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Employee Spotlight

Sarah Parmelee and Amanda Scheps – Thank You!

- ◆ Joe Rossetti (Rappahannock work area senior area forester) met with a landowner January 12 in Fauquier who recently purchased the property. He said while he was looking, he considered buying a different property that has a VDOF easement. While considering that purchase, he talked to both Sarah (forestland conservation coordinator) and Amanda (forest conservation specialist) and he was very complimentary of both. He said they were prompt, courteous, and helpful. They explained things well for him as a novice forestland owner who knew nothing about conservation easements. He has now retired from working in and around the federal government and was used to answers taking a while, so he was surprised when Amanda looked up the property and answered his questions on the spot. Thank you both for your attention and care with landowners.

Percy Ayers and Jeff Hensley – Job Well Done!

- ◆ Below is an email received from State Geologist and Director Division of Geology and Mineral Resources, Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) David Spears.
 - I hope all is well in the Department of Forestry. We've got some big changes coming to DMME, including a proposed name change for the agency. Also, the Division of Geology and Mineral Resources is doubling the size of our staff this year, thanks to successful grant applications to the U.S. Geological Survey.

As a result, we've had to shuffle staff office assignments, and I just wanted to let you know that Jeff (trades utility technician) and Percy (housekeeping team leader) have been extremely helpful. They have moved furniture, patched and painted walls, and generally facilitated the whole process with their pleasant and cooperative manners. It has all gone much more smoothly than I could have expected, thanks to them.

Ed Stoots and VDOF – Thank you!

- ◆ The below email was received from Administrator & Chief Operating Officer of Catawba Hospital Charles Law. See Catawba Hospital Ford Crossing article below written by Chad Austin (water quality engineer) in reference to this project.
 - Many thanks to VDOF, Ed Stoots (state lands coordinator) and the cadre of volunteers who came to install this Geo Mesh project and improve our Forest Management actions on Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services (DBHDS) lands in the Catawba Valley.



You guys are making our valley more sustainable and keeping its natural beauty one project at a time! Thanks for this one benefitting DBHDS, Catawba Hospital and the local residents' viewshed.

Fred Turck – Job Well Done!

- ◆ Below is an email from Jon Cooper a landowner in Botetourt County that attended the virtual 2021 Virginia Certified Prescribed Burn Managers Course.
 - The burn manager course has been very enjoyable and educational. Fred has really done a terrific job of coordinating this virtual project, and the hiccups have been very few and very minor.

Items of Note

Catawba Hospital Ford Crossing

- ◆ The below article was submitted by Water Quality Engineer Chad Austin.
- ◆ Last week members of the western region and water quality team installed a GeoWeb ford stream crossing on the Catawba Hospital grounds in Roanoke County. The ford crossing was installed using State Lands funds from a timber sale being conducted by the agency on the hospital's property. This crossing will replace an extremely undersized culvert crossing that has been a maintenance issue for many years and is in a state of disrepair.
 
- ◆ Ford crossings, where applicable, are one of the most preferred low-cost alternatives to culvert crossings. Ford and bridge crossings are a preferred option in watersheds where land-use change and impervious surfaces like roads and parking lots make flash flooding and greater runoff an issue. Preferred sites for fords often include streams with large watersheds where pipe sizing and bridge crossings are impractical due to stream bank widths; and where low, wide banks are conducive to vehicle traffic.
 
- ◆ The new crossing installation at the hospital will be used to educate loggers and landowners who are considering the installation of GeoWeb ford crossings. It was created with the intention of incorporating it into SHARP Logger trainings and landowner educational

opportunities. Our specialists and field personnel were able to see the various processes and challenges that operators encounter when considering stream crossing options. This, in turn, will aid our field staff in making sound water quality recommendations and suggestions in the future.

- ◆ We would like to thank participants for all the contributions from the region and the agency to make this project successful. Western Region Water Quality Engineer Chad Austin would like to thank State Lands Coordinator Ed Stoots for funding the project; Matt Poirot (water quality program director), Andrew Vinson, Stuart Sours, Cole Young, Adam Cumpston, and Zoë Sumrall (water quality specialists); David Edwards (Mt. Rogers technician); Dylan White (Blue Ridge technician); Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester); and Chris Thomsen (Western regional forester) for various work on crossing planning, construction, documentation, and logistics. Additional thanks to Charles Law with Catawba Hospital for the assistance with manpower and equipment needed for this project. (pictured)



