



May 9, 2022

Upcoming Events

[Forest Carbon Symposium](#) – June 1

[Women's Tree Climbing Workshop](#) – June 3 – 5

[Softwood Lumber Grading Training](#) – June 13 – 16

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

[Teaching Trees Training for Middle and High School Teachers](#) – July 13 – 14

[Project Learning Tree New Facilitator Training](#) – July 26 – 28

[Generation NEXT: Legacy Planning Webinar Series](#) – September 7, 8, 14 & 15

- ◆ Visit <https://dof.virginia.gov/events/> for more public events and <https://dof.virginia.gov/events/category/employee-only/> for more employee only events.

Employee News

Termination of the State's Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL) Program.

- ◆ Our Commonwealth's PHEL program that was approved and implemented since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which provided paid leave to eligible employees to attend to their own medical needs due to positive tests, **WILL expire on May 31, 2022.**
 - Employees impacted by a COVID-19 infection will need to attend to their health similarly to any other illness by staying home when sick, and if unable to telework, use sick and personal leave programs to cover periods of absence.

Remember that:

- ◆ COVID-19 still poses a threat, especially to the unvaccinated, those with weakened immune systems and young children. Remain vigilant for COVID-19 symptoms and stay home and seek advice on testing and treatment from a medical practitioner when warranted;
- ◆ Employees who are positive for COVID-19 must ISOLATE for 5 days and stay home until symptoms improve or they receive a negative test result;
- ◆ Employees exposed to a positive case shall quarantine for 5 days and use face coverings to prevent virus spread in the workplace;

- ◆ Continue preventative sanitary work habits such as frequent hand washing, use of hand sanitizer, clean work stations and equipment, and other actions appropriate to prevent spread in the workplace.

Annual Inventory Reconciliation

- ◆ It's that time of year again - the annual inventory reconciliation! Please follow directions below and have your signed and dated inventory to Chrissy Gough no later than **May 20, 2022**.
 - Asset Owners may generate inventory reports in **IFRIS** by selecting "Program Areas" then "Asset Management" then "My Property Inventory Report" and finally "Print Preview".
 - After the report is generated, select "Print".
 - Asset owners will then verify the accuracy of the report by physically inspecting all inventory items that are assigned to them and signing the report.
 - Any discrepancies should be noted on the report. If necessary, fill out [Form 3.22 Property Inventory Addition](#) to add an item that is missing from your inventory or [Form 26 Damaged, Lost or Stolen Property Certificate](#) to remove a damaged, lost or stolen inventory item.
- ◆ Even if you **do not** have any inventory items you **must** still sign and return your inventory report.

News You Can Use

Fire Adaptive Landscaping Book Available

- ◆ **It's landscaping season in Virginia!** We have a great resource booklet available to give to landowners and communities called "**Fire Adaptive Landscaping for Native Habitats and Wildlife in the Southern Coastal Plain**". The booklet targets more coastal areas, addressing native and invasive species, salt tolerant species, as well as a native plant guide. We have a large stock of these and would like to put them into the hands of people who can use them. Consider any community events or planting events to distribute this resource, or get them to any partner organizations that would be interested in using them. The booklet is available on our website if you'd like to check it out.
<https://www.coastalwildscapes.org/resources/Documents/Education%20TAB/Plant%20Info/Firewise%20entire-book.pdf>
- If you have audiences that can make good use of this booklet, please request them from [Jennifer Leach](#) in the Public Information Office. We'd like to get these out during this season when folks are thinking about their landscaping and planting projects.

Common Pests of Oaks in Virginia

- ◆ A new VDOF publication, "**Common Pests of Oaks in Virginia**," is available online at https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/FT0059_Common-Pests-of-Oaks-in-VA_2022-04_pub.pdf
This publication lists pests and diseases that are frequently found causing damage to oak trees and contributing to oak decline in Virginia.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell, Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester), Sabina Dhungana (utilization & marketing [U&M] program manager), and John Pemberton (forest inventory analysis [FIA] program manager) met virtually with representatives of Forest2Market to discuss the Yellow Pine Analysis Project specifications. This contract will provide the Commonwealth of Virginia with a customized analysis of

our pine resource. This will enhance our ability to recruit a pine sawmill or other wood-using facility to Virginia.

