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Employee News

Welcome to VDOF

- ◆ The Forestland Conservation team would like to welcome the newest member! Caitlin Verdu will be joining the VDOF on October 25 as our new Watershed Program Manager. Originally from Roanoke, Caitlin comes to VDOF from Virginia Cooperative Extension, where she served as the Arlington County 4-H Agent and Unit Coordinator. Prior to Extension, she worked in urban outreach for the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Long ago, she served as an intern at VDOF's very own Conway Robinson State Forest. Caitlin has a B.A. in Environmental Science and Policy & Hispanic Studies from The College of William and Mary, and a Masters of Public Administration from Virginia Tech. She is delighted to be returning to VDOF and looks forward to better learning the agency and its many partners.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell, Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester) and Michelle Stoll (public information director) attended the Shared Stewardship Signing and dedication of Green Pastures Recreation Area in Clifton Forge on September 24. The event celebrated the cooperative agreement among state and

federal agencies and the transfer of Green Pastures from the USDA Forest Service (USFS) to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, State Parks. Also present were Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring and representatives from the Forest Service and National Resource Conservation Service.

- [Governor Northam sign shared Stewardship Agreement with United States Department of Agriculture.](#)
- ◆ Rob Farrell, Sabina Dhungana (utilization and marketing program manager) and Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) joined Secretary Ring in attending the Virginia Forest Products Association (VFPA) Annual Convention in Roanoke, VA. It was a great event to network with Virginia forest industry partners. There were a number of sessions delivered by different speakers highlighting current industry topics and issues such as workforce development, sawmill production efficiency study findings, biomass markets, and trucking.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ The final webinar in the scheduled Waynesboro webinar series took place last week. Dr. Charlie Nilon, PhD, University of Missouri, discussed urban ecosystems and how they support urban bird populations. Over 50 people attended the webinar.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (urban & community forestry [U&CF] partnership coordinator) joined the VDOF Forest Health team, Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) and Katlin Dewitt (forest health specialist) for a Stateline meeting with folks from the North Carolina Forest Health team. Current monitoring projects as well as emerging pests and diseases were discussed, as well as collaboration on response protocols for past/future projects.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (U&CF program manager) gave a presentation to the George Washington Regional Commission about urban and community forestry programming at VDOF, including financial assistance programs and tracking your tree planting project using My Trees Count.
- ◆ Lara Johnson attended the "Trees as BMP" Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting based on HB 520. Participants discussed the feasibility of adding new tree plantings and tree preservation to the Virginia Stormwater BMP Clearinghouse.
- ◆ Rachel Harris (utilization and marketing [U&M] specialist) met with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to discuss workforce development and Virginia Career Works. Rachel has been researching workforce-related information and including it in her upcoming presentation that is scheduled for the Virginia Forestry Summit.
- ◆ The Virginia Statewide Wood Utilization Team (SWUT) is now called the Virginia Wood Council. The name is short, sweet, and impactful.
- ◆ The U&M program is planning to host a mass timber seminar. The event will primarily educate and provide outreach to architects, engineers, and the building community about the use of mass timber products for construction projects. The sustainability of wood resources and building code issues will be discussed. The U&M Team has been reaching out to several partners to pull this event together - e.g., American Architect Institute of VA, American Wood Council, faculty and researchers from Virginia Tech, and the engineering firm that designed Apex Energy's mass timber building in Charlottesville.
- ◆ The U&M team are actively reaching out to our industry partners to establish an improved working relationship. The team has scheduled mill visits with two forest product manufacturers in the state. Along with the VDOF staff, representatives from Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) and VEDP are invited and confirmed for these mill visits. The U&M

team will be visiting Morgan Lumber Company and Meherrin River Forest Products, Inc. in October and November.

- ◆ Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester) helped Deya Ramsden (Middle James River forest watershed project coordinator) identify a local wood business to supply her with 100 red cedar posts for riparian buffer projects. Joe and Deya traveled to Whole Heart Timber located just south of Culpeper to retrieve the posts and meet the owner, Craig Burruss. Whole Heart Timber specializes in a variety of eastern red cedar products.

