



**November 8, 2021**

**Contents**

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<b>Employee News</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Uniforms .....	1
<b>Coming Up</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Webinar - Fall Cankerworm .....	1
<b>Last Week</b> .....	<b>2</b>
State Forester .....	2
Forestland Conservation.....	2
Forest Resource Management .....	3
Agency Lands .....	3
State Forest.....	3
State-Owned Lands.....	3
Central Region .....	3
Eastern Region .....	4
Western Region .....	5
Public Information .....	5
News Clips.....	5

**Employee News**

*Uniforms*

- ◆ A women’s [5.11 Taclite Khaki short sleeve shirt](#) has been added to the uniform website.

**Coming Up**

*Webinar - Fall Cankerworm*

- ◆ Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist), and Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager), will present a webinar about the fall cankerworm on November 10th at 1pm. This native pest can cause significant tree defoliation during outbreak years. The webinar is hosted by the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Forest Health Program and can be accessed here:  
<https://forestrywebinars.net/webinars/fall-cankerworm-in-the-southeastern-u.s>

## Last Week

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### State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell, Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester), David Powell (senior area forester) and Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager) attended the Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards (CATS) dedication of a hackberry tree on the VDOF Headquarters grounds for the founders of the CATS organization.

### Forestland Conservation

- ◆ The Forestland Conservation program successfully established an open-space easement on its second property for the year, the Harrell's Mill easement in Sussex County. The property is 442.81 acres, including stands of hardwoods and loblolly, approximately 105 acres of pond and wetland, and 5,000 feet of frontage on Coppahaunk Swamp. The tract will be incorporated into The Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve, which together with VDOF's adjacent Big Woods State Forest is Virginia's foremost location for teaching about longleaf pine and fire-adapted forests. Forest management will focus on longleaf pine restoration, sustainable logging, and recovery/expansion of habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker, a federally listed endangered species. Acquisition of the easement was supported by the USDA Forest Service (USFS) Forest Legacy Program. Thanks to Amanda Scheps, Andrew Fotinos (forest conservation specialists), many others within the agency, and our partner organizations for their efforts to conserve this valuable property for the benefit of biodiversity, water quality, and the residents of the Commonwealth.
- ◆ Sabina Dhungana (utilization and marketing [U&M] program manager) assisted a new business investor who is interested in opening a primarily white oak and possibly hardwood log export business in Virginia. Sabina organized a meeting with three company representatives and several VDOF staff to help them better understand the resource availability, ports accessibility, phytosanitary requirements, top export destinations for Virginia's wood products, logger contacts, forester information, and local freight forwarders, to help them make informed business investment decisions. Sabina worked with state agency partners from Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (VDACS) and Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to gather information at the company's request.
- ◆ Rachel Harris (utilization and marketing specialist), Sabina Dhungana, and Will Arney (VEDP) visited Meherrin River Forest Products. Company president Don Bright gave a tour of their sawmill plant in Alberta, where the group saw a typical hardwood sawmill operation and talked about resources, mill processes, hauling distance for their materials, markets for their products, and workforce issues, among other topics. After the Alberta mill visit, the group went to their newest drying facility in Crewe to see the mill processes and operations. Don brought up the company's interest in exploring combined heat and power for their drying facility to better utilize their sawdust and other byproducts, and also save on their mill utility expense. A follow-up plan to analyze their options for combined heat and power has been planned. The U&M Program will conduct the analysis.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (urban & community forestry [U&CF] partnership coordinator) attended the Buffer Summit hosted by the Upper and Middle James River Riparian Consortium. Partners discussed how to best implement additional buffers along the James River. State, private and nonprofit entities shared updates.
- ◆ Joe Lehnen provided on-site technical consulting for the filming of the UVA Urban Wood video. All of the filming took place on the UVA Grounds and featured two of the program leaders from UVA Sawmilling, their solar dry kiln project, the UVA School of Architecture's Fabrication Lab, and two 12-foot long slab tables created from a large yellow poplar that was removed due to a building expansion project. Posts of the project can be found on the VDOF Instagram account, and the video will be

posted once editing has been completed. This was a collaborative project between the U&CF team and the Urban Wood Project.

## Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Joe Rossetti (hardwood forest habitat initiative coordinator), met with the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) managers and DWR forester at the Phelps Wildlife Management Area in Fauquier County to start stand assessments for inclusion as hardwood management demonstration sites. VDOF has a long history of working with DWR on the Phelps on activities such as pine planting, creation of quail habitat, invasive species control, and prescribed burning.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt gave a presentation on invasive species in Virginia to the Young at Hearts Club in Orange County on October 27. The group was very interested in the topic, asked a number of questions, and asked about issues with trees in their own yards.