- ◆ VDOF submitted our responses to the USDA Forest Service (USFS) for the allocation of Virginia's first-year funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This funding will flow through the existing USFS State & Private funding programs of Forest Health, Urban & Community Forestry, Forest Stewardship, and Fire Assistance. VDOF is focusing our first year funding on a comprehensive approach to addressing invasive plants in the Commonwealth.
- ◆ Last week the conservation community and several members of the VDOF Conservation Team, Rob Farrell, and Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) attended the Virginia United Land Trusts 2022 Virginia Land Conservation and Greenways Conference in downtown Richmond. The event was well attended and featured two important keynote speeches. One celebrated the conservation work of retired Department Conservation Recreation Director Clyde Christman and our own former Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Bettina Ring. The second was a keynote and closing remarks from our current Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matthew Lohr. The VDOF Conservation staff provided a poster highlighting our landscape scale forestland conservation approach and featured the success of our work in Giles County, near Mountain Lake.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Terry Lasher represented the VDOF at the spring Virginia Agricultural Development Officers (VADO) meeting in Richmond. The meeting gathers economic development professionals from around the Commonwealth to discuss agriculture and forestry industry opportunities. Topics covered at this meeting were legislative updates, developments with hemp, and the unveiling of the Virginia Grown and Virginia's finest new logos and program components.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager), Molly O'Liddy (U&CF partnership coordinator), Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (community forestry specialist), and Lisa Deaton (area forester), attended the Southeastern Virginia (SEVA) Urban Forestry Roundtable in Norfolk. The topic for the event was storm response and preparedness. Speakers from Old Dominion University, the City of Norfolk, and private arborists spoke on their experiences with large storm events throughout the years and the importance of Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ) certification.
- ◆ Lara Johnson attended the Tree Line USA recognition for Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) in Len Park in Culpeper. REC celebrated 20 years as part of the Tree Line USA Program and is Virginia's oldest electric utility receiving the recognition.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy attended the Tree Line USA recognition for Dominion Energy. Dominion Energy has been a part of the program for 12 years.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy joined David Powell (senior area forester) to celebrate Arbor Day with the City of Charlottesville. During the ceremony at Sojourner's Church, a beautiful American elm was dedicated as a notable tree by the Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards.
- ◆ Terry Lasher attended an Arbor Day celebration and the "Tree of the Year" ceremony at the State Arboretum at Blandy Farm in Boyce, Virginia. The "Tree of the Year" for 2022 is the American sycamore.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ In early January, a quick heavy snowstorm struck a section of central Virginia. Sapling-sized loblolly pine stands seemed to be most affected, and VDOF has developed a procedure to assess damage to these stands. On April 25, Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager), Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist), and Amanda Conrad (forest health technician) met with Dean Cumbia (forest

resource management director), Mike Downey, Chuck Wright (area foresters), and Brian Lacey (resource specialist) at a tract in Louisa County to test the procedure. The trees were quickly assessed from the ground and the damage was confirmed with photos taken from a drone. A sample of these stands in the more heavily affected counties will be assessed in the coming weeks.

- ◆ On April 27, Katlin DeWitt spoke (virtually) to the Virginia Tech Urban and Community Forestry class about managing and monitoring forest health within a state agency program.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt presented the Invasive Species chapter of the Tree Stewards manual to the Northern Piedmont Tree Stewards class on April 28. Topics covered included invasive plant control and management as well as information on a few major invasive insects like emerald ash borer, spongy moth, and spotted lanternfly.
- ◆ VDOF continues to engage agency personnel in hardwood management, one of the strategies in the Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative. On April 25, Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator) led a monthly call of approximately 30 foresters. The group discussed the effects of hardwood crop tree release on height and diameter growth of various species, as well as general updates on hardwood progress from around the state.

Public Information

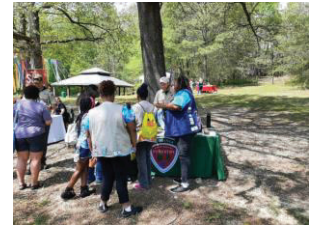
- ◆ Cindy Frenzel (Project Learning Tree [PLT] Coordinator) led a PLT workshop at the Virginia Forestry Summit in Blacksburg.
- ◆ Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) presented a virtual tree identification webinar for Wild Virginia, with approximately 75 people attending.
- ◆ Ellen Powell held a virtual training session for new staff of Camp Woods & Wildlife.

