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Employee News

Congratulations Kinner Ingram!

- ◆ We’re pleased to announce that Kinner Ingram has been selected as the new Senior Area Forester (SAF) for the Rappahannock Work Area. Kinner has a B.S. in natural resource conservation with minors in forestry and urban forestry from Virginia Tech. He has over six years of natural resource experience, three of which are with the VDOF as a Community Forestry Specialist in the Potomac Work Area and as an Area Forester in the Rappahannock Work Area. Kinner also has two years of supervisory experience with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) at both Natural Bridge and Chippokes State Parks. We are looking forward to working with Kinner in his new role and encourage you to congratulate him on this promotion when you get a chance. Kinner's first day as SAF will be December 10.

News You Can Use

2022 VDOF Calendar follow-up

- ◆ Our theme this year is "Sustainability of Forest Resources for the Present and the Future." We are grateful for the contributions of the certified tree farms in Virginia, who graciously shared photos of their own properties to help promote forests and sustainability.
 - We increased our quantities compared to last year but are still evaluating just what the sweet spot is on our supply level to ensure enough available without unused waste. Calendars were distributed to each regional office for distribution to field offices. They were also distributed to Cumberland State Forest, Augusta Forestry Center and Garland Gray Forestry Center. Headquarters staff can pick up a calendar in the Public Information suite or from the front desk.
 - As mentioned in last week's Branch, the calendars are one of our most visible "in-hand" marketing pieces. One primary goal for these calendars is to provide employees with a useful and attractive piece that serves to educate and share our messages. We encourage you to reach out and make in-person contact with landowners, local officials, and other cooperators. And, if you're new to VDOF or new to your work area, this can be a great way to introduce yourself to landowners, reporters, and other key people in your local area. There is space on the back cover in the "For More Information" box to stick a label with your contact information. Thank you in advance for helping to distribute the calendars.

2023 VDOF Calendar Photo Contest

- ◆ While we're on the topic of calendars, it seems like an appropriate time to remind everyone about the Public Information photo contest to create the 2023 VDOF calendar. The best way to get photos of VDOF at work and various aspects of forestry throughout Virginia is through the photo lens of the women and men of VDOF who are out in the forest and directly serving the public on a regular basis. Photos captured by employees may also be used for other VDOF educational and promotional initiatives. We'll be running the contest over the remainder of this fiscal year to allow staff to capture all forest seasons and activities. We want to see your best pictures! Photos will be accepted from now until July 1, 2022. [Read contest rules and submission information here.](#)

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ At the regularly scheduled Cumberland County Board of Supervisors meeting on November 9, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to eliminate land-use taxation for forestland in the county.
- ◆ The Board of Forestry met on November 10 in Charlottesville to discuss the Board members' perspectives on solar development on forested lands in the Commonwealth. Board members shared their concerns about forest land loss to solar power arrays and provided input on possible solutions. In other discussions, the board endorsed the agency's proposed hardwood practice cost-share rates and discussed the loss of forest land-use taxation in Cumberland County.

Fire and Emergency Response

- ◆ Jason Braunstein (GIS program manager) recently passed the national Complex Incident Management Course (CIMC). The CIMC course is one of the highest level offerings for the certification of national Incident Management team personnel. The course combines classroom-type instruction with a very intensive multi-day practical exercise. Jason served as one of four Incident Commanders in the class,

leading his team made up of IMT personnel from the North Carolina Forest Service. Jason is only the seventh VDOF person ever to have completed the national CIMC certification.

- ◆ On Wednesday, November 10, fifteen VDOF employees participated in a unique training/demonstration event, now known as Sawlollapaloosa. The event, which was hosted on the Matthews State Forest, gave participants the chance to gain some practical hands-on experience while comparing and using the latest in power tool equipment, with a special focus on chainsaws, leaf blowers, and slip-in pumping units. Special guest was Jacob Breig, national governmental sales representative with Husqvarna. Special thanks goes out to Dave Houttekier (assistant director fire and emergency response) for coordinating the event, to Zach Olinger (forest management and education specialist) for setting up and hosting the group, as well as all of those who participated.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester) traveled to historic Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, where they are in the process of removing several large live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) and other trees that are at the end of their biological lives. This all occurred because Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community forestry specialist) created a community tree resource plan for the property. The Fort Monroe organization is also an Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) grant recipient. VDOF is pursuing a connection with the U.S. Navy conservators of the historic USS Constitution, which was originally constructed with live oak timbers.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (U&CF partnership coordinator) and Joe Lehnen met with Dr. Dan Hindman (VT Department of Sustainable Biomaterials) and Dr. Jonas Hauptman (VT School of Architecture), who are collaborating to find better uses of limbwood from urban/campus trees. One project they are pursuing is a partnership with Txture Furniture Company - <https://txtur.com/> - in Roanoke to use local urban wood parts in the furniture-making process. The company may be applying for a Wood Innovations Grant to help fund this project. VDOF would be listed as a technical support advisor/partner.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy and Eli Podyma (community forestry specialist) participated in a street tree planting effort in Jackson Ward. The Enrichmond Foundation and community partners planted a total of 50 trees in vacant tree wells throughout the neighborhood. This project was funded through a Virginia Trees for Clean Water grant. Continued care and maintenance for the trees will be completed through partnership with Groundwork RVA.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy and Joe Lehnen traveled to Blacksburg to meet with Virginia Trees for Clean water grantees of the Save Stroubles Creek project. Johnny Vest (area forester) joined the group to conduct a site visit of the area to be planted this spring.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy and Ed Furlow (area forester) met with the Greene County Parks and Recreation director to discuss project ideas for the area parks that would qualify for U&CF funding.
- ◆ Rachel Harris (utilization & marketing [U&M] specialist), Sabina Dhungana (U&M program manager) and Will Arney (VEDP) visited Flippo Lumber Corporation. Beth Hutchinson (Vice President, Flippo Lumber Corp and Vice Chair of the Board of Forestry) gave a tour of their sawmill in Doswell, where the group saw pine sawmill operation and talked about resources, the mill process, hauling distance for the raw materials, markets for their products, and workforce, among other topics. During the visit, the mill reported a shortage of skilled labor, not enough markets for their byproducts, and biomass energy system efficiency issues. The U&M program is planning to work with Flippo Lumber to identify opportunities for their mill process efficiency, primarily in the energy generation area for kilns.
- ◆ Sabina Dhungana participated in an informational webinar opportunity to learn about 2022 Wood Innovation Grants. U&M is brainstorming and developing ideas for a biochar proposal to help improve

