



Weeks of January 16 and January 23, 2023

Upcoming Events

[Eastern Region – Regional Meeting](#) – February 8 @ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

[Volunteer Training: Survey for Spotted Lanternfly Egg Mass](#) – February 21 @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

[Introduction to Forest Carbon Markets](#) – March 3 @ 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

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

Employee Spotlight

Chuck Wright – Thank You!

- ◆ Below is an email received from landowner Russell Pace in regard to work Chuck did for him.
 - “Chuck! I received the email and I’m blown away with how in-depth it is. Thank you for that assessment, it’s really interesting. I will have to pass this around to the other family members and it might be quite a ways out till we get a reply here with holidays and work schedules and all. So I just want to say thank you again, have a happy new year and I will be in touch.

Employee News

Welcome to VDOF

Please give these new employees a warm welcome to the agency when you get a chance.

- ◆ We’re pleased to announce that Lauren Charles has been selected as a forest technician for the Shenandoah District, primarily assigned to the northern part of that district. Lauren has a B.S. in Biology with a minor in Environmental Science from James Madison University. She has 18 months of various experience including working for the Student Conservation Association as an Alaska Conservation Corps crew member, the National Park Service as a Forest Vegetation and Rare Plant monitor intern at Shenandoah National Park, a Natural Resources Management Intern at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, and most recently as a Fire Effects Monitor at Shenandoah National Park. She has eastern and western U.S. wildland fire experience and prescribed fire experience and is currently a Firefighter Type 2. Lauren started with VDOF on January 10.



- ◆ The Eastern Region welcomes Richard “Seth” Powell to the Five Forks work area as a forest technician. Seth, a Hopewell, Virginia native, comes to VDOF fresh from a season fighting wildfire as a member of the Feather River Hotshot Crew. Prior to his experience out west, Seth worked for Arborscapes and as a homebuilder. Seth’s first day on the job was January 10.



Leaving VDOF

- ◆ New River Forest Technician David Bryan’s last day with VDOF was January 11.
- ◆ Capital Forest Technician Alanna Ostrowski’s last day with VDOF was January 24.

Forest Health Liaisons

- ◆ Three VDOF employees have accepted the position of forest health liaison in the Central Region: Connor Goolsby, Zoe Bergman, and Mike Aherron. Forest health liaisons are a point of contact between the field and the forest health program staff and assist with forest health monitoring activities as needed. These additional duties will not exceed 5% of the employee’s time. Thank you, Connor, Zoe, and Mike for stepping into this role!

Project Updates

Policy and Procedures

Edits were made to the following policy and procedures as a part of the normal review and update process.

- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 04-01 Prescribed Burning:](#)
 - Replaced “senior area forester” with “district forester”.
 - Changed one reference of “work area” to “district”.
- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 04-03 Readiness and Mobilization Plan:](#)
 - Replaced “senior area forester” with “district forester” in the list of responders.
 - Changed all references of “senior area forester” to “district forester.”
 - “Regional mechanics” were specifically included under “regional support staff.”
 - Updated readiness plan reference to HQ incident management team.
- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 04-04 Emergency Response Training and Credentialing:](#)
 - Added one bullet to page 2 that clarifies our handling of IQS and credentialing record updates.
 - Added one bullet to page 2 that clarifies our handling of new employee credentialing when they bring prior records from other entities for entry into our own agency IQS system for credit.
- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 04-07 Dispatch Wildfire Control and Situational Reporting:](#)
 - Changed several references of “work area” to “district”.
- ◆ [Policy and Procedure 04-08 Wildfire Prevention:](#)
 - Added one sentence under the Firewise Virginia Program to specify that we can use hazard mitigation grant funding for mitigation work in Virginia communities. (This was a specific suggestion from the USFS to better meet grant funding rules.)

News You Can Use

Camp Woods & Wildlife

- ◆ Applications are open (now through April 15) for the 75th Camp Woods & Wildlife. Promotional materials will be routed to all offices soon, and staff applications will be available in a few weeks. Camp will be held June 19-23 at Holiday Lake 4-H Center. Our campers explore career fields through outdoor learning experiences that teach forestry and wildlife skills. This unique camp is open to any Virginian aged 13 -16 with an interest in natural resources who has not attended before. For more information, visit <https://dof.virginia.gov/education-and-recreation/youth-education/camp-woods-wildlife/>, or contact [Ellen Powell](#) with questions.

