



November 16, 2020

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Employee Spotlight

Russell Proctor, David Edwards and Fred Turck - Job Well Done!

- ◆ The email below was received from a homeowners’ association in Carroll County:
 - “The need for the installation of a dry hydrant on the Cascade Mountain Property Association’s pond has been discussed in this community by previous boards of directors as far back as 2017. However, it has taken a new board that includes a retired Assistant Fire Marshal to see this idea become a reality.

Thanks to the wonderful world of Google, we were able to email Russell Proctor (regional fire program specialist) who responded within hours with a phone call asking how he might be of assistance. We were able to set up a site visit with Russell and David Edwards (technician specialist) and within an hour had a plan for the installation, Fred Turck’s (prevention program manager) contact information, and an idea of our cost as well as any monetary help from the Virginia Department of Forestry.

After years of discussion, your men took minutes to make this a reality and help not only our community but our Carroll County neighbors as well.

It is refreshing to deal with a state agency that works quickly, professionally, and with minimum hassle to help a community do the right thing. Please thank Russell, David, and Fred for their hard work and quick response to our problem. The hydrant has been installed and we are awaiting a day when the Cana Volunteer Fire Department will do a trial run!

Thank you again for your agency's help and your employees' expertise. We are truly grateful."

Employee News

Welcome to VDOF

- ◆ Tony Bailey joined VDOF on November 12 in the Eastern Region as their new mechanic. He comes with significant experience as a mechanic with Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Department of Corrections (DOC) and the private industry. Please welcome him to the VDOF team.

Leaving VDOF

- ◆ Scott Adams (forestry and inventory analysis (FIA) field assistant) has accepted another position in the conservation field, beginning later this month. Thanks to Scott for his service to VDOF and the FIA Program.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ On November 5, Rob Farrell visited with the Blackwater Work Area team in Southeast Virginia. Rob worked as an arborist in the private sector before joining VDOF more than 20 years ago; during this visit, Rob used his expansive urban forestry skills to assist the Blackwater team in training staff from the City of Chesapeake Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism in how to prune and care for urban trees. While in the Blackwater area, he also visited with staff from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – a key partner of VDOF – and learned more about their work in longleaf pine restoration in Southeast Virginia.
- ◆ On November 6, Rob moved further east and met with Senior Area Forester Robbie Lewis in the Maritime Work Area. Rob and Robbie met with a landowner near TNC's Brownsville Reserve who owns property protected by a conservation easement held by TNC. This landowner is currently seeking a stewardship plan that will assist him in managing his land into the future.
- ◆ Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer represented VDOF and the forestry community at a virtual public meeting mandated by 2020 General Assembly Session HB 1639. This bill asked relevant agencies and other interested parties to review the need to better regulate the dumping of offsite fill material on agriculture-zoned properties and to what degree localities should be able to better regulate such activities. Ed's comments focused on the limited degree to which this would potentially happen on harvesting sites, and the fact that it was already strictly regulated by the Silvicultural Water Quality Law.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Joe Lehn (urban wood utilization forester) participated in the informal, but national, monthly Urban Wood Project phone call hosted by the US Forest Service (USFS) Baltimore Project.
- ◆ The Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards (CATS) planted an additional 11 trees on the VDOF Headquarters grounds on November 5. Many thanks to all that participated, including VDOF staff

Justin Barnes (deputy regional forester), Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management), Molly O'Liddy (urban & community forestry [U&CF] partnership coordinator), Lara Johnson (U&CF program manager) and Percy Ayers (housekeeping team leader).

