



**July 4, 2022**

### *2023 VDOF Calendar -- Photo Contest*

*Public Information (Communications) is having a photo contest to create the 2023 VDOF calendar. The photos that best tell our story come from you, the women and men of VDOF.*

- ◆ Check out the Employee Intranet for full details and rules: <https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/Photo-Contest.pdf>

*Please submit your photos by July 18th.*

*Note: Your photos may also be used for other VDOF educational and promotional initiatives.*

### **Upcoming Events**

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

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

**[Wood in Construction and Beyond Seminar](#) – July 27**

**[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 Spotlight**

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#### ***Michael Downey – Thank You!***

- ◆ A Louisa landowner, Fay Tyler, sent in a general request for assistance to the VDOF website in response to recent tornado damage on her property. The website inquiry was forwarded to John Miller and he provided her with some general information and suggested a site visit with Michael Downey. Mike’s follow-up was successful and she emailed the following thank you note:
  - *“Mr. Miller: Thank you for your email of June 22nd in response to my request for help with the May 27th tornado's severe damage to trees on my Mt. Airy property in Louisa County. Mr. Downey made an on-site visit that day. I appreciated his time, compassion and suggestions regarding the*

*massive damage that I have on hand. I am hoping for the best outcome possible with this situation. I thank VDOF for assistance and direction.”*

## Employee News

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### Vehicle Mileage Reminder

- ◆ All fiscal year ending vehicle mileages and equipment hours need to be entered into IFRIS, on or shortly after July 1, 2022.

### IRS Mileage Rate Increase

- ◆ The IRS Mileage rate increased to 62.5 cents, effective July 1, 2022. Internal resources have been updated to reflect this rare midyear change. DOA has updated the Travel Expense Reimbursement Voucher forms to reflect the different IRS rates and can be found here - [Forms - Virginia Department of Accounts](#). The Fleet rate of 24.6 cents remains unchanged. Please reach out to Finance if you have any questions or need assistance with mileage reimbursement rates.

## News You Can Use

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### Capture the Moment

- ◆ The Engage Anywhere team has collaborated with Virginia State Parks to offer “Capture the Moment,” which includes a scavenger hunt and photo contest set in the Virginia State Parks **between July 1 and 25**. The contest is open to all Commonwealth of Virginia employees.
- ◆ Visit a state park of your choice (you will get a bonus entry for visiting Mason Neck, Powhatan, York River, or Natural Tunnel) and seek out the items listed on the “Capture the Moment” info sheet (and take photos of the hunt). After you complete the scavenger hunt, you can enter the contest. Enter the photo contest in one of three categories: Best Visual, Best Catch, and Most Creative. Complete your hunt and take photos between July 1 and 25. **Submissions can be made from the link on <https://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/> only between July 20 and 27.**
- ◆ Prizes include CommonHealth swag and Virginia State Park gift certificates worth up to \$100. First-place winners of each category for the photo contest will win an \$85 Virginia State Parks gift certificate, which can be used to get an annual pass. Second-place winners will win a \$50 gift certificate. State employees can also vote for the photo contest winners. Voting will take place **between Aug. 1 and 5** from the link on <https://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/>.

## Last Week

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### Virginia Forest Products Association Board Meeting

- ◆ State Forester Rob Farrell and Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer joined the Virginia Forest Products Association’s Board meeting and provided an agency update, which included budget amendments, reports and studies from this year’s General Assembly session.

### White Oak Initiative Steering Committee Quarterly Meeting

- ◆ State Forester Rob Farrell participated in the White Oak Initiative steering committee quarterly meeting representing the Southern Group of State Foresters. During the strategic planning call, Farrell advocated for this regional NGO to support state forestry agency outreach to landowners as the most effective way to accomplish their forest restoration mission.

### VDOF Receives USDA Grant

- ◆ VDOF received \$250,000 to expand new markets for biochar – a stable carbon product created from biomass sources like wood chips and plant residues – through collaboration and project demonstrations. Virginia Tech was also awarded \$228,700 for its work in creating structural grade hardwood lumber. Both grants were awarded under the Wood Innovations Grants Program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Wood Innovations Grants Program, launched in 2015, expands wood products and wood energy markets by focusing on mass timber, renewable wood energy and technological development.

### ***Southampton County Forest Conservation Project***

- ◆ VDOF recently completed a forest conservation project by assisting the Virginia Outdoors Foundation with its purchase of two conservation easements in Southampton County. VDOF redirected \$322,100 of federal, Forest Legacy funding to help the Foundation close its deal on 714 acres of now permanently conserved land. Adjacent to thousands of acres of conserved mixed bottomland hardwood and pine forest tracts, the two properties encompass over one mile of frontage on the Nottoway River (a state-designated scenic river) and over 300 acres of forested wetlands.

