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Employee Spotlight

Michael Downey and Zach Long – Thank You!

- ◆ Michael Downey (area forester) and Zach Long (forest technician) received the below letter of appreciation from landowners in Louisa County, Tom and Jean Sullivan, regarding VDOF's response to a wildfire that occurred on the property on March 7.
- "My family and I would like to thank all of you for your efforts at the accidental field fire in Mineral, Virginia on Sunday, March 7, 2021. We were so thankful that you were able to stop this fire and that no one was hurt and that no property was destroyed. Additionally, our family and friends with us were treated with respect, spoken to kindly, and quickly calmed down. Those of you who spoke with our son were not only professional but kind and respectful to his embarrassment to this situation occurring. We appreciate all that you did for us, your professionalism in dealing with us, and of course, your exceptional efforts to stop the fire. We cannot imagine this having been handled any better. Thank you for everything, be safe, and have a great day!"

Employee News

Welcome to VDOF!

- ◆ We welcome Seth Miller and his family back to VDOF! Seth has been hired as an area forester in the Blue Ridge work area. He previously worked for the VDOF from 1999 through 2005 as a forest technician in Botetourt and Pittsylvania Counties. For the past fifteen years, he served as the Erosion and Sediment (E&S) coordinator for Botetourt County before returning to forestry as a procurement forester for WestRock (formerly Mead Westvaco) and most recently Long Island Lumber. Seth has an AS degree in Forestry from Dabney S. Lancaster Community College and a bachelor's degree in Occupational and Technical studies from Old Dominion University. He is also a veteran, having served in the United States Coast Guard. His broad array of experience in the public and private sectors will be a valuable asset to the Western Region and VDOF. His start date is April 10.

News You Can Use

Template – Pre-Harvest Best Management Practices (BMP) Plan for VDOF Easement Properties

- ◆ The Water Quality team and the Forestland Conservation team have developed a new pre-harvest plan (PHP) template for VDOF easement properties. Please use this template when writing PHPs on VDOF easement properties, as it includes easement-specific language relating to BMPs, notifications, etc. Easement properties may have additional restrictions. This template is located under "Water Resources" <http://intranet.dof.virginia.gov/templates-dof/index.asp> on the template page. Please contact [Sarah Parmelee](#) (forestland conservation coordinator) if you have any questions concerning harvesting or forest stewardship plans on VDOF conservation easements.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ In order to identify agency employees for COVID-19 vaccination eligibility, the VDOF classified all regional staff as frontline, essential employees due to spring fire season as well as all nursery staff who are in the midst of the seedling lifting season.
- ◆ Having the bulk of the agency workforce identified as essential leaves fewer employees eligible to participate in the Augmented Emergency Workforce (AEW). So far, two VDOF employees have volunteered to support the AEW.

Administration

- ◆ The Temporary Transfer Agreement (TTA) for the Hanover tractor shed has been finalized by Department of General Services and we can now move forward with the procurement process for this shed.
- ◆ Finance and program staff are working together to identify an automated grants management system to help the Agency more efficiently manage agency grants from both fiscal and programmatic perspectives. We have identified a system currently used by state agencies and will be participating in a demonstration of another system that was recently awarded a state contract. We hope to present options to the Agency in the next 30 days.
- ◆ Repairs to the Headquarters building due to the water leak last month are progressing. Carpeting is scheduled to be laid next week and options for repairing the damaged wallpaper are being reviewed.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ The third week of the Roanoke Webinar Series was held last Wednesday. Eric Khueler, arborist for the City of Nashville, spoke about his work with urban stormwater management. Over 135 people attended the virtual event.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (urban and community forestry [U&FC] partnership coordinator) attended week two of the i-Tree academy. This academy covers the latest software developments within the suite of i-Tree tools.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (U&CF program manager) presented virtually to the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission about the Virginia Trees for Clean Water (VTCW) Program and the My Trees Count application to help account for the new urban tree focused Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ The Riparian Forest Buffer “Brain Trust” of the Shenandoah Valley (RFBTSH), (yes, this is a self-identified group name) met on March 19 to review and discuss buffers in the Shenandoah Valley. Group



members are Patti Nylander, Matt Wolanski, (senior area foresters), Cain Harrison, Walker Wolfe, (area foresters) and



