing carpets, gutting houses and removing interior and exterior debris from flooding and wind damage. We provided generators, food and ice as needed.

The crew was divided into three squads lead by Shep Zedaker, George Scott and Alex Murrillo. Sometimes we worked together as a crew, other times we worked separately.

There was so much need in the communities we traveled through. We could turn down any street and find someone to assist. Initially, it was uncomfortable to have the crew show-up to help one home in a neighborhood when the neighbors had the same need.

Soon thereafter, when the crew or squads were working the assigned tasks, I would canvas the neighborhood we were in to see if there were any invalids, elderly or single parent households who could use our assistance. Later this became an official part of our job, to help anyone of need we came across.

In 14 straight working days of high temperatures and humidity, we helped 81 households from Pascagoula to Biloxi and Gulfport.

I can't think of one homeowner whom I talked to who was not in some state of shock. The people were so grateful for anything we could do that we almost became immune to the impact we were having in being able to assist.

Moving the refrigerators was the worst. With no electricity for nearly two weeks and with the temperature up to 95 during

atrina Relief

the day, we would duct tape them and get them out as quickly as we could. The foul conditions of the flood debris removal work were such that the crew thought of cutting hazard trees under the blazing sun as gravy work.

We were on assignment from September 4 through 20. I was proud to witness the many abilities of the crew; the constant even-keeled good attitude, and the "get-it-done" work ethic that was acknowledged by the overhead. When we were done, we were all very happy to be going home, but also grateful to have been able to help a few of the so many people who were in such great need.

When I returned to Louisa County, I found a phone message that was left while Virginia-10 was working in the Gulf. A man who only identified himself as Bob from Mississippi on the Gulf Coast said in part, "Your forestry people were down here Friday and they cut a couple of trees for a couple of ladies

that did not have the money to cut them out of their yard... and all I wanted to say, I appreciate what your people have done...God bless you all and thank you."



VA-ST-10 Crew

DOF HURRICANE RELIEF

SINGLE RESOURCES

*Bob Boeren (R5)
*Jim Bowling (R4)
*Steve Counts (R6)
*Alan Craft (R5)
*Randy Fleming (R6)
Cindy Frenzel (R3)
*Donnie Garman (R6)
*Chuck Hutsell (R5)
Gene-Paul Matson
*Denny McCarthy (R5)
Pat McWilliams (R3)
Lonnie Miles (R5)
Richard Miles (R5)
Seth Miller (R5)
Thomas Miller (R5)
Kim Novak (R4)
Laura Polant (R5)
Tom Runnett (R3)
*Bob Stempel (R1)
*Fred Turck (CO)
*Larry Willis (R1)

VA-ST-07 CREW

*Mike Womack (SF), crew boss
Kevin Painter (R3)
Lucas Boyer (R5)
Shawn Cawley (R4)
Bobby Chitwood (R5)
Brian Garrett (R5)
Dan Gates (R6)
James Holcomb (R5)
Sam Lloyd (R4)

*Heather Manson (R1)
Cody Miller (R3)
Adam Sampson (R6)
*Randy Short (R6)
*Tom Smith (R5)
*Chad Stover (R3)
James Turner (R2)
*Scott Ward (R6)
*Jon Willoughby (R5)
Brad Wright (R5)

VA-ST-10 CREW

*David L. Stone (R3), crew boss
*Charles R. Proctor (R6)
Brian Daliege (R2)
James Dean (R6)
Jacob Eaton (R6)
Cody Edwards (R6)
James Fortner (R3)
Richard Hartsock (R6)
Aaron Kimberlin (R6)
Lorien Koontz (R5)
Steve Lewis (R6)
Rebekah McCune (R5)
Alex Murillo (R5)
Brian Neff (R6)
Chris Neff (R6)
Will Pettus (R4)
George Scott (R6)
Mark Wiggins (R3)
Josh Wood (R3)
Shep M. Zedaker (R5)