water quality, mine lands, watershed areas, and urban soil health, and to promote markets and utilization of low value woody materials.

- ◆ The U&M Team is working on a presentation on the basics of carbon markets. The goal is to disseminate carbon market related information and opportunities to our field staff to increase their working knowledge and guidance to landowners. The first presentation was on Tuesday, November 16, for the Central Region Senior Area Foresters meeting.
- ◆ The U&M Team continued to make progress on the planning of a mass timber workshop by working with American Institute of Architects' Virginia chapter, partners from Virginia Tech and US Forest Service, and a representative from Hourigan Development. The Team is working on agenda development and are planning to host the event in Spring 2022. The proposed format is to begin with a mass timber topic seminar session in the morning and conclude with an Apex Energy Building tour with in-depth project descriptions, material benefits, and investment motivation from the project developer.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) and Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) presented a webinar on fall cankerworm in Virginia, hosted by the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Forest Health Program. There were 64 participants during the live event, and the webinar has been posted for viewing here: <https://forestrywebinars.net/webinars/fall-cankerworm-in-the-southeastern-u.s>.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt assisted Jerre Creighton (research program manager) to obtain images of pine growth study plots at Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. She flew a drone over pine stands planted at or thinned to different densities and took photos of the canopy. These images will be used in presentations to demonstrate the effects of stand density on tree size and stand architecture.
- ◆ Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator) and Drew Arnn (senior area forester) met with a forest landowner in Halifax County to consider potential for hardwood management and participation in the new Hardwood Habitat Incentive Program (HHIP). While the area will not likely be a HHIP site, they were able to provide the owner with positive recommendations to improve his upcoming harvest. The important outcome of this visit was to emphasize the benefits of hardwood management through planning and professional advice prior to a harvest.

State Forest

- ◆ Jack Kauffman attended The U.S. Forest Service North Zone Ranger District of the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests shortleaf pine field trip.
- ◆ Staff bucked, skidded, loaded, hauled, and unloaded logs from blowdown for use during the Husqvarna demonstration with VDOF Fire Branch staff. Staff hosted chainsaw and blower demonstration at Matthews State Forest with Fire Branch and a Husqvarna distributor.
- ◆ Staff assisted the Central Region's Heartland work area with FFA Forestry judging at the Appomattox Buckingham State Forest.

Eastern Region

- ◆ Dominic Chirico, Alanna Ostrowski (forest technicians), and Clint Phegley (area forester) brought Smokey Bear to the Sunshine Preschool to deliver a message of fire safety. (Pictured)
- ◆ Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, Kendall Topping (community forestry specialists) and Stephen Jasenak (area forester) presented the Tree City award to Joint Expeditionary Base (JEB) Little Creek/Fort Story



at their annual Arbor Day. Due to COVID restrictions, the celebrations and plantings were attended solely by the Commanding Officer of JEB and the Executive Officer of Fort Story. The trees, a yaupon holly and a cherry, were planted on the two Child Development Center grounds at the two bases.

