October 26, 2020

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Celebrate Your Charitable Spirit

Our biggest stars – You!

- 2020 has been an unusual time for many people, and as we near the final few months we would like to share the better moments, the caring and compassionate ones, of the year so far.
- The Office of Workforce Engagement, Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) would like to include you (our employees) in a short highlight reel featuring any type of volunteering, acts of giving, donating, etc. We encourage you to submit photos, short video clips or social media posts that embody a kind or generous spirit, caring, or sharing and to share this message with your entire agency or organization.

- Please go here by October 30th for more information on how to share a photo, video, or social media post so that we can feature YOU - our biggest stars!
- Submissions will be featured in a photo and video montage at the opening session of the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign Charity Fair Jam on November 5.
- A link to the final presentation will be shared with all respondents via the email provided.

Employee News

Welcome to VDOF

- Jonah Fielding will be joining VDOF on October 26 in the Jefferson Work Area as an Area Forester. Jonah graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor's degree in Forestry Operations and Business and a Master's degree in Forestry. Please welcome him to the VDOF team.

Congratulations!

- Michael Downing will be promoted on October 26 from acting Area Forester to Area Forester in the Jefferson Work Area. Congratulations Michael – job well done!

Condolences

- Retired VDOF Fiscal employee Sylvia L. Jones passed away October 21. Please see the link for details. https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/dailyprogress/name/sylvia-louise-jones-obituary?n=sylvia-louise-jones&pid=196984034&fhid=19600

News You Can Use

Dry Hydrant Program Update

- In an effort to make sure that all of our local personnel are in the loop on this if questioned, the following information went out last week to fire departments with pending dry hydrant installs.
- Effective October 15, 2020, the Virginia Department of Forestry ended its dry hydrant installation and repair contract with Silver Creek Inc. Ongoing problems with excessive delays in completing the contracted work (along with other customer service-related issues) have forced us into a total restart of the program. Although we are actively working on several fronts to complete the outstanding dry hydrant work that has already been approved, there will continue to be a bit of a delay in the process as new vendors are secured for this work.
- All applicants with an approved new dry hydrant installation or repair have been contacted and given two options.
    1. Do nothing: VDOF is currently working to secure new contractors to handle the outstanding installation and repair work. It is expected to take 45 to 60 days to obtain the services of a new contractor(s) for the needed services.
    2. Handle the installation or repair of an already approved dry hydrant project using a contractor of your own choosing. Under this option, the applicant will be reimbursed for the actual costs of a repair or new installation, up to the previous contract limits. Any repair or installation completed under this option must meet the established dry hydrant standards provided, or reimbursement of expenses will not be possible.
- Fred Turck is listed in the notice as the program contact, so any questions that come up can be directed his way.

VDOF 2021 Calendar – Trees Are the Answer for Healthy, Sustainable Water Resources

- The 2021 Calendars have arrived! The theme of the 2021 calendar is water quality. Each month focuses on forests and watersheds and how they benefit each other, their link to people's health and livelihoods, and how VDOF works with landowners and communities to preserve and improve Virginia's water quality.
- Due to the number of 2020 calendars left unused and minimal events this fall, we significantly reduced the quantity of 2021 calendars purchased. Each region received 1,400 and HQ has 800 calendars to distribute. Calendars were sent to the nurseries and state forest headquarters as well. HQ employees can pick up their calendar at the receptionist desk. With the reduction in face-to-face events and interactions, distribution this year will be almost entirely dependent upon us handing them to any landowners, cooperators or others that we are able to interact with when the opportunity presents itself. We hope you enjoy the 2021 Calendar!

Drone Mapping

- In case you are able to get some drone mapping done in your areas, the below directions show how to save the image as a shapefile, as well as for entering the new stand into IFRIS <u>without</u> losing any of the Accomplishments or Planned Activities already entered for the stand.

  Creating Maps Made Easy (MME) kml annotation and converting to shapefile.

