



September 19, 2022

Upcoming Events

[2022 Fall Virtual Certified Prescribed Burn Managers Course](#) – September 26 – 29

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

[Board of Forestry Meeting](#) – September 27

[Governor Visit – VDOF HQ](#) – September 30

[Project Learning Tree New Facilitator Training](#) – October 25 – 26

- ◆ 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

Congratulations Chad Briggs!

- ◆ Chad Briggs has been promoted to the new Assistant Director of Wildfire Prevention and Hazard Mitigation. Chad was formerly a Technician in the Shenandoah Work Area and came to the VDOF after a career with Prince William County Fire and Rescue. Chad has a B.S. degree in Communications from Clarion University in Pennsylvania and is currently working on an Associates Degree in Fire Sciences. Chad has been a part-time firefighter with the VDOF since 2007, but has worked in wildfire since 1994 through his earlier association with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Recreation. He started his new position on September 10.

News You Can Use

Senior Management Team (SMT)

- ◆ The minutes from the [August 2 SMT](#) meeting have been posted to the intranet.

Last Week

Acorn Collection Season

- ◆ Last week, VDOF announced the start of the annual acorn and nut collection season, which helps the agency prepare for the next generation of trees. Every year, Virginians from all over the state collect and donate acorns and other seeds that VDOF staff plant at the Augusta Nursery, where more than a dozen hardwood tree species get their start. Successful seedlings are sold to Virginia landowners, typically to reforest open lands. Read the [VDOF news release](#).

VDOF Forest Inventory Program 25th Anniversary

- ◆ VDOF's Forest Inventory program reaches its "silver anniversary" this year. In 1997, VDOF and the Alabama Forestry Commission partnered with U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) unit to provide annual forest inventory information for their respective states. This was accomplished by establishing forest inventory crews to collect field data for USFS processing and publication. In subsequent years, the other 11 southern state forestry agencies followed suit to create their own FIA field crews. Since 1997, VDOF crews have made over 21,000 visits to FIA plots and measured over 1.8 million trees. The VDOF FIA program has employed 103 people during the past 25 years.

Fall Fire Training Academy

- ◆ This week, VDOF's Western Regional Incident Management Team is conducting the Fall Fire Training Academy at Breaks Interstate Park in southwest Virginia. VDOF provides national-level training in wildfire suppression, all-hazard emergency response and incident management. Training courses include engine operator, wildland fire chainsaws, crew boss, and firefighter training in the field; all courses ensure VDOF responders and agency partners maintain the highest levels of expertise.

Forest Management Academy

- ◆ VDOF held the first of two agency training events this week for field-level foresters and resource managers. Designed to supplement, enhance, and broaden employee knowledge and skills in current and emerging topics, the annual Forest Management Academy all-day training sessions support employee development in order to provide the best forest management guidance to Virginia landowners and citizens.

Plant NOVA Trees Reaches Milestone

- ◆ September marks the first anniversary of the launch of "Plant NOVA Trees," a northern Virginia effort by more than 100 local organizations and thousands of individuals to promote native trees and shrubs. Local governments, parks, community associations, and residents have planted 4,000 trees and shrubs as part of the campaign. By reporting these plantings on the Plant NOVA Trees website for inclusion into VDOF's [My Trees Count](#) map, volunteers are helping the agency reach its goal of 600,000 trees planted in Northern Virginia by 2025, to meet Chesapeake Bay protection goals. Many local garden centers also are promoting native trees and shrubs in honor of "Celebrate Native Trees Week," which runs September 26 through October 2.

Tree-of-Heaven Removal Project

- ◆ VDOF forest health staff led a tree-of-heaven removal project with volunteers at the Ivy Creek Natural Area in Albemarle County on September 6. Tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) is a rapidly growing tree and widely spreading invasive species across Virginia and the U.S. The trunk injection method of herbicide application was used to treat 34 trees around the education building and historic farmhouse.

Virginia Society of American Foresters Fall Meeting

- ◆ VDOF forest health staff gave a forest health update at the Virginia Society of American Foresters fall meeting on September 8 in Charlottesville. The hybrid meeting covered topics such as spongy moth, spotted lanternfly, and laurel wilt disease.

Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Conference

- ◆ VDOF staff presented on the hardwood forest habitat initiative at the Virginia Master Naturalist Statewide Conference in Virginia Beach on September 10. The session covered the development of the current hardwood forest, challenges, and future management to support improvement.

Association of Consulting Foresters Meeting

- ◆ VDOF hosted a joint meeting in King and Queen County with the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF) to discuss improving working relationships, forest health, and hardwood initiatives. Following the morning meeting, VDOF foresters led the group to two field sites to review hardwood and pine savanna management practices for wildlife and timber benefits. This provided an opportunity to observe atypical management practices and facilitate discussion around similar project treatments. ACF is a national organization of independent forest consultants who manage forests and related products for private woodland owners in order to maximize property and timber value. More than 30 participants, including 11 consulting foresters, attended the meeting.

