



April 11, 2022

Upcoming Events

[Southeast Virginia Urban Forest Roundtable \(SEVA\) – April 28](#)

- ◆ Focus on trees and storms.

[Camp Woods & Wildlife NEW STAFF Training – May 3 or 11](#)

[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](#)

[Camp Woods & Wildlife – June 20-24](#)

[All Agency Meeting – June 29](#)

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

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

Employee News

Thank You from the Forestland Conservation Team

- ◆ The Forestland Conservation Team would like to thank Scott Bachman, Warren Coburn, Martha Warring (senior area foresters), Ricky Butler (forester specialist), Ed Furlow (area forester), Lindsey Long, Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community forestry specialist) and Caitlin Verdu (watershed program manager) for assistance with field monitoring of our conservation easements. If you conduct easement monitoring, when recording your report in IFRIS, please remember to include your first and last name under the "All Persons on the Property" Section.

Leaving VDOF

- ◆ Amanda Scheps, our Forestland Conservation Specialist, will be leaving the VDOF on April 15. While we hate to see Amanda leave, it is a tremendous opportunity for her, as she will be leading conservation efforts at the Land Trust of Virginia (LTV) as their new Director of Conservation. So, Amanda's efforts to conserve Virginia's forestland will continue. Amanda adds, "Thanks to the generosity of my colleagues

at VDOF, my understanding of forest conservation has grown exponentially. My appreciation for forestry and forest management will come with me as Director of Conservation for the Land Trust of Virginia. LTV holds conservation easements statewide, and they hold more easements than any other non-profit land trust in the Commonwealth. The conservation work at LTV will continue to draw on the extensive knowledge of VDOF staff about potential easement projects, and I am looking forward to staying in touch". Please congratulate Amanda on this career changing achievement.

News You Can Use

FY2023 Reforestation of Timberlands Program

- ◆ The FY2023 RT Program has been created in IFRIS and can be used to develop new landowner agreements for the FY2023 Program year that begins on July 1, 2022. HOWEVER, it is important to complete the final paperwork for the FY2022 Program year before going too deeply into next year's projects. The FY2023 budget has not been finalized yet, so Regional allocations have not been made at this time. In the FY2023 RT Program year, there are several changes to the prescription rates that are noteworthy:
 - The site preparation, herbicide prescriptions, hardwood only, and pine and hardwood, have been split by the application method - aerial and ground - so now there are two prescriptions for each herbicide site preparation prescription.
 - The incentive rates have also increased slightly for these prescriptions to help offset the increase in herbicide prices.
 - The prescribed burning rate has decreased slightly to better match the costs of the practice.
 - These changes will be effective for the FY2023 RT Program and cannot be changed during the program year.
- ◆ On October 1, 2021, the IFRIS accomplishment codes were updated to help simplify accomplishment reporting. However, due to the fact that several of the accomplishments were being used in RT landowner agreements, a solution was reached to add an extension "(CS RT22 Only)" to the code that was being used in the RT Program. Once the FY2022 RT Program ends, on June 30, 2022, those codes with that extension will be removed from IFRIS. Therefore, as new accomplishments are being planned in IFRIS for the FY2023 RT Program, foresters should use the standard accomplishment codes, without the extension. If you have questions, please contact your Regional RT Coordinator.

Emerald Ash Borer Treatment Cost-Share

- ◆ Enrollment for the VDOF Emerald Ash Borer Cost-Share Program opens April 20. This program provides financial assistance for the treatment of ash trees to protect them from the emerald ash borer. Only landowners in VDOF's Eastern Region are eligible to apply, but organizations statewide may apply. You can find more information online here: <https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-management-health/forest-health/financial-assistance-program/emerald-ash-borer-treatment-program/>

