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Employee News

Leaving VDOF

- ◆ David Tolliver (water quality specialist) is retiring from VDOF as of June 1 with 35 years of service. Congratulations David, enjoy your retirement.

Project Updates

Policy and Procedures

- ◆ [01-02 Freedom of Information Act and Responding to Requests for Records](#) has been updated with some minor changes to the fees related to FOIA requests.
- ◆ [03-01 Maintenance of Adequate Internal Controls](#) this was an annual review and only change made was signature blocks were added.

- ◆ [03-04 Coding and Approval Authority Listings](#) has been updated with current coding and approval authorities.
- ◆ [07-06 State-Owned Lands Program](#) was recently updated in coordination with the Regional Foresters. The term Area Forester was replaced by Area Staff to take into account that some positions writing State-Owned Lands Plans or providing oversight of projects cannot be called a Forester by State Code. The change also gives some latitude and recognition for other staff who assist in the management of State-Owned Lands. The Deputy Regional Forester was added in several areas to lead in the coordination and review at the Regional level. There is updated guidance concerning the harvest inspections of State-Owned Lands - the frequency desired based on the type of sale and why more frequent inspections are required. Clarification was also provided that checks for stumpage purchases are to be made out to the Treasurer of Virginia instead of the State Forester as previously stated. If you have specific concerns or questions about the updated policy and procedures, which are now posted on the intranet, please discuss with the Deputy Regional Forester who will compile a list of any issues to be addressed at a future date.

Urban Wood Project

- ◆ Recently the City of Harrisonburg's Urban Wood Program was included in a lengthy article in the local newspaper, the Daily News-Record. The story features the work of urban/local wood artisans Brad Wroblewski (Knoched Inc.) and Sean Black (Black Forest Sawmill). Brad was the creator of the "Charlottesville Bench" which temporarily resides outside of Becky Woodson's office. Also included are comments by Jeremy Harold, Harrisonburg's Green Space manager and a representative to the VA Urban Wood Group, and a mention of VDOF's urban wood program. The entire article and pictures can be viewed by using the following link: https://www.dnronline.com/dnronline/urban-wood-grants-new-life-to-old-lumber/article_2b035d3a-5d6d-5420-a783-5d3705fa14c3.html

Last Week

Agency Matters/Operations:

- ◆ The agency submitted a request for reimbursement, on May 18, from federal CARES Act funding awarded to Virginia for expenses directly related to Virginia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our request includes salaries not covered by FEMA reimbursement for staff assigned to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the request of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to provide logistical and planning support. The total reimbursement request was for \$317K and includes actual expenses incurred through May and anticipated expenses through August of this year. Expenses incurred beyond August would be requested at a later date.
- ◆ For the past 18 months, the agency has been utilizing the Department of General Services (DGS) Vehicle Management Control Center (VMCC) to track mileage and schedule services and maintenance for most of our field vehicles. After a careful analysis of the costs and benefits, the agency has elected to terminate that agreement and return to handling needed maintenance scheduling on our own. This termination will be effective on July 31, 2020.
- ◆ The Commonwealth continues to face challenges outside the novel coronavirus pandemic that are made more complex by the COVID-19 crisis response. VDEM has asked VDOF staff member Steve Counts to assist VDEM in planning and preparing for the upcoming hurricane season, which is predicted to be busier than normal. Steve is uniquely positioned to help lead the planning process, as he is highly qualified at all levels of incident management and planning. He is a nationally qualified Type 1 Incident Safety Officer (the highest level of national qualification), a nationally qualified Type 2 Operations Section Chief, as well as being very strong in operational planning. Steve also has practical

hurricane recovery experience, most recently serving as the Incident Commander (IC) on VDOF's Incident Management Team (IMT) deployment to Texas following Hurricane Harvey.

State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell participated in a video meeting with the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) to discuss and prioritize suggested elements for inclusion in a future COVID-19 relief package. Feedback from the SGSF will be incorporated into the National Association of State Foresters advocacy. State forester priorities include protective equipment for wildland firefighters, funding to maintain agency staffing during state budget reductions, and federal support for developing markets for wood products to support forest management.

Administration

- ◆ A Request for Proposal (RFP) from vendors was issued on May 11 to develop a new agency website. The RFP was issued to vendors who are currently on a state-wide contract to perform similar work for state agencies, which will shorten the time it takes to make an award. Proposals are due to the agency later this month with an anticipated award in early June. This has been a priority of the agency and we are excited to be making progress toward a new website. The team reviewing the website proposals and making a recommendation are Parik Patel, Janet Muncy, Michelle Stoll and John Colligan.