Eastern Region

- ◆ This year's National Arbor Day fell on Friday, April 29. While not all localities choose to hold their Arbor Day events in the spring, many do, and the Blackwater Work Area participated in seven Arbor Day events during the week of April 25. Scott Bachman (senior area forester), Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, Kendall Topping (community forestry specialists), Evan Richardson (area forester), and special guest Smokey, presented Tree City Awards to NSA Hampton Roads (13 years), NSA Hampton Roads Northwest River Annex (20 years), NAS Oceana (28 years), NAS Oceana Dam Neck Annex (22 years), Old Dominion University (nine years), and the Cities of Portsmouth (39 years) and Suffolk (6 years). The audiences ranged from preschoolers to college students and adults, and Scott, Meghan, Kendall, Evan, and Smokey were able to share the importance of trees and protecting trees from wildfire with each audience. To mark the occasions, they also assisted in planting several trees, including serviceberry, fringe tree, live oak, and sweetbay magnolia. (pictured)



- ◆ Zach Dowling (senior area forester) and Travis Tindell (area forester) attended Hopewell's Family Arbor Day Celebration, the city's first. Plenty of tree questions were answered and lots of Smokey swag given away. (pictured)



Central Region

- ◆ On April 26, Rick Butler, Cody Noblitt, and Doug Audley (area foresters) manned the Forestry station for the Area V Envirothon competition held at the Holiday Lake 4-H Center in Appomattox County. Students from Amelia, Buckingham, Cumberland, and Halifax Counties as well as the Fuqua School in Farmville participated in the contest, with the team from Cumberland County placing first in the Forestry section and first overall. Buckingham County placed second overall and Halifax County placed third overall.
- ◆ On April 20 and 22, the Appomattox County High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) sponsored Little Farmer's Day. Students organized the event and showed the children animals and farming techniques. VDOF attended, using this as a way for Smokey to visit the children to talk about fire prevention and explain tree farming. This is something that has not been done in a few years because of COVID. Loblolly pine seedlings were handed out to each child in celebration of Arbor Day and Earth Day.
- ◆ The Peter Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the James River Association (JRA) hosted the 'Slate River Picnic and Paddle' event in Buckingham County. About 50 landowners from throughout the area attended this event. The event was aimed at educating the participants about the importance of watersheds. The Buckingham County Envirothon team taught a water sampling station. The James River Association had a display about the locks on the Slate River, and Tom Snoddy (area forester) led a tree ID walk. Arvon Fire Department provided lunch, and afterwards, many participants enjoyed the river from a kayak or canoe.
- ◆ Matt Wolanski (senior area forester) gave a presentation on woodlot management for a class at Future Harvest – The Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture. The talk was centered on the basic principles of forest ecology and management, and how landowners can take actions, small and large, to improve forest health and opportunities for producing wood products.
- ◆ Matt Wolanski and Cain Harbison (area forester) attended Woodstock's Arbor Day celebration. The Town of Woodstock purchased 500 seedlings from the VDOF nursery for distribution to the 2nd and 3rd grade students in Woodstock. Members of the Woodstock Tree Board stopped by each classroom to wish the students a happy Arbor Day and discuss the value of trees. Special thanks to Cain Harbison and the Central High School FFA students for packaging the seedlings into individual bags for students to take home with them on Arbor Day.
- ◆ Mike Aherron (area forester) and Smokey Bear visited Danville Public Schools' Office of Exceptional Children Field Day at Dan Daniels Park. Over 200 students were able to meet and shake hands with Smokey while hearing his fire prevention message. (pictured)
- ◆ Drew Arnn (senior area forester) attended the Danville City Arbor Day Celebration at Westwood Middle School. Danville City is celebrating its 30th year participating in the Tree City USA program. Students and attending officials planted a dogwood tree to commemorate the day.



News Clips

- ◆ [Study shows threats, opportunities for Virginia's coastal forests](#)
- ◆ [Planting cleaner rivers: OCHS students get hands-on learning experience](#)
- ◆ [Virginia Department of Energy Celebrates 150th Arbor Day in Norton](#)
- ◆ [Though 4 p.m. burn law is ending, fire dangers are still present](#)
- ◆ [Controlled burn being conducted in Carroll Co.](#)
- ◆ [CATS celebrates Arbor Day with recognition of new Landmark Elm Tree](#)