## Agency Lands

- ◆ Jim Schroering (longleaf/southern pine beetle [SPB] prevention coordinator) hosted a tour of the Sussex Nursery and longleaf pine container propagation facility for 14 students in Dr. Lytton Musselman's Old Dominion University botany class.
- ◆ This year's pine cone collection effort at New Kent wrapped up as the last load of cones were shipped to Southern Seed Company in Georgia for processing. A total of 3,020 bushels of loblolly and 15 bushels of shortleaf pine were collected by the contract crew. Thanks to Ones Bitoki (tree improvement forester) and Jeff Stout (tree improvement technician) for coordinating the effort again this year.

## State Forest

- ◆ Staff removed the ramp decking from the Warner swinging bridge on the Cumberland State Forest and posted signage closing the bridge to the public. The bridge had been evaluated by engineers recently and deemed to be a safety concern for continued public use. Plans are being drafted for replacing the bridge in the next year, pending funding. The bridge provides recreational access to about 600 acres of State Forest property that is otherwise unavailable to the public.

## State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Ed Stoots (state lands coordinator) and Zach Olinger (forest management and education specialist) met with District Ranger Lauren Stull and other staff of the Glenwood-Pedlar Ranger District to examine possible administrative access into Moore's Creek State Forest from USFS adjoining lands, and to incorporate the access into a possible Good Neighbor Authority Agreement that is being put out for public comment by the USFS. Public driving access to Moore's Creek State Forest would still be needed along a VDOF right-of-way. Pictured are VDOF and USFS staff meeting along the boundary line separating the USFS property from state property, representing Good Neighbors at work!



## Central Region

- ◆ Rappahannock Work Area staff visited the Culpeper County Dispatch center at the beginning of fall fire season, where they received a tour of the facility and learned about county dispatching procedures from the manager and dispatchers. The dispatchers walked VDOF staff through the process of taking calls, dispatching firefighting resources, and then calling for VDOF staff. VDOF staff left with a better

understanding and appreciation of the dispatchers' job and thoughts about how we can streamline our communications with them.

- ◆ Cameron Lipscomb (forest technician) and Chuck Wright (area forester) set up a display at The Fall Festival at Rassawek Farm in Goochland County. The centerpiece of the display was the Fluvanna tractor and transport. Information was disseminated to landowners all around the Commonwealth concerning questions about forest management. A number of equipment operators were very interested in the design of the bed on the transport. It is estimated that 10,000 + people attended over the two day event. (pictured)



- ◆ Chuck Wright taught about twenty members-in-training from the James River Chapter of Master Naturalists. The training, held at Powhatan Wildlife Management Area, centered on forest ecology with an emphasis on tree identification. Forest management, prescribed fire and wildlife management were also addressed.
- ◆ Kevin Dawson (water quality specialist) assisted with a SHARP logger update class in Lynchburg. A total of 12 people attended.

### Eastern Region

- ◆ Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community forestry specialist) presented urban ecology to the Peninsula Master Naturalists Basic Training cohort of 21 students. Meghan's talk covered some of the challenges faced by urban ecosystems, including invasive species and urban heat islands, some solutions to these problems, and the benefits of urban forests. At the class's request, Meghan also gave a brief introduction to forest succession. The topic had been mentioned by several presenters, but the class had not yet learned about it.
- ◆ Meghan Mulroy-Goldman received an interesting phone call from a building inspection official from Newport News, as a result of a client using the new VDOF website. They were looking for a person to identify some exposed wood in a new business so that the proper fire retardant could be applied. Meghan was not comfortable in making the wood identification and asked Scott Bachman (senior area forester) if he could assist.
  - Meghan and Scott met the building official, the architect, and the chef/owner at the new business, Good Vibes, a music and entertainment venue. The décor of the venue included walls covered in recycled pallet wood. The wood was nearly all pine, with a smattering of oak making up a very small percentage. The wood can now be treated with the proper fire retardant and the occupancy permit issued.
- ◆ The Peninsulas Work Area has been collecting live oak acorns from a small island in Mathews County for the past few years to create a seed orchard for this diminished species as part of our coastal resiliency efforts. Philip Reed discovered this sandy strip of about 30 live oaks with Department of Conservation and Recreation's Natural Heritage staff while working for the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The oaks have produced a few handfuls of acorns for the past few years, but 2021 has turned out to be a bumper crop year. Live oaks are an excellent shoreline yard tree, as they can tolerate salt water and do not grow tall enough to threaten structures. Lisa Deaton (area forester) waded over to the island with Master Naturalists Susan Walton and Bill Blair to pick acorns in late October and returned with several hundred acorns. (pictured)