VA-ST SAW CREW

*Bob Boeren (R5)
*Rick Butler (R4)
Kelly Cope (R6)
*David Edwards (R6)
Scotty Jennings (R6)
*Jack Kauffman (R1)
Gene-Paul Matson (R3)
Lee McMurray (R6)
John Murphy (R3)
*Neil Oberholtzer (R4)
*Chris Owens (R6)
*Bill Perry (R3)
Matt Robb (R3)
*Tom Snoddy (R2)
*Paul Stoneburner (R3)
*Larry Tankersley (R6)
Clark Wade (R4)
Curtis Wininger (R6)

VA-ST-12 CREW

*Harold Fisher (R3), crew boss
*Thomas Reeves (R4)
Allen Arthur (R5)
*Chad Austin (R6)
Bill Dickie (R3)
Ralph Estepp (R6)
Randy Franken (R3)
*Bruce Harmon (R3)
*Jim Jarvis (R4)
*Derek Keiser (R5)
*Brian Ledford (R6)
Warren Lynch (R3)
Steven Morris (R3)

*Patti Nylander (R3)
Aaron Reeves (R4)
Rick Reynolds (R4)
*David Richert (R6)
Glenn Sieck (R5)
Mark Winebrenner (R5)
Jesse Yeattes (R5)

VA-ST-14 CREW

*Alex Williamson (R4),
crew boss
Kevin Painter (R3)
Cody Beares (R4)
Shawn Cawley (R4)
*Eric Filep (R3)
Brian Garrett (R5)
Dan Gates (R6)
*Dirk Hillegass (R5)
James Holcomb (R5)
*Dave Houttekier (R4)
Scotty Jennings (R6)
Jim Koschara (R3)
*Todd Kready (R2)
*Lisa Krajewski (R2)
Steve Lewis (R6)
*Tommy Nunnally (R1)
*Joe Rossetti (CO)
Adam Sampson (R6)
*Tom Smith (R5)
*Brad Whittington (R4)
Brad Wright (R5)

*Full-time DOF

Hurricane Ka

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RICK BUTLER,
FORESTER, REGION 4

Wanting to do something to help on this disaster and not knowing how I could help all seemed to fall into place on Labor Day when Greg Winston called and said, "You're qualified; can you go?"

I said "yes," not really knowing what I was getting into. I was

told to get a tetanus shot and possibly a hepatitis shot, so apprehension was definitely in the air.

The experience turned into a fairly good one, gaining experience and training. Unfortunately, a disaster had to occur to get this training. Planning and preparing is always an essential part of an assignment. Knowledge of the area was of great help as I had traveled and worked in this part of the country at an earlier time in my career. The love bugs were new to me; they're not dangerous, just annoying. You always knew when it was lunchtime because the love bugs came out about that time.

Our assignment upon arrival to Laurel, MS, was to open up the roads on the Chickasawhay Ranger District. This National Forest was established during the Great Depression and ownerships were bought due to back taxes not being paid. The district consisted of 450,000 acres and more than 300 miles of road. Within the district, there were many private ownerships consisting of farms and residences. A beautiful place to live unless a major hurricane hits. These roads were blocked by mostly mature longleaf pine trees, and power lines and poles. High winds in excess of 130 miles per hour were recorded before the weather station blew down. The longleaf pine is gradually becoming extinct, and this district's primary objective was to manage for it and preserve the red cockaded woodpecker.

Upon arrival and check-in, we were told to pitch our tents and report back to briefing. Within an hour, we were cranking our saws and going to work. The devastation was very apparent and roads were impassable. We worked the rest of the day and returned to camp. We were located at an industrial park near an airport. To our surprise, Cowboy Catering had set up a kitchen and showers. The MREs would have to wait. Big disappointment!

We began at 6 a.m. for briefings and worked 14-hour days. We found out Nomex was not required for this

assignment, so a trip to Wal-Mart ensued after work to get some long sleeve T-shirts. According to policy, you must have long sleeve shirts on with pants, gloves, chaps, ear protection and hard hat.