  1. Go to https://www.mapsmadeeasy.com/ and login.

     Username: rod.newlin@dof.virginia.gov

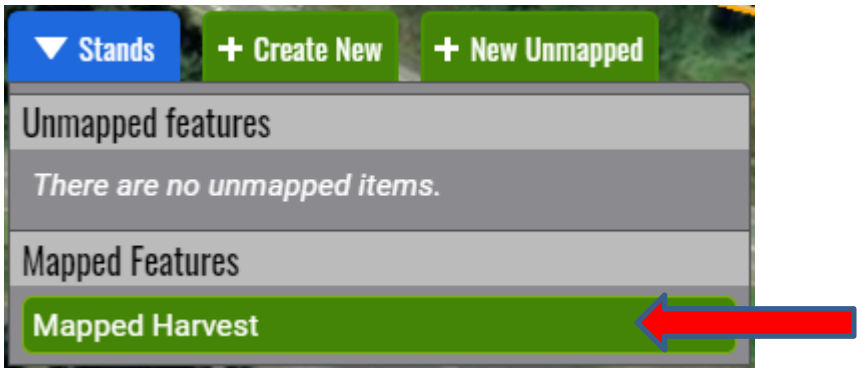
     Password: DOFdrone-1
  2. Once logged in click the link for your map in the list on the dashboard.
  3. Click the draw polygon tool on the left side of the map. Hover over the tools for their description.
  4. Click on the image to create vertices for the polygon. It is similar to IFRIS except that you have to click back on the starting point to complete the polygon.
  5. Click No in the volume measurement window.
  6. To edit the polygon click the edit layers tool on the left side of the map. You can then drag vertices around as in IFRIS. Click save when done.
  7. When the polygon is complete click the KML of Annotations link below the map on the right to download to your computer. You may have to refresh the page after drawing the annotation for the link to show up.
  8. Open DNRGPS. In the main menu at the top click File > Load From > File.
  9. At the bottom right of the window that opens change the file type to Google Keyhole Markup Language (*.kml). Browse to the location of the KML file, select it, and click open.
  10. Select whatever is at the top of the list as the TIDENT field and click OK.
  11. The KML will load into DNRGPS. Click OK when complete.
  12. In the main menu at the top click File > Save To > File.
  13. At the bottom change the file type to ESRI Shapefile (2D) (*.shp). Browse to the location you want to save the file, name the file, and click Save.
  14. Import the shapefile into IFRIS as you normally would.

15. If you have any trouble with the steps above contact Jim at jim.pugh@dof.virginia.gov or 434-987-8088.

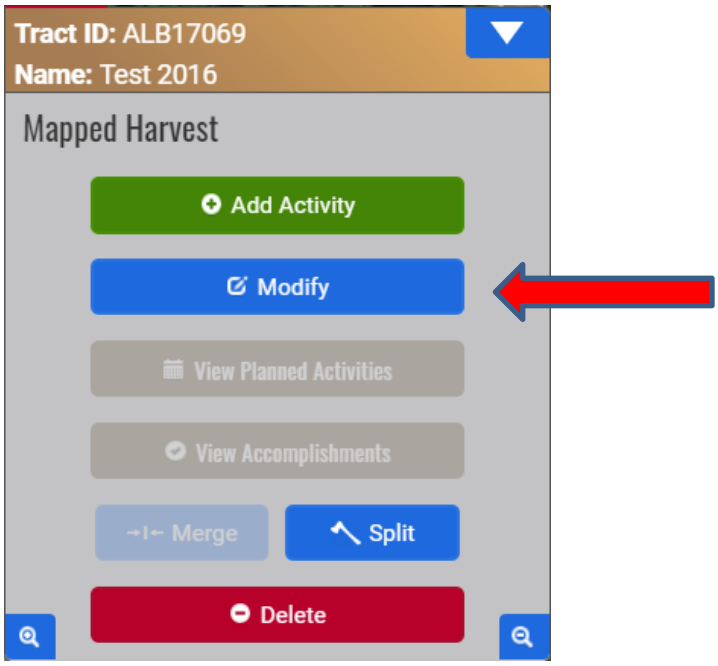
Replace an existing stand boundary with GPS data.

