



January 31, 2022

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Employee News

Leaving VDOF

- ◆ Steve Morris (forest technician) is retiring from VDOF on January 31, 2022 after 32 years of service. Congratulations, Steve – enjoy your well-deserved retirement.

Assets Inventory and Property Numbers

- ◆ If you need assistance with Assets Inventory and Property Numbers, please contact Chrissy Gough at Christine.gough@dof.virginia.gov or 434-220-9138.

Coming Up

Generation NEXT Program and Legacy Planning Introductory Course

- ◆ As a reminder, in February and March 2022, staff from the Forestland Conservation Program (FCP) and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) will be offering VDOF field staff a half-day introductory course to the Generation NEXT Program and Legacy Planning. Three half-day workshops (10am-3pm) are planned:
 - February 23 for Eastern Region field staff at New Kent
 - February 24 for Central Region field staff at HQ
 - March 2 for Western Region field staff at the Salem office
- ◆ If you are already signed up for a workshop, you should have already received an email for Karl Didier (forestland conservation program manager) and provided him with any dietary restrictions for lunch. If you are not signed up, and would like to be, please email Karl (karl.didier@dof.virginia.gov) by **Friday February 4**. Space and lunch are not guaranteed at this point. For those already signed up, expect an email with course details and a little prep work by Feb 9.

Roanoke Tree Care Workshop

- ◆ **SAVE THE DATE:** The Roanoke Tree Care workshop will be held in person on Wednesday, March 16, at the Virginia Western Community College campus. Registration information and agenda details will follow.

Project Updates

Policy and Procedures

[Policy and Procedure 04-008 Wildfire Prevention](#) has been updated to reflect changes in the Woodland Home Community Assessment and Fire Adapted Communities.

News You Can Use

Firesponse Question of the Week!

- ◆ Why is my mobile application not working correctly?
 - On December 30, 2021, the developer released a new version of the Firesponse Production application. While the updated mobile app seemed to push the new version to most everyone's mobile device, some follow-up testing has revealed that approximately 10% of the VDOF phones in service did not automatically update as expected. The easiest solution for anyone who is having some mobile app-related issues is to uninstall and then reinstall the app from the Google Play store.
- ◆ Everyone is encouraged to reach out to fire staff for troubleshooting or additional support, if needed.

Did You Know

February Celebrations – [Statewide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Holiday Calendar](#)

- ◆ At least 25% of our VDOF workforce directly benefitted from one of the United States' most prominent civil rights leaders: can you name her?

- ◆ The day of celebration also marks her birthday and serves as reminder on how servant leadership can lead to a greater good.
 - **February 1 – 28** – [Black History Month](#)
 - **February 1** – [Chinese New Year](#)
 - **February 1** – [Lunar New Year](#)
 - **February 4** – [Rosa Parks Day](#)
 - **February 4** – [World Cancer Day](#)
 - **February 15** – [Nirvana Day \(Buddhist\); International Childhood Cancer Day](#)
 - **February 15** – [Susan B. Anthony Day](#)
 - **February 20** – [World Day of Social Justice](#)
 - **February 21** – [George Washington Day](#)
 - **February 21** – [International Mother Language Day](#)

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell hosted the first meeting of the newly reconstituted Stewardship Coordinating / Hardwood Initiative Steering Committee on January 11. Due to COVID precautions, the meeting was held virtually, but Rob, Dean Cumbia (forest resource management director), Todd Groh (forest resource management program manager), and Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator) were able to share information on the committee members' duties regarding the Stewardship and Forest Legacy programs and an overview of the current status of the hardwood resource. The State Forester then described the goals and strategies of the Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative. The committee is made up of representatives from across Virginia who bring perspectives from forest industry, academia, federal and non-government organizations, partners, landowners, and consulting foresters. This positive first meeting set the tone for an in-person meeting in late spring.
- ◆ Rob Farrell hosted a virtual webinar for VDOF staff on the Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative started under his leadership. The overview covered the history and development of the hardwood forest, the current status of the hardwood forest, and a multi-faceted approach to improving the hardwood resource over time. He introduced the Hardwood Assessment Tool and how it can be used by foresters to assist in preparing recommendations. The forester's recommendations are critical to the landowner's success, and working with the landowner to explain the recommendations and encourage action is important to the final success of the Initiative. The presentation and recording is on the VDOF intranet. <https://dof.virginia.gov/hardwood-forest-habitat-initiative-update-webinar-01-20-2022/>

Fire and Emergency Response

- ◆ Twelve full-time personnel attended an agency offering of the S-212 “Wildland Powersaw” class the week of January 10. The class was held on the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest, and special thanks go out to the state forest personnel for not only providing the hardwood stand for tree cutting, but also a custom burn barrel for helping participants stay warm during what was likely the coldest S-212 ever!

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (urban & community forestry [U&CF] partnership coordinator) attended the quarterly U&CF/Eastern region meeting to discuss the latest projects and initiatives related to urban and community forestry.
- ◆ The Utilization and Marketing Team completed submission of a Wood Innovations Grant proposal to promote biochar in Virginia and the region. New partnerships were created while working on this proposal. Applications in water quality improvements, mine land reclamation, agricultural fields, livestock farms, and urban soil compaction improvements are planned. The grant awards will be announced at the end of spring or early summer.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) attended (virtually) a Blue Ridge PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management) advisory committee meeting. The committee is composed of representatives from state, federal, and non-profit agencies with interests in minimizing the impact of invasive plants. The committee advises the PRISM on plans and strategies, helps make connections with key people and organizations, and collaborates on some local projects. You can find more information about the group here: <https://blueridgeprism.org/>
- ◆ Todd Groh (forest resource management program manager), attended a quarterly virtual meeting of the Upper Potomac Riparian Buffer Strategy Group to discuss current buffer accomplishments with representatives from public and private agencies and organizations from Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia. The discussion primarily focused on updating a strategy document that will help guide the group's outreach and buffer promotional activities across the watershed.
- ◆ Todd Groh attended a virtual national Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) webinar to discuss the state agency and private organization's opportunities under the program. The RCPP is a method for NRCS to increase and widen their conservation efforts by partnering with agencies and organizations to get more conservation practices installed on the ground. VDOF has participated in the RCPP program in the past, and may consider this for future opportunities.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Ed Stoots (state lands coordinator) and Jerre Creighton (research program manager) attended the January meeting of the Board of Directors for the Virginia Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation.
- ◆ Ones Bitoki (tree improvement forester) evaluated survival for the 2021 VDOF progeny tests. There was a large amount of rabbit damage at New Kent (much occurring after the recent snowfall), resulting in only 21% survival. The test at Hockley has a 99% survival rate.
- ◆ We received final results for the white pine seed germination test from the National Seed Lab. Germination rate was 81%, which is close to normal.
- ◆ The Sussex loblolly pine nursery has graded 4,280,000 loblolly seedlings, or 18 percent of the crop. A few contractors have started to pick up seedlings at the various cold storages.

News Clips

- ◆ [Wooden-structured telecommunication towers introduce a low-carbon option for Europe's accelerating 5G market](#)
- ◆ [A new biomass mapping tool can pinpoint the carbon of a single 30 metre tree](#)

- ◆ [Celebration of Trees](#)
- ◆ [Some trees may 'social distance' to avoid disease](#)
- ◆ [What to know before burning storm debris](#)
- ◆ [Applications to environmental protection camp being accepted](#)
- ◆ [Experts warn residents to use caution when burning storm debris](#)
- ◆ [State Ag Secretary Job 'Dream Come True' For Lohr](#)