



August 02, 2021

Contents

Employee News	1
Congratulations – Grayson Coleman and Ben Wassum!	1
Congratulations – Teagan O'Brien!.....	1
News You Can Use	2
VDOF Sponsored Minor League Baseball Game: Salem Red Sox vs Lynchburg Hillcats	2
Accessing the Intranet and Resetting your Password	2
Tips for Finding Forms on the Intranet	2
Public/Employee Event Calendar on new Website and Intranet	2
Last Week.....	2
State Forester	2
Fire and Emergency Response.....	3
Forestland Conservation.....	4
Forest Resource Management.....	5
Agency Lands	6
State Forests	6
Western Region	6
Public Information	6
News Clips.....	7

Employee News

Congratulations – Grayson Coleman and Ben Wassum!

- ◆ Congratulations to Grayson Coleman on his promotion to natural resource specialist III in the Mountain Valley Area! Grayson, a Dabney S. Lancaster graduate with five years combined experience with VDOF and forest industry, will begin his new role for VDOF on August 10th.
- ◆ Congratulations to Ben Wassum on his promotion to natural resource specialist III in the Blue Ridge Area! Ben, an Emory and Henry environmental science graduate with four and one-half years of VDOF field experience, will begin his new role on August 25th.

Congratulations – Teagan O'Brien!

- ◆ Teagan O'Brien (forest health technician) has been selected as the new riparian buffer specialist in the Mountain Valley Area! Teagan has been assisting the Forest Health team, helping with the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Cost-Share Program, insect surveys, and other forest health monitoring. His new role as a buffer specialist will help landowners in establishing and maintaining forested

buffers in the southern Shenandoah Valley. Teagan will start his new position on August 10th. Welcome to the Western Region!

News You Can Use

VDOF Sponsored Minor League Baseball Game: Salem Red Sox vs Lynchburg Hillcats

- ◆ Join VDOF for a game day at the [Salem Red Sox stadium](#) on August 6. We will be promoting our Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) program and celebrating Smokey's 77th birthday.

Accessing the Intranet and Resetting your Password

- ◆ If you haven't done so already, please login to the new Intranet. Go to www.dof.virginia.gov and click Employee Login in the upper right. Your username is your full email address; you should have received an email from "wordpress@dof.virginia.gov" with your login information.
- ◆ If you can't find this email, please **check your SPAM folder**. If you do not find this email, you can click Employee Login, then click "Forget your password? Click here" and enter your full email address. This will send an email to you with a link to allow you to reset your password. The system will offer a strong system password, but you can delete and enter your own strong password. Once reset, you can login with your new password. If you don't see this email with the link to reset, please **check your SPAM folder**.

Tips for Finding Forms on the Intranet

- ◆ Employees can access all VDOF forms on the Intranet at <https://dof.virginia.gov/employee-access/employee-forms/> (under the Policy/Procedure & Forms menu). You must be logged in to access the Intranet. If you know a word of the form title or the form number you are looking for, just type it in the Employee Forms page Search box to the right. You can also Select a Category or Tag from the drop down to narrow the list down if you're unsure of the title or number.

Public/Employee Event Calendar on new Website and Intranet

- ◆ Did you know our new website has a [public event calendar](#) and the [new Intranet](#) has an employee calendar?
- ◆ Any employee can submit forestry events for our public event calendar or our employee calendar. These submissions are reviewed and approved by Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) or Mary Weaver (executive assistant) before they appear on the appropriate calendar.
- ◆ For the public calendar, we want to focus on forestry-related events, particularly any events that VDOF is hosting, partnering on, or participating in. For the employee calendar, we want to focus on events involving a larger group of employees, training opportunities, or other events specifically for employees to be aware of. Help us share the word about events by [submitting events](#) for these calendars.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell and Sabina Dhungana (utilization and marketing program manager) toured the NOVEC Halifax County Biomass Plant in South Boston with Secretary Ring and Secretary Ball. The tour provided an opportunity to learn about this unique facility that utilizes no fossil fuels in its

operations and produces electric power 24 hours per day burning a combination of wood waste from timber harvests and from tree trimming.

- ◆ Rob Farrell worked with Karen Firehock of the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) to finalize a plan of work for the riparian forest buffer implementation strategy. In this initial phase, the GIC will bring partners together to develop a decision support tool to guide and track outreach to landowners. A second phase is planned to create a database to track outreach by all partners and to gather feedback to support adaptive management of landowner outreach. Rob also spoke with Executive Director of Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Kendall Tyree about the project and gained her support for the initiative.

Fire and Emergency Response

- ◆ **VDOF Multi-Incident/Multi-State All-Hazard Incident Support – Spring and Summer 2021**

Before diving right in to the summary of our western fire support for this summer to date, it is important to highlight the total scale of all-hazard incident support provided by our personnel in 2021. Everyone deserves a big pat on the back for this effort!

January – May: 35 personnel provided direct support of Virginia's COVID-19 vaccination effort. VDOF personnel provided nearly 8900 overtime hours in support of this mission.

February: 18 personnel provided ice storm related response and support.