We were blessed with unusually good weather. Mississippi can be very hot at times, but daytime temperatures were in the 90s and nighttime temperatures were in low 70s with low humidity and no rain. In my opinion, tents are no fun in the rain.

Our crew had noticed Bo Trapper's Gator Farm on the way to our assignment one morning, and we obtained permission from our supervisor to visit after work one evening. Bo was an unusual person. He and his wife had four children and 300 alligators along with various other animals. He was very fortunate that the storm had knocked down several large trees on his place but did very little damage to his house and fences where his animals were kept. He was missing his poisonous snake collection consisting of 20 different types. Luckily, we did not find them. Bo raised his alligators for the meat and hide. Apparently farm-raised alligator is not an illegal entity and is a tasty treat in the area. Tom Snoddy sampled some on our way back to Virginia and said it was right good! Bo was out of business until the power came back on because he could not run his freezers to store his products. A collection was taken up and presented to Bo; he was very grateful. He was able to buy food for his family and livestock. We left with a good feeling about helping our fellow man. Many local people thanked us for our efforts and the usual friendly small-town atmosphere was still there.



As things progressed, it appeared that these folks had not expected Virginia crews to work as fast as we did. We were gradually working ourselves out of a job. New and interesting assignments kept popping up as we completed each one. As the three of us were working on one of our assignments, a fellow came up from behind and introduced himself as Dennis.

Katrina Relief



VA-ST Saw Crew

He was from North Carolina and taught chainsaw and tree climbing in 48 states and Puerto Rico. He was observing our techniques and safety habits. We must have done okay as he never said a word. We were able to learn some valuable techniques from him. We learned a lot from some of the class C fallers; learning more about various plunge cuts and felling snags. Tradition is to have a name for your chain saw. We met Angela and Betsy. We christened ours Katrina.

Friday, we were told that we were going home. Teamwork and helping our fellow man always plays a big part in an assignment. I was very proud that our teams came together, looked out for each other and handled themselves in the true DOF manner to which we are accustomed.



RANDY SHORT, FORESTER, REGION 6

This September was an interesting month for me. I had the opportunity to assist with Hurricane Katrina disaster relief in Louisiana. I have been on hurricane details before, but nothing as destructive as Katrina. I had already taken my name off the availability list for the year and did not expect to be going anywhere

(except Buchanan County in the fall). I had just returned from a family vacation in Michigan when Katrina hit. I called Richard Thomas and asked to be put back on the availability list. Richard called me back later that same day and asked if I wanted to be squad boss on Mike Womack's crew. I accepted readily. One reason I like to go on details is to make some extra money, but this one was different. I actually had an opportunity to directly help people in need.

After a long drive, three or four moves, and some hurry up and wait, we finally went to work. Our assignment was to

distribute food, ice and water with some other crews and the National Guard at a POD (point of distribution) in Hammond, LA. Hammond is located approximately 40 miles north of New Orleans. Our POD was set up in the parking lot of a Belk store in a strip mall. Serving approximately 4,500 cars per day (it was a drive through set up), our POD assisted twice as many folks as the next busiest POD. The people who came through were very appreciative and thankful for our efforts. Due to the extensive damage, many of the folks had three or four families staying in one home. We would put the items in the car and there would be photo albums, clothing, etc., in the trunks or back seat. Then it hit you, that this is all they have left. Having children myself, I guess the hardest part for me was someone who had small children in the car. We always tried to give a little extra (including some candy) to the cars with kids inside.

There were also some other highlights from our time spent in Hammond. The folks at the Belk store were extremely supportive and appreciative of our work. They prepared and gave us food, snacks and drinks the whole time we were assigned there. I also celebrated a birthday while in Hammond. I was given a cake by Belk, and balloons and gifts by the crew (thanks, guys). I got more attention for this birthday than I have in years!

We worked at the POD in Hammond for a little over a week. We then were assigned to a POD in a suburb just west of New Orleans. This was a very different setup. The folks would walk through while we gave out canned goods, ice and beverages. They were also extremely appreciative of our work. We ended our detail after a few days at this POD and headed home.