Forestland Resource Management

- ◆ As part of the Hardwood Habitat Initiative, VDOF conducted targeted hardwood training for approximately 25 foresters September 21-23 at Holiday Lake 4-H Center and Appomattox – Buckingham State Forest. The training focused on stages of hardwood stand development, the new Hardwood Assessment Tool, hardwood management practices, outreach strategies, the Hardwood Forest Habitat Incentive Program, and demonstration areas.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) and Jim Pugh (GIS specialist) met with Dave Slack (area forester) to conduct a drone mapping mission of a stand that had naturally regenerated following a harvest. The map created from the flight will assist with the landowner's concerns about the number of pines growing a few years post-harvest and will serve as a basis for walking the tract with the landowner in a few weeks.
- ◆ The VDOF forest health program led a survey for beech leaf disease in Prince William Forest Park on September 24. Beech leaf disease was found in the park for the first time this summer, which was the first report of this tree disease in Virginia. It is caused by a foliar nematode and causes decline of American beech trees. Staff from VDOF, VDACS, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Virginia Tech, County of Fairfax, and Prince William County worked together to survey the 16,000 acre park to determine if the disease was widespread or limited to the initial site of detection. While not widespread, it was found in two other locations within the park.

State Forest

- ◆ Personnel hosted a Department of Historic Resources archeologist visit at Sandy Point State Forest to investigate a 19th-century barge discovered in the Mattaponi River.
- ◆ Staff sold the Pocahontas State Park pine thinning sale, of approximately 300 acres, to Clay Barton Logging. VDOF will administer the sale for Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).
- ◆ Several staff participated in the Hardwood Initiative Training held at Holiday Lake for internal VDOF staff. Plans are to implement Hardwood Initiative projects on State Forests and State-Owned Lands where we can better control the prescriptions, and track the costs of implementation to help establish possible cost share rates for private landowners. State Forests will also set up long-term demonstration areas for continued education efforts for VDOF staff, forest consultants, and private landowners.
- ◆ Acceptable bids were received for invasive species control of mainly *Ailanthus* via basal bark application this winter on the Cumberland State Forest. Bid rate will be \$68.00 / hour.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Acceptable bids were obtained for planting 22.6 acres of white pine on the Bland Corrections project at a cost of \$110.62 / acre.

- ◆ The Virginia Department of Veteran Services has contacted VDOF about evaluating timber and having it harvested on three of their properties (near Dublin, Amelia and Suffolk). Acreage involved could total 120 acres, with approximately 40 of the acres to be considered for reforestation. Staff will be evaluating the projects over the next two weeks.

Central Region

- ◆ Michael Downey (area forester) and Cameron Lipscomb (forest technician) met with NRCS staff Matt Carroll (district conservationist) and Tom Burke (forester), as well as Private Lands Biologist with Quail Forever Celia Vuocolo. The field visit consisted of a prescribed fire that was completed by VDOF last spring and another site that is enrolled through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) to improve/establish wildlife habitat and timber stand improvement.

Eastern Region

- ◆ Manij Upadhyay (area forester) was invited to have a forestry booth and share fire prevention knowledge with children in The Fredericksburg Dog Mart Festival Event. It was the 323rd anniversary of the oldest dog event in America. About 65 adults and kids came to the forestry booth and 16 of them showed interest in working in the forestry sector in the future. Smokey Bear educational materials were distributed to the children. (pictured)



- ◆ Jeremy Falkenau (senior area forester) met with Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Andi Clinton at the Chickahominy Wildlife Management area to discuss potential projects where VDOF and DWR could mutually benefit.

- ◆ Manij Upadhyay finished a stewardship forest management plan for Mr. Victor Buadu. Mr. Buadu purchased 113 acres of land in Stafford County. He and his wife Julia are interested in timber income, wildlife habitat management, Christmas tree farming and grassland management on their property. The plan was developed from the Costal Heirs Grants Project. (pictured)



- ◆ Kendall Topping and Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community foresters) presented the Master Naturalist basic training to the Tidewater Master Naturalist group in Virginia Beach. They had an audience of around 20 Master Naturalists.

