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Action Requested

Input Needed from Field Staff

- ◆ In the 2020 State of the Forest, VDOF will highlight the ways our agency’s work continued this year despite challenging circumstances.
- ◆ We’d like to share stories from field staff about how your work changed in response to COVID-19. To begin with, we’re particularly interested to hear about the ways that interactions with landowners may have changed. For example:
 - Did you schedule virtual meetings with landowners to replace in-person contact?

- Are you sending more digital documents and resources?
- Are there noticeable changes in the pattern of requests you're hearing from your community?
- ◆ Please direct questions and responses to public.info@dof.virginia.gov.

Employee Spotlight

Joe Rossetti – Job Well Done!

- ◆ Below is a note received from Bob Hudson, landowner in Culpeper County:
 - “I write to commend Joe Rossetti (senior area forester) who served me well yesterday on forestry issues for my property in Griffinsburg, Virginia. It was our first meeting.”

Employee News

Leaving VDOF

- ◆ Jack Miles (equipment operator) is retiring from VDOF on August 1 after 40 years of service. Congratulations Jack, enjoy your well-deserved retirement.

Transferring with in VDOF

- ◆ Stephen Jasenak (water quality specialist) transferred from Central Region to the Blackwater work area as an area forester on July 10.
- ◆ Tom Snoddy (area forester) transferred from the Mattaponi work area to the Heartland work area as an area forester on July 22.

Project Updates

Small Purchase Charge Card (SPCC)

- ◆ For the fourth quarter of FY20 the agencies utilization of the state's small purchase charge card (SPCC) program was 99.3 percent, meaning that agency staff used the SPCC in 99.3 percent of the transactions for which the card is eligible as a form of payment. The statewide average for SPCC usage by all agencies in the fourth quarter was 91 percent. Appropriate use of the SPCC card for eligible payments is a cost efficient way to expend state funding. Keep up the good work!

News You Can Use

Use of VDOF Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems

- ◆ Through funding from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) UAV-LSR grant and the Water Quality Program, VDOF currently has nine drones and nine pilots. In the next month there will be an additional three pilots. There are at least two pilots in each region and four in headquarters. The drones have proven to be very useful over the past year for harvest inspections, wildfires, prescribed burns, forest health inspections and mapping acreage. In order to streamline the process of using this resource, please use the dispatch procedures located on the Intranet located in Program Areas under Administration <http://intranet.dof.virginia.gov/hq/sUAS%20Dispatch%20Procedures.pdf>. This link is temporary while the Policy and Procedures are being completed and posted.

Ash Removal Cost-Share Program

- ◆ VDOF received short-term limited funding to assist municipalities with removal of high-risk dead or dying ash trees from the public landscape.

- Cost-share expenses will be provided on a 50 percent basis for trees 17 inches in diameter or larger.
 - Reimbursable payments will be made up to \$6,150 per organization at a rate of less than \$30 per diameter inch.
 - For each tree removed, VDOF will provide a \$200 incentive payment to replace the removed tree with an approved caliper size tree.
 - Enrollment will open on August 3, 2020 and applications will be accepted until September 18, 2020. Application review, ranking and awards will be issued by September 25, 2020.
- ◆ Urban & Community Forestry (U&CF) and Forest Health staff will be responsible for all site visits but will make sure field staff are aware of projects in their work area. Field staff can participate in site visits as desired. Please contact [Molly O'Liddy](#) (U&CF partnership coordinator) with questions or potential contacts interested in the program.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell, Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager), and Jerre Creighton (research program manager) had an initial discussion with representatives of the Audubon Society in Northern Virginia as a promised follow up to HB1204 (Tran) Cankerworm Landowner Opt-in. VDOF is helping to identify a compromise solution related to locality programs for foliar spraying to control cankerworms.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Lara Johnson (U&CF program manager), Molly O'Liddy and Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester) attended a virtual Trees Virginia board meeting to discuss new potential board members, tree steward support and fall programming.
- ◆ Charlie Becker (utilization & marketing program manager) was interviewed by the Louisa County "Central Virginian" about solar farm impacts on forests. [Wave of solar worries farm, forest advocates](#)
- ◆ Joe Lehnen's work with the Virginia Urban Wood Program was featured in the July Urban Wood Network Newsletter and was also promoted in the July edition of the Southern Regional Extension Forestry News Digest.
- ◆ Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) completed the quarterly report for the "Turf to Trees" Project (T2T). This project is a partnership between VDOF and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The T2T project was developed to focus on underserved communities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The program utilizes DEQ's recently created EJSSCREEN tool to locate potential tree establishment projects in public or locality ownership by differentiating areas of open turf versus some other use. The project accomplishments are then recorded in the "My Trees Count" app which tracks community planting projects that are conducted with or without assistance from VDOF staff. This app was recently developed by U&CF to more efficiently capture an individual tree planting, or groups of tree plantings, both of which count as progress towards the Commonwealth's WIP III goals.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Each year, forest Landowners pay real estate property tax to the county or city in which the property is located. This process is administered by local Commissioners of Revenue. The tax is a percentage of the fair market value of the property and can be a significant expense to landowners. Use value taxation is an option for localities which allows the tax to be assessed on the use of the property

(agriculture, forest, horticulture or open space), which is often lower than fair market value, and lowers the tax cost. This is particularly helpful to forest landowners, where timber revenue occurs over long periods of time. VDOF calculates suggested forest use values each year for this purpose. The Virginia Association of Assessing Officers (VAAO) is the professional group that includes county and city officials and staff that administer property taxes. On July 16, Todd Groh (forest resource management program coordinator) and Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management) made virtual presentations to the annual meeting of the VAAO. Todd shared information on forest management planning and Dean offered information on the factors that affect the forest value determination, including timber type, rotation and management, site, and markets.