Tune in to ForestryTV

- ◆ Just in case you've somehow forgotten to watch your favorite channel ForestryTV, here's a reminder. Check out our latest video called "Fighting Bugs With Bugs" featuring Forest Health Program Manager **Lori Chamberlin** who explains how VDOF (with our insect allies) is battling the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid. <https://www.youtube.com/@ForestryTV/videos>

Last Week

2022 State of the Forest Report

- ◆ VDOF has completed and published the [2022 State of the Forest report](#). The State of the Forest serves as the agency's annual report and is a vehicle to share VDOF's work with legislators, industry partners, non-government organizations and the public. As directed by § 10.1-1119: Preservation of evidence as to conserving forest supply; reports to General Assembly; publications, VDOF submits this annual report of agency actions, conclusions and recommendations to each session of the General Assembly and the public.

Holiday Wildfires and Plane Crash

Over the holidays VDOF firefighters responded to three atypical fire incidents across eastern Virginia.

- ◆ Early Christmas morning, VDOF responded to a significant house fire in New Kent County. Due to encroaching vegetation around the burning house, the local fire department requested a control line to prevent the fire from spreading into the surrounding woods and to clear access for county firefighting crews.
- ◆ Four days later in Prince George County, VDOF firefighters used a bulldozer to prevent flames from spreading into the woods from Apex Pallet, a pallet recycling and supply facility. VDOF established a fire line and the fire was contained to a 100-foot-long pile of pallet and wood debris.
- ◆ On January 7, VDOF wildland fire resources were called to the 3900 block of Carolina Road in the City of Suffolk to suppress a wildfire that resulted from the crash of a small private aircraft. The crash resulted in two fatalities, both occupants of the small plane. Two tractor plow units responded to the scene and assisted the Suffolk Fire and Rescue crews to contain the blaze, protect four homes, and assist in the wreckage recovery. VDOF staff used a tractor unit to create response vehicle access for extracting the victims and incident investigation by Virginia State Police, Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board. Within three hours, the wildland fire was contained, after impacting 65 acres.

Historic Smithfield Plantation Merry Oak

- ◆ VDOF staff recently visited the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg for the installation of the Merry Oak Tree sculpture, which pays homage to a large white oak that once stood on the Smithfield Plantation property upon which some of the campus is built. The project was made possible through the combined efforts of the university, Smithfield Plantation, VDOF and descendants of families formerly enslaved there. This historic oak tree, estimated to have sprouted in 1740, was fatally damaged by a storm in 2020. Virginia Tech is deeply engaged in the [stewardship of historical trees](#) on campus and has led a multi-year effort to preserve the life and legacy of the tree. The university is producing a video about the creation of the sculpture and items made from the remaining wood that have been locally crafted for the descendants.

Forest Health Review Available

- ◆ The latest version of VDOF's Forest Health Review has been published and posted on the VDOF website <https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/FHR-2022.pdf>. This publication is produced every year to summarize forest health conditions and highlight work by VDOF's Forest Health program, which supports landowners to meet their goals and monitors Virginia's forests for major pests and other issues.

USDA Interagency Research Forum

- ◆ VDOF staff attended the 31st USDA Interagency Research Forum on Invasive Species in Annapolis, Maryland. This was the first in-person research forum in several years and included presenters and attendees from all parts of the globe. Research topics included the latest methods of invasive species detection and monitoring, insecticide and biocontrol efficacy and use, and ecosystem dynamics in the wake of invasive species presence. Newly presented material will be utilized to improve the detection, monitoring, and treatment efforts of VDOF's Forest Health section.

Tree Canopy Improvement Efforts in Henrico County

- ◆ VDOF staff from the Urban and Community Forestry team met with Henrico County and Capital Trees to discuss ongoing efforts to expand tree canopy in the county and on K-12 school grounds. Capital Trees is a non-profit urban greening organization that works with private citizens to restore public spaces.

