



June 01, 2020

**Contents**

<b>Employee News</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Welcome to VDOF Starting June 10.....	1
Permethrin on Pants .....	1
<b>Project Updates</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Policy and Procedures .....	2
<b>Items of Note</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Public Information Office Email.....	2
Headquarters Staff Email.....	2
Retirement Luncheon Photos .....	2
<b>Last Week</b> .....	<b>2</b>
State Forester .....	2
Forestland Conservation.....	3
Forest Resource Management .....	3
Agency Lands .....	4
Western Region .....	4
Public Information .....	5
News Clips.....	5

**Employee News**

*Welcome to VDOF Starting June 10*

Anne Ligush, Bay Watershed Specialist

Walker Wolff, Mountain Valley Work Area Forester

Matthew Hutchins, Jefferson Work Area Forest Technician

*Permethrin on Pants*

- ◆ I hope all the field staff availed themselves of the opportunity to get their field pants treated with tick repellent by InsectShield. Rappahannock Work Area Forester Ed Furlow shares this testimony on their effectiveness:
  - *“I can now personally attest to the value and effectiveness of treating our work pants with permethrin. I have used the treated pants three times through heavily tick-infested areas. A landowner walked next to me during one field visit and he had to remove a half dozen ticks off his*

*pants and I only found one dead tick on my pants. I will wear the two treated pants continuously throughout the summer and will likely pay to treat more pants out-of-pocket.*

*Thanks for making this option possible for field staff."*

## Project Updates

---

### Policy and Procedures

- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 8-4 Human Resources Benefits Management](#) - has been updated to add the Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL).

## Items of Note

---

### Public Information Office Email

- ◆ The Public Information Office established a new email account [[publicinfo@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:publicinfo@dof.virginia.gov)] to streamline submissions and workflow. This will take the guesswork out of who you need to send things to and also allow the first available PI staff member to take care of your request. Effective immediately, please send the following types of submissions to this new email address:
  - Website updates
  - Intranet updates
  - Blog posts
  - Social media posts
  - Photos/videos to share
- ◆ As always, feel free to reach out to appropriate staff members when needed, but this shared email box for our most routine work tasks will help us to more efficiently handle your requests. Any event notifications, requests for new projects or time-critical needs can be sent directly to [Michelle.Stoll@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:Michelle.Stoll@dof.virginia.gov) or other appropriate staff members.

### Headquarters Staff Email

- ◆ The email address for sending to all VDOF staff at the headquarters building has changed. [DOF-Centraloffice@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:DOF-Centraloffice@dof.virginia.gov) is no longer valid, please use [DOF-HQ\\_Staff@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:DOF-HQ_Staff@dof.virginia.gov) it is located in the Global Address Book.

### Retirement Luncheon Photos

- ◆ Retirement Luncheon for Blair Dalton and Henry Womack Photos posted on Flickr [https://www.flickr.com/photos/vdof\\_photos/albums/72157714480699407](https://www.flickr.com/photos/vdof_photos/albums/72157714480699407)
- ◆ Retirement Luncheon for Gwynn Tyler posted on Flickr [https://www.flickr.com/photos/vdof\\_photos/albums/72157714479267121](https://www.flickr.com/photos/vdof_photos/albums/72157714479267121)

## Last Week

---

### State Forester

- ◆ Hector Rivera (director of human resources) and Smokey Bear accepted delivery of high-quality Victory facemasks from local company Rhoback and their canine mascot Bunker. The masks will be provided to all VDOF employees, providing for safety and a professional uniform appearance for all agency staff. Afterwards, Hector and Smokey shared fire safety and social distancing messages via VDOF social media.

- ◆ Work has begun on the new tractor sheds the agency is constructing across the Commonwealth to house our newest firefighting tractors and transport units. In May, the agency broke ground in Fluvanna and Goochland counties on the first two of what will eventually be more than 30 tractor sheds. Once all are completed, they will allow the agency to protect all of our tractor units when not in use. The attached photos show the Goochland location with concrete and timber construction (note the use of Virginia manufactured wood products) and the Fluvanna foundation work. Plans are to finish these first two buildings by mid-summer.



- ◆ Rob Farrell participated in a call with resource managers on the George Washington-Jefferson National Forest to coordinate field-testing of the Hardwood Assessment Tool. This is a decision support tool being developed in collaboration with VA Tech College of Natural Resources and the Forest Service Southern Research Station that will eventually be used to support hardwood incentive programs on public and private land.

### **Forestland Conservation**

- ◆ VDOF closed the Howell's Quarter conservation easement on May 21. The property is 742 acres adjacent to the Chubb Sandhills Natural Area Preserve in Sussex County and includes 1.84 miles of frontage on the Nottoway River. The easement preserves 445 acres of working forestland and protects 247 acres of rare coastal plain bottomland forest. This easement was a partial purchase thanks to a \$450,000 Forest Legacy Grant, \$225,000 from The Nature Conservancy, and \$225,000 from the Virginia State Forest Mitigation and Acquisition Fund.
- ◆ Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) participated in a WIPIII update presentation to members of the Virginia Conservation Network with Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources Ann Jennings. The presentation focused on recent EPA comments and plans regarding Virginia's approach.
- ◆ Terry Lasher made a presentation to the Water Equity Taskforce (sub group of the Virginia Health Catalyst) regarding the importance of forests and forest management to our rural economies, public drinking water quality/quantity and their contributions to our health.

