



May 22, 2023

Upcoming Events

[Board of Forestry Meeting](#) – June 21 – 10:00am – 2:00pm

[Fall Fire Academy](#) – September 25 – 29

[2023 Virginia Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Course](#) – October 2 – 15

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

Employee Spotlight

Appreciation for Job Well Done

- ◆ The below letter was received from landowner Kyle E. Schilling in regard to a fire on April 5.

“My wife and I wish to express appreciation and thanks for your department’s role and prompt response to the fire of April 5 which began on property adjacent to ours and rapidly spread to our property; as well as other adjacent land. It threatened our house, outbuildings and the lives of my wife, a neighbor and our dog.

The effective and noteworthy intergovernmental response and coordination exhibited by the nine responding companies was impressive. The knowledge that other companies were also standing by was also reassuring. The responding companies were, I believe: Fort Valley, Woodstock, Conicville, Edinburg, Mt. Jackson, Strasburg, Toms Brook, USDA Forest Service, and the Virginia Department of Forestry.

Your department and all the others involved are to be commended for the well-coordinated and executed response. Please pass on our gratitude and thanks to these other companies for their outstanding service.”

Employee News

Congratulations Robbie Talbert!

- ◆ Regional Forester Robbie Talbert joined more than 25 senior agency staff to successfully complete the Virginia Executive Institute (VEI). Led and conducted by VCU’s L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, VEI is the capstone course in the Commonwealth’s state employee leadership development curriculum that includes two weeks of training and education that develop executive leadership skills. On the final day of the course, graduates presented group projects on a variety of important topics and received inspirational comments from former Governor Doug Wilder.



Last Week

Virginia Interagency Wildland Fire Academy

- ◆ DOF's 22nd annual Virginia Interagency Wildland Fire Academy will be held on the campus of Longwood University in Farmville from May 23 to 27. Nearly 250 students, representing local fire department personnel along with state and federal wildland fire agencies from Virginia and three other states, will participate. This year's academy includes a mix of eight different wildfire suppression and incident management related classes. All coursework follows the national training curriculum of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and ensures that all firefighters in the Commonwealth are prepared for any emergency.

DOF Participates in Virginia Emergency Support Team Exercise

- ◆ Members of DOF's Fire and Emergency Response branch participated in the Virginia Emergency Support Team Exercise conducted by Virginia Department of Emergency Management at the state Emergency Operations Center on May 9. This year's exercise used a hurricane scenario to test and train various agency functionalities through a simulated statewide disaster.

"Learn and Burn" Workshop

- ◆ On May 12, the Eastern Region and Eastern State Forests, along with partner groups, led an Advanced "Learn and Burn" workshop for citizens from around the Commonwealth. Approximately 30 private landowners and contractors participated in the event. The event supports the ongoing effort to increase practical training and prescribed burn capacity on private lands in Eastern and Southcentral Virginia. The group conducted a 15-acre understory burn at Big Woods State Forest. Representatives from U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Nature



Conservancy, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation participated (pictured).

Watch DOF's video: <https://youtu.be/t8q9F278Z5k>



Yellow Pine User Recruitment Strategies Partner Meeting

- ◆ Utilization and Marketing Program Manager Sabina Dhungana met with Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and Virginia Economic Development Partnership partners to plan yellow pine user recruitment strategies in Virginia. The team is planning to meet on June 1 to discuss an incentive package to send to potential North America companies looking for investment opportunities.

Virginia Contract Administration and Risk Management Certificate

- ◆ Chief of Administration Amanda Davis completed the Virginia Contract Administration and Risk Management Certificate (VCARM) Program through DGS. A six-week course, VCARM includes online

modules, virtual classes and a final exam. This course is part of the procurement career path for contract administration professionals.

Petersburg Heat Island Projects

- ◆ DOF staff planted over 60 trees across three different city parks in Petersburg. The project was in coordination with Virginia State University to mitigate extreme heat. In addition to installation, trees were given away to residents in these areas so they could plant a tree to mitigate heat concerns. Other partners in this effort included Groundwork RVA, First Alliance Consulting and Division Street Landscaping.

DOF Mentors JMU's Urban Wood Program

- ◆ Over the past two years, James Madison University (JMU) students completed their semester urban wood projects in the Architectural Design program. In early May, the "Design-Build Dukes" dedicated a Story Walk and Reading Roost Project at the campus arboretum. All the installations were created using wood from dying oak trees that were felled on arboretum grounds, processed locally and returned to the class. DOF staff serve as mentors and consultants to the JMU Urban Wood program, as well as several other university and college organizations (pictured).