- You previously drew an approximate boundary for a harvest stand and now have more accurate GPS data. You need to replace the existing boundary for the stand with the GPS data to keep the link to the harvest and create an RT Cost-Share Agreement.

1. Go to the stand mapper and select the harvest from the list at the bottom left.



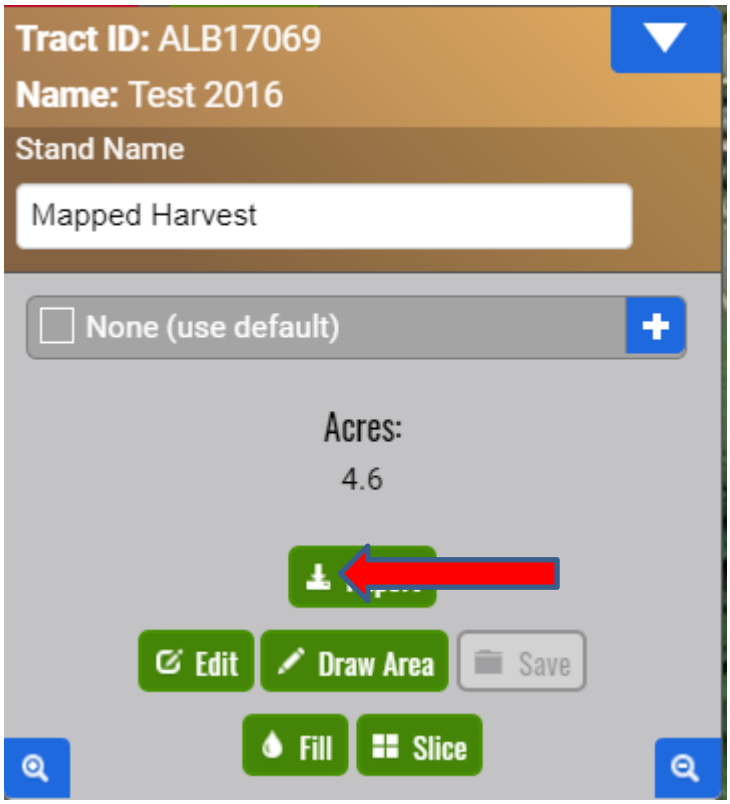
2. Click "Modify" in the edit window at the bottom right.



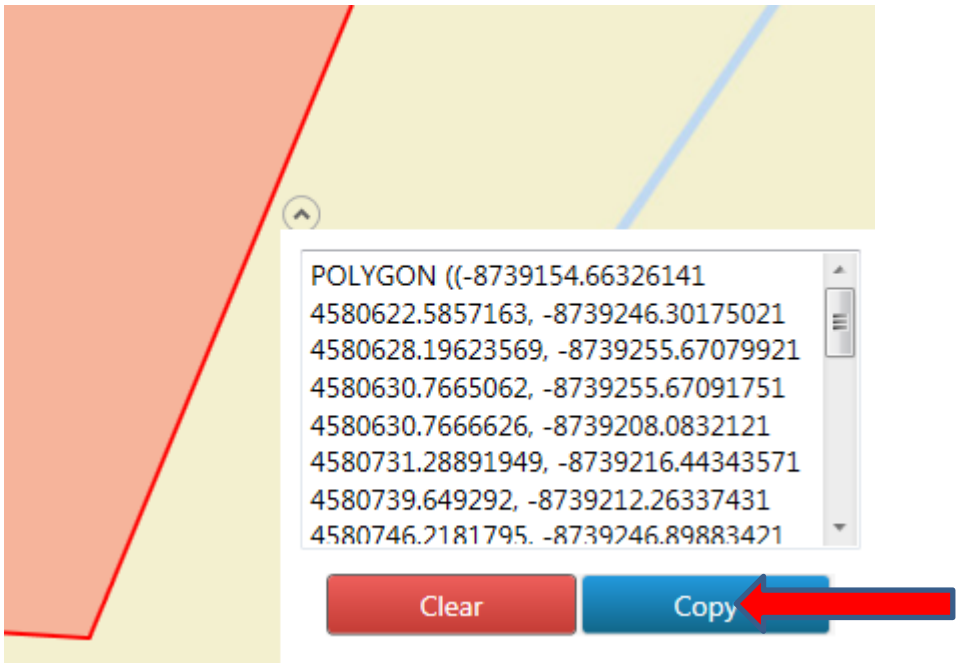
3. Click inside the existing stand boundary so all the vertices are highlighted.

