



March 21, 2022

Upcoming Events

[Environment Virginia Symposium](#) – March 29 – 31

[2022 Virginia Interagency Wildland Fire Academy](#) – May 24 – May 28

[Forest Health Workshop – Charlottesville](#) – June 8

[Forest Health Workshop – Galax](#) – June 9

- ◆ Registration is open for the **2022 VDOF Forest Health Training** on June 8 at HQ in Charlottesville and June 9 at Matthews State Forest in Galax. These one-day training events will be led by Dr. Coyle from Clemson University and will cover basic forest health topics, including the identification, diagnosis, and management of native and invasive forest pests specific to Virginia. SAF and ISA credits will be offered. This is a great opportunity for newer employees and a good review for others- all are welcome! Please obtain approval from your supervisor and then sign up at the following link. Please email Lori Chamberlin (lori.chamberlin@dof.virginia.gov) if you have questions. Registration (free): <https://forms.gle/ggY7zB1RoawfZCNc6>

[All Agency Meeting](#) – June 29

Employee News

Congratulations Andrew Matteson!

- ◆ The Eastern Region welcomes Andrew Matteson, who will be transferring from the Dan River Work Area to the Mattaponi Work Area on March 25. Andrew will be serving as an area forester in his new work area after working for the past 3 years as a forest technician and previously as a FIA assistant. Andrew has a degree in Fisheries & Wildlife Resource Management from West Virginia University.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ The Commonwealth's contract with United Parcel Service (UPS) expired in January 2022 and is being renegotiated. There is no other state contract for shipping. The previous UPS contract had rates that were significantly lower than non-contract rates. VDOF nurseries built our shipping rates on the contract rates, and have now seen a sharp increase in costs that will significantly impact their bottom line for this season. This problem mainly impacts the VDOF hardwood nursery in Augusta County, where the increased rates could triple our shipping costs between now and May.

Fire and Emergency Response

- ◆ Since March 8, the VDOF responded to seven wildfires that burned eight acres and damaged one home and one outbuilding. Agency response efforts during this same period protected four homes and three other structures, with an estimated value protected of over \$750,000. Since the beginning of 2022, the VDOF has suppressed 244 wildfires which have burned 2786 acres.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ The Virginia Department of Forestry is hosting a one-day Forest Carbon Symposium. Speakers from around the US are invited to deliver information on forest carbon markets, what this market means to Virginia, and opportunities for our state's forestry community to consider. Large to small forest owners, urban and rural forestry professionals, landowners, and forest managers will benefit from the sessions. Please follow the link to register for the event: [Forest Carbon Symposium | Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program | Virginia Tech \(vt.edu\)](#)
- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager) & Eli Podyma (community forestry specialist) completed a tree inventory of Richmond's southside Hull Street with Groundwork RVA staff to find open tree wells for a planting project happening later this year.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (U&CF partnership coordinator) assisted the Blackwater Work area with planting a Turf to Trees project at Hickory High School in Chesapeake. Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, (community forestry specialist) led the project, which involved more than 30 students planting 25 trees on the school's campus. Trees were sourced locally, and the entire Blackwater Work Area participated in making the planting a success.
- ◆ Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester) provided a remote presentation on the status of the Southern Region Urban Wood Program to the Services, Utilization & Marketing (SUM) committee, which was meeting in Oklahoma City, OK.

- ◆ The VDOF Urban Wood program partnered with the Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance, Harrisonburg Department of Public Works, and Rocktown Urban Wood Inc. for an urban wood charcuterie board "make & take." Participants selected their favorite wooden blank and transformed them into charcuterie boards with guidance from the staff of the sponsoring organizations.



Attendees also had an opportunity to learn about Harrisonburg's Urban Wood Program. Additionally, a chef from James Madison University's Dining Services was on hand to demonstrate the proper composition and placement of food to create a successful charcuterie presentation. The event, which was limited to twenty people, was hosted by Brothers Craft Brewing, which has several urban wood elements in their taproom (pictured).

- ◆ The Forestland Conservation Program and Virginia Cooperative Extension successfully completed three trainings for VDOF field staff on the Generation NEXT Program and legacy planning. Eighty field staff participated in the trainings across the three VDOF regions. Participants learned the basics of legacy planning, including introductions to the conservation, legal, and financial tools; heard inspiring landowner stories; practiced encouraging landowners to start legacy planning, and discussed ways to

improve outreach. A post-course competition will reward field staff who perform the most outreach in the next two months. If you are field staff who attended the course, please remember to keep a list of the landowners you've engaged (name and address at least; email or phone if possible) and send it to Karl Didier before 5:00pm on May 2. Thank you to all the field staff who participated, the Regional and Deputy Regional Foresters for their support, and especially to Kathy Albertson, Lara Wilson (program support technicians), and Brenda Clark (part-timer) for their help with logistics and catering!

