



March 28, 2022

Upcoming Events

[Hardwood Forester 2022 Class Training – May 18 – 20](#)

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

[2022 Mid-Atlantic Compact Fire Academy – June 6 – 10](#)

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

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

[All Agency Meeting – June 29](#)

[Forest Management Academy – East – September 13 – 15](#)

[Forest Management Academy – West – September 27 – 29](#)

Employee Spotlight

Joe Cotner, Dave Thompkins and Ben Wassum – Job Well Done!

- ◆ The note below was received from Oak Hallow Farm landowner Preston Allen in Bedford County.
 - “I just wanted to drop you a quick note to say how impressed I am with the professionalism and competence shown by several of your forester team in Bedford County.
 - I have a small privately owned tree farm in Bedford County. I have relied on your professional team of foresters in Bedford County since 2010 when I acquired my 96 acres. They guided me through logging, replanting, best practices, reforestation with pines, riparian buffers and facilitating a relationship with the Bedford Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) who I also am most thankful.
 - Most recently, March 16, Joe Cotner (senior area forester), Dave Thompkins (forest technician) and Ben Wassum (natural resource specialist) conducted a prescribed burn of my NWSG Oak Savannas. I was never concerned when they thought of all contingencies and were prepared for any eventualities. All went as planned and with perfection. I was impressed.
 - Thank you for making this caliber of folks available to me and other forestry landowners.”

Dennis Gaston, Benjamin Duke, Lisa Deaton, Alan Sutherlin and Doug Audley – Thank You!

- ◆ The note below was received from Ones Bitoki (tree improvement forester) expressing his great appreciation for the help he received with 2022 progeny test planting.
 - “The following people helped with 2022 progeny tests planting this year and I would like to recognize their help. Indeed, since a few years back, these same people are helping again and again in test establishment at New Kent and Hockly, K&Q County. Their efforts are not in vain as a lot of selections from these tests are part of our orchards where we collect cones to extract seeds used in the VDOF nurseries. Thanks to: Dennis Gaston (forest management specialist), Benjamin Duke (state forest technician), Lisa Deaton, Doug Audley (area foresters) and Alan Sutherlin (forest technician).
 - A special thank you to Doug Audley for all his time, he has never missed any planting season. We are thankful and it was a joy to take a picture of his last progeny seedling he planted maybe before his retirement. I said last seedling before retirement because I sense he may want to plant more even after his retirement.
 - Not being their supervisors to express my appreciation to them during the evaluation process, I would like to pass on this information to you so it can be taken into account that they went beyond their normal duties to help advance the common good of the Virginia Department of Forestry.”

Employee News

Welcome to VDOF

- ◆ Welcome Amanda Conrad, VDOF's new Forest Health Technician. Amanda has a degree in Environmental Studies from Saint Francis University and has experience working as an invasive species assistant. She will work with the Forest Health staff to administer the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) cost-share program and assist with forest health monitoring and treatment activities in Virginia. Amanda started with VDOF on March 24.



- ◆ We are pleased to announce that Jacob Zielinski has been selected for the bay watershed specialist position covering the Rappahannock and Potomac Work Areas. Jacob has an A.A.S in Forest Technology from Penn State University and a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology from Frostburg State University. He has a year of natural resources experience through several internship opportunities related to plant surveys, entomology, and arboriculture. Jacob started with VDOF on March 25, and his office is located in Warrenton.

- ◆ Welcome aboard to Randy Kyner, who started with VDOF on March 25 as the Assistant State Forest Superintendent. Randy most recently worked for the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) as a Wildlife Manager for five Wildlife Management Areas. Prior to his work with DWR, Randy spent time as a consulting forester, running his own company with a partner since 1984. Randy has a degree in Forest Resource Management from West Virginia University.



News You Can Use

Charlotte State Forest Opens for Recreational Use April 1

- ◆ The newest addition to our state forest system will open to public recreation this Friday. With over 5,000 acres of forestland, meadows and wetlands, Charlotte State Forest offers great hiking and wildlife watching. Visitors with a State Forest Use Permit can take advantage of the forest for hunting, fishing, mountain biking and horseback riding. Learn more [here](#).

Project Updates

Urban Wood Project Update

- ◆ Last week, the VDOF's Urban Wood program assisted with the Natural Areas Management (NAMS) train-the-trainer workshop which was held in Hagerstown, MD. NAMS trains resource professionals and green industry businesses in opportunities in the hugely untapped world of small property management. Attendees hailed from several states, including MD, VA, PA, OH, NC, SC, CT & NH. The VDOF was represented by Lindsey Long (community forestry specialist, NOVA Work Area), Connor Goolsby (natural resource specialist, Shenandoah Work Area) and Joe Lehnen (forest utilization and marketing specialist) (pictured).



Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ VDOF hosted the Board of Forestry meeting at our headquarters, along with a visit from Secretary Lohr and Deputy Secretary Green, who also spent the morning visiting with agency staff.
- ◆ The Board of Forestry selected Beth Hutchins of Flippo Lumber Company to serve as the incoming chair. Secretary Lohr shared administration priorities with the board and discussed concerns from the forestry community regarding forest conversion due to solar development and the importance of biomass energy as a market for forest products.
- ◆ Rob Farrell participated in a meeting with the Secretary's office, Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (VDACS), and the Virginia directors of three federal conservation agencies -- NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Rural Development. The meeting yielded several areas of overlapping priorities and opportunities for collaboration.

Fire and Emergency Response

- ◆ Over the last week, the VDOF suppressed 25 fires which burned 286 acres. The largest fire of the last week was a 97-acre blaze in Amherst County.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ John Pemberton (forest inventory manager) met with Southern Research Station - Timber Products Output staff virtually to discuss the status of Felled Tree Studies in VA and training needs. Felled Tree Studies are visits to active logging sites to scale harvested trees to determine utilization rates and update volume tables.
- ◆ The U&M team is exploring EMSI data. EMSI is a tool that is similar to IMPLAN but seems focused mostly on the labor market, which could make it useful for workforce development. Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) uses this in our state. Our economy is massive and fast-moving, and pulling our data from multiple sources gives us the most complete, nuanced, up-to-date view of the labor market. The U&M representative from Alabama shared EMSI information with VDOF staff at the SUM meeting last week, and they are evaluating it.
- ◆ Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester) hosted an Urban Wood Program display and shared outreach materials at the Roanoke Tree Care workshop. Joe also provided logistical and programming support to the Urban & Community Forestry team for this event.
- ◆ Trees Virginia, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Forestry, the Roanoke Valley Urban Forest Council, and Virginia Western Community College, hosted the 2022 Roanoke Tree Care Workshop. The full-day event was the first in-person workshop hosted by Trees Virginia in two years. Over 135 attendees from state, private, non-profit, and federal agencies participated. Topics included the Roanoke Valley Greenway system, native species for bioretention areas, 3 pests/diseases for 3 seasons, and the relationship between trees & sidewalks. Outdoor demonstrations included grafting vintage apple varieties, as well as examples of urban pests/diseases throughout the area.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager) coordinated a Tree Steward training video on young tree pruning with the Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards for the 2023 manual update.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator) participated in the Natural Area Management Series professionals training. Joe assisted this three-state virtual training with a presentation on Crop Tree Release. The training targeted service providers who sell their natural resource experience and services to landowners. They included landscapers, foresters, biologists, arborists, and others.
- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) and Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) attended the virtual National Forest Health Monitoring workshop over the course of three days. The theme was Climate Change and Accelerated Disturbance and featured talks from forest health professionals across the nation. Katlin DeWitt gave a presentation about state partner participation in forest health monitoring. There were 140 people in attendance discussing detection monitoring techniques, data collection, and reporting formats.
- ◆ Lori Chamberlin gave a presentation to the Albemarle County Master Gardeners about invasive plant control methods.
- ◆ On March 17, Todd Groh (forest resource management program manager) facilitated an internal meeting at VDOF HQ to update the VDOF shortleaf pine management plan.

State Forest

- ◆ Planting contractors started March 22 with the pine plantings on Cumberland and Appomattox/Buckingham State Forest (ABSF). The contractor doing the planting this year is Rock

Spring Forestry out of Courtland / Southampton County. One stand of shortleaf in addition to loblolly is being planted on ABSF.

