



September 5, 2023

Upcoming Events

[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.

Welcome to DOF

Tim Lord has been accepted for the forest technician position in the Southern Rivers District, primarily covering Mecklenburg County. Tim, a native of Charlotte County, has an A.A.S. in criminal justice from Southside Virginia Community College and has worked as a chief ranger for Virginia State Parks for the past 2 ½ years. Tim's first day with the DOF was Aug. 25. Please provide him with a warm welcome when you get a chance.



Congratulations!

New Research Manager

Zoe Bergman has been selected to be the agency's next Research Manager. Zoe previously served DOF as natural resource specialist and has Bachelor of Science in Biology with a concentration in Ecology and Environmental Sciences from James Madison University and a Masters in Environmental Sciences with a concentration in Ecology from the University of Virginia. Congratulations to Zoe on this exciting new role.

Virginia Contracting Officer Certification

Congratulations to Director of Finance **Lauren Sumner** and Facilities and Assets Coordinator **Lora Newlin**, who have completed the Virginia Contracting Officer (VCO) certifications through the Department of General Services (DGS), Institute of Procurement. The second rung of the "Virginia Contracting" certification ladder, VCO requires completion of Virginia Contracting Associate certification. Focusing on complex purchases (over \$100,000), competitive sealed bidding and competitive negotiation, the certification course consists of pre-class online modules requiring approximately 16 hours to complete, followed by four days of class with a final exam on the fifth day.

[Temporary Bridge Cost-Share Program Funding Available – Policy and Procedures 18-005 Temporary Bridge Cost-Share Program](#)

- The funding DOF received for the Temporary Water Crossing program from the U.S. Forest Service is ready accept project applications. This program received its funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).
- The funding (\$350,000) will support temporary water crossings for skidders and heavy forestry equipment through implementing a cost-share bridge program very similar to our current program.
- To qualify for the cost-share, applicants must:
 - Be certified under the SFI SHARP Logger Program administered by Virginia Forestry Association (VFA) and Virginia Tech (or equivalent if not in Virginia).
 - Have no current debt for either civil penalty or past due bills owed to VDOF.
 - Have no active water quality impairment (Water Quality Recommendations, Special Orders or Emergency Special Orders) open on any tracts on which they are currently operating.
- The projects will consist of a purchase of a portable wooden/steel temporary bridge or wooden/ steel truck mats to be used at the site of the stream crossing or a sensitive area. Cost-share is based upon receipts and statement of actual expenses incurred. A maximum of 75 percent of the cost of the project not to exceed \$12,000 per project if the project includes the purchase of a portable bridge, or a maximum of 75 percent of the cost of the project not to exceed \$6,000 per project if the project includes the purchase of wood mats. Total cost-share not to exceed \$12,000 per program year per tax identification entity.
- Please promote this program as we conduct our harvest inspections and let your local Water Quality staff know of potential projects. More information about the program can be found on our [Temporary Bridge Cost-Share Program](#) webpage.

More VRS Representative Visits

The VRS representative will be back in Charlottesville on Oct. 3, at the Waverly Office on Oct. 10, and the Salem Office on Nov. 1. Contact Chief Human Resources Officer **John Habel** at (434) 270-3364 or John.Habel@DOF.Virginia.gov for more details.

ATV and UTV Helmet Policy

DOF is striving to purchase ATV/UTV helmets for field staff. The purchase process will take some time. In the interim, employees should use helmets already provided by the agency.

You may have purchased your own helmet in the past or may want to purchase one moving forward.

DOF IS NOT requiring employees to purchase their own helmets. But if you choose to do so, or use one you have purchased previously, helmets must be verified and approved by the Safety and Training Coordinator **Chad Briggs** prior to use.

That process would entail:

1. Visual inspection or pictures of the helmet and its condition.
2. Providing paperwork or decals certifying the helmet meets all federal standards set by the American National Standards Institute or the U.S. Department of Transportation.
3. **Note: Helmets must be provided to the Safety and Training Coordinator prior to use.**

There may be other changes forthcoming to our ATV/UTV and helmet policies in the near future. Thank you in advance for your patience. Questions? Contact Chad at Chad.Briggs@DOF.Virginia.gov.

Agency Updates

DOF Firefighter Deployment

DOF currently has 21 personnel on out-of-state deployments to assist with wildfire suppression and management in the western U.S. This includes four full-time employees and seven agency part-time firefighters. The team is currently deployed in California, Oregon, Texas and Washington. DOF firefighters voluntarily take out of state deployments to increase their training and skills managing large wildfire incidents. Through a national agreement, the opportunity also provides a mechanism for employees to gain national-level incident management credentials and earn additional income. All related employee time and expenses are fully reimbursed to DOF by the states receiving assistance.