Ashley Mock, (riparian forest buffer specialist). Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management) and Todd Groh accompanied the group and offered additional insight on the riparian forest buffer history in Virginia and availability and requirements of multiple programs. The group examined and discussed past, pending, and planned riparian buffer projects in Luray and southern Warren County.

- ◆ Teagan O'Brien (forest health technician) spent a day in the field with Ryan Hewitt's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) team to learn more about the process of collecting FIA data.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) gave a virtual presentation during a session on alternative methods for treating invasive plants as part of a natural area management series. Katlin spoke about VDOF's experience using goats to remove invasive plants at Lesesne and Paul State Forests.
- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health manager) and Teagan O'Brien conducted surveys for spotted lanternfly egg masses at a truck stop off of I-81 in Rockbridge County. Rest areas and truck stops are high risk sites for spotted lanternfly introductions due to the high number of trucks and cars coming from other places.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt attended a USFS training on crew resource management for aerial surveys. This series of trainings are for sketch-mappers who do aerial surveys to collect forest health monitoring data. VDOF forest health staff will conduct aerial surveys for this spring for tree damage.
- ◆ Todd Groh, (forest resource management coordinator), met with Daniel Cloeter, (area forester) to review potential Hardwood Initiative demonstration sites on the Grassy Hill Nature Preserve property

owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The state-owned property is northwest of Rocky Mount in Franklin County and has good road access to Rt. 220 business. Daniel will work with Todd to refine the areas and hopefully begin work later this summer/fall.

Agency Lands

- ◆ The Garland Gray Forestry Center has lifted 74 percent of its crop and has graded 81 percent of its inventory.
- ◆ Joshua McLaughlin (assistant nursery manager) did a tour/seminar for the Virginia Tech Virginia Agriculture Leaders Obtaining Results (VALOR's) program at Augusta Forestry Center. The group consisted of 11 people who enjoyed learning about the nursery and talking about the demands in agriculture in Virginia.
- ◆ Fernanda Crandol (finance director) and Corey Richie (procurement officer) visited the nursery. Procurement topics were covered as well as a tour of nursery operations.
- ◆ Augusta Forestry Center (AFC) field staff continue to lift and grade trees. In the office we have taken in 1,795 orders totaling \$533,328.42.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton (research program manager), Jake Good (nursery technician), Todd Gibson, Timothy Howdysshell (part-timers) and Dr. John Scrivani lifted, packed and stored this year's crop of 131 hybrid American chestnut seedlings. These will be distributed among Matthews State Forest, the American Chestnut Foundation, and other interested collaborators for outplanting over the next several weeks.
- ◆ Gary Heiser's (state forest manger) last work day is March 25th - have a happy retirement, Gary and thank you for your service!
- ◆ Tree planting contractor started planting on State Forest and State-Owned Lands pine reforestation projects on March 18. Planting should be completed by the first week of April, if all goes well.
- ◆ On March 18, Ed Stoots (state lands coordinator) and Zach Olinger (forest management & education specialist) met with the Matthews Board of Trustees on the Matthews State Forest. The Board expressed appreciation for everything VDOF has done to date on the property.
- ◆ Zach Olinger and Ben Duke (state forest technician) repainted the Bourassa State Forest boundary this past week and also examined the pine plantation present for possible harvesting.
- ◆ Prescribe burns were conducted on the Matthews State Forest. Western Region staff provided assistance on both burns from Mount Rogers work area team members.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton, Jim Schroering (longleaf/southern pine beetle [SPB] prevention coordinator) and Ones Bitoki (tree improvement forester) began the inventory/layout/planning process for the upcoming grafting effort at our longleaf orchard at New Kent Forestry Center (NKFC).
- ◆ Ones Bitoki and Jeff Stout are continuing cleanup efforts at the NKFC orchards and preparing for the upcoming controlled pollination project.