- ◆ Lori Chamberlin, Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist), and Molly O'Liddy met Albemarle County staff at Biscuit Run Park to assess the health of a hemlock stand. VDOF and Albemarle County staff treated 78 hemlock trees on this state-owned property in the fall of 2019 to protect them from the hemlock woolly adelgid. The trees appear healthy despite signs of infestation. The treatment should last five years, but the stand will be monitored annually. Albemarle Natural Resources staff attended the field day to map coordinates and conditions of the treated trees.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt and Lori Chamberlin measured monitoring plots at Lesesne State Forest for Laurel Wilt Disease. This disease is spread by the redbay ambrosia beetle and kills redbay, sassafras, swampbay, pondspice, pondberry, camphor, spicebush, avocado and other plants in the laurel family. It has not yet been detected in Virginia, but is present in neighboring states. VDOF Forest Health is partnering with the USFS to monitor sassafras in Virginia and trap for the redbay ambrosia beetle.

Agency Lands

- ◆ The Cumberland State Forest received three bids for timber sold July 15. The winning bid was from Marion Brothers Logging, Inc. at a bid of \$62,165.00 working out to a value per acre of \$2,079.18 for the timber to be harvested. Good Job Shannon Lewis (forest management forester) and Tom Zaebst (assistant state forests manager) with the successful sale!
- ◆ Jerre Creighton spent a day touring hybrid American chestnut plantings in Page County that were established by interested landowners this past spring. Overall, five different landowners planted more than 200 open-pollinated seedlings from the Lesesne State Forest in early April. Three months later, more than 95 percent of them are living and many have already grown out of their four-foot shelters. The level of effort these landowners have invested in both planting (using an auger to drill planting holes, tree shelters, etc.) and care after planting (monitoring rainfall and watering every tree during lapses in precipitation) inspire confidence that these may grow into useful outplantings either for future selections or as orchards. (Pictured: A three-month old seedling.)
- ◆ Jerre Creighton met with other team members – Adam Downing of Virginia Tech Extension, Dave Carter (assistant professor at Virginia Tech), Patti Nylander (senior area forester) and Walker Wolfe (area forester) – to review the layout of a planned hardwood silviculture demonstration at McCormick Farm. The plan is to have a series of paired small openings of different shapes (rectangular versus circular) with thinned areas between them as demonstrations of the effects of harvest patterns on light levels and regeneration.



State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Invasive species control underneath a hardwood stand was recently completed on approximately 19 acres on the Catawba State Hospital Property in Roanoke County. The goal of the treatment was to treat invasive species present *prior* to harvesting to allow for better hardwood regeneration when harvested. By treating before harvesting we hope to give hardwood regeneration a better chance to get started. Thank you to Denny McCarthy for assistance in identifying the area for treatment! Results are pictured.



Central Region

- ◆ A fire started by lighting on July 19 located in Albemarle County off Howardsville Turnpike has been contained at approximately 86 acres.
- ◆ There were also two lightning-caused fires on July 20 – one in Shenandoah County and one in Brunswick County. The hot weather and dry conditions are starting to cause fire starts to pick up.

Western Region

- ◆ After four months of using the Salem cold storage as a personal protective equipment (PPE) distribution site for 16 counties in SWVA, it has been determined that this manner of distribution is no longer needed. During this time, our Salem facility received weekly shipments of essential PPE which was distributed to medical facilities and first responders. Personnel from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Virginia National Guard, and VDOF worked together well and with one common goal of delivering these critical items to our front line workers battling COVID-19.
- ◆ Kenny Thomas (forest technician), Mike Salyer (forest technician), and Adam Cumpston (water quality specialist) met with John Wade of Timberline Logging to look at potential cost share for a stream crossing where he had bought the land and timber. In a few hours of working on the tract, a pre-harvest plan was developed, several riparian areas were identified for potential tax credit, a stewardship plan application was requested by the landowner, a potential Golden Wing Warbler project was referred to Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) was contacted about a logging entrance permit for the tract. Timberline is also planning to harvest the adjoining tract and John Wade is going to talk to that landowner about VDOF doing a Stewardship plan on his property. Pretty fruitful morning for the landowner and VDOF!
- ◆ This past spring VDOF used a portion of an old road as a fire line in Buchanan County. It turns out this road is on a Century Forest and was originally installed in the early 1900's as a sled road. Jon Perry (forest technician) and Greg Estoll (senior area forester) returned to the fire site recently and reduced the size of water bars that had been installed for stabilization purposes as the road is being used by the landowners for forest recreation, as well as, for hauling firewood.

Pubic Information

- ◆ Raina DeFonza (public information specialist) met with Rae Tamblyn (North American Forest Partnership #FORESTPROUD) last week to discuss NAFFP resources and shared social media targets.
- ◆ Michelle Stoll (public information director) participated in the SGSF Communications Committee “virtual summer meeting” last week.

- ◆ Josh McLaughlin (assistant forestry center manager) was interviewed by “Real Virginia,” a program sponsored by Farm Bureau. The interview, which provides landowners with a basic understanding of VDOF seedling nurseries, will air August 1 on PBS affiliates.
- ◆ Field Notes post: [On the Wings of a Tiny Wasp](#)

News Clips

- ◆ [Virginia Farmers Mitigate Beaver Damage](#)
- ◆ [Large Brush Fire Contained Near Howardsville](#)
- ◆ [Many Happy Returns? A Motto That's Not Necessarily True For Landowners When A FERC Pipeline Is Cancelled.](#)
- ◆ [Forestry Internship Gives Randolph Student a Taste of Field Work](#)