- ◆ Staff participated in the SE Burn Partners Coordination meeting.
- ◆ Invasive Species control work was mostly completed on the Cumberland State Forest this past week. The contractor (Eastern Forest Consultants) treated over 293,379 linear feet of roads worked, which is 45.4 miles. The road edges were worked 100 feet into the woods on both sides, and several field edges totaling a perimeter of 44,514 feet were worked. The contractor also went back to three areas from the 2021 invasive species control application and treated autumn olive, which was skipped last summer. In total, the contractor treated 1248.9 acres of invasive species (primarily for ailanthus with some privet, mimosa, and autumn olive) for less than \$20,000. An estimated 46.2 acres of that total was heavy autumn olive. The invasive species work was covered under a grant obtained by Lori Chamberlin. The remaining \$1,500 will be utilized later in May - June.
- ◆ Staff assisted the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) with a 100-acre understory exemption burn at Parkers Branch in Sussex County.
- ◆ Staff assisted the Master Naturalists with the sampling of vernal pools at Sandy Point State Forest.
- ◆ Three additional Crop Tree Release projects (part of our Hardwood Habitat Initiative demonstrations) are currently out for bid on Appomattox/Buckingham, Chesterfield, and Prince Edward-Gallion State Forests. An optional pre-bid meeting for interested contractors is scheduled for March 31 at the Appomattox/Buckingham office. The link for the Quick Quote is provided for passing along to those with interest. - [Crop Release- State Forest](#)
- ◆ Staff will meet April 6 with DWR and Ducks Unlimited to discuss wildlife management at Charlotte State Forest. There are possible grants that could aid in the maintenance and replacement of several culverts that help to control water levels on the riparian area.
- ◆ Jason Woodfin (Conservation Services) was awarded the timber appraisal contract for the inventory of timber on the Stanley phase 3 and John H. Daniel projects, both of which will add approximately 690 acres to Charlotte State Forest.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Planting contractors will move from the State Forest to two State-Owned Lands projects later this week or early next week. Southampton Corrections has about 20 acres to plant post-harvest, and Paul D. Camp Community College has about 36 acres to be planted.
- ◆ Harvest layout started at the Department of Veteran Services Cemetery Property in Amelia.
- ◆ Neal Oberholtzer (area forester) and Hassan Gray (forest technician) attended the Mecklenburg County Fire Chiefs Meeting to introduce Gray and discuss the spring fire season.

Central Region

- ◆ Rodney Newlin (water quality engineer) and Jason Braunstein (GIS program manager) held an IGNIS drone training session for five Eastern Region drone pilots at New Kent Forestry Center. (pictured)
- ◆ Tom Snoddy (area forester), Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator), Katlin Dewitt (forest health specialist), and Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) assisted with an "advanced" woodland owners' retreat, co-hosted by VDOF, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and the Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program (VFLEP). "Forest



Management: Beyond the Basics" was held at Holiday Lake 4-H Center and was geared toward participants of previous beginning woodland owner retreats. The 22 participating landowners visited sites in and around the Appomattox/Buckingham State Forest, as well as an active timber harvest on Weyerhaeuser land. Other presenters included Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, local NRCS and SWCD staff, and the James River Association. Landowners had a packed weekend, with lots of great demonstrations and discussions on how to keep Virginia's forests healthy and growing.

- ◆ Cain Harbison (area forester) and members of the Shenandoah Work Area have organized four volunteer work days throughout the month of March and the first week of April to complete a live staking project at the Hawksbill Greenway in Luray. So far, 26 volunteers have participated during the first two scheduled work days. By the end of the project, the volunteers and VDOF staff will have planted just over 3,700 live stakes along 5,224 feet of bank. The live stakes were purchased using funds from the Mountains to Bay program. (pictured)



Eastern Region

- ◆ The Capital team planted an additional 25 trees at the West End Manor Civic Association in Henrico using funds from the James River Buffer Program (JRBP). This is the third round of tree planting the JRBP has funded at this location.
- ◆ Jeremy Falkenau (senior area forester) attended a meeting of the Emergency Management Alliance of Central Virginia. Jeremy provided updates about fire season, reminders of the 4PM Burn Law, and shared information about relevant VDOF resources (public fireResponse and Daily Fire Summation websites, Volunteer Fire Department Assistance, and dry hydrant grants).
- ◆ Eli Podyma (community forestry specialist) assisted the EnRichmond Foundation with a tour of the East End and Evergreen Cemeteries. During the tour, Eli spoke with 15 Master Naturalists from the Riverine chapter about good forest management, and the plans and work that has gone into these cemeteries. Over the last four years VDOF has played a large part in the revitalization of East End and Evergreen.
- ◆ Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community forestry specialist) and Lisa Deaton (area forester) participated in the 2022 Arbor Day - 37th Annual Award Ceremony and Reception, presented by the Williamsburg Area Council of Garden Clubs and County of York on March 11. Meghan attended the ceremonial planting of two red maples in front of the York County Tourism Office and Lisa presented a "Celebration of Trees" photographic essay as guest speaker for the awards ceremony. Over 100 Garden Club members, York County officials, and award recipients were in attendance.
- ◆ The Peninsulas Work Area completed an 18-acre understory burn in a 19-year-old longleaf pine stand in Middlesex County. Burns have been conducted every 3 or 4 years in this stand by VDOF staff. The landowner has been pleased working with VDOF's assistance and professionalism since the stand's establishment. (pictured)



News Clips

- ◆ [Crews continue to fight 80-acre wildfire on Snowden Mountain](#)
- ◆ [Amherst wildfire contained at 96 acres](#)
- ◆ [Scientists rename the controversial gypsy moth](#)

- ◆ [Weather conditions played key roles in Amherst County forest fire spread, containment](#)
- ◆ [Sierra Club calls for moratorium on logging in endangered species areas](#)
- ◆ [Meet some of the women firefighters battling flames in California](#)
- ◆ [Crews battle separate brush fires Saturday](#)