I guess the biggest thing that I noticed on the detail was the support we received. People who had lost everything overnight were so thankful for our help. This, in itself, made the trip worthwhile.



Human Resources

NEWS

WELCOME!!!

Jana Maynard is the new administrative program specialist in Region 6. Jana attended East Tennessee State University and prior to joining DOF served as the office manager at Sunbelt Rentals.

Justin Funk is our new Cumberland County forester in Region 4. He received his bachelor's in Forestry from Virginia Tech and served as an FIA technician for several months. While in school, Justin worked as a maintenance ranger at Hungry Mother State Park.

Kirby Woolfolk is our new Nottoway County forester in Region 4. Kirby is a Virginia Tech graduate. Prior to joining DOF, he worked with Colonial Forest Products and has worked as a logger in the past. He also has training as a wildland firefighter.

Kelly Wagner is our new Loudoun and Prince William County forester in Region 3. She received her Bachelor's from Virginia Tech. She has experience with the U.S. National Arboretum and the Roanoke City Department of Parks and Recreation.

Jennifer Carver is our new receptionist at Central Office. She came to us from UVA-HealthSouth where she had been serving as a receptionist for the past four years.

Randy Robinson is our new Southampton County technician in Region 1. Randy received his bachelor's in forestry from Virginia Tech and worked as a P-14 for the Resource Management Division for a short period of time. Prior to that, he served as a fisheries technician with DGIF and forester for Clearwater Timber.

RETIREMENTS

Donnie Foster, technician for Culpeper County in Region 3, is retiring January 1, 2006.

Jim Starr, director of resource management at Central Office, retires January 1, 2006.

FAREWELL & BEST WISHES

Jerry Judge, forester for Southampton County in Region 1, has left DOF. He moved to South Carolina to accept a forestry

position with the U.S. Army.

Chuck Kuhler, forester for Fauquier County in Region 3, has left DOF. He accepted a position with the Fauquier County Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

Bill Worrell, RC&D forester in Region 6, has left DOF. He accepted a position with Virginia Tech.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Scott Bachman was promoted to assistant regional forester in Region 1. He had been acting in the position for the past year.

Judy Okay, forester for Fairfax County, will be "on loan" to the U.S. Forest Service Chesapeake Bay project for a minimum of two years starting on October 25. She will serve as a Chesapeake Bay Riparian Specialist and will utilize her specialized skills and training. We thank Judy for her willingness to help the Forest Service.

Jonathan Pine, technician for Loudoun and Fauquier Counties in Region 3, will transfer on January 10, 2006 to the technician position for Culpeper and Orange Counties in Region 3.

WEDDING BELLS

Congratulations to our newlyweds!

Greg Farrish, buildings and grounds, recently married Tammy. Congratulations to the happy couple!

NEW ARRIVALS

Congratulations to our new parents!

Thomas Mallory, buildings and grounds, and his wife, Sandy, welcomed their third child on September 3. The new baby is a girl and joins sister, McKenzie, and brother, Chase.

Bill Miller, assistant regional forester for Region 6, and wife, Kellie, are first-time parents. Hayden William Miller was born on September 26. He weighed 8 pounds.

Greg Meade, assistant regional forester in Region 3, and wife, Gail, are the proud parents of a baby boy. Wesley Cole Meade was born on November 2. He weighed 8 pounds 8 ounces. Big sister, Hannah, welcomed her baby brother home.

CONDOLENCES

Our thoughts and prayers are with the following employees:

Jonathan Pine, technician in Region 3, Fauquier County, lost his brother. Aaron Pine, age 27, lived in Tampa, Florida and died on September 11.

Stuart Sours, technician in Franklin County, Region 5, lost his father. He passed away this October.

Jeff Hensley, trades utilities mechanic at Central Office, lost his grandfather in October.

