



June 6, 2022

Upcoming Events

[VDOF Baseball Night in Richmond](#) – June 10

[VDOF Baseball Afternoon in Norfolk](#) – June 16

[All Agency Meeting](#) – June 29

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

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

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

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

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

- ◆ 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

Leaving VDOF

- ◆ John Colligan (chief of administration) has resigned from his position with the agency to return to the Department of Criminal Justice Services. His last day with VDOF was June 3.

Advocates for Experiential Learning

- ◆ On June 1, the VDOF family welcomed our most recent class of summer interns. For over 5 years, we've been able to provide practical or experiential learning opportunities for college students to develop and prepare them for entry into the labor force. Our program, over the years, has impacted over 26 undergraduate students by relying heavily on the selfless service of VDOF employees acting as sponsor-mentors. This year we selected interns with the greatest potential for careers in natural resources and/or public domains. Please join us in welcoming our newest VDOF team members:
 - Logan Helsley (University of Virginia) -- Mentored by Jonah Fielding
 - Caroline Norris (Virginia Tech) -- Mentored by Zach Dowling
 - Mackenzie Shull (Dabney Lancaster Community College -- Mentored by Zoe Sumrall
 - Jessica Showalter (Blue Ridge Community College) -- Mentored by Dean Cumbia

- ◆ Equally exciting was our re-selection as an agency to participate in the Commonwealth of Virginia Engineering & Science Fellowship (COVES). This program aims to strengthen ties between the scientific community and state government, while encouraging and equipping more scientists and engineers to be effective advisors for public policy in the state of Virginia.
 - VDOF was once again selected as one of fifteen organizations statewide to host a COVES Fellow. We are extremely pleased and excited to welcome University of Virginia's Doctoral Scholar and PhD Candidate Haoyu "Hazel" Sun. Hazel will be primarily mentored by Assistant State Forester Terry Lasher with Director of Human Resources Hector Rivera acting as secondary mentor.

Project Updates

Policy & Procedures

- ◆ [Policy & Procedures 7-6 State-Owned Lands Program](#) was updated recently to reflect some changes in definitions. Additional enhancements / changes were made to better spell out when a Forest Management Plan is required for a property, along with the process for approving the plans, starting with submission to the Deputy Regional Forester (DRF) for plan review and approval BEFORE sending plans to the State Lands Manager. Other updates define the process for project submittal, ordering seedlings, the establishment of a cover page for submitted plans for review, and other enhancements, including the establishment of a State-Owned Lands Database by Heather Dowling to help with tracking of lands & plans with access limited to the Regional Forester (RFs), DRFs, and the State Lands Manager.

New You Can Use

- ◆ Reminder! Enrollment for VDOF's Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) cost-share for ash treatment closes June 17. This program provides financial assistance to private landowners in the Eastern Region, and to organizations statewide. Let's encourage folks to protect our remaining ash trees! To learn more about the program, contact [Amanda Conrad](#), or visit the website: <https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-management-health/forest-health/financial-assistance-program/emerald-ash-borer-treatment-program/>

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell and Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester) toured the Chips Inc. pine sawmill in Zion Crossroads and visited with owners Clark, John, and Jordan Diehl. The visit focused on the importance of having robust markets for mill residuals such as chips, sawdust, and bark for the facility to continue operating.
- ◆ The VDOF Strategic Management Team (SMT) hosted Secretary Lohr and Deputy Secretary Green at an onsite meeting at Longwood University. This provided an opportunity to interact with some of the firefighters attending the fire academy. Secretary Lohr led SMT in a discussion of agency challenges and opportunities related to the agency operating as Best in Class.