Forest Management

- ◆ On May 9 and 10 Joe Rossetti (hardwood coordinator) organized and led a Hardwood Assessment Tool (HAT) training session at Holiday Lake 4-H Center and the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. Fifteen DOF foresters attended the session to learn about the stages of hardwood stand development and how to use the HAT to gather data and develop recommendations for stand improvement. The training and the Tool are elements of the overall Hardwood Initiative and will contribute to better hardwood management across Virginia.
- ◆ The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is updating their statewide Wildlife Action Plan and as part of that held an initial agency stakeholder meeting on May 11 at DWR Headquarters in Richmond. Joe Rossetti and Zoe Bergman (natural resource specialist) represented DOF and will provide input as the Plan is developed over the coming months. The Action Plan is updated every ten years and outlines species of greatest conservation need, and ways to address conservation of these species, including habitat management.
- ◆ Forest Health Technician Amanda Conrad met with Department of Conservation Recreation (DCR) staff at Middle Peninsula State Park in Gloucester County on May 10 to perform a biocontrol release for the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Four hundred *Oobius agrili* wasp pupae were released as a part of an integrated pest management plan for that area. Larger trees will be chemically treated to ensure protection and survival from EAB as the biocontrol takes effect.
- ◆ Forest Health staff released 300 predatory insects (*Leucotaraxis piniperda*) at First Mountain State Forest in Rockingham County on May 9. These silver flies have predaceous larvae that feed on hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) eggs. A different biological control agent (a predatory beetle *Laricobius osakensis*) was released at First Mountain last fall. Together, these two agents work to control the entire life cycle of HWA and should protect hemlock trees at this state forest.
- ◆ Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) and Kenny Midgett (forestry technician) conducted an aerial survey of the Eastern Shore of Virginia on May 10. The purpose of this flight was to locate and map

coastal ghost forests along the coast, which are areas of trees that have died due to sea level rise and saltwater intrusion. This is part of a region-wide effort to map ghost forests in the Southeast to document the rate at which we are losing forests along the coast to these factors.

- ◆ Amanda Conrad (forest health technician) and Katlin DeWitt worked with Cory Swift-Turner (communications specialist) to create a video that demonstrates the proper way to treat hemlock trees with insecticide applied as a soil drench. Private landowners are the target audience. This video will be shared on the DOF website and YouTube page so that the general public is aware of options they have to protect their trees themselves.
- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) and Lindsay Caplan (invasive species specialist) attended the first meeting of the Blue Ridge Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management's (PRISM) Statewide Workshop's Steering Committee. PRISM is planning to host a statewide workshop on invasive species in the fall/winter and has created a steering committee to help plan the event.

State Forest

- ◆ Staff joined 20 Master Naturalists on a forestry walk at Whitney State Forest.
- ◆ Staff safely completed the Advanced "Learn and Burn" prescribed burning workshop at Big Woods State Forest, with DOF staff, partner instructors and approximately 30 students conducting a 15-acre understory burn.

Central Region

- ◆ Shenandoah District staff along with Patti Nylander (watershed stewardship specialist) and Ian Morris (state forest technician) collaborated for a day of invasive control work around the Augusta Forestry Center. Invasive plants were controlled through a variety of means, including manual removal and bush hogging of honeysuckle as well as cut-stump treatment and removal of autumn olive, Norway maple, burning bush, and multiflora rose in the riparian buffer (pictured).
- ◆ Zoë Sumrall (water quality specialist) assisted with a SHARP logger class in Rockingham County. Approximately 15 people attended.
- ◆ Miller Adams (area forester), Thomas Reeves (forest technician) and Chris McClelland (district forester) attended a Venture Outdoors program offered through the Virginia Cooperative Extension in Charlotte County. Miller gave a presentation on silvopasture and the different practices he has implemented on his family farm. The day concluded with a tour of the farm, where participants got to see these practices and ask questions.
- ◆ Patti Nylander and Caitlin Verdu (watershed program manager) assisted Virginia Cooperative Extension with a "Fifteen Minutes in the Woods" video highlighting the implementation and benefits of riparian forested buffers. The video can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcZw0lfmf0g>