4. Press the delete key on the keyboard. The existing boundary will still be visible in orange.

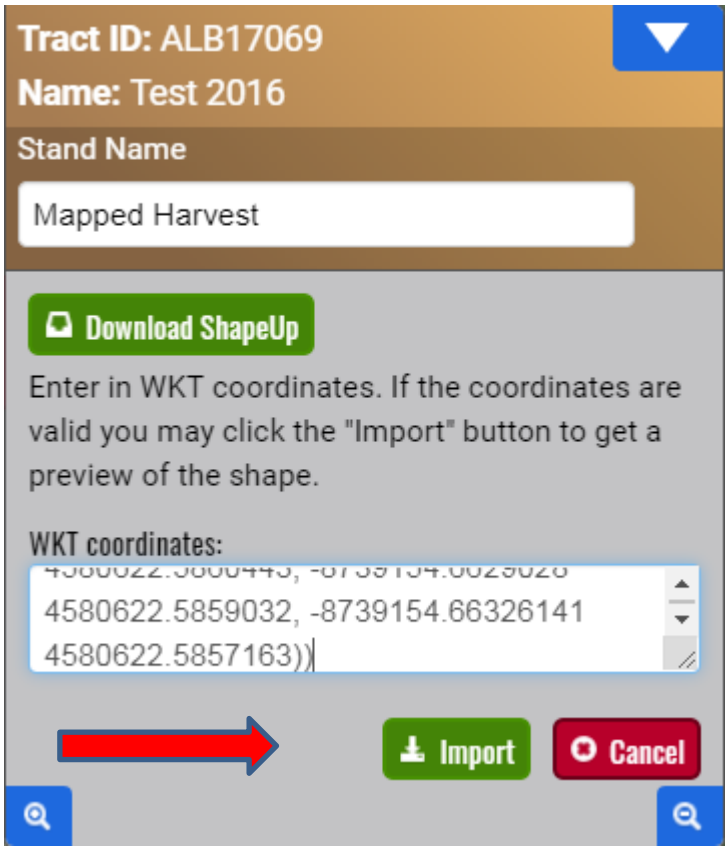
5. Click the import button at the bottom right.



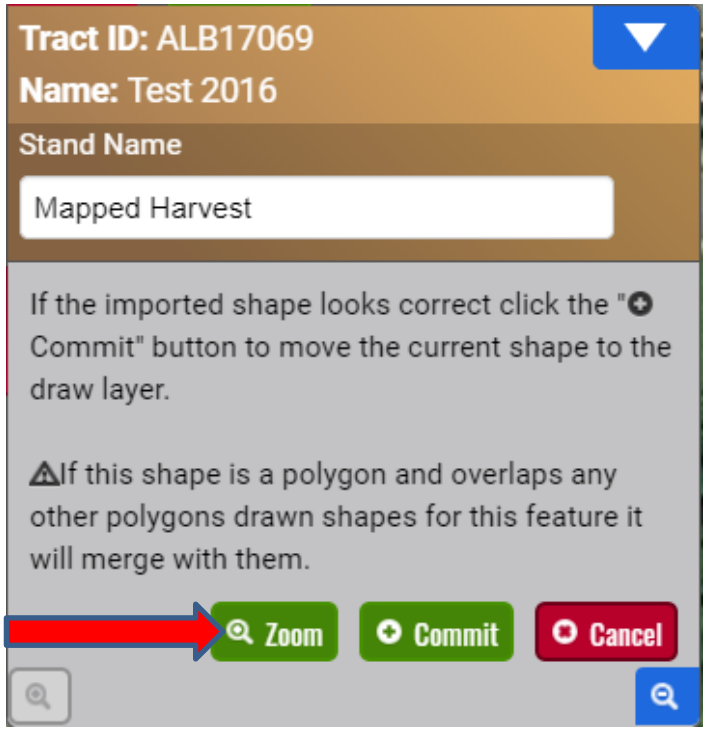
6. Open the GPS shapefile in ShapeUp and click inside the boundary for the harvest (it will turn red). Then click the "Copy" button at the bottom right.