Fire and Emergency Response

- ◆ On May 27 at 7:25 AM, an EF-2 Tornado with max winds of 135 mph touched down in the Goode area of Bedford County. This tornado struck less than a mile from the home of Jake Stinnette (forest technician). After ensuring the safety of his own family, Jake responded to the scene to assist with search and rescue operations. After linking up with Incident Command, Jake was tasked with assisting VDOT units to attempt to clear downed trees out of the roads and establish better access to the area. Damage was observed to 15 residences, with three being completely destroyed. Additionally, 35 structures such as sheds, outbuildings, barns, and garages were damaged or destroyed. Numerous trees and power lines were also either downed or snapped along the path of the tornado. Fortunately, there were no fatalities and only two minor injuries reported. (pictured)



- ◆ The VDOF hosted its 20th annual statewide wildfire training academy May 25 – 28. The academy provides a mix of wildfire suppression, emergency incident management, and prescribed burn implementation training for agency personnel, cooperators, and volunteer fire department members from across the Commonwealth. The academy was hosted by Longwood University, who provided the needed lodging, meals, and classroom accommodations, while field activities were held on the VDOF's nearby Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. This year's academy hosted 284 students from Virginia and four other states. A total of nine different training classes were held over the four-day event. VDOF's training academy is the third largest academy of its kind in the nation.
- ◆ Fred Turck (prevention program manager) and John Miller (director of fire and emergency response) attended the Mid-Atlantic Compact executive committee meeting in Garrett, MD on May 17. The Mid-Atlantic Compact includes Virginia and the state forestry agencies of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The compact was originally established to facilitate collaboration and the sharing of resources during more extreme wildfire events in the included states, but that cooperation has grown to include a very active wildfire prevention group and collaboration to host the Mid-Atlantic Wildfire Training academy each year in June. (The Mid-Atlantic training academy was modeled after the Virginia training academy.)

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ The VDOF Utilization & Marketing (U&M) program received Notification of Selection - Wood Innovations Grant Proposal 2022 from the USDA Forest Service (USFS). The grant is for biochar products promotion via collaboration to help utilize woody biomass and small-diameter wood products in the state. Virginia has two biochar production companies coming online soon. This project will involve collaborative work planned with these companies.

- ◆ Lara Johnson (U&CF program manager), in partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, City of Richmond, and Davey Institute, led a workshop on how to rehabilitate highly compacted soils in urban areas using the Soil Profile Rebuilding technique developed out of Virginia Tech. An old asphalt basketball court was rehabilitated over the course of two days and will be planted with trees this fall (pictured).
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (urban & community forestry [U&CF] partnership coordinator) spoke at the Harrisonburg Urban Tree Care Workshop on caring for urban trees on campus. Along with urban tree care, over 50 attendees from the landscape departments of the City of Harrisonburg, James Madison University (JMU), and Eastern Mennonite University learned about JMU Urban Forestry, Stormwater Best Management Practice's (BMPs), and Urban Wood Utilization. Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester), spoke on the VDOF Urban Wood Program and hosted a portable sawmill demonstration at the event.
- ◆ John Pemberton (forest inventory & analysis [FIA] program manager) and Ryan Hewitt (FIA specialist) attended portions of the virtual Forest Inventory & Analysis Users Group conference hosted by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and National Council for Air & Stream Improvement (NCASI) during the week of May 23. The meeting provides external FIA data users an opportunity to provide input into the direction of the national FIA program.
- ◆ John Pemberton and Jeff Turner (Southern Research Station FIA – Head of Information Management) met virtually to discuss plans for the upcoming 12th Survey of Virginia's Forests, which will begin in the fall. The discussion concerned restructuring data collection in Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia to better align with the calendar year.



Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Forest Health program staff conducted ground and windshield surveys near Rt 64 in Waynesboro/Fishersville assessing and mapping tree damage. What was initially thought to be insect defoliation turned out to be hail damage from a storm that hit the area in late April. The impacted area was mapped with the Digital Mobile Sketch Mapper. Trees are already producing new foliage and should recover from the damage.
- ◆ On May 24, Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager), Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist), Amanda Conrad (forest health technician), Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management), Todd Groh (forest resource management program manager), and Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator) toured the Mountain Lake Biological Station in Giles County, the site of the upcoming Western Forest Management Academy (September 27-29). In addition to touring the facility and looking at classroom space and lodging, sites were assessed for field trips. The forest health program staff also surveyed the area for fall cankerworm, a native pest that had a local outbreak at Mountain Lake the past couple of years. No cankerworms were found, but significant oak mortality was observed, which is most likely the result of oak decline exacerbated by multiple years of fall cankerworm defoliation.
- ◆ On May 26, Jerre Creighton (research program manager), Todd Groh, Joe Rossetti, and Dean Cumbia made a similar site-scoping visit for the Eastern Forest Management Academy (September 13-15). The group looked at potential field trip sites and the event venue near Williamsburg.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban forestry & community [U&FC] program manager), Lori Chamberlin, and Katlin DeWitt met with staff from the Virginia Forestry and Wildlife Group to discuss and demonstrate proper techniques for treating hemlock trees. VDOF has experience treating hemlocks on state land, and the