Catherine Chase, retired program support technician in Region 2, passed away about three days shy of her 80th birthday. Catherine was a PST in the Tappahannock Office for 35 years (1950-1985).



ATV TRAIN THE TRAINER

(L to R) Randy Fleming, Dennis Vaughn, Cody Daniels and Harold Fisher review course requirements in the ATV Train the Trainer course. The four, along with Nelson Hillyer, Derek Keiser and Steve Counts, completed the grueling four-day course in October. They will soon be teaching other DOF staff the safe and proper way to operate an ATV. Congratulations to these newly certified instructors.

BEST WISHES, LARRY DUNN!

Submitted by Greg Meade, assistant regional forester, Region 3

On August 31, 2005, several of Larry Dunn's coworkers, retirees and colleagues thanked Larry for his 30 years of service and wished him well in his retirement. Larry wished to keep this celebration small but despite this, the crowd grew to around 20 well-wishers who could not let Larry retire without a proper sendoff. The group enjoyed barbecue chicken, several stories about Larry's past 30 years and presented him with a pocket knife and a Cabela's gift certificate. Larry didn't give up his conservation-minded efforts for long though; he is currently working part-time for John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District in Warrenton as a conservation specialist. In this position, Larry provides on-the-ground planning for local landowners and conservation education programs.



BEST WISHES, CALVIN RICKS!



Region 1 celebrated Calvin's retirement. Calvin, wife Sally and daughters Sharron Whitley (left) and Susan Harris (right).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Keith P. Brown (CO) ~ Jan. 5
 Phil T. Grimm (Ret) ~ Jan. 7
 Jesse L. Rivers (GG) ~ Jan. 7
 J. David Cooper (R5) ~ Jan. 10
 Richard K. Steensma (R2) ~ Jan. 12
 James Timberlake (Ret) ~ Jan. 12
 Jon A. Willoughby (R5) ~ Jan. 13
 Steven G. Wells (R6) ~ Jan. 13
 Tammy A. Butler (R3) ~ Jan. 13
 Thomas W. Zaebs (SF) ~ Jan. 14
 Janet R. Muncy (CO) ~ Jan. 14
 Sandra K. Stephens (R3) ~ Jan. 15
 Neal T. Oberholtzer (R4) ~ Jan. 15
 T. Kem Pace (R5) ~ Jan. 15
 Mary L. Mead (Ret) ~ Jan. 16
 John A. Brooks (R2) ~ Jan. 17
 Todd A. Kready (R2) ~ Jan. 17
 Matthew H. Coleman (R2) ~ Jan. 19
 Alan T. Sutherland (R2) ~ Jan. 19
 Alan D. Craft (R5) ~ Jan. 20
 Hope H. Tyzinski (R5) ~ Jan. 20

Kirby A. Woolfolk (R4) ~ Jan. 20
 Rita D. Moore (CO) ~ Jan. 21
 Donald R. Jamerson (NK) ~ Jan. 22
 Trent G. Badgley (CO) ~ Jan. 24
 Angela R. Brown (CO) ~ Jan. 25
 David H. Terwilliger (R2) ~ Jan. 25
 Terrance J. Lasher (R2) ~ Jan. 26
 E. Edward Stoots (R6) ~ Jan. 28
 Rodger L. Moyers (R3) ~ Jan. 29
 D. David Snyder (R4) ~ Jan. 30
 Carolyn S. Morris (R4) ~ Jan. 31
 David J. Houttekier (R4) ~ Feb. 1
 James P. Fulcher (CO) ~ Feb. 1
 Joseph P. Hancock (Ret) ~ Feb. 2
 Ricky A. Butler (R4) ~ Feb. 2
 John W. Campbell (CO) ~ Feb. 4
 Pamela D. Logan (CO) ~ Feb. 5
 M. Bruce Thacker (SF) ~ Feb. 7
 A. John Wright (R5) ~ Feb. 7
 Roger C. Roberts (Ret) ~ Feb. 9
 Janet W. Barr (Ret) ~ Feb. 9

