



January 12, 2024

Upcoming Events

[Eastern Region – Regional Meeting & Fire Training](#) – Feb. 7, 2024

[2024 Forest Management Academy at Sweet Briar College](#) – Sept. 9 - 13, 2024

[Landowner Woods & Wildlife Conference – Southwest Virginia](#) – Feb. 10

[Landowner Woods & Wildlife Conference – Northern Virginia](#) – Feb. 24

Have an agency-relevant event to share? Email **Mary Weaver** at Mary.Weaver@DOF.Virginia.gov

Policy Updates

[Policy 3-5 Personnel, Vehicle, Equipment, Service and Publication Rates](#) has been updated to reflect the current mileage and part-time firefighter pay rates as of Jan. 1.

Employee Updates

Jake Good has been selected for the Assistant Nursery Manager position at the Augusta Nursery. Jake holds an A.A.S. in Forest Management from Mountain Gateway Community College and has been at Augusta Nursery as a technician since 2019. Jake also runs a beef cattle and row crop farm. Congratulations to Jake in his new role.



Agency Updates

Governor Recognizes Virginia Firefighters

Governor Youngkin hosted a virtual meeting on Jan. 5 to express his appreciation to all Commonwealth wildland firefighters who participated in the challenging fall fire season. Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matt Lohr, State Forester **Rob Farrell**, Deputy State Forester **Ed Zimmer**, Assistant State Forester **Terry Lasher**, Chief of Fire and Emergency Response **John Miller**, DOF leadership and firefighters were joined on the call by representatives from the Virginia National Guard, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, and Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

(Photo: Quaker Run morning briefing in November.)



Enrollment Open for Federal Fire Deployments

Enrollment is open to support federal fire deployments through the USDA Forest Service AD program. Full-time and active part-time DOF personnel can apply by competing and submitting hiring packet paperwork to the VIC center in Charlottesville by Jan. 31. The required paperwork was emailed to everyone who completed the process last year and is also available from the three regional fire specialist or Assistant Director of Fire Response – Operations **Dave Houttekier**. The applicable agency policy for emergency assignments can be located here: [Policy and Procedure 4-2: Emergency Response Assignments](#)

New Office Locks

The Facilities team is installing new locks for regional and field offices currently equipped with master locks. Installation has begun in the Western Region with an expected completion date of Feb. 15. Once the Western Region is completed, the Facilities team will continue with the Central and Eastern regions, State Forest offices, and then the Nurseries, with a goal of completion by November. Keys will be distributed to Regional Foresters for distribution to current employees as new locks are installed.

First Hardwood Initiative Tax Credit is Certified

DOF recently certified the first Hardwood Initiative Tax Credit (also called the Reforestation/Afforestation Tax Credit) for a Rockingham County landowner who performed invasive species management and a timber stand improvement project to release hardwoods from competition in a young stand. Any person who has an expense related to performing hardwood management as recommended in a management plan and is subject to Virginia personal income tax can apply to receive a credit for up to \$1,000. See [Policy and Procedure 7-008](#) for more information. Contact Hardwood Initiative Coordinator **Joe Rossetti** for more information.

New Boot Brush at Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest

Forest Health Program Manager **Lori Chamberlin** and Invasive Species Specialist **Lindsay Caplan** and State Forest Forester **Shannon Lewis** installed a boot brush station at the Carter Taylor trailhead parking lot on the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. The station features educational signage on invasive species and encourages the public to clean their shoes and other gear before and after recreating to avoid inadvertently spreading seeds. Additional signs will be installed on other state forests over the coming months.



DOF Meets with Forest Modeling Research Cooperative

On Dec. 19, Research Manager **Zoe Bergman** and Forest Management Program Manager **Dean Cumbia** met with retired Research Manager Jerre Creighton and Steve Morrone with Virginia Tech's Forest Modeling at the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. The group visited several research sites including flexible planting density, intensively managed plantation study (that included thinning), pine spacing trials, and two shortleaf pine study areas. The mission of Tech's Forest Modeling Research Cooperative is "to develop tree growth and stand development models that advance the science of forest modeling and provide land managers with decision support capabilities needed to practice economically viable and environmentally sustainable forest management." DOF is one of 18 members in the cooperative and provides research sites on our state forests,

gaining us access to resulting science, which in turn helps us advance our mission. Learn more about the Forest Modeling Cooperative: <https://fmrc.frec.vt.edu/index.html>

Collaborating with Virginia Tech to Advance Hardwood Management

On Dec. 20, Hardwood Coordinator **Joe Rossetti** and Hardwood Forester **Audrey Lux** met with staff from Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment at the University's Fishburn Forest property to discuss opportunities for collaboration in advancing hardwood management on university lands. Virginia Tech's 2,600-acre Blacksburg campus alone has more than 11,000 trees

Virginia Invasive Species Working Group

Deputy State Forester **Ed Zimmer** and Forest Health Program Manager **Lori Chamberlin** attended the Virginia Invasive Species Working Group (ISWG) meeting in Richmond on Jan. 3 to discuss industry resources to support implementation of the [Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan](#). The ISWG, chaired by the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, was created by the Virginia General Assembly in 2009 (Code of Virginia § 2.2-220.2).

Fungi Plantings at State Forests

Research Manager **Zoe Bergman** is collaborating with Virginia Tech's Forest Productivity Co-Op and Funga — a company that focuses on soil microbes — to install and study fungi plantings in our state forests. The aim of the study is to determine if beneficial soil microbes from inoculated soil can increase the growth and yield of loblolly pine. On Jan. 2, a group met at Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest to plan installation of three different sets of plots at Cumberland, Charlotte and Appomattox-Buckingham state forests. While there, staff collected loblolly pine scion wood for a study tracing nitrogen fertilizer in its path from soil addition into tree tissues.

New Multi-use Trail Opens at Charlotte State Forest

State Forest staff announced this week the opening of a new multi-use trail at Charlotte State Forest. Featuring both northern and southern loops, the trail showcases 8.5 miles of beautiful forests and wetlands in a rough "figure 8" path. The trail is suitable for hiking, wildlife observation, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Charlotte State Forest is the newest of DOF's 26 state forests:

<https://dof.virginia.gov/education-and-recreation/state-forests/virginia-state-forests/charlotte-state-forest/>