January – July: VDOF responders have suppressed 275 wildfires that burned more than 5200 acres. Perhaps more importantly, the incredible efficiency of your response efforts are responsible for protecting 201 homes and 186 other structures, with a total value protected exceeding 39 million dollars!

May: Two personnel provided COVID-19 related support in IL and RI, and one additional responder supported federal prescribed burning activities as a Helicopter Manager in both NC and VA.

May – through 08/01/2021...and counting: 62 VDOF responders have supported 31 different wildfire incidents in 10 different western states (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, OR, SD, UT, WA, and WY). It is also a safe assumption that western fire activity will continue into October, so those requests for assistance will continue to come our way.

- ◆ **Crews versus Modules:** 2021 has definitely been the year of the Module. Wildfire hand crews have historically been formed in 20-person units. The use of smaller 8 or 10 or 12-person modules have become popular, for both wildfire suppression and prescribed burning, because of the increased functionality provided by a smaller, slightly more mobile work unit. So far in 2021, VDOF personnel have supported a total of four different interagency suppression modules in support of western fires. Our four modules have supported wildfires in New Mexico and then Arizona, Idaho, and most recently Wyoming. In all four cases, our Modules had to drive rental units from Virginia to their western destination, because rental vehicle availability is very limited out west.

- ◆ **Boot Allowance:** Good News! A boot allowance is once again available to support the wildfire PPE needs of our agency. The boot allowance will be available for fulltime employees who support wildfire response in the agency. Eligible positions include:

- Agency responders, as defined under the agency Readiness and Mobilization Plan
- State Forest and Nursery personnel, except PST's
- Buildings and Grounds personnel
- Agency Mechanics.

- HQ Incident Management Team personnel.

Anyone with eligibility questions should contact John Miller.

Details:

A reimbursement of 100% of the cost of one pair of boots, up to \$250 maximum, will be provided for newly purchased boots that meet current wildfire standards.

- Boots purchased under the program must be of all leather construction, with a minimum of an 8" top and slip-resistant soles.
- Boot purchased by the Mechanics should include a steel toe, per agency policy.

Reimbursement will be handled by way of a travel voucher.

- Paid invoices must be marked by the employee to indicate that it is for the "Boot Reimbursement" as well as including a statement to say that "the purchased boot meets the agency minimum standards for wildland boot PPE."
- **Important Note:** Only original itemized "paid" receipts for the purchase can be accepted with the travel voucher for reimbursement. Credit card receipts, receipts that do not show payment, and packing or shipping slips will not be accepted.
- For Online purchases: Fiscal will need to have something printed out that shows the payment made (not just an order confirmation) as well as a packing slip showing that the boots have been received before a reimbursement can be processed.

Boots must be purchased and travel vouchers must be submitted for payment prior to November 30, 2021 to qualify for the reimbursement.

- For those who have recently purchased boots, itemized receipts for boots meeting our minimum standards will be accepted for reimbursement as long as the receipt is no older than Jan 01, 2021.
- Reimbursements of up to \$250 will also be allowed for anyone who wishes to have an existing pair of boots overhauled or resoled, provided an original itemized paid receipt can be generated prior to the November 30, 2021 deadline.

Submitted travel vouchers should be coded to Cost Code 506 to ensure payment.

- ◆ **Kevlar/Aramid ripstop fire pants:** Fire Staff has secured the funding to provide all of our response personnel with one pair of Kevlar-reinforced Aramid-style pants. This is the version of nomex BDU-style fire pants available through GSA supply that copies the popular Crew Boss style of pants currently in service.

We will be using this distribution as a test run for this line of pants. If these pants prove to be satisfactory, our plan is to move to this style of pants as our sole model for VDOF standard issue PPE.

To facilitate the collection of everyone's pants size for this effort. A separate email will be coming out to all of our responders' tomorrow morning (Tuesday, August 3, 2021). That email will contain a link to a Google Forms document that you can use to input and submit your own individual pants size.

Once we have captured everyone's size, we still need to order and distribute the needed pants, so our goal is to have the pants in your hands before the start of fall fire season.

Forestland Conservation

resource management), Todd Groh (forest resource management program manager), Michelle Stoll (director of public information) and Mary Weaver (executive assistant) to produce the first of five commemorative plaques for the 50th anniversary of the Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) Program. These 50th anniversary commemorative plaques will be given to five, long-time cooperators of the VDOF. The five plaques will be made from a 50-year old loblolly pine, one of the first to be planted under the RT cost-share program.

