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Employee Spotlight

Heather Tuck – Note of Appreciation

- ◆ Below is a note from landowner Jackie Anderson that received a wildfire risk assessment.
 - Two of my neighbors and I had the pleasure of receiving wildfire risk assessments at our homes from Heather Tuck, Fire Program Specialist in the Eastern Region. We live on the same private road in rural Doswell on very wooded properties of around 8-10 acres each. We learned a great deal from Heather about both general and specific risks and mitigation. She was knowledgeable, professional, friendly and very helpful in responding to our many questions. She left each of us with a very useful assessment and a booklet on wildfire prevention that I think every homeowner on wooded properties should have.

Had I not been involved with your agency a couple years ago to assist with strategic planning, I might not have thought to contact the Department of Forestry. Fortunately, my neighbors and I are now armed with useful information that we can turn into plans (and hard work). It’s a good thing I bought that “baby” (battery-powered) chainsaw for myself last year. I wanted to be sure to pass along our compliments and thanks. Heather Tuck is clearly an asset to your team. We appreciate her expertise and thoroughness and we are pleased that this service is available to citizens.

Action Required

Annual Inventory Reconciliation!

It's that time of year again, the annual inventory reconciliation!

- ❑ Please follow directions below and have your signed and dated inventory to Kristi Clore no later than **May 8, 2020**.
 - Asset owners may generate inventory reports in IFRIS by selecting “Program Areas | Asset Management | My Property Inventory Report | Print Preview.”
 - After the report is generated, select “Print.”
 - Asset owners will then verify the accuracy of the report by physically inspecting all inventory items that are assigned to them and signing the report.
 - Any discrepancies should be noted in the report. If necessary, fill out a Form 3.22 Property Inventory Addition, to add an item that is missing from your inventory, or Form 26 Damaged, Lost or Stolen Property Certificate, to remove a damaged, lost or stolen inventory item.
 - **Even if you do not have any inventory items you must still sign and return your inventory report.**

News You Can Use

- ◆ The Pine Bark Beetle Prevention Cost-share Program for pine thinning and longleaf restoration and the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Cost-share Program for ash treatment remain open (Policy and Procedures 6-1 and 6-2).
- ◆ Meredith Bean (emerald ash borer coordinator) is placing EAB traps in counties east of Richmond where EAB has not yet been confirmed. These traps target the adult beetles which usually emerge in May. The forest health staff is planning ash treatments for this spring, so if you are aware of healthy ash on state land that could benefit from treatment, please reach out to Meredith Bean.

Last Week

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Charlie Becker (utilization and marketing manager), participated in a conference call with the Governor’s Economic Strike Force’s Data Work Group. This group, consisting of various agency representatives, is responsible for collecting information on the impacts COVID-19 on businesses and workers. Many of the agencies do not collect the needed information or collect it often enough to show what the current impacts are. Efforts are underway to identify other potential sources of needed information and ways agencies may be able to collect this information moving forward.
- ◆ Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester) and Charlie Becker attended a conference call of the Governor’s Economic Crisis Strike Force. This call covered the initial reports of the various work groups on the Strike Force.
- ◆ Charlie Becker began analyzing the Forest Products Tax data and submitted 2019 fiscal year county-level tax information to internal departments related to the Reforestation Timber (RT) Program.
- ◆ Charlie Becker followed up on a request related to the southern yellow pine (SYP) log export ban to China. Virginia and South Carolina are the only two states that China will not accept SYP logs from due to concerns about pinewood nematode infestation. Weyerhaeuser Corporation reached out to the two states to see if they could assist with another effort to have the ban lifted. VDOF is working with

Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services, USDA-APHIS, state forestry associations and trade representatives to work on the next steps.

