



August 14, 2023

## Upcoming Events

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[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

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### *Commercial Driver's License Program*

On Aug 3, nine DOF employees successfully completed the latest joint DOF and Mountain Gateway Community College Commercial Driver's License-B program. This program takes employees from the beginning steps of obtaining their CDL-B permit through to the final steps of DMV testing to receiving their CDL-B License.

Congratulations to **Dalton Brown, Richard Powell, Stuart Baker, Matthew Drake, Lauren Charles, Garrett Evans, Antonio Alvarez, Matias Pineiro** and **Tyler Newton**. If you need to acquire a CDL-B, please contact [Danny Fortune](#) to be enrolled in the next class.

## Last Week

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### *Shenandoah Wildfire*

**Darwin Rhodes** (forest technician) and **Matt Wolanski** (district forester) responded to a natural gas pipeline explosion in northern Shenandoah County. The explosion resulted in an 18-acre wildfire that was suppressed by a combination of DOF resources and local fire departments.



## *Shenandoah Valley Conservation Collaborative Meeting*

**Ashley Mock** (bay watershed specialist) and **Matt Wolanski** (district forester) attended the Shenandoah Valley Conservation Collaborative (SVCC) meeting. The group is a collective of natural resource professionals including Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, non-profit organizations, and conservation easement groups. The SVCC has a considerable amount of funding that can be used towards conservation goals centered around water quality.

## *Be Storm Ready, Stay Storm Safe*

On Aug. 3, Community Forestry Specialist **Kendall Topping** appeared on WTKR TV-3 (Norfolk) with “Coast Live” host Chandler Nunnally to discuss tree safety, storm preparedness and how a healthy tree can protect your landscape. During the discussion, Kendall encouraged viewers to care for and keep mature trees in the neighborhood, and the importance of keeping them as resilient as possible. Watch Kendall’s interview here:

<https://www.wtkr.com/coast-live/local-forestry-specialist-shares-advice-for-handling-trees-on-coast-live>



## *State Land Use Evaluation and Advisory Council*

The State Land Use Evaluation and Advisory Council (SLEAC) met on Aug. 3 at DOF HQ. Per state code, SLEAC provides suggested values for lands under forest, agriculture, horticulture, and open space use. Use value taxation has been adopted by approximately two thirds for Virginia localities and provides a mechanism for landowners to be taxed on the use of the property, rather than fair market value. It is an important tool that helps landowners keep and maintain these lands. Each year **Todd Groh** (forest management programs) and **Dean Cumbia** (forest management director) calculate estimated forest use values, which were presented at the SLEAC meeting. In addition, DOF provided an overview of the 2022 Forest Sustainability Fund development process and distribution.

## *Black Ash Treatment*

On Aug. 1, **Lori Chamberlin** (forest health manager) and **Amanda Conrad** (forest health technician) met with Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources staff to treat 25 black ash (*F. nigra*) in G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area in Fauquier County. Black ash is a rare species in Virginia and the population at Thompson Wildlife Management Area is one of the few surviving on state lands. These trees have been treated since 2018 when DOF Forest Health started their emerald ash borer program. Most of the larger trees have succumbed to extensive damage, but many of the smaller trees still survive with regular treatments. As the small trees grow, they will be a seed source so that future black ash populations may survive and expand.

## *Rare Pumpkin Ash*

**Lara Johnson** (urban and community forestry program manager) and **Katlin DeWitt** (forest health specialist) met with Cecilia Boyd (environmental manager at Langley Air Force Base) to help identify and tag pumpkin ash on one of their properties. Pumpkin ash is a rare species in Virginia and the State Champion pumpkin ash trees grown in this location. Some trees have been treated with DOF assistance since 2020, and DOF Forest Health staff will help retreat these trees next summer to protect them for another two years.

## *Watershed Adventure Camp*

**Tyler Newton** (area forester) and **Laura Hudson** (area forester) attended the Watershed Adventure Camp hosted by the Soil and Water Conservation District. The camp was hosted at Staunton River Battlefield State Park in Clover. Laura and Tyler presented to 23 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, and discussed forestry jobs, forest products, tree identification and how to use an increment borer.

### *New Red Oak Champ?*

Central Region staff visited a private home in Appomattox County to obtain measurements of a Northern Red Oak tree that could potentially be a Champion Tree. Champions are measured on a points-based system determined by height, crown spread and trunk circumference. A potential champion is compared only to the trees of its same species. **Kevin Dawson** (water quality specialist), **Paolo Alvarez** (area forester), **Thomas Reeves** (forest technician), and **Matt Drake** (forest technician) spent the morning recording measurements to be sent to Jason Fisher, the official surveyor for the Champion Tree Program. The preliminary measurements taken scored high enough for an official measurement later in the month. If the official numbers are close to what the DOF staff has seen, then this Red Oak could be one of the largest in Virginia.



### *Longleaf Cooperation*

The Longleaf Cooperators of Virginia, composed of agencies, organizations and landowners interested in the restoration and management of longleaf pine, an important, yet highly diminished tree species in Virginia, met in Petersburg on Aug. 2. **Bryant Bays** (regional forester) and **Jim Schroering** (longleaf coordinator) shared updates regarding DOF activities including longleaf accomplishments on private land, development of seed production capacity, nursery production, and prescribed burning. Other partners offered updates on cooperative activities, financial assistance programs and practical studies. Longleaf pine supports more of the most diverse and valuable forest ecosystems in the south, with southeast Virginia as the northernmost portion of its range. Restoration efforts by members of the group have pulled the species from only a handful of surviving trees 25 years ago to now over 8,000 acres.

### *Smokey Visits Surry National Night Out*

On Tuesday, Aug., **Jay Basset** (Technician), **Zach Dowling** (Forester) and **Caroline Norris** (Forester) represented DOF at the Surry County National Night Out. The annual campaign promotes partnerships and enhances relationships between neighbors and law enforcement while supporting a sense of community.



### *Leading by Example*

Established and emerging programs are both essential to advancing forestry in Virginia. On Aug. 2 and 3 **Kevin Keith** (area forester Henry and Patrick counties) and **Joe Rossetti** (hardwood coordinator) teamed up to tackle a variety of projects. First, they reviewed forest management accomplishments and completed monitoring of several properties under the Forest Stewardship Program as a part of the annual program review. Next, they conducted hardwood stand assessment on several properties that will be used to guide landowners to implement hardwood management practices (and entry into the hardwood cost-share program). Finally, they completed a prescribed burn to enhance wildlife habitat. These diverse tasks illustrate the daily work of agency staff across the Commonwealth that collectively leads to well-managed and productive forests.

### ***“Teaching Trees” Workshops***

Conservation Education Coordinator **Ellen Powell** and Project Learning Tree (PLT) Coordinator **Lesley Newman** worked with Virginia Cooperative Extension and Society of American Foresters partners to hold “Teaching Trees” workshops in Louisa County and Newport News in July. Seventeen middle and high school teachers attended. These workshops are a unique “hybrid” of PLT secondary workshop and local forestry tour. Generous funding from the Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation allowed teachers to take home materials kits for use with their students. In addition to the partners listed, special thanks go to consulting forester Matt Dowdy and to Newport News Waterworks for providing the tours on their property.