- ◆ On November 13, Kendall Topping managed a community planting for Harbour View Homeowner's Association in Suffolk, Virginia. A total of 35 large trees were planted in public spaces in the community. Over 50 people participated, including Girl Scout groups, families, the Nansemond River Preservation Alliance, and Commonwealth's Attorney for Suffolk Narendra Pleas. Each family was assigned at least one tree. Families then planted and tagged the tree's deer protection cage with their names and a message for their tree. This event helped bring the community together as well as increase the tree canopy for the neighborhoods. Evan Richardson (area forester) assisted with this community planting. (pictured)



- ◆ The Capital Work Area held their monthly bulldozer day at Zoar State Forest. Daren Williams (eastern region mechanic) joined the team and walked everyone through the proper procedures for preventative maintenance on bulldozers and transports. With Daren's instruction (followed by some real-life practice) several of the team members were able to complete their VDOF basic tractor operator position task books. (pictured)



Central Region

- ◆ Alex Hernandez (area forester) and Adam Smith (senior area forester) attended the Lake Country Soil and Water District (SWCD) monthly board meeting in South Hill. The SWCD was established in the 1930's to develop comprehensive programs and plans to conserve soil resources, control and prevent soil erosion, prevent floods and conserve, develop, utilize and dispose of water. The board meeting was led by Ms. Alvis Inge (SWCD office manager). During the meeting SWCD Soil Conservationist Avery Layne discussed conservation projects up for approval for assistance to the board of directors. Adam Smith discussed VDOF cost-share assistance programs available for tree planting and discussed the details of the Riparian Buffer Tax Credit Program available to landowners following timber harvesting, to reward the retention of a timber buffer along riparian areas of the harvest up to 300' wide. Emphasis was placed on the importance of establishment of riparian buffers and the technical assistance offered by the VDOF in continuing to increase public outreach about riparian buffer importance. Alex Hernandez provided introduction as area forester in Brunswick County with an open invitation to be contacted to provide forestry assistance. VDOF attendance was well received by all attending board members.

- ◆ The Heartland Work Area hosted the Southeast Area FFA Forestry contest this year at the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. This event included five high school teams and seven middle school teams from the area, with the winners qualifying for the state competition in April. Tom Snoddy (area forester), Rick Butler (forester specialist), Charlene Bardon (program support technician), Ian Morris (state forest technician), and Russell Schmidt (forest technician), along with volunteer John Prosch, set up the contest and worked the various stations. Stations consisted of tree volume measurement, tree identification, map interpretation, and equipment identification. Middle school students participated in determining tree value while high school students competed in timber stand improvement. This is a great way to educate young people about forestry and why landowners grow trees on their property. Practice began in late August and students practiced after school once a week to prepare for the contest. The Appomattox High School FFA provided a special thanks to Rick Butler on the school web page for his help in training the Appomattox teams this year. (pictured)



- The Agriculture students and teachers thanked Rick and Russell with the following comments on the FFA web page: “We are grateful to Mr. Butler and Mr. Schmidt from the Virginia Department of Forestry for spending the day with us. They taught us about wildfire fighting, careers in forestry, and forest fire safety. These guys are the best!” (pictured)

- ◆ It has become a tradition in Appomattox County to hold a Forestry training day for all of the agriculture classes at Appomattox County High School. The students and faculty are constantly having to clean the Future Farmers of America (FFA) land lab of materials from blow downs and brush that occur due to Mother Nature. It has always been a problem to clear the area of this material. Several years ago, instructors from the agricultural department asked if Forestry Department personnel could help with burning the piled material. It became a very productive day. The team exercised equipment using chain saws, bulldozer, and trucks. We set it up so the students would come to the land lab and observe practices related to fire and forest management. Instruction and training about fire and forest management as well as career opportunities in forestry were covered. The students then enjoyed a treat by making s’mores and destroying over ripe pumpkins a local farmer donated. We have had several interested students wanting to go into forestry and wildland firefighting.

Western Region

- ◆ Bill Sweeney (area forester) provided Roanoke’s CBS affiliate, WDBJ-7 the following interview which appeared on their website news: <https://www.wdbj7.com/2021/11/05/fall-wildfire-season-underway-roanoke-valley/>

- ◆ Bill Sweeney (area forester) aided the Ferrum College Environmental Sciences Program, led by Dr. Todd Fredericksen, with instructing a series of three labs focused on forest management. Bill led the students to three different sites in the Ferrum area to view and discuss topics including reforestation methods, intermediate treatments, and harvesting techniques. The students will use these labs in the crafting of their capstone stewardship plan projects. (Pictured is the 2021 Environmental Studies/Forestry class.)



- ◆ Brian Ledford (area forester) and Bill Miller (senior area forester) participated in the annual NatSci+Ag Expo hosted by Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) in Abingdon. Representatives from Virginia Tech (VT) and VHCC were on hand to answer questions about starting a Natural Resources degree program at VHCC and transferring to VT. State, federal, and city natural resources and agricultural agencies were also present to answer career questions. (pictured)



Public Information

Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) concluded this year's weekly fall foliage reports and hotline recordings for Virginia Department of Tourism. The extended foliage season resulted in a record 10 weeks of reporting.

News Clips

- ◆ [Bedford County firefighters battle Sunday afternoon brush fire](#)
- ◆ [New State Forest is Charlotte County's First Publicly Accessible Land](#)
- ◆ [CNRE Hosts Fall Forestry and Wildlife Field Tour](#)
- ◆ [CONSERVATION: Poster contest winners advance to state level](#)
- ◆ [Protect Virginia's forests, and your wallet, when using firewood this fall](#)
- ◆ [Forestry Initiative donates \\$10,000 to Roanoke Center](#)