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**Contents**

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**Employee Spotlight..... 1**  
 David Edwards – A Great Honor!..... 1

**Action Requested ..... 2**  
 2021 State of the Forest Report ..... 2

**News You Can Use ..... 2**  
 Tax Statements for Unemployment Insurance Claims ..... 2

**Project Updates ..... 2**  
 Urban Wood Project - 21 ..... 2

**Last Week..... 3**  
 State Forester ..... 3  
 Forestland Conservation ..... 3  
 Forest Resource Management ..... 3  
 Agency Lands ..... 4  
 Central Region ..... 4  
 Eastern Region ..... 4  
 News Clips..... 5

**Employee Spotlight**

***David Edwards – A Great Honor!***

- ◆ David Edwards (forest technician) was awarded an Office of Professional Standards (O.P.S) Protector Challenge Coin by Conservation Officers from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). Individuals who receive a sequentially-numbered O.P.S. Protector Challenge Coin and appear on a permanently maintained roll have been nominated by Conservation Police Officers currently serving on the frontlines; these individuals were then approved by the Law Enforcement O.P.S. Advisory Council. Challenge Coins formally recognize those cooperators in the Commonwealth who have gone above and



beyond to aid and assist the efforts of DWR law enforcement officers. Through their continued dedication and commitment, these supporters have earned a unique place within DWR that ranks them as a “Wildlife and Natural Resources Protector”. (pictured)

## Action Requested

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### *2021 State of the Forest Report*

- ◆ The 2020 State of the Forest Report is an achievement we can all be proud of. Each year the report highlights many of our outstanding accomplishments and current data to tell the story of forests and forestry in Virginia. Each of us plays a role in that story and has a part to tell. Public Information invites you to share your successes and ideas for the 2021 State of the Forest throughout the year. Have you received a letter or email from a landowner recognizing your hard work or the efforts of one of your staff? Maybe a project you've worked on has yielded interesting results or data. Let's not forget photographs of projects and events. These are the kinds of things that make our story compelling. When you have an idea, a story, photos or data to share for next year's State of the Forest, please let us know. It's as easy as sending an email to [publicinfo@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:publicinfo@dof.virginia.gov).

## News You Can Use

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### *Tax Statements for Unemployment Insurance Claims*

- ◆ The Virginia Employment Commission recently shared that some state employees received tax statements for Unemployment Insurance claims filed in their name as a matter of identity theft. These employees should visit the link below and complete two actions.
  - Complete the online fraud/identity theft report form that can be found on the web page linked below.
  - Complete the request for a corrected 1099 in accordance with the instructions listed on the website.<https://www.vec.virginia.gov/node/12663>

## Project Updates

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### *Urban Wood Project - 21*

- ◆ Twenty-one? That's the number of businesses added to the Urban & Small Woodlot Forestry Business Directory in 2020! A breakdown of the primary services offered by these new entries are as follows:
  - Small Parcel Management: 9
  - Wood Crafters: 7
  - Portable Sawmills: 3
  - Kiln Operators & Lumber Sales: 2
- ◆ The directory of service providers can be found at: [www.vurbanwoodhelp.org](http://www.vurbanwoodhelp.org)
- ◆ The Virginia Urban Wood Project is also participating in the new four-week, eight-session Natural Area Management Series Level-2 training webinar series. These trainings were developed by a cadre from Virginia Tech Extension, Penn State Extension, University of Maryland Extension, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and VDOF. The goal is to expand the knowledge and skills of service providers serving the needs of small parcel landowners across the multi-state area. Workshop registration information

can be located at: <https://www.treesvirginia.org/events/paid/127-natural-area-management-services-webinar-series-2>

## Last Week

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### State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell, Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager) and Molly O'Liddy (U&CF partnership coordinator) attended the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) U&CF Winter Meeting hosted virtually by North Carolina. All coordinators from the 13 Southern states and islands, as well as representatives from the USDA Forest Service and SGSF, attended. States shared projects and challenges faced in 2020, as well as ideas for future cross-state collaborations. Presentation subjects included the Urban Forest Strike Team lessons learned and updates on the Urban Economic Impact Study for the South as well as many others.
- ◆ VDOF is currently providing 15 personnel to VDEM in various positions serving as the Commonwealth of Virginia Incident Management Team (IMT). Thirteen large Community Vaccination Centers (CVCs) across Virginia have been assigned to VDOF's IMT, with the given assignment of establishing, expanding, supporting, and coordinating increased vaccination capacity, in support of the Governor's goal of providing 50,000 COVID-19 vaccinations daily in the Commonwealth. In the short term, the IMT is coordinating the Virginia Department of Health, local health districts, and Virginia's Medical Reserve Corp to supply increased levels of staffing at the identified sites. Longer term, the IMT will have the responsibility of transitioning the entire operation over to the National Guard, as increased Guard assets become available over the next three to four weeks.

### Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) participated in the Department of Environmental Quality's Coastal Policy Team meeting. Coastal resiliency, the Coastal Resiliency Framework, and assisting State and Federally recognized Native Americans with conservation projects were points of the discussion.
- ◆ The final deadline for Tree City USA Applications was the end of January. Molly O'Liddy and Lara Johnson worked hard to evaluate and approve Tree Line, Tree Campus and Tree City applications as well as those entered for a "growth award." More than 60 communities have applied or are in progress of seeking Tree City USA status. Despite 2020 being a very challenging year, we had four new communities apply for this designation. Along with Tree City, we have one new electric coop applying for Tree Line USA designation, bringing the total number of additions to the program to five. Finally, we have the Tree Campus Program with 10 participants.

