



**October 31, 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

### Congratulations – Amanda Conrad!

- ◆ Amanda Conrad has accepted the Forest Health Technician position. This was previously a part time, wage position, but thanks to grant funds, will now be a full-time technician position that supports both the VDOF Forest Health and U&CF programs. Amanda has been with the VDOF since March 2022, and transitions to this new position on October 25. Amanda Conrad is a native of Pennsylvania and received her Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Science with a minor in Biology from St. Francis University.



### Welcome to VDOF

- ◆ We are pleased to announce that Paulo Alvarez has been selected for the area forester position assigned to Appomattox County (James River District) that was recently vacated by Ricky Butler's retirement. Paulo, who is a native of Fairfax County, has a B.S. in Forest Resource Management from West Virginia University. Paulo's first day was October 25. Please provide him with a warm welcome to the VDOF and Central Region when you get a chance.
- ◆ The Eastern Region welcomes Jennifer Basile as the newest New Kent Conference Center coordinator. In this part-time position, Jennifer will fill the role that Brenda Clark previously held coordinating events and training at the New Kent Conference Center. Jennifer's first day in this new role was October 25. Please welcome her to the VDOF and Eastern Region when you get a chance.



## News You Can Use

### 2023 VDOF Calendar is Now Available!

- ◆ We're excited to share this year's calendar, featuring photography provided by our fellow employees. Thank you to those who contributed to the employee photo contest! We'll be naming our contest winners soon - you'll see many in the 2023 calendar! Rest assured that your photos will make appearances in calendars and outreach materials into the future.
- ◆ The calendar is one of our most visible marketing pieces and serves as a great educational gift for landowners, loggers, local officials, cooperators and others. There is space on the back cover for you to

add a label with your direct contact information. We're anxious to share these with everyone so we encourage you to start distributing the calendars as soon as you receive them.

- ◆ The calendars are being distributed to regional offices, nurseries and state forests for further distribution, and are available for Headquarters staff from the Office of Communications.

### VDOF Business Cards

- ◆ The Commonwealth has awarded the business card contract to a new vendor (Dister, Inc.). This means a few changes to the business card ordering process and formatting. Attached is an example of the new approved template.
- ◆ Going forward, Customer Care and Personnel Assistant Chrissy Gough will place all business card orders for the agency. Designated staff who will be submitting requests on behalf of work areas, programs and divisions should send order requests to Chrissy at [Christine.Gough@DOF.Virginia.gov](mailto:Christine.Gough@DOF.Virginia.gov).
- ◆ **Your requests should include the exact information you want included on each business card.** Keep the following in mind:
  - See the business card template (attached) for formatting details.
  - Double check all spelling and phone numbers.
  - Use your working title (should match your email signature and the VDOF website directory).
  - If you have existing business cards, please use these up prior to ordering new ones.
- ◆ Questions? Contact Director of Finance Lauren Sumner at [Lauren.Sumner@DOF.Virginia.gov](mailto:Lauren.Sumner@DOF.Virginia.gov).



### Form Update

- ◆ [Form 9.3 - Intranet User Account/Website Directory Listing Request](#) has been updated to reflect the new district reorganization. This form is used to gather information for ensuring that new, transferring or departing employees are correctly entered on the website so that Agency Directory and Find a Forester searches function properly. This also sets up and removes employee user accounts for Intranet access.

## Policy and Procedures

- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 05-01 Fleet Management Care and Maintenance](#) and [05-02 Motor Vehicle Operations](#) have been updated to reflect the reorganization changes.
- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 07-05 VDOF Services and Equipment for Forest Landowners](#) has been updated to reflect the reorganization changes.
- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 10-01 Open-Space Easement Development](#) has been updated. Important changes include:
  - Different deadlines for landowners to submit easement applications to VDOF when the easement is fully donated versus when it is grant-funded
  - A requirement for Forestland Conservation Program staff to contact the relevant District Forester to inform them that we've received an easement application and to inquire if they have any concerns or important information about the property.
  - A requirement that, when accepting an easement, our letter to the landowner indicate the specific document that the landowner will need to provide VDOF in order to close the easement, such as an appraisal report, title binder, survey, etc.

## Last Week

### Forest Products Week Events

- ◆ VDOF joined agencies and organizations across the Commonwealth and U.S. to celebrate National Forest Products Week to raise awareness of the many benefits and economic impacts that forests provide. VDOF leadership and staff were joined by Governor Youngkin and Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Lohr for a tour at Blue Ridge Lumber in Fishersville, followed by a visit to the Augusta Nursery.

### Forest Sustainability Fund

- ◆ VDOF has received 19 applications from localities interested in participating in the Forest Sustainability Fund. Working with a steering committee, VDOF has developed guidelines and is administering the fund through the agency's new online grants system. Created by the 2022 session of the General Assembly, the fund assists localities with forest land use taxation. Parcels under this designation are taxed based upon use value rather than fair market value. While beneficial to landowners, localities receive less tax revenue. The fund is a means to return some of this forgone revenue to localities. Special thanks go to Amanda Jones (finance office), Jackie Newton (grants accountant), Todd Groh (program manager forest management), and Becky Woodson (program support forest management) for their assistance in getting the fund and processes up and going.