- ◆ Rachel Harris (utilization & marketing [U&M] specialist) and Sabina Dhungana (U&M program manager) attended the SUM Committee meeting in Oklahoma City, OK March 7-11. The agenda included individual state programs updates, federal program updates, U&M issues, items in the SGSF SUM committee work plan, plans for improving the forest products locator website, TPO, forest carbon markets, and discussion on potential regional future grants.
- ◆ Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) provided an update to the General Assembly Military and Veterans Caucus regarding the Commonwealth's progress on a Sentinel Landscapes Designation. This has been a multiyear process and we continue to work towards a designation in 2022.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ VDOF Forest Health staff and Forest Health liaisons are conducting visual surveys for spotted lanternfly egg masses in high-risk locations such as rest areas, parking lots, and popular hiking trails that have significant populations of tree-of-heaven. Spotted lanternfly continues to spread in Virginia, and early detection and rapid response is critical for successful control, so everyone is encouraged to look for these egg masses. You can report the results of an egg mass survey here: <https://arccg.is/04n0SW>.
- ◆ Did you know that the Department of Forestry has an action plan to help restore longleaf pine in Virginia? The first plan was developed in 2008 by an internal team of VDOF employees, and that plan is being updated by another team of VDOF staff representing headquarters, the Eastern Region, the State forests, nurseries and research. The group met on March 9 at the VDOF Waverly office to review the current plan, update and/or revise the existing strategies, and develop new strategies that will continue to increase longleaf pine in Virginia's landscape. Once the plan is updated and approved by VDOF leadership, it will be available as a reference to all employees for work planning purposes.
- ◆ On March 10, Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator), and Scott Adams (area forester) met with Department of Wildlife Resource (DWR) staff foresters Kent Burtner and Randy Kyner, and Lands and Access Manager Ron Hughes to look at hardwood stands on the Oakley Farm Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Robert W Duncan WMA in Spotsylvania and Caroline counties. DWR has hardwood stands on both properties that are in good condition for Crop Tree Release demonstration sites. Joe and Scott will revisit the stands to sample them using the Hardwood Assessment Tool.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Augusta Forestry Center (AFC) field staff continue to lift and grade trees. They have taken in 1712 orders totaling \$518,693.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton (research program manager) spent one day at Appomattox/Buckingham State Forest (ABSF) helping a crew from NCSU and VT (Drs Rachel Cook and David Carter and staff) to collect foliage samples from trees on the old site prep study that is now being used as a nitrogen fertilizer trial to trace the fate of applied fertilizer in crop pines and competing hardwoods. The idea is to answer the question of how much fertilizer actually goes to pine production vs how much is diverted by competition.
- ◆ This year's loblolly pine progeny tests - established as part of VDOF's collaboration with the NC State Tree Improvement Program - were planted at New Kent and Hockley. The New Kent location was planted by Ones Bitoki (tree improvement forester) and Jeff Stout (tree improvement technician) while

at Hockley, Ones and Jeff were joined by volunteers Doug Audley, Lisa Deaton (area foresters), Dennis Gaston (forest management specialist), Alan Sutherlin (forest technician), and Ben Duke (state forest technician). The results of these tests provide the basis for our future selections of improved loblolly pine seedlings for our nursery operation.

State Forest

- ◆ Staff have been painting the property boundaries for Charlotte State Forest, building some kiosks, developing additional parking, and putting the GIS together to create a map in an effort to have Charlotte State Forest open for the spring gobbler season.
- ◆ Timber was sold last week on the ABSF, bringing \$201,164 for approximately 1,113.6 MBF of mostly pine sawtimber and 1010 tons of pulpwood on 88.6 acres.
- ◆ Staff prescribed burned 266 acres at New Kent Forestry Center including CP orchard, the west nursery, and the longleaf pine provenance and Cactus Trail areas.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Staff cruised the Virginia Department of Veteran Services Dublin Cemetery tract in preparation for a timber sale consisting of 36.8 acres of mostly 65-year-old shortleaf pine.

Eastern Region

- ◆ Meghan Mulroy-Goldman and Kendall Topping (community forestry specialists) gave talks at Norfolk Botanical Garden for their adult education program. Meghan focused on the benefits of trees and the challenges they face in urban and community areas, as well as the importance and benefits of urban and community forestry management. Kendall covered wildlife benefits of trees in urban areas and how you can use trees in your backyard to create habitat for wildlife.
- ◆ The Blackwater work unit completed a 45+/- acre understory burn in a thinned pine stand in Southampton County. Part of the property was burned three years ago by VDOF. The landowner was pleased with the earlier burn and wished to burn all the thinned parcels on the property. The burn was completed quickly and efficiently with the assistance of help from outside the work unit. Dominic Chirico, Kenny Midgett (forest technicians) and Heather Tuck (regional fire specialist) assisted Evan Richardson, Stephen Jasenak (area foresters), Kendall Topping and Scott Bachman (senior area forester) with ignition and holding on this burn. We were efficient enough that Heather had time to fly the burn with her drone and practice identifying hot spots with the IR camera.

