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Employee Recognition

Rocky Wood – Thank You!

- ◆ Amidst significant flooding events, local emergencies were declared in Dickenson and Tazewell counties. Rocky Wood (forest technician) and Greg Estoll (senior area forester) responded to requests for VDOF assistance. Many roads, as well as vehicles, sheds and houses were underwater due to creeks and rivers overflowing their banks. The below thank you was received from Richard A Thacker Dickenson County Emergency Management Coordinator:
 - “Good morning Rocky Wood! I would like to thank you on behalf of Dickenson County Emergency Management for your outstanding assistance during the recent flood event in Dickenson County, and I would like to thank the Virginia Department of Forestry for allowing you to come to our aid, The work performed by you during the disaster helped prevent injuries and the possible loss of life. We can't begin to describe how much we appreciate your Agency for allowing you to come to our aid. Please let them know, and if we can ever be of assistance to you or VDOF please let us know.”

Coming Up

Take Me Out to the Ballgame – Save the Date(s)!

- ◆ Please join the Forest Health team at one of the following minor league baseball games for a special Emerald Ash Borer sponsorship night.
 - Friday, April 24th @ Salem Red Sox - pre-game Arbor Day ceremony and in-game activities/ tabling.
 - Monday, June 8th @ Charlottesville Tom Sox - in-game announcements and tabling.
 - Friday, June 12th @ Norfolk Tides - pre-game kids mini-bat giveaway, table in concourse.

Project Updates:

Policy and Procedures

- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 06-02 Emerald Ash Borer Cost-Share Program](#) has been updated. Please be aware there is slightly less funding available this year so applicants are encouraged to apply early for better chances of getting approved. The in-house deadline (June 30th) is a week later than the published deadline of June 22.
 - All links for the Emerald Ash Borer cost-share have now gone live!
 - Application Form 6.5:
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/forms/f06.05.dotx>
 - Supplement to Application (aka Appendix):
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/forms/f06.05-supplement.dotx>
 - Cost-share Forestry Topic Sheet (see page 2 for “How to Apply” flow chart):
http://www.dof.virginia.gov/infopubs/forestry-topics/FT0032_Emerald-Ash-Borer-Cost-Share-Program_2020-02_pub.pdf
 - Description of Application Process (aka cheat sheet):
<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/health/EAB-Application-Process.pdf>
 - Any questions, please contact [Meredith Bean](#) (emerald ash borer coordinator) 434-220-9034.
- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 04-01 Prescribed Burning](#) has been updated:
 - Addition of VDOF Community Assistance Burning using Community Assistance Grant Funds.
 - VDOF provides either full-service agency prescribed burning or prescribed burning stand-by service, on private or state lands adjacent to national forest lands. There are no VDOF service expenses for the included landowner. VDOF service expenses will be recouped through agency Community Assistance grant funding.
 - The dormant season prescribed burning parameter temperature limitation on VDOF prescribed burning operations has changed to:
 - Temperature – 60 degrees F or below change to Use Caution when temperatures exceed 60 degrees F.

Urban Wood Project Update

- ◆ As most of you realize, finding a person interested in processing six trees can almost be an impossible challenge! Yet, defying the odds of that happening, Virginia State University (VSU) Campus in Petersburg delivered a success story. We were contacted on a Tuesday morning about six trees being