Fire Emergency and Response

- ◆ The VDOF IMT has reached its 50th day of deployment.
- ◆ VDOF has 17 personnel deployed virtually as an IMT to lead the planning efforts of VDEM in the state EOC. May 7 marked the 50th day of deployment which is, the longest recorded deployment for a single incident in the agency's history. IMT members are divided into two teams, with each team working a 14-day on/14-day off rotation. The IMT is supporting VDEM by collecting and assembling the response and support information of state agencies and localities throughout the Commonwealth who are responding to provide COVID-19 related support. Three days a week, VDOF's IMT produces the state EOC's Incident Support Plan (ISP), a document that has grown to more than 35 pages, in a process the VDOF first developed during the Commonwealth's state response to Hurricane Isabel in 2003.
- ◆ VDEM leadership recently had the following to say about VDOF's leadership during the COVID-19 response: "I wanted to take a moment and say thank you...to acknowledge what you accomplished - you developed, maintained and sustained an Incident Command System structure in the virtual environment while combating a global pandemic. This has never been done before. What you accomplished is nothing short of amazing."
- ◆ Spring Wildfire Season Summary – April 30 marked the official end of spring wildfire season in Virginia. For Virginia's spring season, VDOF suppressed 285 wildfires, which burned 3,810 acres. These fires caused an estimated 1.8 million dollars in timber damage and damaged 10 homes and other buildings, with those damages estimated at just over \$142,000. VDOF suppression efforts directly protected 463 homes and other buildings, with an estimated value of almost 40.5 million dollars. For Virginia's spring wildfire season, VDOF officers completed 16 law enforcement actions.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry program manager), Molly O'Liddy (urban & community forestry partnership coordinator) and Denny McCarthy (area forester) attended a virtual Roanoke Valley Urban Forest Council meeting to discuss issues and response in the region.

- ◆ Joe Lehnen (utilization & marketing specialist), Lara Johnson and Charlie Becker participated in a conference call of the VA Urban Wood Group to discuss future plans and activities and how to adjust plans based on the COVID-19 impacts.
- ◆ Charlie Becker was part of a webinar presentation to Virginia Society of American Foresters. Charlie provided a summary of forest resources and industry conditions and the various affects that the COVID-19 crisis is having and is predicted to have on businesses.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ May 18-22 was National Invasive Species Awareness Week. Meredith Bean (emerald ash borer coordinator) and Raina DeFonza (public information specialist) worked to make information available through social media.
- ◆ Virginia has experienced a couple freeze events this spring that have caused widespread frost damage to plants. Yellow-poplar and sycamore trees seem to have the most noticeable damage, and green-up appears to be delayed in higher elevation areas. Although frost damage looks severe, trees will usually recover. There may be some growth reduction this year, but little long-term damage. Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) has been in touch with area foresters in western Virginia; it seems late freeze events have delayed green-up in high elevation areas, but no sign of gypsy moth yet.
- ◆ Lori Chamberlin placed four spotted lanternfly traps last week, and will place the remaining six in the near future. These traps are at five high-risk sites in Albemarle and Nelson counties and will be monitored every two weeks through August.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Garland Gray Forestry Center personnel completed seeding for approximately 90,000 containerized longleaf pine. The seeding continues with a target of 165,000 containerized longleaf pine and 330,000 loblolly pine.
- ◆ Augusta Forestry Center personnel planted 16 different hardwood species for the spring planting season and completed a fungicide application of the nursery seed beds.
- ◆ An aerial pesticide application was conducted on both the New Kent Forestry Center and Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest loblolly pine seed orchards. The treatment was for the control of cone and seed worms. Monitoring will occur to determine if additional applications are warranted.
- ◆ Gary Heiser (state forests manager) met with Louise Finger, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) stream specialist, for recommendations on stream channel matters on First Mountain State Forest.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton (research program manager) and Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management) planted 25 seedlings grown from open-pollinated nuts from our largest surviving pure American chestnut (the Thompson tree). The seedlings were planted on Lesesne State Forest in the "goat plus herbicide" treatment area.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ The Central State Hospital Timber Sale is now advertised for sale. The harvest consists of approximately 25 acres in Dinwiddie County on property owned by the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services. Bid opening will be June 24 at 1:00 PM at the New Kent Regional Office. Thank you to Heather Dowling (senior area forester), Jack Colyer (forest technician), Jim Pugh (GIS/remote sensing analyst), and Charlie Becker for their assistance in preparing the sale.