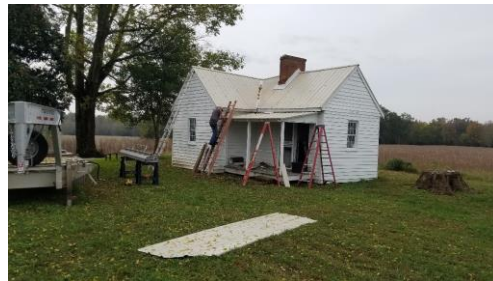
Forest Resource Management

- ◆ The hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) is a small non-native insect that has caused significant loss of hemlock trees in Virginia. As with most non-native species, the insect has few natural enemies. However, the entomology lab at Virginia Tech is raising predatory beetles (*Laricobius osakensis*) that are available for cooperators to release. VDOF's forest health program obtained 510 of these beetles to release at Nature Camp in Vesuvius (Rockbridge County). These beetles will hopefully establish at this site and begin to control HWA populations. Follow-up monitoring of this site will occur next fall.
- ◆ The Cooperative Forestry section of the USFS offers competitive funding each year through Landscape Level Restoration (LSR) Grants. On November 6, VDOF submitted three LSR grant proposals to the USFS Region 9 Office in Atlanta. The first proposal seeks funding for a VDOF Hardwood Coordinator to further develop the Hardwood Initiative as well as the larger multi-state Upland Oak Sustainability and Management Plan. The second, in partnership with TNC, would bring support for strategies to increase prescribed burning for forest restoration, concentrated in southern and eastern Virginia. The third would be a cooperative project with Virginia Tech for natural control of the problematic invasive Ailanthus tree, followed by restoration of sites with native trees. Thanks to Bryant Bays (eastern regional forester), Brian van Eerden (TNC), Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist), Dr. Scott Salom (Virginia Tech), Jerre Creighton (forest research program manager) and Todd Groh (forest resource management program coordinator) for their assistance in preparing the proposals. The VDOF proposals are among 33 others from across the South. The USFS will rank and select the top proposals, with anticipated results in early 2021.
- ◆ Todd Groh attended the virtual meeting of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR), Virginia Agriculture Cost Share (VACS), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to discuss new practices for the FY2022 program year. The new program year begins on July 1, 2021. Due to COVID-19 concerns, the TAC and subcommittee meetings were held virtually this year and the only proposed new practice addressed was a temporary fencing practice which was passed by the TAC on November 4. Currently, there are three specific forestry practices covered under the VACS Program; FR-1 - Afforestation of Crop, Hay and Pasture Land; FR-3 - Woodland Buffer Filter Area; and FR-4 - Woodland Erosion Stabilization. The DCR's specifications for these practices can be found in their on-line [Agricultural Cost-Share Manual](#).

Agency Lands

- ◆ Garland Gray Forestry Center (GGFC) packaged 287,000 containerized loblolly pine seedlings for Weyerhaeuser Company. In order to promote more fall growth this year, the seedlings were lifted on October 7 – more than a week earlier than last year. Last year's crop root collar diameter (RCD) was 3.2 mm. This year the average was 4mm.
- ◆ GGFC also grew and packaged roughly 130,000 longleaf pine containerized seedlings.
- ◆ Both GGFC and the Augusta Forestry Center have worked diligently to minimize the risk of infectious disease during the critical lifting and packing season that commenced last week. Some precautions that have been taken include plexiglass on the grading tables, limiting number of contract workers in a building, enforcement of masks, and increasing ventilation in the grading room. In addition, GGFC is going to utilize more cold storages this year and lift a week in December to help mitigate any unforeseen circumstances that could happen this season.

- ◆ Virginia State Forests received their surveillance annual audit report back from NSF - the body that holds Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) & American Tree Farm System (ATFS) Certification on the State Forests. The forest system was found to be in full conformance with the referenced standards. NSF did not identify any non-conformances or opportunities for improvement for either the SFI or the ATFS Forest Management Standards. One (1) Exceeds recommendation was given in reference to SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules®, Section 2 – Forest Management Indicator 3.2.1-Program. This section addresses management and protection of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, other water bodies and riparian areas during all phases of management, including the layout and construction of roads and skid trails to maintain water reach, flow and quality. Observations during the field tour confirmed well-designed use of ditches, crowning, wing ditches, rock, seeding, hay bales, logging debris and other water-diversion methods to minimize soil movement and prevent sedimentation into water.
- ◆ Staff assisted Department Wildlife Resources (DWR) staff with duck blind construction at Sandy Point State Forest and attached duck blind licenses to them.
- ◆ Re-roofing work on the "Old Kitchen House" at Zoar State Forests was completed. (Pictured: before and after).