New wood products manufacturing facility

- ◆ Governor Northam recently announced the establishment of a new wood products manufacturing facility in the Town of Saint Paul. Rambler Wood Products will convert a range of hardwood species, from high quality white oak to wood residuals, for products that include barrel staves, dimensional lumber, and paper and biomass products. Rambler is committing to source at least 55 percent of its timber from the Commonwealth, supporting regional loggers and forestland owners through the purchase of \$22.3 million in Virginia-grown hardwoods over the next three years. This operation affirms the importance of Virginia's Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative, supports Southwest Virginia's economy through the establishment of 73 new jobs in Russell County, and demonstrates that Virginia is an attractive location for investment.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer represented VDOF in a video meeting with Virginia Tech's 2020-2021 College of Natural Resources and Environment Leadership cohort. The Leadership program takes its students through a year-long program of leadership development and self-analysis. In past years, the group began their week-long trip to the seats government with a stop at VDOF. This year the program was all virtual.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager) participated in virtual meetings for Clinch River Valley Initiative Steering Committee and Virginia Land Conservation & Greenways Conference planning committee.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (U&CF partnership coordinator) attended the virtual Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course. Presentation topics included rainwater management, mushroom & fungi decay, and how trees can save the world. A community who received funding through the VDOF Virginia Trees for Clean Water (VTCW) program also presented examples of how restoration efforts have been achieved

through planting. Many foresters within the agency were able to attend and receive continuing education credits (CEUs).

- ◆ Molly O'Liddy attended a U&CF Southern Group call to discuss logistics of the 'Winter Meeting'. The winter meeting will include all U&CF representatives from the southern states (Alabama, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Texas) and will layout project initiatives for the next year.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy attended a Trees Virginia conference call where new members to the board were voted in. Newly filled seats will include the landscape architect seat, the municipality seat and the non-profit seat.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ The Southern Research Station (SRS) has released the new issue of "The Inventory," and Update Concerning the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program. https://www.fs.usda.gov/srsfia/program_information/TheInventory_Issue60_Jan2021.pdf. This issue contains information about quick access to the Timber Products Output Factsheets, including a 2020 Virginia update; interesting information about non-timber forest products, including food and medicinal produces, several of which are concentrated in southwest Virginia; an update on longleaf forests (Virginia has now reappeared in the FIA data!); as well as current status of current data and inventories.
- ◆ Several VDOF staff members participated in a quarterly update call with representatives of the Black Family Land Trust (BFLT). Justin Barnes (deputy regional forester), Bryant Bays (regional forester), Todd Groh (forest resource management program coordinator) and Dean Cumbia (director forest resource management) from VDOF and Ebonie Alexander and Kay Hamlin of BFLT discussed recent forest management planning efforts and implementation efforts with landowners, and future outreach efforts.
- ◆ Todd Groh and Deya Ramsden (James River buffer program coordinator), presented and facilitated discussion for the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) Planning for Planting, Installation, and Maintenance webinar for riparian forest buffers held on January 15. Todd made a presentation on site preparation and invasive plants considerations for the attendees in the morning. Deya and Todd helped facilitate a breakout room discussion later that morning for several participants on developing a plan for a site in Amherst County. This webinar is combined with several field and online activities that will lead participants to earning a CBLP Riparian Forest Buffer Certification.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Jerre Creighton (research program manager) measured pines at the remaining two locations (on Cumberland and Dragon Run State Forests) of the study comparing containerized and bare root seedlings and one location (Dragon Run) of the study comparing storage systems (kraft bags vs our traditional open-ended bundles) for loblolly seedlings.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton, Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management) and Tom Zaebs (assistant state forests manager) visited the new Charlotte State Forest to learn the property boundaries and access points and assess the forest types and stands for potential future research opportunities or hardwood silviculture demonstration areas.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton, Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester), Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager), Katlin Dewitt (forest health specialist) and Lara Johnson participated in a conference call with Dr. Erin Putalik and Dr. Michael Luegering of UVA to discuss their developing programs tentatively

aimed at understanding the impacts of changing forests on the supply of building materials for architectural uses.

- ◆ Shannon Lewis (forest management forester) worked on lining up materials, people, and equipment for the parking lot installation on the brand new Charlotte State Forest. Folks installed the sign for Charlotte State Forest and prepared a parking area on January 19. (Pictured)
- ◆ Zach Olinger (forest management & education specialist) participated in a conference call on white pine grant proposals with Virginia Tech and the University of Maine.