### **Forest Resource Management**

- ◆ Several weeks ago, VDOF, in association with Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Forestry Association, issued a news item "Your Forest Savings Account During Trouble Times- Pause. Plan. Act." The article, accompanying video from Rob Farrell and associated web links encouraged forest landowners who may be experiencing financial stress during the crisis to be careful and use professional advice before selling timber. After the Forest Management Chief with the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDOF) expressed interest, VDOF shared the message with KDOF, which has experienced an increase in landowner calls for timber sale advice.
- ◆ Each spring, VDOF forest health staff and a number of foresters around the state participate in the south-wide southern pine beetle (SPB) trapping program. This year, 25 traps were placed in 11 counties that are considered at risk for a SPB outbreak based on the amount of host type available per county. Funnel traps baited with three pheromone lures are deployed when the redbuds bloom. Traps are checked weekly and samples are sent to VDOF headquarters for sorting and identification. The

number of SPB and their associated predator, the clerid beetle, are counted, and that data is entered into a regional SPB Portal where trap data is visible from all southern states that participate in the survey. In Virginia, we collected very few SPB this year; the most beetles were found in Chesterfield, a few beetles were found in Amelia and Hanover counties, and one single beetle was found in Spotsylvania. The south-wide SPB Portal also models the potential for a SPB outbreak. Based on this year's results, Virginia's chance for an outbreak this year is very low. This is good news for Virginia, but we still encourage everyone to contact the forest health program if you see signs/symptoms of southern pine beetle activity.

- ◆ VDOF forest health staff placed 10 spotted lanternfly traps in Albemarle and Nelson Counties and will be checking them every two weeks through August.

### Agency Lands

- ◆ Garland Gray Forestry Center (GGFC) personnel completed seeding for its containerized seedling operation. The target for this season is of 165,000 containerized longleaf pine and 330,000 loblolly pine. Additionally, nearly 2,000 cells were seeded with native grass species, such as little bluestem, that compliment longleaf pine ecosystems. The Nature Conservancy will use these "plugs" in a study that compares grass planting versus seed sowing. The nursery also seeded more than 4,000 cells with Atlantic white-cedar that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will use for restoration of that species at the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.
- ◆ Many thanks to Dennis Gaston (eastern area state forests manager), Ben Duke (eastern area state forests technician) and Jim Schroering (SPB and longleaf pine coordinator) for assisting with the containerized seedling at GGFC.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton (research program manager) and Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management) planted 31 American chestnut seedlings at First Mountain State Forest in various locations in openings in existing young pine plantations where future tour groups will be able see them.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton assisted beekeeper Diego DeCorte with the installation of eight beehives on Channels State Forest. The hives will be weighed periodically to record honey production, and varroa mite infestation will be monitored to compare the frequency and intensity of infestations under the relatively isolated conditions on the state forests to other hives located closer to other beekeepers.
- ◆ Ones Bitoki (tree improvement manager) participated in the NCSU-Tree Improvement Program executive committee conference call meeting and discussed the 2020-2021 budget to be presented to all members during the annual meeting in June. The annual Tree Improvement Report has been released and this year a milestone has been reached, with more than one billion full-sib seedlings having been planted in the Southeast. Full-sib seedlings are produced from a cross of two known parent trees.

### Western Region

- ◆ Rocky Wood (forest technician) worked with the Dickenson County Sheriff's Office and Commonwealth Attorney on multiple timber theft investigations. Each turned out to be a trespass or similar issue and will be dealt with as civil matters.

- ◆ Kenny Thomas (forest technician) at the request of Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) – Natural Heritage (NH) personnel (Claiborne and Laura Young) has again shared his local knowledge of Lee County and its landowners. DCR – NH is in talks with two landowners to purchase their properties and add them to their existing Cedars Natural Area Preserve. Kenny assisted them with identifying some boundaries and notable features on the properties, including Indian Gulley characterized by cedar glades on very steep slopes, a cave, and a deep spring walled up with hand hewn rock. Several rare and endangered plants were also identified. (pictured)



### Public Information

- ◆ We received proposals from two website design vendors last week. The vendors – AISN and Site Vision – are both VITA-approved vendors. The proposals are now under review.
- ◆ Page Hutchinson (Project Learning Tree coordinator) developed a series of online professional development courses in anticipation of ongoing social distancing restrictions this fall. Due to a generous grant from the Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation, Virginia PLT is able to offer these workshops to educators at a highly discounted rate. Courses currently available include Environmental Education for K-8 grade, Tremendous Science! K-2, Energy in Ecosystems 3-5, Carbon and Climate 6-8, Early Childhood, and Green Schools. Each course will include video conferencing call with a PLT Facilitator as well as self-paced coursework.

### News Clips

- ◆ [Hazel Mountain Fire Tower](#)
- ◆ [The Haunting Ghost Forests of Maryland's Eastern Shore](#)
- ◆ [COVID-19 Is Crushing Conservation Groups](#)
- ◆ [Two states, D.C. plan to sue EPA for failing to enforce Chesapeake Bay cleanup plan](#)
- ◆ [CLASS OF 2020: STUDENT'S PROJECT WILL MAKE SUN-DRIED LUMBER AVAILABLE ON GROUNDS](#)
- ◆ [Stocks With Rising Relative Strength: Universal Forest Products](#)