Open Enrollment – May 2 - 16

- ◆ Open Enrollment for health benefits and flexible spending accounts (FSAs) will take place from May 2 through May 16 for elections effective on July 1, 2022. This is the time each year you are eligible to make changes to your health benefits and flexible spending accounts (FSAs) without a mid-year qualifying event. Watch for information to be mailed to your home address and emails from the Human Resource Office.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ VDOF sponsored the Environment Virginia Symposium at VMI and had a range of employees attend and make presentations. Rob Farrell participated in the panel discussion for the keynote session, along with the new directors of DEQ and DCR. Former State Forester and Secretary Bettina Ring was honored with the annual Erchul Environmental Leadership Award for her work in fostering collaboration on behalf of the environment in Virginia.
- ◆ Also at the 2022 Environment Virginia Conference, Harrisonburg's Department of Public Works was presented the Governor's Gold Medal Award for Environmental Excellence for its Urban Forestry-Urban Wood program. These two programs are collectively supported by the VDOF's Urban & Community Forestry and Urban Wood teams, which provide technical assistance for program development, engaging the municipality and private-sector businesses.
- ◆ The popular WAVY TV 10 feature "Hampton Roads Show" highlighted the agency's efforts to promote critical habitats by using prescribed fire. Senior Area Forester Scott Bachman was interviewed on the scene of the prescribed fire for the feature segment "Reck on the Road." <https://www.wavy.com/hr-show/reck-on-the-road/reck-on-the-road-inside-a-controlled-burn/>

Wildfire Response

- ◆ Rain has finally subdued the past week's extremely busy wildfire activity across the state. Over the past week VDOF staff fought 55 wildfires for a total of 2358 acres. VDOF has responded to fires in almost 30 counties all across the state, the largest being a 1300-acre fire in Lee County,
- ◆ With most of the significant fire activity concentrated in the southwestern portion of the state, VDOF activated our readiness plan and moved 16 staff members from the Eastern and Central regions to the southwest portion of the Western region.
- ◆ At least two fires resulted in serious injury and significant loss of property. Two people were injured while trying to contain an escaped fire in Pulaski County. In Campbell County, a home and large shop building were lost due to a wildfire that was accidentally started on the same property.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager) presented to the new Culpeper Tree Stewards group about environmental factors that affect trees.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (U&CF partnership coordinator), Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, and Kendall Topping (community forestry specialists) attended the City of Virginia Beach's 42nd annual Arbor Day celebration. A redbud tree was planted at the historic Lynnhaven house to mark the occasion.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ On March 29, John Colligan (chief of administration), Jeremy Falkenau (senior area forester), and Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management) visited several forest management project sites on private lands and Sandy Point State Forest in King William County. The sites included both pine and hardwood sites that have been actively managed or with planned practices. These sites provided an excellent setting for discussion regarding overall management practices, landowner assistance, and program delivery. Thanks to Dave Slack (area forester) and Dennis Gaston (forest management specialist) for assistance with preparation and background information.

- ◆ On March 29, Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist), Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager), and Amanda Conrad (forest health technician) met with Shannon Lewis (forest management specialist) and Devin Bily (plant pathologist with Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services[VDACS]) at Cumberland State Forest (CSF) to assess an aging pine stand with thin crowns and diminished productivity. There was no evidence of bark beetle activity, so soil, root, and fungal fruiting body samples were collected and sent back to Richmond for analysis. Additionally, forest health staff placed southern pine beetle traps in CSF as well as at Prince Edward State Forest.
- ◆ On March 30, Matthew Coleman (senior area forester) and Dean Cumbia met with a forest landowner in Spotsylvania County to assess effects of heavy snow on forest stands.
- ◆ On March 31, Joe Rossetti (hardwood habitat coordinator), Mike Womack (forest management specialist), and Dean Cumbia led a pre-bid meeting for potential hardwood contractors at the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest Headquarters. Bids are being solicited to conduct crop tree release on stands in three different state forests. Joe provided an overview of the practice and work to be completed, followed by a field visit to one of the sites.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt attended a virtual training session to be an EDDMapS verifier. EDDMapS is an online database for documenting invasive species distribution. The public can report occurrences of invasive plants, insects, and other animal species. All entries are verified by knowledgeable naturalists before points are confirmed on the map.
- ◆ VDOF forest health liaisons and other volunteers conducted visual surveys for spotted lanternfly in February and March. Surveys were conducted in high-risk areas such as parking lots, rest areas, and popular hiking trails. A total of 73 surveys were conducted. Thank you to everyone involved!