- ◆ Meghan Mulroy-Goldman assisted volunteers from HRSD in planting loblolly pine seedlings on about 1.3 acres of property owned by Hampton Roads Sanitation District in Virginia Beach. This planting was the second phase of a planting project which added hardwood trees, shrubs, and pine seedlings to the property. The many enthusiastic volunteers enjoyed getting to plant the bare-root seedlings and learning how to use a dibble bar. Robbie Lewis (senior area forester) and Lynnhaven River Now were also involved in planning the planting. (pictured)



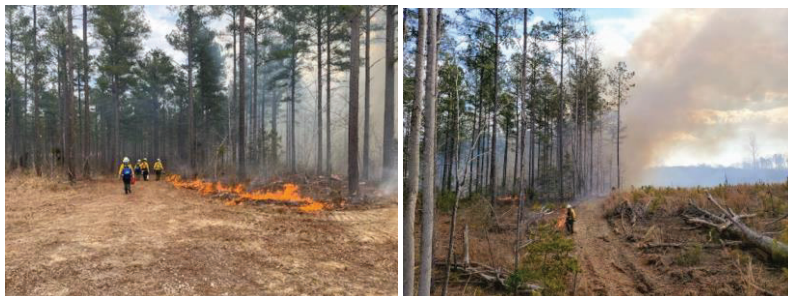
Hickory High School's Environmental Club in planting 25 trees in honor of the school's 25th anniversary. The club had previously reached out to Chesapeake Horticultural Extension Agent Mike Andruczyk about developing a planting project for the school. Mike had connected them with Meghan, who worked with them to develop a plan, source trees, and organize a planting day. Meghan, Evan, Scott, and Molly were all impressed with just how many students came out to plant on a Friday afternoon. With over 30 volunteers from the Environmental Club and other school groups, they were able to get the trees planted, mulched, and staked in just a couple of hours. Thanks also to Chesapeake Parks, Recreation and Tourism who augured holes, and Kendall Topping who transported mulch and trees to the site prior to planting.

- ◆ In honor of International Women's Day on March 8, Chesapeake Public Libraries held a career fair focused on jobs that have been traditionally dominated by men. Meghan Mulroy-Goldman and Kendall Topping attended the event and were able to introduce girls ranging from 3rd grade to high school to the field of forestry. Each of the attendees had guided "interview" questions to ask the women at the event. The younger girls had questions like what is the best part of your job and what is the yuckiest part of your job (Meghan and Kendall agreed that briars were the best answer to this question), while the high schoolers had questions about how they got into the field and what an average day looked like. Meghan and Kendall also shared how they had learned to do things they never pictured themselves doing, like driving a bulldozer and fighting fires. For any of the guests that were interested in natural resource careers, they recommend applying for Camp Woods and Wildlife this year (or when they were old enough). Both WAVY Hampton Roads Show and WCTV were at the event and Meghan gave a brief interview (pictured).



- ◆ John Rose (forest technician), Evan Richardson, Stephen Jasenak (area foresters), and Scott Bachman all assisted Jim Schroering (longleaf pine/SPB coordinator) and Travis Tindell (area forester) on a wildfire in Surry County. The fire was reported on Thursday late afternoon. By the end of the day on Friday, the nearly 600 acre fire was contained and the lines blackened by the Waverly work unit staff Jay Basset (forest technician), Zach Dowling (senior area forester), Travis Tindell (area forester), as well as Brian Lacey (regional resource specialist), Jim, and the Blackwater staff (John, Evan, Stephen and Scott). Three dozers were used on the fire to create fire lines prior to burn out operations. Damage to the timber is expected to be minimal as the soil moisture in the area was relatively high, resulting in mostly surface fire. One positive was that we were able to utilize the Emergency Purchase Card system for the first time, providing meals on Friday for the VDOF staff. It is good to get experience with this newer tool in a less chaotic situation than a multi-agency response. <https://www.wavy.com/news/local-news/500-acre-wildfire-in-surry-county-no-injuries-reported/> - Photo was taken by Evan.