- ◆ Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community forester) led a Master Naturalist field visit for the freshman class of Master Naturalist students at William and Mary College on Saturday. This also happened to coincide with Parents Weekend at the college. Not only did the tour include 15 students but also a half dozen parents. This field visit was facilitated by Rick Brown, the president of the Historic Rivers chapter of Master Naturalists and Dr. Linda Morse, the faculty advisor and geology professor at the college.

- ◆ John Rose (forest technician), Stephen Jasenak (area forester) and Heather Tuck (regional fire specialist) were invited to host a "Rescue Camp" at the recently



concluded First Responder Virginia Conference/Expo at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. The event attracts Firefighters and EMS personnel from across the Commonwealth. Youths ages 8-15 were introduced to our PPE, our pick-up truck equipment and tools as well as a brush truck. They also learned about wildfire prevention and the role of the Virginia Department of Forestry in wildfire suppression. Approximately 20 youth participated in the event, even getting to use a hose to “target shoot” a soccer ball! (pictured)

- ◆ The Blackwater Work unit held their September team meeting at the Mariners’ Museum and Park in Newport News. Lisa Burke (program support technician) was our guest, going over all the fiscal procedures and paperwork that we send to the regional office. Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community forestry specialist) has re-established a relationship with the Museum and Park through the production of a community forest plan on the 467-acre property. Prior plans had been produced by Dennis Gaston (forest management specialist) and others (pictured).



Western Region

- ◆ Rocky Wood (forest technician) and Greg Estoll (senior area forester) led the field portion of S-130 for local part-time firefighters interested in improving their knowledge and skills.

Public Information

- ◆ Thirteen landowners attended the eastern Virginia Beginning Woodland Owners’ Retreat at New Kent Forestry Center, learning about forest management options for their land. Five of this year’s participants were from traditionally under-served groups. This event was the second of three retreats held this fall, hosted by VDOF, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and Virginia Tech’s Forest Landowner Education Program. Instructors included Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) and Dave Slack (area forester).
- ◆ Ellen Powell conducted training for Ivy Creek Natural Area’s school program nature guides, focusing on forests and trees.
- ◆ Smokey Bear is making weekend appearances at the Virginia State Fair. Staff who made this possible are Lisa Deaton and Peter Schoderbek (area foresters); Jesse Bander (natural resource specialist); Cameron Lipscomb and Alan Sutherlin (forest technicians); Eli Podyma (community forestry specialist); Heather Tuck (regional fire specialist), and Paul Reier (VDOF retiree.)
- ◆ Michelle Stoll met with the Environment Virginia Planning Committee. Topics for consideration this year include:
 - Chesapeake Bay
 - Climate Change
 - Emerging Contaminants in Water
 - Energy
 - Environmental Justice/ESG
 - Land Use/Conservation/Forestry/Agriculture
 - Sustainability/Resilience
 - Water
 - Emerging Environmental Issues
 - Topics of Regional Interest

News Clips

- ◆ [Ghost forests creep up U.S. East Coast](#)
- ◆ [Forest landowners retreat to the woods](#)
- ◆ [Dual Purpose Lot Forest Management System](#)
- ◆ Helping the giant trees: [Why controlled fires help giant sequoias survive](#)
- ◆ [From treetops to tree cores: A new generation of foresters conducts summer research](#)
- ◆ [Group hosts walk, talk on trail](#)
- ◆ [Fall foliage is coming, and so are the hikers. Here's how to find trails less traveled.](#)
- ◆ [Hiwassee resident named to forestry board](#)
- ◆ [Hay Field Fire Spans 20 Acres](#)
- ◆ [What's So Special About a Forest](#)
- ◆ [Japanese engineers develop earthquake-resistant 'CLT checkered block wall'](#)
- ◆ [Virginia signs agreement with agriculture department to restore historic recreation area](#)
- ◆ ['Finding the Mother Tree' explores the intricate communication networks within a forest](#)
- ◆ [Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition Formed to Protect Iconic Trees from Threats of Climate Change and Catastrophic Wildfire](#)