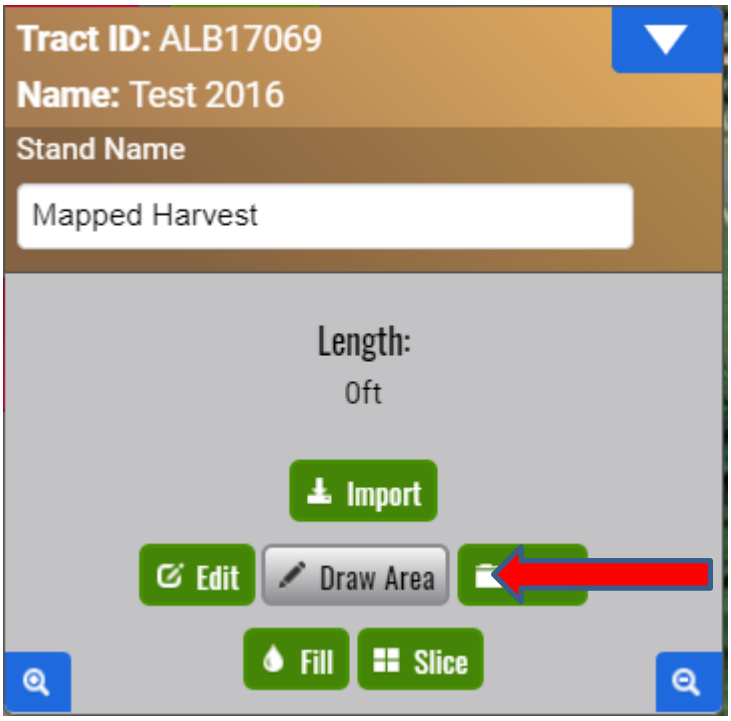
7. Paste the coordinates from ShapeUp into the WKT box in IFRIS and click the “Import” button.



8. If the imported shape looks correct click the "Commit" button.



9. Click Save. After saving the acres will be recalculated.



10. The updated boundary will now be visible on the map.

Last Week

State Forester

- The VDOF leadership and forest management staff, Rob Farrell, Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester), Terry Lasher (assistant state forester), Dean Cumbia (forest resource management director) and Todd Groh (forest resource management coordinator/forestry liaison) met with Virginia's new Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, Dr. Edwin Martinez, and his leadership team, David Kris (assistant state conservationist for water resource operations) and Chad Wentz (state resource conservationist). VDOF has had a good working relationship with the NRCS for many years under the recently retired State Conservationist Jack Bricker's leadership and we look forward to continuing the valuable partnership with the new NRCS leadership staff.
- Rob Farrell and Terry Lasher met with the forestry and ag advocacy groups to review VDOF's efforts related to tree preservation during land development and preserving tree canopy in developed areas. The group agreed to continue working on this effort and to reach out to other stakeholders to prepare for proposed legislation, likely involving a recommendation for a study led by VDOF.
- Rob Farrell was a presenter for a Peer Learning Session titled "Cross-Boundary Tools to Implement Shared Stewardship" hosted by the U.S. Forest Service, National Forest Foundation and National Association of State Foresters. Rob presented on Virginia's successful use of the Good Neighbor Authority to get management work done on the National Forest. There were about 140 participants from all across the country.

Administration

- Significant progress is being made toward closing on Phase 1 of the new Charlotte State Forest no later than early December. VDOF is working closely with our partners at The Conservation Fund (TCF),

Department General Services (DGS), and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to work through the review of documents and all of the details of a project of this significance. Special recognition to VDOF staff person Andrew Fotinos who, as a result of vacancies on the land conservation team, has taken the lead role for VDOF on this project.