### Forest Resource Management

- ◆ A new Forest Health Review has been published! This document summarizes forest health program work in 2020. A hard copy has been mailed to all VDOF offices, and you can view and download the digital version online. Email forest health staff if you need extra hard copies to hand out or keep in your office. [http://www.dof.virginia.gov/infopubs/fhr/FHR-2021-01\\_pub.pdf](http://www.dof.virginia.gov/infopubs/fhr/FHR-2021-01_pub.pdf)
- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health manager) attended the virtual SGSF Forest Health Committee meeting. This meeting was attended by state and federal partners. Agenda topics included budgets, hurricane damage assessment protocols, emerging pests such as Asian Longhorned Beetle in South Carolina, FIA and Forest Health integration, and outreach materials. The committee also reviewed the 2021 Forest Health work plan.
- ◆ Lori Chamberlin and Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) met Rich Reuse, (area forester) to assess a bark beetle spot in Chesterfield County. Black turpentine beetles were present and causing tree

decline, but there was no sign of southern pine beetles. The drone was used to view the forest canopy and look for more damage, but no large scale damage was observed. Southern pine beetle traps will be placed nearby at Pocahontas State Park this spring to monitor the population.

- ◆ Angela Holmes started as a forest inventory technician on January 27<sup>th</sup>. Angie is a graduate of Radford University with vegetation sampling experience on the Mountain Valley pipeline who will be working out of the Blacksburg area.
- ◆ On January 26, Dean Cumbia (forest management director) recorded content for a podcast with the Black Family Land Trust (BFLT). Topics included the importance of forest planning, including having a family business plan, the importance of conserving forestland in Virginia, and how landowners could respond to offers on their property. The podcast is part of the outreach to families, coordinated by BFLT's Kay Hamlin, and will be part of the Family Land Live series. Thanks to Amanda Scheps (forest conservation specialist) for her assistance with background information and facts.
- ◆ Dabney S. Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge has the only SAF-accredited two-year forestry technician program in Virginia, and many graduates serve in roles in the forestry community in Virginia, including some with VDOF. Billy Newman, the head of the forestry program at Dabney, is a long-time consulting forester who served with VDOF earlier in his career. On January 28, Dean Cumbia presented a session on non-industrial private forest landowners and forest management planning to the second year forestry students at Dabney.

### Agency Lands

- ◆ Garland Gary Forestry Center (GGFC) has graded 6,847,650 – twenty-six percent of our crop.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton (research program manager) collected soil samples from two potential American chestnut planting sites and shipped them to Dr. Steve Jeffers at Clemson University to be tested for the presence of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (which causes an often-fatal root rot disease of chestnut seedlings). The two sites are, Pleasant Grove Park in Fluvanna County and the former hybrid poplar study site on Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest (ABSF). Pleasant Grove is slated for a demonstration planting of hybrid chestnut seedlings and ABSF will be either a chestnut orchard site or a *Phytophthora* resistance test site, depending on the lab results.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton, John Scrivani and David Crouch (research technicians) have finished measuring pines on three of the four locations of the study of alternate planting layouts to maximize fiber production for different target products (biomass, pulpwood, sawtimber). All of the data have been keypunched and error-checked.
- ◆ Jeff Stout (tree improvement technician) cleaned and prepared cold storage 8 for seedling storage and began managing seedling delivery and pickup at New Kent Forestry Center.

### Central Region

- ◆ Joe Rossetti (senior area forester) was one of five panelists for the Blue Ridge Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) winter quarterly meeting on Winter Invasive Plant Control, which was held virtually. Approximately 400 people participated in at least a portion of the meeting from all over Virginia, and a few from other states including Texas, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, and Florida.

### Eastern Region

- ◆ Eli Podyma (community forester) and Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester) met with Daniel Klein from the Richmond Virginia (RVA) tree committee and representatives from the RVA Toolbank to discuss opportunities for urban wood processing in Richmond.

- ◆ Matthew Coleman (senior area forester) assisted Caroline County Public Works by identifying and flagging several danger trees adjacent to a walking trail. The county had installed the 2.5 mile trail through an area next to a county park that had been selectively harvested a few years ago. Many of the trees had succumbed to various ailments including soil compaction and mechanical damage.
- ◆ Michelle Stoll (public information director) visited Camp Kum-ba-yah in Lynchburg last weekend to cover ash tree removal activities. The camp holds historical significance in the Civil Rights Movement and will be featured in VDOF's Black History Month stories.
- ◆ The Public Information team shared a Field Notes post in memory of Page Hutchinson after her recent unexpected passing. Page was Virginia's PLT Coordinator and was very involved in the state's environmental education community. She will be missed dearly by many. <https://myvaforest.org/2021/02/04/in-memory-of-page-hutchinson/>

### News Clips

- ◆ [The Joy of Working with Wood](#)
- ◆ [Making Major League Baseball Bats From Forest to Field](#)
- ◆ [ACHS FFA conducts Harvest Bag project](#)
- ◆ [New Wildfire Smoke Research Improves Climate Modeling Accuracy](#)
- ◆ [NEW FOREST MANAGEMENT INCENTIVE FOR USDA'S CRP](#)
- ◆ [Tree map: Program catalogs every grove in the U.S. forest](#)
- ◆ [Forests Come Back Without Human Help](#)
- ◆ [The Conservation Fund Green Bonds](#)
- ◆ [Zooming Loggers, High-fiving Naturalists, and Landowner workshops: Extension Agents Reach Out in New Ways](#)
- ◆ [Seedling-distribution effort underway in Fairfax](#)
- ◆ [Controlled burn helping to keep Riverbend Park healthy](#)
- ◆ [P&G Harnesses Innovation to Accelerate Sustainable Change](#)
- ◆ [VTech to Launch Green Electronic Learning Products](#)