removed due to a construction project on campus. An email was sent that morning to several area urban wood businesses and within *30 minutes* the logs had a new home! It was a pretty sweet deal, the trees would already be felled and the contractor agreed to load them on a trailer. All of this occurred due to the forward thinking of Joel Kolci, an Extension Specialist at VSU and the on-going outreach efforts of the VA Urban Wood Project.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell participated in the Virginia Fire Services Board meeting held in conjunction with the Virginia Fire Chiefs Associations, Fire and Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach. James M. “Jim” Stokely was elected to be Vice-Chair. Jim is a retired insurance agent and volunteer firefighter in Manassas who advocates for firefighter issues related to the insurance industry. The Board voted to delay action on a proposal to increase minimum distributions of the Assistance to Localities funding for Counties and Towns. There seemed to be general consensus to support the increase on the board but there was concern that the proposal had not been adequately vetted with impacted communities.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Lara Johnson (U&CF program manager) and Robbie Lewis (senior area forester) had a planning meeting with the staff from the Green Infrastructure Center Inc. to discuss the Coastal Resilience Project during which they reviewed GIS data and set priorities for the opportunities phase of the work.
- ◆ Lara Johnson and Molly O'Liddy (U&CF partnership coordinator), in conjunction with the Potomac work area staff, Jordan Herring (senior area forester), Jim McGlone (urban forest conservationist) and Kinner Ingram (community forestry specialist) met with representatives from Northern Virginia to plan the 2020 NoVA Urban Forestry Roundtables, which VDOF and Trees Virginia will host.
- ◆ Charlie Becker (utilization & marketing manager) and Robbie Lewis (senior area forester) met in Accomac with businesses and state and local officials to discuss forest industry opportunities on the Eastern Shore.
- ◆ Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) attended the Chesapeake Bay Interagency Team meeting in Richmond. He provided an agency update as well as VDOF's newly calculated “Two Year Numeric Milestones for WIP III Implementation”.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ For the 2020 Federal Fiscal Year, Virginia NRCS anticipates receiving nearly \$26 million for EQIP. There are statutory requirements for how the funding is divided. Fifty percent of the funding goes to livestock operations; 10 percent for wildlife; five percent for beginning farmers and five percent for socially disadvantaged farmers, leaving 30 percent for other mandatory offerings and state priorities, including forestry practices. Again, in 2020, forestry practices eligible for EQIP funding include hardwood management, longleaf and shortleaf pine and invasive plant control practices.
- ◆ Todd Groh, (VDOF forest resource management program coordinator and Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) forestry liaison) attend three of the four Farm Bill Program Joint Employee Development (JED) training sessions in February which were held across the state for NRCS field staff. These Program JED training sessions are usually scheduled in November each year, however they needed to be postponed due to the 2018 Farm Bill Program interim rules coming out just recently. Although there are still some questions to be answered, the field staff have been given enough information to process and rank the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) applications that are being accepted until **Friday, February 28, 2020**.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Jerre Creighton (research program manager) with assistance from Miller Adams (Dan River work area forester), completed measurements of the shortleaf planting density study location at Red House. After five years, the trees average 7 feet tall and just over one inch in diameter and 97 percent survival. Because they have not yet gotten big enough to compete with each other, the original planting spacing has made no difference so far.
- ◆ Zach Olinger (forest management and education specialist) met with representatives from Galax High School and Blue Ridge Discovery Center to plan upcoming education events to be held at the Matthews State Forest.
- ◆ Zach also hosted an apple tree pruning workshop on the state forest for 13 attendees and assisted with a 62-acre timber cruise on Difficult Creek Natural Area Preserve for Ed Stoots (state lands coordinator).
- ◆ Shannon Lewis (forest management forester) along with Kathleen Ogilvy (Five Forks work area forester) gave a forest management tour of Cumberland State Forest to 17 members of the Riverine Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalist.
- ◆ Ben Duke (state forest technician) completed Wilderness First Aid and CPR class.
- ◆ Ben has also been assisting Garland Gray Forestry Center with seedling deliveries due to the lack of a Class A CDL driver.
- ◆ Augusta Forestry Center has processed 726 orders for this year's sales and 1.4 million seedlings have been graded to date.
- ◆ Garland Gray Forestry Center has packed a total of 12.9 million loblolly pine seedlings to date.

State Owned Lands:

- ◆ VDOF recently helped Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) sell approximately eight acres of timber connected to a truck parking lot-expansion project at the Ladysmith Rest Area north of Richmond in Caroline County (located on Southbound I-95).