- The first two tractor sheds – in Fluvanna and Goochland – are essentially complete and are working through the construction punch list. Power for both locations is scheduled and should be completed in the next 30 days. Looking ahead we have three other locations – Hanover, Tazewell, and Russell – that will soon be ready for the construction bid process.

Forestland Conservation

- Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager) and Molly O'Liddy, (U&CF partnership coordinator) were deployed to Mobile, Alabama as task specialists for the Urban Forest Strike Team response to Hurricane Sally. Over the course of a week, the strike team assessed tree risk and damage in three different cities. Along with Virginia and Alabama, task specialists from Mississippi, Georgia, Texas and Tennessee were in attendance.
- Joe Lehnen (utilization & marketing urban wood specialist) represented VDOF at the Virginia Tech Forest Landowner Education Program Forestry and Wildlife Field Day at the VA State Arboretum in Clarke County. There were approximately 25 attendees who visited six stations during the daylong event. One of the stations was urban/local wood including a portable sawmill demonstration. Joe documented some of the day's events on VDOF's Instagram account.
- Terry Lasher had a meeting with Virginia Tech Forestry Professor Dr. John Munsell to discuss opportunities for non-traditional forest products in Southwest Virginia. Dr. Munsell and Terry discussed rural economic development, workforce development strategies and potential utilization and marketing opportunities surrounding a growing segment of forest products such as black cohosh, ginseng and forest farming.
- Terry Lasher attended a virtual conference meeting hosted by Virginia Tech Extension discussing Commercial Scale Industrial Solar Development projects. Several topics were covered including soil impacts, location and siting of projects.
- Amanda Scheps (conservation easement specialist) presented at the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) meeting regarding updates to the forestry section for the upcoming funding cycle of VLCF funding. The event was attended by potential applicants as well as several partners and other land trust organizations.

Forest Resource Management

- Todd Groh (forest management coordinator), Deya Ramsden (Middle James River Forest Watershed project coordinator), Anne Ligush (Bay watershed specialist) and Josh McLaughlin (assistant nursery manager) spent the morning of October 16 reviewing the selection, quality and quantity of the hardwood seedlings available at the Augusta Forestry Center for winter/spring 2020-21. This visit takes place annually in September/October to provide the foresters with information to determine the best seedlings to recommend for planting of forest riparian buffers. The report was sent to the Deputy Regional Foresters for distribution.
- Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) met with Jesse Bander (forest technician) and Heather Tuck (Eastern Region fire specialist) to look at an approximately five-acre bark beetle spot on Dragon Run State Forest in King and Queen County. Heather flew the drone to see how large the spot was from above and then ground checks were done to assess which bark beetles were present in the stand. It was determined most trees were stressed and succumbed to black turpentine beetle activity.

Afterwards, Katlin and Jesse went to Sandy Point State Forest (King William County) to check on the hemlocks and survey for hemlock woolly adelgid.

Agency Lands

- Garland Gray Nursery held a hiring fair last week and hired three new part-time employees for the upcoming lifting season.
- The new crop of containerized loblolly pine seedlings is now being processed. This year the nursery successfully produced over 300,000 containerized loblolly pine seedlings.
- Jerre Creighton (research program manager) participated in a virtual strategic planning meeting with Virginia Tech Forest Modeling Research Coop staff. Subject areas were planning for 1) the tree sampling and 2) installing the pilot study of the new thin x fertilize x hardwood control plots at Prince Edward.
- Longleaf cone collection at South Quay is completed – only five bushels were gathered. Jim Schroering (longleaf/southern pine beetle prevention coordinator) will gather the crop at New Kent and submit a final summary when done.
- On October 5, Ed Stoots (state-lands coordinator) was given a tour of the Conway Robinson and Whitney State Forests with Tom Zaebst (assistant state forests manager) and Justin Barnes (deputy regional forester) present for both visits. Jordan Herring (area forester) was present on Conway Robinson and Sarah Parmelee (area forester) on Whitney. Lots of good things going on with both State Forests and the efforts by all are greatly appreciated.
- Ed Stoots and Tom Zaebst visited First Mountain State Forests on October 20 along with Matt Wolanski (senior area forester). Very impressive views were noted on the visit! Matt has worked with forest health team to treat hemlocks earlier this year for infestations of woolly adelgid. There were none present during the visit so the treatment was a success. A new hunting sign was installed stating what hunting was allowed and a map of the property was posted on the kiosk for visitors.
- Staff repaired a culvert on a walking trail on Crawfords State Forest and installed a ford stream crossing.
- On October 13, Shannon Lewis (forest management forester) was contacted to help find two hikers that had gotten lost hiking in the Cumberland State Forest. All parties were safely found.