Central Region

- ◆ Jim McGlone (urban forest conservationist) taught two sessions of risk management to the Fairfax Master Naturalists. He did a refresher class for the general chapter membership and a first class as part of the basic training.
- ◆ Jordan Herring (senior area forester) was a presenter at the second annual "Greening Your Neighborhood" workshop led by the Audubon Naturalist Society. The purpose of the workshop was to work with members from Homeowners Associations (HOAs) and Condo Associations in Loudoun County to make their communities more ecologically sustainable. Jordan's presentation was about the

right tree, right place and why HOAs should be using a certified arborist for tree care in their communities.

- ◆ Jordan Herring, Jim McGlone and Kinner Ingram (urban and community forester), attended the kick off meeting of Plant Virginia Trees. This is a tree planting campaign started by Plant Northern Virginia (NOVA) Natives. The campaign seeks to bring together local government, non-profits, landowners and interested citizens in promoting tree planting and preservation. Specific targets for planting are corporate campuses and “tree deserts” that are usually associated with heat islands and social injustice. One hope is that corporations will not only plant trees on their campuses but also support tree planting in poorer areas of Northern Virginia. This project is also a response to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP III) tree planting goals.
- ◆ Drew Arnn (senior area forester) participated in the virtual Southern Virginia (SOVA) career expo for 2021. Over 1,800 students registered as live views on 16 different career-based panel discussions. Forestry was one of four different careers represented in the natural resources field panel.
- ◆ Dean Cumbia and Molly Hunt (area forester) met with a landowner on a tract in Brunswick County that was planted this year under the Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) program. This landowner is the heir of an original RT participant from 1971 and also works in the timber industry. Dean and Molly recorded a video interview with the landowner in honor of the 50th anniversary of the RT program.
- ◆ Neal Oberholtzer (area forester) and Chris Roux (forest technician) attended the Mecklenburg County Fire Chiefs Association meeting. Various topics were discussed to coincide with spring fire season.

Public Information

- ◆ Testing has begun on the new website, which is anticipated to go live in April.
- ◆ Field Notes posts:
 - [An Exciting Mass Timber Project in Charlottesville](#)
 - [Wandering the Winter Woods](#)
 - [Atlantic White-cedar Makes a Comeback?](#)

News Clips

- ◆ [Forest Service holds controlled burn](#)
- ◆ [Blackburn honored for urban forest efforts](#)
- ◆ [The Forest Industry Should Embrace the Climate Change Conversation](#)
- ◆ [Trees form a smiley face along Oregon’s Douglas fir forest](#)
- ◆ [The First Women on Hotshot Crews](#)
- ◆ [FPL Sends Historic Legacy Mahogany to Help Restore U.S. Capitol](#)
- ◆ [Climate Change Is Behind Ghost Forests Along the Coast](#)
- ◆ [Maps to improve forest biomass estimates](#)
- ◆ [Fairfax City Named '2020 Tree City USA'](#)
- ◆ [Crews spend two days getting fire contained](#)
- ◆ [Delaware Department of Agriculture First State Agency To Make 1t.org Pledge](#)
- ◆ [What’s Driving the Disparity Between Log and Lumber Prices](#)

- ◆ [Wood products industry state fact sheets--economic impact](#)
- ◆ [Swiss Scientists Generate Electricity From Wood](#)
- ◆ [8 reasons we need to protect our forests](#)
- ◆ [USDA Forest Service to host ceremonies celebrating 2020 Forest Legacy Grants](#)
- ◆ [Dozens of brush fires strike area, caution warned](#)