Agency Lands

- ◆ The Sussex nursery has finished lifting this year's loblolly pine crop. The nursery lifted and graded 23,272,000 loblolly seedlings.
- ◆ The Augusta Forestry Center (AFC) field crew continues to lift and grade trees. The office has taken in 1950 orders worth \$631,211.

State Forest

- ◆ State Forest staff finished painting all boundary lines, and installing kiosks, signage, and gates at Charlotte State Forest, in preparation for opening the state forest for public use.
- ◆ Tree planting has been completed on State Forest and State-Owned Lands.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Staff completed the cruising and harvest layout for the Department of Veteran Services Cemetery property near Amelia, and for the Virginia Department of Transportation Meadow Tract complex in Henrico.

Central Region

- ◆ Ashley Mock (bay watershed specialist) and Matt Wolanski (senior area forester) co-led a volunteer riparian buffer planting with the Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The project involved the planting of 360 hardwoods, furnished with tree shelters, stakes, and bird nets, across nearly two acres of floodplain. The funds for the project came from the Mountains to Bay buffer program, and nearly 50 volunteers completed the planting.
- ◆ Amy Bigger (Area Forester) participated in the Central of Lunenburg Career Expo, attended by about 950 students in 5th through 12th grades. The table was set up with various forestry tools and

brochures on forestry careers. Students could use the "Your Personality and Green Jobs" worksheet from Project Learning Tree's Green.Jobs activity "Who Works in the Forest" to see what kind of green job would suit them and win a Smokey prize.

- ◆ Adam Smith, Kinner Ingram (senior area foresters) Chad Briggs (area technician), Chris McClelland, Alex Hernández, BJ Butler, Tom Snoddy, Connor Goolsby, and Mike Aherron (area foresters) were deployed as a part of the Central Region Green Task Force to the Western Region Complex Fires. The Complex included fires in Russell, Tazewell, Buchanan, Lee, and Scott counties. Favorable weather conditions have helped staff get full containment and burnout operations completed while remaining available for new fires and high priority needs.

News Clips

- ◆ [Firefighters fighting flames near Ragged Mountain Reservoir](#)
- ◆ [High winds, low humidity increase fire risk in western Virginia](#)
- ◆ [ACFR, VDOF investigating what caused forest fire in Round Top area](#)
- ◆ [Some roots take hold: Forestry and conservation families continue to shape their legacies at Virginia Tech](#)
- ◆ [Roanoke County brush fire shrinks overnight](#)
- ◆ [High risk of fires this time of year, ACFR gives prevention tips](#)
- ◆ [Fires totaling 385 acres in Southwest Virginia 100% contained](#)
- ◆ [Roanoke County brush fire 100% contained](#)
- ◆ [Roanoke County brush fire spreads too close to home for residents](#)
- ◆ [Southwest Virginia wildfires ravage 1,670 acres in Lee, Tazewell counties](#)
- ◆ [18 wildfires have scorched more than 2000 acres this week in Virginia](#)
- ◆ [Crews continue battling wildfires across Southwest Virginia](#)
- ◆ [Wildfire that has burned 1,300 acres in Lee County is 80 percent contained: VDOF](#)
- ◆ [Outside Assistance Help SWVA Firefighters Continue Battle With Nearly Four Thousand Acres Burning](#)
- ◆ [Family displaced after Campbell Co. brush fire, traffic being detoured Wildfire that has burned 1,300 acres in Lee County is 80 percent contained: VDOF](#)