Robert L. Miles (Ret) ~ Feb. 12
 B. Blair Dalton (R4) ~ Feb. 12
 Connie H. Young (GG) ~ Feb. 13
 Neva H. Hodges (CO) ~ Feb. 13
 Edward L. Embrey (R3) ~ Feb. 15
 John D. Miller (CO) ~ Feb. 16
 George L. Nelson (CO) ~ Feb. 17
 William L. Saunders (Ret) ~ Feb. 21
 M. Barbara White (CO) ~ Feb. 22
 Robert C. Kennedy (R5) ~ Feb. 24
 William R. Miller (R6) ~ Feb. 24
 Samuel H. Austin (CO) ~ Feb. 25
 Martha E. D. Warring (R3) ~ Feb. 26
 Jason A. Braunstein (CO) ~ Feb. 27
 Douglas E. Audley (R4) ~ Feb. 29
 Bradley W. Carico (R6) ~ Mar. 1
 Dwight H. Stallard (GG) ~ Mar. 2
 Jay S. Bassett (R1) ~ Mar. 3
 Gregory P. O'Donnell (CO) ~ Mar. 3
 Rodney T. Newlin (R3) ~ Mar. 3
 Rodney W. Keenon (Ret) ~ Mar. 4

Phyllis F. Carruthers (Ret) ~ Mar. 6
 Cynthia M. Bronner (R2) ~ Mar. 6
 Karen E. Stanley (R5) ~ Mar. 6
 John W. Kauffman (R1) ~ Mar. 7
 James W. Harris (Ret) ~ Mar. 10
 Gary A. Heiser (SF) ~ Mar. 12
 Kathleen A. Ogilvy (R2) ~ Mar. 12
 G. Shannon Lewis (R4) ~ Mar. 13
 Harold A. Fisher (R3) ~ Mar. 14
 Richard D. Reuse (R2) ~ Mar. 15
 Deborah M. Howe (CO) ~ Mar. 18
 Bruce D. Harmon (R3) ~ Mar. 19
 James A. Pugh (CO) ~ Mar. 19
 David E. Queen (CO) ~ Mar. 21
 Scott D. Ward (R6) ~ Mar. 21
 Richard Holman (SF) ~ Mar. 23
 R. Barry Crawford (R5) ~ Mar. 25
 Hylton J.G. Haynes (R1) ~ Mar. 26
 Michael C. Womack (SF) ~ Mar. 29

Mail Bag

November 16, 2005

Dear David Stone, forester, Region 3, Louisa County

It's been over 2 months since you and your crew were down here in Mississippi helping so many people - my family included. I felt it was long past time to write and let you all know once again how appreciated your efforts were. Had it not been for you and your guys working so hard in my neighborhood, I know many of us would not be as far as we are today.

My husband and I are back to living in our bedroom and that means a bed, a working bathroom and a concrete floor. But it's clean and has power. We are so thankful for that. The rest of the house is coming along very slowly, but we should be back in sometime in the not-to-distant future. I will keep you posted.

Anyway, as Thanksgiving draws near, I find there are so many people to thank this year, but very high on that list is you and the rest of the VA-ST#10. They were delightful, wonderful, hard working, and very special people to do this type of work and it won't be forgotten.

And as far as I personally am concerned, I couldn't be prouder to work for an agency that really cares about its extended family, enough to provide service like this.

Again, thank you all so much. Stay well and have a happy holiday season.

Don and Barbara Luedeke, Gautier, MS

Contacts AND INFORMATION

Submit articles to:

Janet Muncy

janet.muncy@dof.virginia.gov

The deadlines are as follows:

Spring Issue -- February 1, 2006

Summer Issue -- May 1, 2006

Fall Issue -- August 1, 2006

Winter Issue -- November 1, 2006

Submit articles by email. Simple text is best. Color photos, slides, negatives, or high-quality digital photos are all acceptable. Clearly label photos including to whom they should be returned.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. 12/2005



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please notify of address corrections