- ◆ Encourage everybody to take a few minutes to enjoy an outstanding article and video about Virginia's prescribed fire and longleaf restoration work, published in the November edition of the Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine: [Prescribed burns are being used for land management and habitat restoration in the Southeast.](#)

Rebecca Wilson and Steve Living are profiled, and they just nailed it. Kudos to both for superb work communicating the role of fire in longleaf management and for shining the light on Virginia's interagency fire team! State forest personnel Ben Dukes is even featured in a photo.

- ◆ Staff conducted a tour of Sandy Point State Forest with Virginia Coop Extension with help from Eastern Region staff Ken Sterner (senior area forester), Jim Schroering (longleaf/southern pine beetle [SPB] prevention coordinator), Lisa Deaton and Dave Slack (area foresters), as well as DWR and USDA staff.
- ◆ Material was procured for the installation of a new office sign at the Cumberland State Forest. All State Forests signage is in the process of being replaced, incorporating the proper VDOF shield into the design. \$5,000 worth of signs are being budgeted each year until completed.

State-Owned Lands:

- ◆ The College of William & Mary Ash Lawn Highlands timber sale was posted on VDOF's website for bids to be received on December 3. The sale consists of a total harvest of 22 acres containing 380.70 MBF of sawtimber and 646 tons of pulpwood.
- ◆ A sale was also posted for the College of William & Mary Endowment Association through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VDOF consisting of thinning 18 acres containing 683 tons of pulpwood and 775 tons of pine sawtimber. Bid opening is also December 3.

- ◆ Approval was received to proceed with a timber sale on the Greensville Correctional Center consisting of approximately 175 acres. Staff will be working to mark the sale boundaries before performing a timber cruise.
- ◆ VDOF staff met with Virginia Tech - McCormick Farm staff to plan for a timber sale on McCormick Farm Agricultural Research Center. The sale would consist of thinning from below on approximately 42 acres with eight one-acre blocks scattered throughout the unit utilizing a “femelschlag” or expanding gap harvest system to favor oak regeneration. Another 18 acres would be thinned from below while also targeting the removal of white pine and favoring oak regeneration. Approximately six acres would be a total harvest to be replanted to pine. VDOF staff also met with WestRock staff concerning the viability of the harvesting from a harvest operation’s side.
- ◆ Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc. is also discussing doing a MOU with VDOF to do a total harvest on approximately 12 acres of mixed hardwood that joins McCormick Farm that would be partially planted to pine to create a silvopasture area.
- ◆ Ed Stoots (state lands coordinator) will be holding conference calls with various VDOT districts starting this week to discuss the State-Owned Lands Program and ways that VDOT and the Commonwealth could benefit from greater use of the program. VDOT staff set up the first conference calls for November 10 and 16.

Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)

- ◆ Ed Stoots met with USFS staff from the Mount Rogers Ranger District to look at possible GNA work in the Ivanhoe/Pellbridge area of Wythe County. Currently the USFS is evaluating several hundred acres as a part of their Ewing Mountain Endangered Species Act (ESA)/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review for possible harvesting with VDOF being considered as a GNA project. Their NEPA review would not be completed before March 1, 2021.

Central Region

- ◆ Drew Arnn (senior area forester) served as guest lecturer for the Forest Ecology class at Averett University. Subjects discussed included tree species diversity in the Commonwealth, forest succession in the Piedmont and local fire ecology.
- ◆ Jim McGlone (urban forest conservationist) taught a section of the Woodland Health Practices virtual workshop with 151 trainees. This workshop and the accompanying handbook are aimed at existing landscape professionals, with the goal of expanding the pool of forestry service providers for urban and small woodlot parcels.

