



October 3, 2022

Upcoming Events

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

Employee News

Welcome to VDOF

- ◆ We would like to welcome Harish Jangaon to the VDOF family as Jr. Database Analyst. Harish has a Master's degree in Management Information Systems from Wilmington University in Delaware. He comes from Phoenix Industries in New York and has extensive experience with data analysis and database reporting. He joined the IT team supporting iFRIS and other agency applications on September 26.



- ◆ Richard Schmidt joined VDOF on September 26 as the new Facilities Manager. Richard has previous state government experience with Department of Veteran Services (DVS), Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), as well as many years in the construction industry. We are very excited to welcome Richard to the Assets & Infrastructure.

News You Can Use

Firesponse Application Update

- ◆ The agencies Firesponse web and mobile application received an internal update over the October 1st weekend. The updates are all program type updates designed to improve functionality. The program updates were automatically handled by the web version of the program, as well as on any phones where that device was set to receive automatic updates. Users whose phones were not set to receive automatic updates will need to uninstall and then reinstall the app from the Play store during the week of October 3rd to ensure use of the more recent edition. If there are any questions, contact a VDOF fire staff member.

Senior Management Team (SMT)

- ◆ The minutes from the [September 6](#) SMT meeting have been posted to the intranet.

Last Week

VDOF Creates 200th Open Space Easement

- ◆ On September 2, VDOF's Forestland Conservation Program established the agency's 200th open space easement on Pine Mountain, a 1,428-acre property in Wise County. Using funds provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation to help mitigate impacts of constructing Route 460 through Buchanan County, VDOF worked in close partnership with The Nature Conservancy to complete the project. VDOF's easement portfolio now includes more than 91,000 acres in more than 60 counties and cities across the Commonwealth. In addition to protecting 84,000 acres of forest, easements protect nearly 460 miles of streams and rivers, including portions of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

National Association of State Foresters Annual Meeting

- ◆ VDOF State Forester Rob Farrell recently attended the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) annual meeting in Washington State. Discussions focused on the role that state forestry agencies would play in assisting private landowners to access emerging markets for ecosystem services, such as carbon offsets. This meeting marked the end of Farrell's term as chair of the Southern Group of State Foresters.

American Chestnut Plantings

- ◆ Plantings of control-pollinated (research) and open-pollinated (next year's nursery crop) American chestnut trees were completed at the 422-acre Lesesne State Forest located in Nelson County. This effort helps repopulate chestnut trees and adds biodiversity to forests where other species are dying. A total of 298 pollination bags were gathered from eight select parent trees included in this year's research effort. In addition, approximately 30 bushels of hybrid burs (spiny husks that contain and protect chestnuts) and 15 bushels of wild-type American burs were collected and will be raised at VDOF's Augusta Nursery.

First Mountain State Forest Project

- ◆ VDOF staff met with James Madison University (JMU) engineering professors and students, and Trout Unlimited representatives on First Mountain State Forest this past week. They discussed a project that would enhance and improve recreational access to the state forest by improving a stream crossing with resident trout populations and moving the parking lot further into the forest and out of the floodplain area. Funding from the DuPont Foundation, Trout Unlimited and recreational earnings are being considered to cover the project. JMU hopes to provide learning opportunities for students during the design phase.

Mountain Gateway Community College Partnership

- ◆ VDOF staff met with representatives from Mountain Gateway Community College (MGCC) in Clifton Forge to discuss a partnership and workforce development opportunities related to MGCC's new Appalachian Hardwood Training Initiative grant and VDOF's Industry Roundtable grant. This partnership will strengthen the labor supply for the forest industry sectors.

Forest Product Company Visits

- ◆ VDOF staff visited four forest products companies - Ashton Lewis Holdings, J.H. Knighton Lumber Company, T.C. Catlett and Sons Lumber Company, and Doolen Lumber. Topics of discussion covered industry issues and the importance of mill participation in the Timber Product Output survey.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) assessed two hemlock stands in Fairfax County with staff from Fairfax County's Forest Pest Management Branch. These hemlocks are on county land, and the group discussed strategies to protect them from the hemlock woolly adelgid using an integrated pest management approach that includes both pesticide and biological control.
- ◆ Amanda Conrad (forest health technician) checked spotted lanternfly traps for the final time this season. These traps have been up since July to monitor populations of the spotted lanternfly, a new invasive insect. On this final trap check, one spotted lanternfly adult was found in a trap in Albemarle County. Spotted lanternfly has been previously discovered in Albemarle, but this detection gives us more information about the spread within the county.