- ◆ Joe Lehnen (utilization and marketing specialist) completed the Charlottesville Urban Wood Bench Project. Once the Arbor Day celebrations are rescheduled, Joe will present the bench to Clark Elementary School.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban and community forestry program manager) and Molly O'Liddy (urban and community forestry partnership coordinator) helped review presentations on municipal forestry programs around the country for Virginia Tech's senior-level urban forestry course.
- ◆ Lara Johnson participated in Trees Virginia and Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI) Steering Committee conference calls.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy visited two past planting grant sites, Chesterfield Public Works Orchard and Cary Elementary school, to check on the health of the trees. The trees are doing well and provide educational experiences for the surrounding communities.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Dean Cumbia (forest management branch director) evaluated several sites in the Central Region for potential hardwood management demonstration areas.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Augusta Forestry Center continues to ship seedlings for this season and orders YTD total 1,063. Field staff installed irrigation pipe, bush hogged, performed yard and equipment maintenance, and began preparing fields for next season's seedling crop.
- ◆ Garland Gray Forestry Center personnel are preparing the fields for next season's planting and putting equipment in place to conduct the seeding of trays for the containerized seedlings.
- ◆ K9 Alert trained for search and rescue at Sandy Point State Forest.

Eastern Region

- ◆ Filming for the newest installment of Virginia Ag in the Classroom's [Farmlife 360](#) video took place on April 6. Once complete, this total-immersion video experience will focus on the entire cycle of a timber harvest from the planning stages through harvest and reforestation. Footage captured included tree measurements (planning), mock site preparation (with UTV and backpack sprayer), loblolly planting and active timber harvesting. This video is the first of its kind! A fact sheet and activity sheet serving as a lesson plan (meeting Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL)) will accompany the video. Many thanks go to Virginia Ag in the Classroom/VA Farm Bureau, the Capital work area, and Mid-Atlantic Tree Harvesters (local logger) for pulling resources together to make this happen. We are excited to see the final product!
- ◆ A Riparian Buffer Tax Credit (RBTC) was submitted to Water Quality Program Manager Matt Poirot for more than 62 acres in Southampton County. This RBTC was another example of the partnership between ENVIVA and VDOF. The plan requirement for the tax credit was met with a Tree Farm plan produced by an ENVIVA forester. The company issued a voucher for the RBTC application fee as well. This credit was one of many applications funded by ENVIVA. According to Matt this credit will be the 100th of the 2019 tax year – a new record for the RBTC program!

Public Information

- ◆ The public Information and forest management teams created a message for forest landowners that may be experiencing financial stress during the crisis. The message entitled, "Your Forest Savings

Account During Troubled Times- Pause, Plan, Act” was developed cooperatively with Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Forestry Association. It encourages landowners to act thoughtfully and wisely prior to selling timber. The message is under the [COVID19, landowner resources section](#) of the VDOF website, as well as the VCE and VFA sites. A companion [video message from Rob Farrell](#) is on the VDOF YouTube channel. This information will be also be shared by VFA and VCE to their partners and newsletter subscribers. Special thanks go to Raina DeFonza (public information specialist) for providing her editorial and video expertise.

- ◆ Page Hutchinson (project learning tree coordinator) has been remotely collaborating with Candace Lutzow-Felling (State Arboretum) on creating "Environmental Education in the 2018 Science Standards of Learning". This document lists each Virginia SOL from kindergarten through high school science courses that have any environmental literacy components ("*Having the knowledge, skills and dispositions to solve problems and resolve issues individually and collectively that sustain ecological, economic and social stability*" per Virginia Department of Education). For each SOL, Page and Candace are listing specific environmental connections in a separate column. This document will be a good resource for teachers as they try to connect the SOLs to the real world.
- ◆ Page Hutchinson has been collaborating with Suzie Gilley (wildlife educator, DGIF) on transforming their first weekend session of the Mountains to the Bay Professional Development for high school environmental science teachers from an in-person training to an individual online training with video-calls for sharing, reflection and questions. The learning curve is steep!
- ◆ Michelle Stoll (public information director) attended a virtual meeting of the Virginia Forestry Association’s editorial board. Justin Barnes (deputy central region forester) also participated. The group discussed plans for upcoming issues of Virginia Forestry magazine and agreed to focus the next issue on the role of fire in Virginia –past and present – and include various examples and perspectives.
- ◆ Field Notes posts included:
 - [VDOF Pine Projects Continue Despite Unusual Circumstances](#)
 - [Bottomland Forests and Flooding](#)

News Articles

- ◆ [Firefighters respond to 10-acre brush fire in Hanover County](#)
- ◆ [Conservancy organizations merge to protect land from future development](#)