Represent With Distinction: Consider Joining the DOF Honor Guard

The mission of the DOF Honor Guard is to honor our fallen public servants. The Honor Guard represents us with dignity and respect, and to instill a sense of pride, unity, duty and discipline within our ranks and throughout the agency. The DOF Honor Guard consists of staff from across the state. If you are interested in serving on the DOF Honor Guard, learn more at the fall in-person meeting on Oct. 25-26 at the New Kent Conference Center. To attend, obtain supervisor approval and then email Water Quality Specialist **Derek Keiser** (Derek.Keiser@DOF.Virginia.gov). More details about the Honor Guard can be found on our website <https://dof.virginia.gov/honor-guard/>



Emergency Escape Route Project in Bedford County

DOF's Western Region staff completed the first phase of a fire break and emergency escape route project in the Suck Mountain community located in Bedford County. After several meetings with local authorities, DOF was given permission to open an existing road owned by the Town of Bedford for use as an emergency escape route for the community. DOF met with the town's Public Works team on site to obtain access and remove several large, downed trees from the road. The final phase of the project – that will include a fuel-reduction project along the road and installation of reflective signage to clearly identify the escape route – is planned to take place before fall fire season that begins in October.

Smokey Takes the Mound at Flying Squirrels Game

The Capital Team, with help from Smokey Bear, represented DOF at the Richmond Flying Squirrels "Preparedness and Weather" night in Richmond. Before and during the game, nearly 5,000 fans heard messages from state and local emergency management agencies including DOF, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, the Emergency Management Alliance of Central Virginia/PlanRVA, Charles City County Fire, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on proper preparation for any emergency. At the beginning of the game Smokey was given the honor of throwing the first pitch (looks like a knuckleball).



Appomattox Buckingham State Forest

Grubb Enterprises started on a mulching contract in the Appomattox Buckingham State Forest. The goal will be to create a designated area for shortleaf seed tree production.

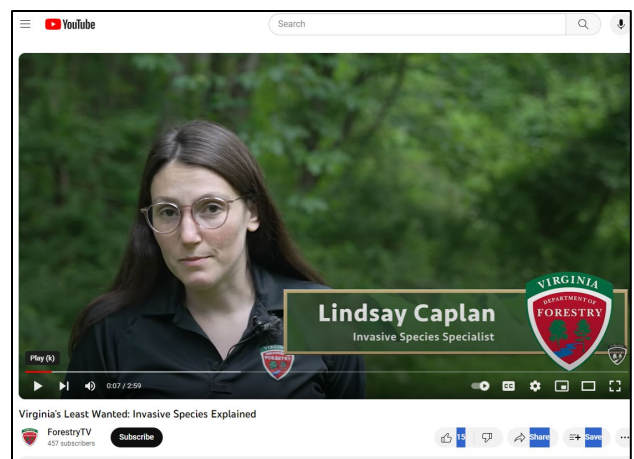
3rd Annual Newport News Pawpaw Festival

Community Forest Specialist **Andrew Murray** represented DOF at the 3rd Annual Newport News Pawpaw Festival at Historic Endview. A dozen state agencies, volunteer organizations, and local government representatives provided information about natural resources and environmental issues in Virginia, as well as samples and sales of Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) fruit and trees, growing and foraging, and demonstrations of recipes in which North America's largest native fruit can be incorporated. During the event Andrew talked with landowners about the importance of native plants, wildfire prevention and preparedness, as well as funding opportunities such as the Virginia Trees for Clean Water and Urban and Community Forestry grants.



Wavyleaf Grass Treatment and Invasives Outreach

DOF Forest health staff are working to control and manage wavyleaf grass, a relatively new invasive species that spreads rapidly and crowds out desirable plants. Staff surveyed for wavyleaf grass on three private properties in Carroll County near Galax in preparation for treatment next year and is working collaboratively with Powhatan State Park, where contractors have begun control efforts. DOF is also producing a series of [invasive species videos](#) with Invasives Species Specialist **Lindsay Caplan** on identifying, treating and reporting problem spots in Virginia.



Forest Improvement Efforts at Headquarters

DOF's Forest Health and Forest Management program staff are developing a plan to improve the forest around DOF's Headquarters, a site of over 30 acres. Much of the land was originally open land and DOF has owned it since the 1930s. Over time, the trees (flatter areas housed a tree seedling nursery and the sloping areas were planted with conifers of many types) have matured and the process of natural plant succession is taking place. Along with natural hardwood regeneration, many invasive species have found their way to the property, which are overcrowding and preventing the growth of native flora and forest regeneration. DOF is launching several activities, including identification and mapping, invasive species management (including goat grazing and chemical control), and treating ash trees to protect them from the invasive emerald ash borer. In addition to housing the agency's Headquarters, this area serves as a significant working site to practice and demonstrate forest management techniques that have application in other locations.