- ◆ The Capital Team conducted a 43-acre understory burn for a savanna project in Hanover County. This burn was the final step in a 4-year implementation of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program through Natural Resources



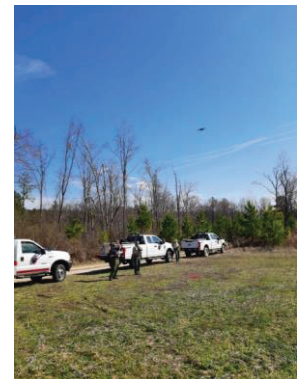
Conservation Service (NRCS). Converting this loblolly stand to a pine savanna was originally recommended in a 2014 forest stewardship management plan written by VDOF (pictured).

- ◆ Maritime area personnel assisted US Fish & Wildlife Service Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge with a prescribed burn. The burn was for habitat enhancement in the tidal marsh and marsh/woods interface, and in several shallow water impoundments for fuel reduction, and to improve forage for the Chincoteague pony herd and waterfowl. (pictured)



- ◆ Joshua Just (forest technician) and Warren Coburn (senior area forester) provided a basic wildfire training session for members of the Cople Volunteer Fire Department in Kinsale, VA (Westmoreland County) on February 17. The group was appreciative of the training and gave a grand tour of all of their fire equipment, which Josh and Warren found very beneficial.

- ◆ On March 3, Heather Tuck assisted members of the Five Forks Work Area. She was able to provide the team with a drone flight of the 165 acre Branches Road Fire. The drone flight was able to produce several results. First, the V-pattern back to the origin was photographed to support the court case. Second, the IR camera was used to confirm that the fire was truly out. Third, pictures were taken of a home that was saved thanks to Steve Coleman's quick dozer work. These pictures will be used in regional Firewise educational programs. (pictured)



Central Region

- ◆ Jim McGlone (urban forest conservationist) taught a Tree Diagnostics class for the Arlington/Alexandria tree stewards. These tree volunteers are often called on to provide assistance to homeowners with sick trees. The class was designed to teach them to recognize the signs of general classes of disease and pests, like vascular wilt, root rot and phloem feeders, and then direct the tree owners to professionals for specific identification and treatment options.
- ◆ Jim McGlone taught the pruning section of basic training to the Loudoun County Master Gardeners. In the morning virtual lecture, Jim talked about the process of pruning and how small cuts early in the life of a tree can create good structure later. He also shared pictures from 14 years of pruning his crabapple and explained why he made the cuts he did and how they affected the tree. In the afternoon the class met live at the George C. Marshall house in Leesburg to do some hands-on pruning and talk about tree issues that can't be fixed by pruning.
- ◆ Patrick Murphy (senior area forester) provided a tour for Mimee Jones, student intern, and Kelly Atkinson, education specialist, both with the Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) about forestry. The topics included pine silviculture, timber harvesting, and hardwood management.

Western Region

- ◆ Russell Proctor (regional fire specialist) attended the Board of Directors meeting for Isle of Pines HOA in Moneta. Russell gave a presentation about the Firewise program and its benefits to the community. At the end of the presentation the board voted to move forward with becoming a Firewise community.
- ◆ Russell Proctor met with representatives from the Chalet High Community in Carroll County. The community has dropped out of the fire-wise program for various reasons. As a result of the meeting, the community is interested in becoming a Fire-wise Community again, and a plan was formulated to get the community back in good standing.
- ◆ Russell Proctor and William Neff (forest technician) met with Shane Sturgill, USDA Forest Service (USFS) South Zone FMO at the Clinch RD office. The USFS provided some mapping assistance on a VDOF project. The need to have a cooperators meeting was discussed due to a number of personnel changes within the Clinch and Mt. Rogers work areas as well as the USFS. The South Zone prescribed burn goals were discussed as well as suppression cooperation.
- ◆ Andrew Vinson, Cole Young, Leslie Mace (water quality specialists), and Chad Austin (water quality engineer) held a water quality calibration session for the Blue Ridge Work area and some newer field staff. An indoor session was held where procedures and the Water Quality law were discussed in detail. The afternoon session was a field visit to a logging site in Roanoke County where participants discussed BMPs and pre-harvest planning.

News Clips

- ◆ [Fire danger high in Southwest, Central Virginia Monday](#)
- ◆ [Virginia Cooperative Extension, Natural Area Management Services provide webinar series](#)
- ◆ [One of this year's biggest solar bills is all about forests and farms](#)
- ◆ [Five Ways Conservation Easements Make a Difference With Virginia's population nearly doubling in 50 years, saving land is more important than ever](#)
- ◆ [County finance department: Data centers' tax revenue would fall short of projections](#)
- ◆ [Hodge: Many came to the rescue](#)
- ◆ [Richmond Report: Agricultural and forestry needs of Southside](#)