Eastern Region

- ◆ John Rose (forest technician) was invited to the Newsoms Volunteer Fire Department in Southampton County to familiarize our partners with the newest member of the Blackwater wildfire suppression team: our new John Deere 450 K dozer. Around 20 fire fighters from Newsoms, Boykins, Branchville and Capron Fire Departments attended the training. John went over the tools and capabilities of the new unit as well as refreshing the attendees' knowledge of the 4:00 PM burn law. We certainly could not do what we do on wildland fire without the assistance of our fire department colleagues. (pictured)
- ◆ The Longleaf Cooperators of Virginia met at the New Kent Forestry Center (NKFC) on February, 19. Thirty-four participants from VDOF, Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, The Nature Conservancy, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Old Dominion University, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Meadowview Biological Research Station, the Oak Hill fund and several private landowners (including Bill Owen and John Matel) met to discuss 2019 accomplishments, outreach, funding challenges and ways to increase



the awareness and importance of reestablishing longleaf pine in its native Virginia range. The meeting concluded with a field tour of the longleaf pine provenance study and root stock nursery at NKFC. VDOF attendees included Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester), Harvey Darden (director of agency lands), Jerre Creighton (research program manager), Bryant Bays (regional forester), Scott Bachman (senior area forester), Dennis Gaston (state forests forester), Todd Groh forest resource management program coordinator) and Jim Schroering (longleaf/SPB prevention coordinator).

- ◆ A landowner from Nelson County recently saw Scott Bachman (senior area forester) in a fast food restaurant. The landowner had come down to the Garland Gray Forestry Center to pick up 50 longleaf to plant on his land. Due to the weather and not being able to lift seedlings, the nursery was not open. Scott contacted Jim Schroering and asked if it would be ok to get the trees for the landowner. Jim said he was aware of the order and to get the landowner the trees and complete the paperwork. Scott packaged up the seedlings and sent him back to Nelson with tips on planting and where to get a dibble. The landowner's motivation for this unusual planting was so that his grandchildren could come back to his property with a memory of planting trees. He told Scott that his parents had purchased the land when he was young and planted trees. These trees remind him of times on the land with his parents, now departed. Scott enjoyed his conversation with the gentleman and hopes his VDOF experience was positive. You don't always know when your uniform will result in a positive experience for a client and maybe generations to come.

Western Region

- ◆ Daniel Cloeter, Bill Sweeney (area foresters) and Smokey Bear visited the kindergarten classes at Dudley Elementary. The children listened to the story of Smokey and learned his five rules and then were surprised by a visit from Smokey himself! (pictured)
- ◆ Bill Sweeney worked to help sharpen the Franklin County High School's Envirothon Team and get them ready for this spring's competition. The students worked on tool and tree ID as well as tool usage.
- ◆ Andrew Vinson (water quality specialist) trained all members of the Blue Ridge Work Area to become Visual Observers to aid Remote Pilots in Command in the safe operation of the VDOF's unmanned aircraft while flying missions during forest management, law enforcement and fire suppression activities.
- ◆ Adam Cumpston (water quality specialist) and Rocky Wood met with Ben Tolton of The Forest Management Company (consulting forester for The Nature Conservancy) and an operator harvesting on an adjacent property to discuss an alleged timber trespass. VDOF's role in timber theft and trespass cases was discussed with both parties. The parties were able to reach a tentative agreement to resolve the conflict with VDOF personnel helping to facilitate the discussion.
- ◆ Working with Denny McCarthy (area forester), Roanoke College was recently recognized as a Tree Campus USA. This designation honors colleges and universities for promoting healthy trees and engaging students and staff in the spirit of conservation.
- ◆ Good-bye to Jason McGhee (forest technician) as he leaves VDOF to pursue personal endeavors. Best of luck on you new adventures.



Public Information

- ◆ Field Notes features a new story: [What's in the Woods? Daffodils!](#)

News Clips

- ◆ [Franklin County first responders talk about the efforts that went in to containing Sunday's brush fire](#)
- ◆ [Crews spend nine hours putting out brush fire in Franklin County](#)
- ◆ [Preserving and expanding Virginia Beach's forests is key in fight against flooding, study says](#)