JMU Fall Festival Series Features Urban Wood Resources

- ◆ The Edith J. Carrier Arboretum's Fall Festival Series at James Madison University (JMU) recently celebrated the beauty and sustainability of Virginia's urban wood resources. The Arboretum is a woodland sanctuary on the JMU campus that serves as a public urban garden and forested greenspace that preserves native species, provides opportunities for research, and promotes knowledge of the botanical and natural world. The evening included presentations featuring the urban wood programs at VDOF, City of Harrisonburg, and James Madison University. Local business Rocktown Urban Wood also displayed their work at the event, including a new ash activity cart for the Arboretum.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ A total of 55 applications were submitted for the Virginia Trees for Clean Water grant cycle for Fall 2022/Spring 2023 planting projects totaling \$1.2 million. Our ranking committee of certified arborists reviewed and ranked each application last week. Grantees will be notified and awards will be issued in the coming weeks.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (urban & community forestry [U&CF] program manager) and Kendall Topping (community forestry specialist) met with Teens for a Purpose in Norfolk to look at a site for soil rebuilding this winter. They also met with City of Hampton Parks and Recreation staff to complete a tree inventory at Bluebird Gap Farm.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Amanda Conrad (forest health technician) and Todd Groh (forest management programs) took a number of old pesticides and rinsate water to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Pesticide Collection event on September 8 in Albemarle County. This event allowed for the safe disposal of old and unwanted chemicals. These events are held periodically around the state, providing an excellent opportunity for VDOF and the public to maintain safe and current pesticide storage facilities. <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pesticide-collection.shtml>.
- ◆ The second meeting of the State Land Evaluation and Advisory Council was held on September 7 in Charlottesville. The council adopted the suggested forest, agriculture, horticulture, and open space land use taxation values. Localities with land use taxation may elect to use these values for property tax purposes.
- ◆ On September 6, Joe Rossetti and Dean Cumbia (forest resource management director) met virtually with several staff members of the Virginia Department of Taxation (VATAX) to discuss the new

Beneficial Hardwood Practices Tax Credit. The credit will provide a state tax credit of up to \$1,000 to forest landowners who implement hardwood management practices. VDOF and VATAX are working to develop guidelines and procedures.

State Forest

- ◆ Staff hosted and conducted two educational programs for ecology classes from Grayson County High School at the Matthews State Forest. Thirty students took water samples, collected and identified macroinvertebrates, and learned the value of forested landscapes and forest management to water quality.
- ◆ Staff participated in a conference call concerning planning for the implementation of a grant from the Ruffed Grouse Society for Dynamic Forest Restoration management work on the Channels State Forest. While the project focuses on wildlife habitat for many bird species, it also correlates well with VDOF's Hardwood Habitat Initiative and could provide some funding and additional resources for practices implementation on the Channels and lands owned by Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), which is also participating.

Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)

- ◆ The Ewing Mountain Brush Creek Units 22 & 29 timber sale in Grayson County had no bidders. It is currently available for negotiated sale with one or two potential buyers having interest.
- ◆ Staff participated in a virtual meeting on increasing active forest management on the George Washington -Jefferson National Forest. Participants were from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Ruffed Grouse Society, Wild Turkey Federation, VDOF, and USDA Forest Service (USFS).

Nursery

- ◆ The nursery held their pre-bid meeting for nursery labor. Josh Bennicoff (nursery manager), Josh McLaughlin (assistant nursery manager), Corey Richie (procurement officer), and Lauren Sumner (finance director) were in attendance. Two contractors attended the event.
- ◆ On Friday the nursery hosted a tour for the Master Naturalists, with 19 people in attendance. The tour focused on the history of longleaf in Virginia as well as the restoration efforts done by VDOF. Guests were able to see the nursery growing system, including the containerized loblolly, longleaf, shortleaf, and native grasses.

Eastern Region

- ◆ Jack Colyer (forest technician) submitted a summary and pictures about his two recent assignments to Texas. The article including his comments is posted on our website.
<https://dof.virginia.gov/tales-from-the-fireline/>

- Governor Youngkin posted a thank you to all of our VDOF firefighters, using Jack's pictures in his posts.

- ◆ Cody Noblitt (natural resource specialist) hosted a VDOF booth at the VT Southern Piedmont Research and Education Center Farm and Family Day. The booth focused on Wildfire Safety and Prevention. Approximately 1,000 people were estimated to have attended the event.
- ◆ Heather Dowling (senior area forester) hosted a VDOF booth at the Town of McKenney's 100th Anniversary Celebration. The VDOF booth focused on both fire prevention and pine management.



- ◆ The Capital Team, with help from the Eastern Region and Smokey Bear, hosted a table at a Richmond Flying Squirrels Game. This game was designated as PlanRVA/Emergency Management Alliance of Central Virginia's Emergency Preparedness Night. The Capital Team spoke with nearly 5,000 attendees about good forest management, and wildfire prevention and suppression. Smokey Bear was given the honor of throwing out a first pitch. (pictured)

Communications

- ◆ Project Learning Tree (PLT) Facilitators Ashley Palmer and Maura Christian held a PLT workshop for the Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees Annual Training at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, VA on August 24. Ashley is the Communications and Education Specialist from the Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and is one of about 100 Certified PLT Facilitators who help the Virginia Department of Forestry teach PLT workshops across Virginia to teachers and other educators. Maura Christian is the Education & Training Coordinator for the Virginia Association of SWCDs. For more information about PLT in Virginia, visit: <https://sites.google.com/site/pltvawebiste/home> . (Pictured, Ashley is fourth from left, Maura is third from the left.)