### Land Dedication to the Nansemond Indian Nation

- ◆ VDOF staff attended a ceremony dedicating a 500-acre wooded tract located in the Driver area of the City of Suffolk to the Nansemond Indian Nation. Transfer was facilitated by Ducks Unlimited through a partnership with Dominion Energy, Enviva, the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. VDOF helped facilitate the transfer through the creation of stewardship and invasive species management plans on the nation's Mattanock Town property. With input from the tribal council, VDOF will also create a stewardship plan for the Cross Swamp property. The goals for the property are expected to include interpretive trails, forest health, and



building relationships among the conservation community. The celebration was attended by approximately 40 nation members, resource professionals and elected officials, including Representative Rob Wittman (VA, 01) (*pictured*).

### Hardwood Steering Committee

- ◆ The Hardwood Steering Committee met on October 21, at Virginia Tech's McCormick Farm Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Raphine. Serving as a hardwood demonstration area, McCormick Farm has undergone a variety of forest management activities over the past 20 years. The committee of representatives with varied interests discussed priority tasks for the coming year. Discussions focused on forester training and further development of demonstration sites. The committee, which also serves as the forest legacy and stewardship committees, also approved the VDOF forest legacy application for continued conservation of land around the Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve in Floyd County. The group ended the day with a tour of a "Femelschlag," or expanding gap harvest, on one of the property's 50-acre stands. (Pictured on top: Hardwood Steering Committee, McCormick Farm 10-21-22. Pictured on bottom: Hardwood Steering Committee, McCormick Farm field site visit; Dr. David Carter of Virginia Tech is addressing the group.)



### Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Agency staff Dennis Gaston (forest manager), Randy Kyner (assistant state forest superintendent), Ben Duke (state forest technician), Dominic Chirico, Scott Adams (natural resource specialists), Alanna Ostrowski (forest technician), and Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator) gathered data for the Hardwood Assessment Tool in a 59-acre stand on Dragon Run State Forest. This forest is almost entirely in loblolly pine plantation, being land that was formerly owned by the paper industry. Dennis Gaston identified this stand as a candidate for conversion to hardwoods about 8 years ago because it had merchantable pine, good hardwood regeneration in the understory, and had young pine surrounding it that wasn't producing seed at the time. Dennis will develop recommendations with the assistance of the Hardwood Assessment Tool and incorporate them into plans for the State Forest.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) and Amanda Conrad (forest health technician) surveyed a rest area along I-64 eastbound at mile marker 105 (Afton area) for spotted lanternfly (SLF) adults on October 17. An adult had previously been caught in a trap that VDOF placed on a tree-of-heaven at this location. Albemarle County is already part of the Virginia Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine, but surveys are still useful to determine the extent of the SLF population. All survey data is shared with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS).

### State Forest

- ◆ Staff led a Bridgewater College Wildlife Ecology and Management class on a field trip at Paul State Forest. Topics covered included forest management planning, prescribed burning, and how to use basic forestry tools to assess both the habitat and the value of the timber.
- ◆ Staff mapped a southern pine beetle infestation area on the Cumberland State Forest with the VDOF forest health staff on October 25. There is at least 18 acres of currently standing dead timber that staff is working to have salvaged.

## State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Harvesting was completed on the Department of Veteran Services Albert Horton Cemetery property in Suffolk.

## Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)

- ◆ The final decision notice was signed for the Green Hill project on the Glenwood - Pedlar Ranger District near Natural Bridge. The project will also access areas of Moore's Creek State Forest for forest management and lead to a new GNA project area.

## Agency Lands

- ◆ Cone collection at New Kent wrapped up with a total of 2280 bushels of loblolly pine and 35 bushels of shortleaf pine on their way to Southern Seed Company for cleaning and processing.
- ◆ Kudos to Tree Improvement (TI) interns Chris McClelland, Dominic Chirico, and Evan Richardson for completing their first 3 months in TI internship. Chris put in at least 16 hours mowing the Appomattox-Buckingham seed orchard to prep for cone collection. Dominic and Evan joined Jeff Stout and Ones Bitoki at Hockley to lay out the 2023 pollen cloud study. 1508 pin flags were laid out on an 8 by 8 foot spacing on a 2.2 acre area.
- ◆ Jim Schroering (longleaf/southern pine beetle prevention coordinator) completed the final longleaf pine container crop inventory at Sussex Nursery, attended the 2022 planning call for America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI), and picked 2.5 bushels of longleaf pine cones from the New Kent orchard.

## Eastern Region

- ◆ Eastern Region personnel continue to work diligently to establish riparian buffers on a variety of coastal landscapes across the region. On the Eastern Shore, Robbie Lewis (area forester) worked with Troop 314 in Exmore and Occohannock on the Bay to establish and expand a riparian buffer in an area stressed by salt influence from recent storms and from a recent wildfire. Robbie and the Blackwater team's continuing work on the shore has been focused on improving the coastal resilience of forests in the area by planting tree species that can thrive in harsh coastal conditions. (*pictured*)
- ◆ Heather Dowling (area forester) and Travis Tindell (district forester) hosted a station at the Appomattox River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Farm Day in Dinwiddie County. This year's Farm Day was held at Cockade Stables, a farm owned by former VDOF FIA forester Jeff Grieco and his wife Amy. Students learned about forest products and how we protect forests from fire (so we can still have those products). The students were asked to name their favorite forest product and the best answer of the day was "a violin." (*pictured*)