- ◆ Joe Lehnen partnered with Molly O'Liddy (urban and community forestry [U&CF] partnership coordinator) to co-author an Urban Forestry Full Circle Management Field Notes which will soon be published by VDOF's Public Information team.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (U&CF program manager), Molly O'Liddy and Joe Lehnen met with Dovetail Partners to facilitate discussion on the Urban Forest Management Plan template. The template was sent out for review by VDOF Community Forestry staff and feedback will be implemented into the plan before final submission. The Community Forestry staff who contributed feedback included Jim McGlone (urban forest conservationist), Kinner Ingram, Eli Podyma, Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, Kendall Topping (community forestry specialists), Jordan Herring (senior area forester) and Manij Upadhyay (natural resource specialist).
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy and Joe Lehnen submitted a combined article to 'Field Notes' on full circle urban forest management. The article focused on developing an upstream approach to management by utilizing the resource in its entirety by creating a closed system of zero net waste. The article should be published on the VDOF website soon.
- ◆ Lara Johnson, Molly O'Liddy and Denny McCarthy (area forester) attended the Roanoke Valley Urban Forest Council meeting. Projects and updates by members of the council were shared as well as grant opportunities offered by VDOF.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health manager) and Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist), visited Warm Springs Mountain Preserve in Alleghany County where significant oak decline has been observed for the last few years. Weather events (prolonged periods of wet/dry weather, late freezes), site conditions and defoliation are all likely stress factors to oak trees in the area. Gypsy moth was detected on an adjacent property and is an inciting factor for further tree decline. Healthy trees can recover from single defoliation events, but multiple consecutive years of defoliation can lead to tree mortality. A significant number of gypsy moth egg masses were observed so VDOF forest health staff will monitor the area next spring.
- ◆ Teagan O'Brien (forest health technician) placed spotted lanternfly traps at the Charlottesville train station in a patch of Ailanthus trees near the train tracks. Spotted lanternfly was just detected in Charlottesville; VDOF is working with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) to survey the city and delimit the infestation.
- ◆ The Joint Chiefs Lower Cowpasture Project is a collaborative effort with VDOF, the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to improve forest management and conservation in parts of Bath and Alleghany counties. VDOF contracted with two consulting foresters to prepare Forest Stewardship Plans, test the Hardwood Assessment Tool (HAT), and to assist in implementing forest management projects. On July 20th, Brad Carico (deputy regional forester), Grayson Coleman and Daniel Swisher (forestry technicians), Jon Vance (Lower Cowpasture assistant), and Dean Cumbia (director forest resource management) visited five tracts to review stewardship recommendations and identify potential projects to move forward.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Ones Bitoki (tree improvement forester) attended a planning meeting with members of the North Carolina State Cooperative Tree Improvement Program to discuss shared work activities at the co-op's loblolly pine breeding facility at Arrowhead, Georgia. VDOF will contribute 80 hours per year to take care of grafts and 40 hours to extract, count and soak seeds from cones of crosses from the breeding activities.
- ◆ White pine cone collection started on July 19th in the orchard at Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest; 180 bushels of cones had been collected as of July 24th.
- ◆ Jim Schroering (longleaf/southern pine beetle [SPB] prevention coordinator) hand weeded and re-flagged the 2020 longleaf pine progeny test at Garland Gray. Agency Lands staff will tally second-year survival and grass-stage emergence this fall; the work Jim did will help immensely with that effort.
- ◆ The Garland Gray nursery began meeting with contractors to discuss allocations for next year.
- ◆ The nursery began checking seedlings heights to see when top clipping would begin. Top clipping is done to aid in producing the correct ratio of root to shoot. When the nursery is done, the seedlings will have a 10-12 inch top and a 5-6 inch root.

State Forests

- ◆ Tom Zaebst (assistant state forests manager) and Ed Stoots (state lands coordinator) met virtually with Mike Shealy of the South Carolina Forestry Association to discuss their participation in the Natural Capital Exchange (NCX), formerly Carbon Harvest Deferral Program. The South Carolina Forestry Commission is submitting several thousand acres to be reviewed for possible entry into the program.
- ◆ Tom Zaebst and Ed Stoots met virtually with Jeff Wright of NCX to discuss their one-year carbon deferral program. Currently, 1.2 million acres are enrolled in their program with 93 different landowners, generating 130,000 tons of carbon offset. After discussion, the state forests 67,200 acres will be analyzed for enrollment.
- ◆ Preliminary discussion/contacts made with possible engineering firms for the design of two swinging bridge repair/replacement projects on the Cumberland State Forest that aid in public recreation. One bridge was taken out against public outcry in earlier years and one bridge needs repair/replacement.



Western Region

- ◆ Daniel Swisher (forest technician) and Jonathan Vance (Lower Cowpasture funded technician) visited Goshen Scout Camp in Rockbridge to talk about forestry and forest fires, and taught the Scouts about several native trees that were located at the camp. Swisher and Vance visited the camp three consecutive weeks, and the program they gave helped Scouts complete requirements toward their Forestry Merit Badge! (pictured)

Public Information

- ◆ The website currently has 92 business directory user accounts. Of those, there are 64 listings; 33 are consulting foresters, 30 are loggers, and 11 are other providers.

Some accounts fall into multiple categories.

News Clips

- ◆ [Young forests are preferred summer vacation destinations for bats](#)
- ◆ [Kristi Corporation Establishes Suffolk, Virginia, Lumbering Facility](#)
- ◆ [The Western Wildfires Are Affecting People 3,000 Miles Away](#)
- ◆ [How Wood Products Could Lower the Cost of Forest Management](#)
- ◆ [Marymount team helps in statewide effort to address 'heat islands'](#)
- ◆ [Tree Work at Barrett House in Lorton](#)
- ◆ [Missoula Fire Sciences Lab Facility Tour](#)