- ◆ The Capital Team, with assistance from Bryant Bays (regional forester), hosted an area Future Farmers of America (FFA) Competition. Senior Teams from Goochland, Fluvanna, King William, Atlee, Caroline County, and Mechanicsville High Schools, and a Junior Team from Caroline County High School competed (approximately 60 students in total). Atlee High School won the Senior Team competition and Caroline County won the Junior Team competition.
- ◆ Jesse Bander (natural resource specialist) and Alanna Ostrowski (forest technician) represented VDOF at this year's virtual offering of "Mission Tomorrow." The Mission Tomorrow event encourages students to explore career interests and in-demand jobs through an interactive series of activities and discussions with employers. Students are exposed to various career and technical education resources within their localities and are able to gain a better understanding of what it means to be prepared for a job. During the two-day event, over 12,000 public school 8th graders from Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Richmond and Powhatan had the opportunity to interact with nearly 170 businesses in the Capitol region.

### Western Region

- ◆ Grayson Coleman (area forester) completed dozer work on the Deep Run Ponds Preserve, a DCR property that borders Shenandoah National Park. DCR hopes to conduct some prescribed burning on the property this season. The dozer work Grayson completed was to construct a fire line and open up a road to make it accessible for a Type VI Engine, which will help with burning operations.
- ◆ Mountain Valley Staff members Teagan O'Brien (riparian buffer specialist), Clint Folks (natural resource specialist), and Patti Nylander (senior area forester) set up the FFA Forestry Judging Contest for the Augusta County FFA Federation. A total of nine teams participated in the competition, which was held at the Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville. Last year's competition was cancelled due to COVID, so it was great to see so many teams and students come out to participate!
- ◆ Clint Folks (natural resource specialist), Daniel Swisher (forest technician), and Cole Young (water quality specialist) held a Fire in the Field training at McCormick Farm in Rockbridge County. The USDA Forest Service (USFS) also assisted with the training. A total of seven students participated and learned about wildland firefighting tactics, equipment, and what to expect when arriving on a larger incident.

### Public Information

- ◆ The Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) program recently created a story map spotlighting significant projects benefitting urban forests. VDOF is a state sponsor agency for the VMN program and provides advisors for seven of the 30 VMN chapters.  
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/84fd480871954f76a269fd5f8a697f0a>.
- ◆ Michelle Stoll (public information director) and Cory Swift-Turner (public information specialist) met with communication staff from the Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) last week to outline plans for a collaborative story about longleaf pine in Virginia. DCR, DWR, the Nature Conservancy and VDOF each play a part in Virginia's longleaf story. The final product will be a video that shows the longleaf cycle, examines the connection between fire and longleaf health, and discusses habitat and partnerships.

### News Clips

- ◆ [50-acre brush fire breaks out in Campbell County, drawing help from several fire departments](#)
- ◆ [Ten of the best hiking destinations in Virginia](#)
- ◆ [HP's Expanded Partnership with WWF Aims to Grow Forest Conservation and Restoration](#)
- ◆ [Va. awards \\$7.5 million in grants for land conservation](#)

- ◆ [Warmer temperatures and pests are big challenges for forest management](#)
- ◆ [When to see peak fall foliage in Virginia](#)
- ◆ [Scientists have found a way to harden wood to make a knife that rivals steel](#)
- ◆ [Pioneering new process creates versatile moldable wood](#)
- ◆ [State grants will help preserve Culpeper and Orange historic sites](#)
- ◆ [Tree planting 101: What corporations need to know](#)
- ◆ [Fire season returns throughout commonwealth](#)
- ◆ [Forestry tax deferrals could end](#)
- ◆ [From green wood to a green world: How Extension agents are impacting America's hardwood industry](#)
- ◆ [Chatham wins state forestry competitions](#)
- ◆ [Board shoots down plans to harvest timber on two county-owned sites](#)
- ◆ [McLean's Mature Trees Threatened](#)
- ◆ [Grown Here at Home: Virginia Department of Forestry selling trees](#)