Virginia Beach Heat Island Planting

- ◆ VDOF assisted with a large heat island planting on the campus of Virginia Wesleyan in Virginia Beach. This project is part of a statewide heat island study led by the Virginia Foundation of Independent Colleges. More than 60 trees were planted along the Lynnhaven River.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) presented two Forest Pest Update presentations to the 2023 Northern Shenandoah Valley Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Program on January 10 in Winchester. The presentations included information on oak decline, laurel wilt disease, and beech leaf disease. One presentation covered two different credit tracks- one for professionals geared towards ornamentals and turf and one for agriculture plant and animal pest control. In total there were 140 people in attendance.
- ◆ The Hardwood Initiative seeks to implement best practices and develop contractors to perform work. VDOF is seeking a business to perform work on agency land for three hardwood management projects in eastern Virginia, at Sandy Point State Forest in King William and the Hockley Research Property in King and Queen. The projects involve timber stand improvement through basal and foliar

herbicide spraying. Bids are due for all three on February 2. Spread the word to any interested contractors. Contact Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator) or Dennis Gaston (forest manager) for more information.

Eastern Region

- ◆ Matt Coleman and Scott Adams (area foresters), Jerre Creighton (research program manager), Dean Cumbia (director of forest resource management), Joe Rossetti (hardwood initiative coordinator), John Magruder and staff (Three Rivers Forestry Consultants), and Caroline County landowner John Burke met on his property to review several hardwood stands and work done in them. The group looked at results of past management and discussed next steps. There were several areas of shelterwood harvest, potential for crop tree release or pre-commercial thinning, several areas trying to establish oak regeneration, and some areas ready for understory burning. Mr. Burke is eager to get involved in the VDOF hardwood initiative program to continue to improve his forest stands for future generations. It was a good day of cooperative discussion and idea exchange between different levels of agency personnel, private contractor and landowner.



State Forest

- ◆ Joe Rossetti and Jack Kauffman (forest manager) met to review potential work for hardwood demonstration projects at the Conway Robinson State Forest, Whitney State Forest, and Lesesne State Forest, located in northern and central Virginia. Demonstration sites are an important component of the Hardwood Initiative. They allow for landowners to see forest management practices in action, for forestry services businesses to gain skills, and for VDOF to test the innovative Hardwood Assessment Tool.
- ◆ Twenty VDOF staff took part in a chainsaw practice session at the Paul State Forest in Rockingham County, achieving multiple goals. Under the leadership of chainsaw trainer and VDOF Forester Bill Perry, staff increased skills by felling trees, bucking and limbing, resolving trees hung and stuck in other trees, and releasing spring poles. VDOF responders have the need to use all of these skills in wildfire suppression, hurricane, ice storm, and tornado response, and must practice them to maintain preparedness. The area of the forest where chainsaw practice occurred had been marked for Timber Stand Improvement by VDOF staff as a Hardwood Initiative demonstration site. Prior to the training, VDOF staff led by Joe Rossetti and Jack Kauffman walked the area and marked crop trees to keep for future timber harvesting, as well as inferior trees to cut in order to release the crop trees' crowns for improved growth. The inferior trees were cut during chainsaw training. The result is an improved stand of trees, completed Hardwood Initiative demonstration project, and increased VDOF staff skills.
- ◆ Rob Jones, who works for Rayonier in TX, LA, and OK, visited some of the wide spacing studies on the Appomattox- Buckingham State Forest (ABSF). He was interested in low density planting in wet areas accessible only three months of the year to extend the timeframe for or eliminate thinning. He was particularly interested to see if lower density planting had any effect on sawtimber quality from increasing limbs/knots lower on the tree. He liked what he saw on ABSF and is planning to give 300-400 TPA a try in some of the areas they have.

Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)

- ◆ Timber harvesting is active on two GNA Projects in western Virginia. Garden Mountain Timber sale (part of Round Mountain West) is active in Bland County, and Brush Creek Units 13 & 21 - a part of the Ewing Mountain Project in Carroll County - is active.