- ◆ The Goochland Women's Correctional Center Timber Sale was sold on May 21 and has been awarded to Ontario Hardwood. Co, Inc. Thank you to Chuck Wright (area forester) and David Powell (senior area forester) who made the proposed harvest a success. There were a total of four bidders who bid on the timber sale.
- ◆ The Catawba Hospital Timber Sale located in Roanoke County was put out for bid on Wednesday May 20 with a bid opening date of June 30. Thank you to Zach Olinger (forest management and education specialist), Joe Boswell (senior area forester), Denny McCarthy (forester), and David Thompkins (forest technician) for their assistance in helping to put this sale on the market. Particulars for this sale can be found on the internet under the Business Center tab.

Eastern Region

- ◆ Jay Bassett (forest technician) washed and sterilized 30 Smokey bandanas for the independent living center at the Village Woods Edge retirement community. Smokey is helping the residents interact and stay safe. (pictured right)

- ◆ Kenny Midgett (forest technician) recently began assessing and pump testing the dry hydrants in Accomack and Northampton County. Using



one of our Eastern Region pumpers, he is visiting all 67 hydrants (there may be a few more out there not documented) to make sure they will hold a draft. Any operation problems, breaks, poor access, replacement parts or other needs are being documented. Each volunteer fire company will be consulted on the conditions of the dry hydrants in each of their districts and how to go about addressing those issues. (pictured left)



Central Region

- ◆ Jim McGlone (urban forest conservationist) made an on-line presentation on Forest Management for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University. This is the second in a series of four classes on forest management that Jim was invited to give by OLLI. Jim explained his process for field identification and also answered specific questions from the 31 participants.

- ◆ Jim McGlone made a site visit to assess 13 ash trees on George Washington's Mount Vernon for coverage under the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) grant program. Although none of the trees dates back to Washington's time, one tree dated from 1807 and measured 71 inches in trunk diameter. (pictured)



Public Information

- ◆ Social distancing and other restrictions associated with the novel coronavirus have made many of the agency's outreach efforts more difficult, but VDOF always finds ways to accomplish the mission. After much collaboration, the final draft of a total-immersion virtual forestry experience has been posted to the FarmLife360 webpage and YouTube. This educational experience is targeted for elementary-age

students, but the video and lessons can be tailored for students of any age. Anyone can access the 360* video, however, using a smartphone helps to enjoy the full immersion experience. Physically move your phone around in all 360* to see the entire scene! This forestry operation video, sponsored by Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom and Virginia Farm Bureau, is the first of its kind! The video and worksheets are fantastic educational tools for VDOF to use and share. All content meets Virginia S.O.L.s! Special thanks to Tammy Maxey (Sr. Education Manager, Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom), Mid-Atlantic Tree Harvesters, Janet Muncy (integrated media manager) and the Capital Work Area for making this experience come to life.

- ◆ Michelle Stoll (public information director) met virtually with Rae Tamblin of the North American Forest Partnership (NAFP) last week to discuss resources currently available through #ForestProud, strategies for social listening and upcoming changes to the #ForestProud partner library.
- ◆ Ellen Powell (conservation educator) wrote last week's feature story for Field Notes, "[Fantastic Ferns.](#)"

News Clips

- ◆ [Fallen power line starts brush fire in Roanoke County](#)
- ◆ [Urban Wood Grants New Life To Old Lumber](#)
- ◆ [Grown Here at Home: Floyd forester explains benefits of restorative forestry](#)
- ◆ [Family paves way for conserving farm, woods near Rappahannock](#)
- ◆ [In California, A Push Grows to Turn Dead Trees into Biomass energy](#)
- ◆ [Agricultural and Forestry Machinery Market to Reach ~USD 400 Billion Valuation by 2029: Transparency Market Research](#)
- ◆ [Mixed bag for South Carolina's forestry industry](#)
- ◆ [Oklahoma Forestry Services delivers medical supplies to health care workers](#)
- ◆ [West Virginia forestry director dies in accident](#)
- ◆ [Amazon to donate \\$10 million to Appalachian forest conservation](#)
- ◆ [This startup founder wants to use satellite imagery and AI to track forest health](#)