### ***Happy Campers***

- ◆ After a two-year COVID break, 61 teens from 31 counties and cities took part in hands-on field experiences and learned about natural resource careers at the 74th annual Camp Woods and Wildlife. Twenty-nine VDOF staff gave their time and talents to support the camp, held June 20-24 at Holiday Lake 4-H Center. Additional staff included representatives from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Davey Tree, Greif-Riverville, Virginia Tech, Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District, Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, Weyerhaeuser, Holiday Lake 4-H Center, as well as several volunteer educators.
  - Open to Virginians aged 13-16 who are interested in natural resources, Camp Woods and Wildlife is our agency's flagship program for teens. Fees are affordable for all, thanks to more than \$16,000 in annual donations from organizations, businesses, and partners.
  - Following are this year's academic top ten campers, as scored from quizzes and final exam:
    - #1 Lilly Moo - Arlington**
    - #2 Daniel Worrell – Augusta Co.**
    - #3 Theo Hwang - Arlington**
    - #4 Noah Richter – Prince William Co.**
    - #5 Henry Seilheimer – Albemarle Co.**
    - #6 Julia Archie - Arlington**
    - #7 Stephen Cloe – Stafford Co.**
    - #8 Nobel Richter – Prince William Co.**
    - #9 Alli Phillips – Rockingham Co.**
    - #10 Bruce Jones – Appomattox Co.**
  - Camp directors Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) and Lisa Deaton (area forester) offer a big "thank you" to all who helped make this year's camp a success! See Camp photos on the VDOF flickr site:  
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/vdof\\_photos/albums/72177720300175719/with/52179640762/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/vdof_photos/albums/72177720300175719/with/52179640762/)

## State Forest Audits

- ◆ The 4th Annual Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) and America Tree Farm Standards certification surveillance audits were conducted last week on the State Forests. Audits of various standards were conducted on Cumberland, Lesesne, Appomattox-Buckingham, Prince Edward Gallion, and Charlotte State Forests. This year's audit was carried out on current SFI objectives and standards. In April 2023 a full recertification audit will be conducted of the State Forests incorporating the new SFI objectives and standards.

## Chesapeake Bay Interagency Team Meeting

- ◆ VDOF staff recently attended the Chesapeake Bay Interagency Team meeting. The team consists of state agency representatives responsible for meeting the goals in the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). Topics discussed by VDOF were the additions of the agency's watershed stewardship specialists, Riparian Buffer Implementation Plan and lead role in working towards the completion of a Virginia Riparian Buffer Implementation Plan to achieve WIP III by 2025.

## "Bike Shack"

- ◆ The "Design Build Dukes" class at James Madison University created a bike storage and repair station structure for the university's Occupational Therapy Clinical Educational Services, a teaching program and rehabilitation therapy lab for children with motor skills impairments. Serving as technical advisors for the project, VDOF staff provided suggestions, alternative designs and improved material use. The "Bike Shack" was built from wood milled from local urban ash trees killed by the invasive emerald ash borer (EAB). Harrisonburg has removed over 1,100 EAB-killed trees from public property over the past three years. Read more in [VDOF's blog article](#).

## Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health manager) and Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) attended the Southern Forest Insect Work Conference in Lexington, KY. This meeting is attended by state forest health staff, university researchers, USFS staff, and entomologists working in private industry. The goal of the meeting is to share information and current research on emerging forest health pests. Katlin was a program chair for the meeting, and Lori participated in a session highlighting career options for graduate students.
- ◆ The Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative is collaborative process. More specifically, VDOF and the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) are working together to increase management on DWR Wildlife Management Areas. Last week, VDOF and DWR staff marked two stands are crop tree release cutting. One stand (10 acres) was on Little North Mountain WMA in Augusta County and the other (30 acres) at Oakley Forest WMA in Spotsylvania County. The marking provided an opportunity for "learning by doing", and thanks go to a number of local VDOF field staff for participating, and Joe Rossetti (hardwood coordinator) for organizing.

## State Forest

- ◆ Zach Olinger (local state forest manager and education specialist) attended the Eastern White Pine Symposium hosted by the Eastern White Pine Management Institute in Concord New Hampshire. The institute is composed of several northeastern colleges & universities and a collaborative effort of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. Zach was invited for his work with White Pine in Virginia with the Institute covering Zach's costs for attendance. Great example of relationships established in Forestry.

- ◆ The bid for the State Forests and State-Owned Lands Site Preparation work is in process of being awarded to H&H Forest Management for treatment of approximately 810 acres of State Forest & State-Owned Lands.