State Forest

- ◆ Staff hosted an educational program at the Matthews State Forest for 29 third graders from Fairview Elementary. Students learned about trees, soils, and water. In the afternoon, they got to go fishing in the Matthews pond.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Jerre Creighton, John Scrivani, and Ellen Powell hosted a visit to the Lesesne chestnut orchards by approximately 23 seniors in the Western Albemarle High School Environmental Studies Academy.
- ◆ Jim Schroering assisted the Sussex Nursery staff with longleaf pine top clipping, irrigation monitoring, and preparation for upcoming loblolly container deplugging. Jim also assisted with tours of Sussex Nursery by Assistant Secretary of Ag/Forestry Beth Green, Dr. Lytton Mussleman and his class from ODU, and the VA Pinelands Planning Group from TNC.

Eastern Region

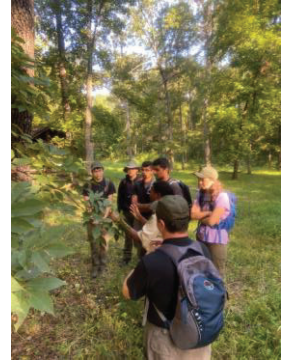
- ◆ The Blackwater work unit staffed a booth at the Isle of Wight County Fair. The 29th annual event drew over 32,000 visitors over four days. Stephen Jasenak, Kendall Topping, John Rose, Evan Richardson and Scott Bachman set up a booth in the Agriculture exhibit area featuring the inflatable Smokey. Many fair goers stopped by to ask questions about forest management and fire prevention. On Friday, Isle of Wight County fourth grade students were treated to a morning at the fair. (Pictured is John Rose with students and family.)
- ◆ Eli Podyma (community forest specialist) assisted Meghan Mulroy-Goldman (watershed stewardship specialist) with delivering a seminar to a freshman class of about 20 students at William and Mary.
- ◆ Stephen Jasenak (area forester) and Scott Bachman (senior area forester) met with Dr. Edwin Martinez, State Conservationist for NRCS, along with NRCS staff and the Peanut Soil and Water Conservation District. They discussed some of the UC&F accomplishments with partners, including the Food Forest installation in Newport News. Bachman and Evan Richardson (area forester) also met with Dr Martinez and the Chowan SWCD and NRCS staff, where a major topic was VDOF's longleaf partnership that includes DCR's Natural Heritage Division.
- ◆ Jesse Bander (natural resource specialist) represented VDOF during Dr. Martinez's field visit to Hanover County. During the visit, NRCS District Conservationist Matt Carroll Matt highlighted the strong partnership between NRCS and VDOF in Hanover, including the successful development and completion of several forestry- focused projects, as well as some of the challenges faced by field staff (mainly finding good burn windows and encouraging landowners to re-enroll in NRCS programs).



- ◆ On September 17, Kendall Topping and Lara Johnson participated in the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia Powwow. The event celebrated the history, culture, and land of the Nottoway, Mattaponi, and Nansemond Indian Nation tribes. Lara and Kendall educated families and tribe members on the importance of forest health, biodiversity, and conservation of our forests in Virginia. They also spoke with chiefs of the tribes to discuss future partnerships and current projects.

Central Region

- ◆ Kinner Ingram (senior area forester) spoke to 75 attendees at a New Landowner Workshop about how the Virginia Department of Forestry can assist new farm/landowners in the commonwealth. Topics included cost share programs, prescribed fire, site visits, and information on plans the state offers.
- ◆ Cain Harbison (area forester) and Matt Wolanski (district forester) joined the NRCS Strasburg office for a field visit from the NRCS State Conservationist to share their backgrounds and discuss the value of existing partnerships. Partner organizations in attendance included the SWCD, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Trout Unlimited, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, VDOF, and NRCS staff.
- ◆ Lindsey Long (community forester) and Kinner Ingram (senior area forester) led a group of Boy Scouts on a walk through the Conway Robinson State Forest. The scouts were working on their Forestry merit badge. Topics covered included tree ID, timber harvesting, the importance of managing a forest, and different harvest techniques. (pictured)



Western Region

- ◆ On September 20 Emily Wotton (forest technician) participated in a Tazewell County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Kids in the Creek program. At her station, Emily talked with 6th graders and their teachers (~90 individuals) about riparian buffers and wildland fire.
- ◆ On September 20 Collin Sapp (forest technician) participated in Russell County SWCD's Natural Resources Fest program. At his station Collin talked water quality with about 200 students and their teachers.
- ◆ Kevin Keith (senior area forester) participated in the NWTJ Jakes event at Boxwood Hunting Club in Henry County. The event was sponsored by the Henry County Longbeards and featured a variety of outdoor events for children under 17. At the VDOF booth, kids and their parents learned about tree planting, tree growth (using tree cookies), wildland firefighting, and fire safety. They also got to sit in the VDOF dozer and take home a Smokey gift bag.