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Employee News

Summer Interns Welcome to VDOF:

- ◆ Cody Leonard and Nicholas Smith are Forestry Majors at Virginia Tech and will be working at the Matthews State Forest.

Project Updates

Urban Wood Project Update

- ◆ Last week the Virginia Urban Wood Group published its second VA Urban Wood newsletter. The e-newsletter is distributed through the Trees Virginia Constant Contact platform. Over 270 people received this second edition including VDOF personnel who have been involved in the Urban Wood program. Once again, many thanks to Molly O’Liddy (urban and community forestry partnership coordinator) and Becky Woodson (Forest Management Programs Coordinator) for their assistance with this project.

- ◆ Following is a link that will take you to the recent edition of the VA Urban Wood newsletter. Please contact Joe Lehnen (joe.lehnen@dof.virginia.gov) would like to be included on the distribution list >> <https://conta.cc/3dBjcxM>

Training Opportunity

Forest Health Webinars

- ◆ Free forest health webinars are being hosted this summer by First Detector, a program of the National Plant Diagnostic Network, to help individuals detect and report the presence of invasive, exotic plant pathogens and arthropods. You can see the webinar schedule here: <https://www.firstdetector.org/sites/firstdetector.org/files/webinar%20postcard.pdf>

News You Can Use

Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB)

- ◆ Alert! The Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) has been found near Charleston, South Carolina, which is about 320 miles south of the Virginia state line. ALB is an invasive insect that attacks and kills many tree species including maple, willow, elm, horse-chestnut, buckeye, and birch. ALB has NOT been found in Virginia, but you may get inquiries since it has been in the news. Please forward all questions and reports to the VDOF forest health staff. You can read the USDA press release here: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/stakeholder-info/sa_by_date/sa-2020/sa-06/alb-sc

Items of Note

- ◆ [Why Engineers Used Wood to Build Spacecraft](#)

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Secretary of Agricultural and Forestry Bettina Ring, Rob Farrell and Charlie Becker (utilization & marketing manager), participated in a conference call with South Carolina Forestry Commission and US Forest Service (USFS) representatives about how best to address the ongoing China ban on southern yellow pine (SYP) logs from Virginia and South Carolina. Plans are for Virginia and South Carolina state forestry representatives to meet with North Carolina (who are permitted to export SYP logs to China) to better understand their procedures and how to duplicate them in Virginia and South Carolina.
- ◆ Rob Farrell spent a day in the woods with Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Forester Ryan Hewitt in Highland County. FIA is a program run by the USFS with the field data collection performed by VDOF in Virginia. The inventory plot measured this day was actually on National Forest property. Measuring the trees on the FIA plots across the state every five years provides critical data on the growth of Virginia's forest resources.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Joe Lehnen (utilization and marketing specialist) visited Shenandoah Shavings, a new company outside Woodstock, Virginia. They plan to produce dry pine shavings for the poultry industry. Matt Wolanski (senior area forester) is providing the company owner a loggers list and will serve as the local contact.
- ◆ Joe Lehnen participated in a conference call of the VA Urban Wood Group, and on Wednesday, June 17, Joe, as the Southern Representative, participated in a conference call of the national Urban Wood Network.

- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban and community forestry program manager) and Molly O'Liddy participated in a team call for the Economic Impact Study of Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) in the Southern United States. Virginia is the lead state on this project and will be working with research leaders to compile this data. Project is set to finish in winter of 2021.
- ◆ The U&CF Grant Assistance Program request for proposal is open for applicants. The application window will close on August 14, 2020.
- ◆ Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) provided a presentation to the Office of Public Drinking Water of the Virginia Health Department. His presentation centered on the importance of forests, forested watersheds and forest management as they contribute to public drinking water quantity and quality. According to a recent USFS study, approximately 4.3 million Virginians receive their drinking water from state and private forests.
- ◆ Terry Lasher provided an update to the Rappahannock River Basin Commission regarding progress towards the Commonwealth's Sentinel Landscape application and is expecting a Request for Applications from the Department of Defense in early 2021. The Sentinel Landscapes Team, consisting of members from the Society of American Foresters (SAF), the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs (SVDA) and Secretary of Natural Resources (SNR) offices are currently forming a State Level Coordinating Committee to assist in the development of the application.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ The goats are back! Forest health program staff is working with the Shenandoah work area and State Forest staff to complete a goat grazing project at Paul Sate Forest. On June 15, 100 goats were released into a six-acre fenced-in plot at Paul State Forest to "clean up" an area densely packed with invasive plants. The goats will graze for about two weeks.
- ◆ You may, or may not know that our Headquarters in Charlottesville was also the site of an early VDOF nursery. The flatter land contained beds for producing many different kinds of seedlings. The sloping land was planted in a variety of tree species, to serve as demonstration areas. A 1934 map of the property lists locations for plots of many of the native species that we still produce, but also some unusual species, including Red pine, Austrian pine, Arborvitae, Slash pine, Scotch pine, Douglas fir, and Longleaf pine. Few, if any, of these remain. However, a number of the Longleaf pines are still present, on the VDOF mechanic shop side of Rt. 29, behind the old brick "R3" regional office. On June 17, Amelia Kahle (student intern) and Dean Cumbia (forest management director) practiced tree measurement on several of these trees, with diameters from 17 to 30 inches, most about 100 feet tall, and 70 years old. The trees are of interest to the Virginia Longleaf Cooperators Group due to their age and size.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Gary Heiser (state forests manager), Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester), John Colligan (chief of administration), Andrew Fotinos (forest conservation specialist) and Harvey Darden (agency lands director) met with personnel from Division of Real Estate Services and Office of Attorney General (OAG) to review land acquisition projects involving VDOF. Discussion included the current status of the Stanley, Phase I project, which is expected to close later this year and will be a 2,500 acre new state forest in Charlotte County. There is a planned Phase II, which will be an additional 2,500 acres of this property, hopefully acquired in 2021. They also discussed the status of the Turlington property, which is a 200-acre parcel adjacent to Big Woods State Forest. This project is also expected to close later this year, with the acreage added to the state forest.
- ◆ The nursery staff at Augusta Forestry Center had to remove the irrigation pump to prevent damage from rising river level from excessive rainfall.

- ◆ Treating for invasive species is an ongoing battle at some of the state forests. Recently, Zach Olinger (forest management & education specialist) treated 47 acres for invasive plants in multiple stands on the Matthews State Forest. Primary targets were oriental bittersweet, Japanese barberry and autumn olive. Zach also planted a three-acre wildlife food plot with seed donated by the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Western Region

- ◆ Kenny Thomas (forest technician) and Bill Miller (senior area forester) worked out a plan with the Town of Big Stone Gap to use VDOF's bulldozer to do some grading work to help establish a Greenbelt Trail the town is building. This allowed the Wise County dozer to be exercised, as well as provided some "seat time" for our part-time dozer operator on the JD450K. In return, the town delivered two dump truck loads of gravel to our office (free of charge). This saved the VDOF several hundred dollars in gravel expense. In addition, Mike Salyer (forest technician) brought his small Kubota tractor and spread the gravel. This was a true team effort with not only the Clinch Area Team but also with the dozer operator and the Town of Big Stone Gap. (pictured)



- ◆ All those emergency roadside service companies have nothing on Jon Perry (forest technician). While traveling for his normal forestry duties, he came upon a distressed motorist still in the roadway with a flat tire. Jon not only made the scene safe, but assisted the elderly motorist to change the tire and get back on the road.

- ◆ Adam Cumpston (water quality specialist). Chad Austin (water quality engineer), and Chris Thomsen (regional forester) recently met with a representative of Spearhead Trails and a local wood producer atop High Knob in Scott County. They viewed a 1,200-acre harvest now in its third year of active cutting. VDOF inspectors have worked with the loggers to minimize water quality issues despite record rainfall amounts. As some areas are being closed out, Spearhead Trails has taken over and is developing equestrian trails. These new trails are slated to open later this year and will be part of a 1,000-mile recreational trail system bringing economic development to far Southwest Virginia. (pictured)



Central Region

- ◆ Derek Keiser (water quality specialist) coordinated a water quality training webinar for VDOF staff in the Rappahannock, James River and Jefferson Work Areas. The webinar reviewed water quality procedures, first quarter statistics, Best Management Practices (BMP) audit results, timber trespass and timber theft and focus areas related to BMP implementation. A total of 16 VDOF employees participated.
- ◆ Rodney Newlin (water quality engineer) worked on an internal water quality training video with Raina DeFonza (public information specialist). The main purpose of the video is to provide examples of how our water quality program works with an emphasis on consistency and communications. So far we have filmed examples of water quality law enforcement showing the interaction between our inspector and the logger when there are no concerns on the site, concerns on the site and the

interaction between the logger and the water quality specialists when concerns have been addressed and when they have not been addressed. We have also filmed a segment on the importance of pre-harvest planning and communication with all the parties involved. Future segments will discuss the Logging BMP cost share program and the BMP audits.

News Clips

- ◆ [Grant program geared toward agriculture, forestry during COVID-19](#)
- ◆ [US Supreme Court rejects ruling feared by timber groups](#)
- ◆ [Virginia Sawmill Business a Leader In Producing Crossties for Railroads](#)