Virginia Forestry and Wildlife Group wanted to learn more about the different treatment methods and equipment used.

State Forest

- ◆ Staff met with Phil Walker (former Stanley Land & Lumber manager) to discuss the Charlotte State Forest management plan and decide on road/management unit names that might honor the former Governor Stanley family for their past ownership of the property.
- ◆ Staff released weevils to help control & combat mile-a-minute vine, an invasive species established in the Paul State Forest. A Quick Quote was also listed for removing brush from the roadsides on the Paul State Forest.
- ◆ State Forest staff, along with Chris McClelland (area forester), taught 95 Cumberland third grade students about the benefits of trees on the Cumberland State Forest and how to age a tree.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Staff met with the timber buyer that will be harvesting on the College of William & Mary - Ash Lawn property to review the pre-harvest plan. Plans are to start moving onto the property the first week of June.
- ◆ Thank you to Heather Dowling for the creation of a State-Owned Lands Database with access limited to the Regional Foresters and Deputy Regional Foresters. Heather's initiative and knowledge to create a better way to house data for State-Owned Land Properties is much appreciated! The database will be used for completed plan information for State-Owned Lands, instead of storing it on an Excel spreadsheet.

Western Region

- ◆ Bill Miller (senior area forester), assisted the Scott County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) with a "Kids in the Creek" event for Rye Cove High School. Sixty-one freshmen, sophomores and juniors were in attendance. Miller used a dichotomous key to assist the students in identifying common trees found at Natural Tunnel State Park. Representatives from Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Virginia Energy, Scott County Litter Control, and Daniel Boone SWCD also made presentations at the event.
- ◆ Teagan O'Brien (riparian buffer specialist) led a discussion with the Implementation Team of the James River Consortium in Augusta County to test out the Pilot Buffer Stewardship Program that James River Association (JRA) is launching May 31. Two interns working with JRA will visit 200 acres worth of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) sites in the Upper James to determine what management activities need to take place in order to ensure a successful established buffer. Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), JRA, and VDOF have worked together for the last several months to establish a protocol for the interns to follow when they are visiting older CREP sites. Once needed management activities are identified, the recommended actions (planting more trees, treating invasive plants, repairing tubes, etc.) will be completed on 100 acres using a contractor, with the ultimate goal of improving the area so that it is eligible to re-enroll as a CREP buffer when the contract is renewed.
- ◆ Clint Folks (area forester) coordinated a 1-acre riparian buffer planting in the Lower Cowpasture watershed in Bath County. In addition to hardwoods and shortleaf pines, some American chestnuts were also planted on the property. Two other suitable sites for American chestnut were identified and trees planted within the focus area. Funds from the Joint Chiefs Lower Cowpasture Initiative covered

the cost of materials and trees, and Mountain Valley staff, Cole Young (water quality specialist), and Dean Cumbia planted the trees.

- ◆ Brian Ledford (area forester) assisted Virginia Energy with their annual Arbor Day Event on a reclaimed mine site near Norton. This year's theme was "Let's Make the World Green." Nearly 150 students from nearby Wise Central High School participated in the event to help with the mined land reclamation efforts. The students participated in educational stations to learn about mining operations, mined land reclamation, heavy equipment demonstrations, and tree planting. In total, nearly 1500 trees were planted. It was a great day for tree planting and the students were very excited about their role in the project (pictured).
- ◆ Clint Folks worked with the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton and helped plant several American chestnut trees near the Native American exhibit. Chestnut trees were widely used by Native Americans and adding the trees to the exhibit will highlight their cultural and economic importance in America's history.