Eastern Region

- ◆ November 5 was a special day in the Blackwater work area – it was State Forester Visit Day! Blackwater work area staff put Rob Farrell’s knowledge to full use. The City of Chesapeake Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PR&T) manages a large number of city-owned trees but does not currently have a staff arborist. Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community forester) arranged a pruning workshop for a number of PR&T staff; training grounds were the young trees at the Chesapeake Public Safety Operations Center – a several-years-old facility that houses the city dispatch center.



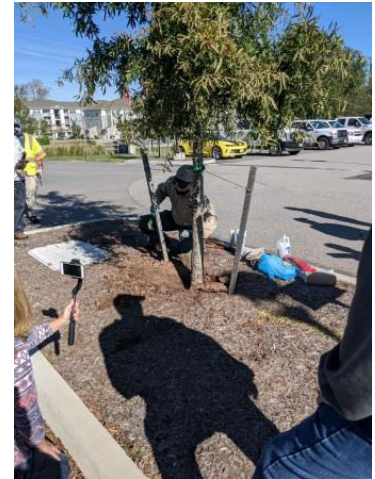


Following a discussion of proper planting depth and a demonstration of root collar excavations, the workers split up into groups of four with Stephen Jasenak (area forester), Scott Bachman (senior area forester), Meghan and Rob as group leaders. John Rose (forest technician) and Manij Upadhyay (area forester) worked between the groups moving debris and helping with the excavations and pruning chores.

After several hours, the groups had pruned more

than thirty trees, removed stakes and improved site conditions. The PR&T staff and Parks Manager Kevin Kaul expressed their thanks for the hands-on training. The site looked great after the work. We hope the bit of training provided will assist in the management of their community forest.

- ◆ After the pruning exercise, the team showed Rob an older longleaf planting and a “burn box” – a unique burning tool for land clearing. We then met with TNC’s Bobby Clontz in Smithfield to review a longleaf demonstration planting they did in partnership with the Town of Smithfield and DCR.



Public Information

- ◆ Director of Public Information Michelle Stoll met with Adam Downing and Jen Gagnon (Virginia Cooperative Extension [VCE]) to discuss the public launch of the Generation NEXT publication, *Legacy Planning – A Guide for Virginia Landowners*. This guide will serve as Virginia-specific support material for the Generation NEXT Legacy Planning Workshops offered by VCE. Until now, the team has been using a similar resource from Oregon State University's Ties to the Land Program. This guide provides woodland owners with manageable steps they can take to move through the legacy planning process. The public launch will include a media relations strategy once the guides are printed (end of the year).

News Clips

- ◆ [UMaine, NASA will map carbon in forests, helping monitor their health, climate progress](#)
- ◆ [What 13,000 wildfires teach us about Washington forests](#)
- ◆ [Larger, older trees can store more carbon and help tackle climate change](#)
- ◆ [How Biomass Could Reduce the Risk of Wildfires](#)
- ◆ [Canadian wood fibre biodegradable COVID-19 mask coming in 2021](#)
- ◆ [Mass timber reaches for new heights to unlock zero-carbon cities](#)
- ◆ [Carpenter Designs Wooden Motorcycles—ride against the grain](#)
- ◆ [White Oak Initiative \(video\)](#)
- ◆ [Does NY Plastic Bag Ban Open New Opportunities for Paper?](#)
- ◆ [Beyond Timber: The Future of Forest Products](#)
- ◆ [Esperance’s Landis Arboretum inducted into Old-Growth Forest Network](#)
- ◆ [Q+A: Transforming payments for forest environmental services in Vietnam](#)

- ◆ [Judge throws out lawsuit challenging the bulldozing of Maryland forest](#)
- ◆ [6 differences between forestry and soil carbon offsets](#)
- ◆ [Finding Prehistoric Rain Forests by Studying Modern Mammals](#)
- ◆ [Alabama's leading National Forests advocates announce rebirth of Wild Alabama](#)