State-Owned Lands:

- Todd Groh and Ed Stoots visited the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Catawba Hospital property to examine potential areas for various hardwood management demonstration projects. Several sites hold promise for various treatments that could demonstrate both short-term and long-term practices that could help with oak regeneration and VDOF's hardwood initiative going forward.

Central Region

- At the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest, Derek Keiser (water quality specialist) instructed nine new employees from the Central and Eastern Regions regarding safe ATV operations.
- Rodney Newlin (water quality engineer) provided operational training to new drone pilots in the Eastern Region.
- Bill Perry (forester specialist) coordinated and led two separate chainsaw safety and operations refresher sessions involving a total of 32 employees from the Central Region. One session took place at the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest and the other session occurred on the First Mountain

State Forest in Rockingham County. The sessions covered numerous topics including tree felling accident analysis, skill building exercises, and saw maintenance. A special thanks to Bill for taking the initiative, time and effort to coordinate and lead the refresher!

Eastern Region

- On October 13, Rodney Newlin and Jim Pugh (information systems) provided drone training to Brian Lacey (pine resource specialist), Steve Coleman (water quality specialist) and Heather Tuck in Amelia County. Each of the new pilots received their new drones, and while each drone has different capabilities, all of them can be used for mapping. As part of the training they flew and mapped ("photographed") a recently harvested stand in Amelia County. Brian's drone is the one that took the photographs that were stitched together to produce the image in the attached link. The "stitching together" is done by a company that charges for the service with the fee dependent upon how many photographs are involved. It is done using a "point" system. The image from the first flight for AME95054 is viewable at https://www.mapsmadeeasy.com/maps/public/effa5b8b05e44ff9911b384b5555a55d/

Western Region

- Daniel Cloeter and Bill Sweeney (area foresters) were both featured on Roanoke's CBS affiliate WDBJ7's *Morning Show.* The station did two stories during their morning time slot about their recent summer western fire details. Daniel went to two fires in Arizona and Bill worked one "gigafire" in California. Rocky Mount foresters return from battling wildfires out west
- Jon Perry and Rocky Wood (forest technicians) and Greg Estoll (senior area forester) teamed up with Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Virginia Cooperative Extension to record a virtual Kids in the Woods event for Buchanan County students this year. The recordings are currently being edited by an assistant director at the SWCD and put into a format useable by the school district.
- Volunteers came to the campus of the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind (VSDB) to plant 30 container saplings. A variety of species were planted to create a screen and to add green canopy to the beautiful campus. State Lands funds were used to purchase the trees, planted as part of a city wide effort to establish 2,700 trees throughout the city; one tree for every student in Staunton City Schools. Students from VSDB and Mary Baldwin University helped plant the trees, along with local residents and friends. It was a beautiful day, and all of the trees were in the ground before lunchtime! (pictured)

- Andrew Vinson (water quality specialist) gave a virtual lecture to the Virginia Tech Forest Harvesting class on water quality and best management practices for timber harvesting operations. Twenty-six students were in attendance. Following the lecture, the students were shown a pre-recorded field exercise where Andrew walked them through a recent timber harvest and explained the best management practices in use. Thanks to Dylan White (forest technician) for assisting with the pre-recorded field exercise.

Field Notes

- Covey Call in the Big Woods

News Clips

- Ash disaster: Local ash trees Face their own pandemic

- Bulleit Teams Up with American Forests to Plant One Million Trees Over the Next Five Years in Continued Fight Against Climate Change