



August 4, 2023

Upcoming Events

[Fall Fire Academy](#) – September 25 - 29 ***Registration Open**

[Virginia Tree Farm Foundation Tour – Crozet](#) – August 25

[Virginia Tree Farm Foundation Tour – Halifax](#) – September 15

[Generation NEXT: Legacy Planning 1-Day Workshop](#) – September 16

[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.

News You Can Use

Need First Aid/CPR certification?

Contact Safety and Training Coordinator [Chad Briggs](#), who has six open slots for the class on Sept. 8 at HQ.

SLOW DOWN!!!

In 2022, the Virginia Department of Transportation began installing speed cameras as an experimental project in work zones on Interstate 81 in the Roanoke area. Since that time, the project has expanded to other areas of the state, including localities installing their own red-light cameras. Any persons observed speeding by these cameras are subject to an automatic fine of \$100 (driving record will receive no points).

In recent months, several DOF vehicles have been observed on these cameras speeding through enforcement areas. Employees operating the vehicle during infractions will be required to pay the \$100 fine out of pocket and may also receive disciplinary action. Below are excerpts from the DOF Policy and Procedure 5-2 Motor Vehicle Operation:

General Driving and Prohibited Practices

- *Employees shall be expected to always exercise safe driving practices and have due regard for public safety when operating any state-owned vehicle.*
- *Employees will not exceed posted speed limits while operating a motor vehicle. Emergency situations are no exception.*

Emergency Vehicle Operation

When responding to emergencies, employees will:

- *Obey all moving vehicle laws and not exceed the posted speed limit for any reason.*

Remember...when you're in a state vehicle your behavior behind the wheel represents DOF and the Commonwealth. We can't properly serve the public if we're putting their, and our, lives in jeopardy with careless driving practices. Drive safely, avoid distractions and obey all traffic signs.

Policy and Procedures

Tax Credit Programs – Hardwood Initiative Incentives

NEW! [Policy and Procedure 07-008 Tax Credit Programs](#) includes the Hardwood Initiative Tax Credit and Riparian Buffer Tax Credit programs. Passed in 2022, the Hardwood Initiative Tax Credit is now available. This non-refundable tax credit is worth up to \$1000 for people subject to Virginia income tax who have a forest management plan and have an expenditure implementing at least one hardwood best practice.

For more information, read the Policy and Procedure and contact Hardwood Initiative Coordinator **Joe Rossetti** with any questions. The Riparian Buffer Tax Credit has been available since 2000. It offers landowners who harvest timber and forested a riparian buffer a tax credit of 25% of the value of timber in the buffer, up to \$17,500. No changes have been made to the Riparian Buffer Tax Credit process. For more Information, read the Policy and Procedure and contact Water Quality Engineer **Rodney Newlin** with any questions.

Last Week

Fire Mitigation Grant for St. Paul Community

Fire Mitigation Specialist **Jon Perry** joined the St. Paul fire chief and town manager to facilitate a fire mitigation grant for Gray Hill, an underserved community. The community lacked organizational infrastructure to become an official Homeowners' Association, however after working with St. Paul, they were able to facilitate a grant application for a fuel reduction project. In June, Rx Fire Effects completed the project, treating 12 homes. DOF's wildfire mitigation grants help reduce the risk of wildfire in at-risk communities. Through federal funding, the grants provide communities with support and technical assistance necessary to complete hazard mitigation projects.

62nd Annual Southern Forest Insect Work Conference

On July 25-27, forest health manager **Lori Chamberlin** and forest health specialist **Katlin DeWitt** attended the 62nd Annual Southern Forest Insect Work Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. This conference brings together forest health professionals from academia, industry, state and federal government to learn about current issues and discuss updates in research on forest pests in the Southeastern U.S. Lori gave a presentation in the opening session highlighting the importance of partnerships and collaboration in forest health programs. Katlin presented in the state cooperators session about spongy moth in Virginia. At the end of the meeting, the group voted to change the meeting name to the "Southern Forest Health Work Conference" to be more reflective of the broader nature of forest health and responsibilities of the members.

Innovative Ash Treatment in Cumberland State Forest

Forest Health Manager **Lori Chamberlin** and Forest Health Technician **Amanda Conrad** met with Cumberland State Forest Manager Shannon Lewis to treat a young ash on July 27. This particular plot has been used as a testing site for efficacy of different emerald ash borer treatment methods, such as soil drenches and basal bark

spraying. This year, Lori, Amanda and Shannon used a new piece of equipment to inject survivor ash in this stand. This method of treatment has proven to be the most effective in controlling emerald ash borer populations and will protect the treated trees until 2025.

Fuel Reduction Project on Suck Mountain

DOF Fire Mitigation Specialist **Jon Perry** worked with Appalachian Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) to facilitate a fuels-reduction project on Suck Mountain Trail in Bedford County. Three homeowners from a small, wooded community contacted DOF expressing concerns about wildland fire. Upon conducting a site visit, DOF staff determined the homes likely would be great candidates for RC&D funding to complete single dwelling mitigation projects. After coordinating with the RC&D and Shiloh Land Management, they were able to complete a fuels reduction project for the three parcels. In addition, a secondary escape route has been identified on county property in the form of an abandoned road leading to the county reservoir. Another project is under way to address deadfall and debris in this area and provide emergency access to residents.

Conservation Camp

Justin Funk, Allen Pennington, Andrew Vinson, and Emily Wotton spent a day running a station at the NRCS SWCD Youth Conservation Camp at Claytor Lake State Park. They spent time talking to teenagers about careers in forestry, water quality protection, tree identification, prescribed burning and wildfire suppression. They also brought a dozer and other fire equipment to show the campers. Emily then went on to spend the rest of the week with the campers, serving as a camp counselor.



Teaching the Teachers

Western Region Water Quality staff (**Andrew Vinson** and **Daniel Cloeter**) and foresters from the Mountain Valley District (**Denny McCarthy** and **Mitchell Kim**) spent a day with teachers from Allegheny and Bath counties to educate them on various forestry related topics. The teachers got the opportunity to help Water Quality staff with harvest inspections (with Technician **Doug Morris**) and complete a BMP audit to learn about timber harvesting and water quality. They also joined DOF foresters on landowner visits, and learned about forest management and the services DOF provides for landowners. The teachers are enrolled in forestry courses at Mountain Gateway Community College and hope to take their new knowledge to become more effective agricultural education teachers.

Franklin Ash Treatment

Forester **Scott Bachman**, Forester **Evan Richardson** and Forester **Kendall Topping** (pictured) treated ash trees for Emerald Ash Borer at Paul D. Camp Community College in Franklin.

