



October 23, 2023

Upcoming Events

[Board of Forestry Meeting](#) – October 31

Welcome to DOF

Josiah Donaldson was selected for the forest technician position in the James River District, primarily covering Louisa and Goochland Counties. Josiah, who currently resides in Louisa County, has a B.A. in Geospatial and Environmental Analysis from Virginia Tech and a Masters of Natural Resources from Virginia Tech. He served in the Air Force for 5 years, has completed S-130/190, and has several months of practical natural resources experience.



Evan Slabach was selected the forest technician position in the Southern Rivers District, primarily covering Halifax County. Evan, who was born and raised in Halifax County, has 11-years of experience in the sawmill, most recently as a press operator, and has experience running heavy equipment including bulldozers. Additionally, he has 13 years of experience as a volunteer firefighter and is currently a captain in his local fire department.



Policy Updates

The Policy and Procedures [05-002 Motor Vehicle Operation](#), [08-001 Human Resources General Policies](#) and [08-002 Human Resources Equal Opportunity and Employment Practices](#) have been updated to reflect changes to our drug and alcohol testing procedures for positions requiring a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). To remain compliant with federal standards, the agency will require all CDL holders who operate our transports to register with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. DOF will conduct a background query on all CDL drivers at the time of hire and annually thereafter. Additionally, the procedures for drug testing for new hires, post-accident, random testing, and reasonable suspicion have been updated. **DOF has requested that all current CDL holders register with the clearinghouse no later than Nov. 1.** If you need more information, talk to your supervisor.

Random drug testing will begin in January and up to 50% of our drivers will be screened annually as required by federal guidelines.

The Policy and Procedures [7-1 Forest Management Planning](#) was recently updated and posted to the DOF

intranet. The primary update was to the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Activity Plan (CAP 106) information. The CAP 106 name has been changed to the “NRCS Conservation Planning Activity (CPA 106)” that also includes a “Design and Implementation Activity (DIA 165) document. The NRCS approved technical service providers develop these plans, however, the DOF Deputy Regional Forester reviews, approves and sends copies of these plans to the local DOF office.

Update:

Another important update was to the USDA Certification of Natural Resources Conservation Service Cooperator (Attachment C) agreement that must be signed by all DOF employees who receive landowner’s personal identifiable information (PII) from local NRCS Service Centers. This agreement should be on file at the NRCS office before any landowner contact information can be given to the DOF employee.

Agency Updates

Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Class

The annual Certified Prescribed Burn Manager (CPBM) class was completed by 147 students the week of Oct. 9. The class provides advanced instruction in the use of prescribed burning and leads to state level certification as a burn manager. Facilitated virtually, this represents the largest CPBM class to date.

Watershed Forestry Retreat

Middle James River Forest Watershed Project **Deya Ramsden**, Bay Watershed Specialist **Jacob Zielinski** and Watershed Stewardship Specialist **Meghan Mulroy-Goldman** attended the Watershed Forestry Retreat at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Karen Noonan Center in Dorchester County, Maryland. Also attending were representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, Farm Service Agency, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, and Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia Forestry agencies. Participants learned about the wildlife and waterman culture of the Bay. They were also able to spend time on the water, set crab pots, and dredge for oysters.

Acorn Collection Event at Randolph College

Forest Health Technician **Amanda Conrad** participated in an acorn collection event at Randolph College in Lynchburg on Oct. 11. This event was held by the College's Sustainability Coordinator and involved both students and faculty in acorn identification and collection to benefit DOF.

Hemlock Treatment Cost-Share Program Update

The DOF Forest Health program sent out the first letter of award for its Hemlock Treatment Cost-Share Program. This is a new cost-share program that provides financial assistance for the treatment of hemlock trees to protect them from the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid. It is currently funded with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invasive species grant money. You can find more information about the cost-share program on our website: <https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-management-health/forest-health/financial-assistance-program/hemlock-woolly-adelgid-treatment-cost-share-program/>

DCR Stream Protection and Forestry Subcommittee Meeting

Forest Management Program Coordinator **Todd Groh** attended the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s (DCR) third Stream Protection and Forestry subcommittee meeting on Oct. 10. This subcommittee meets whenever there are suggestions to change any of the Virginia Agriculture Cost Share (VACS) program practices that concern stream protection and/or forestry. If the subcommittee agrees with the suggested changes, they are forwarded to the full DCR Technical Advisory Committee for approval and then to the State’s

Water Control Board for final approval. If this board approves the change, it will be incorporated into the 2024 VACS Program, beginning July 1.

Quad-State Fire Managers' Meeting

DOF hosted the annual Quad-state fire managers' meeting at Breaks Interstate State Park on Oct. 11. This year's meeting included 47 state fire managers from Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia to share agency updates, receive detailed pre-fire season weather forecasts, share agency directories, and test the interoperability of all four states' two-way radio systems to ensure efficient communications for emergency response.

Still Available: Certified Forest Stewardship Invasive Plant Control

This opportunity is for Certified Forest Stewards who would like to control invasive plants on their property and are willing to use these areas for demonstration to other local landowners. The DOF forester will visit the site, identify the invasive plants, develop a plan of action and send it and a signed Form 6.08 Invasive Species Treatment Agreement to the Forest Management Branch for consideration and approval. If approved, there will be no cost to the landowner and the DOF will schedule and manage the herbicide application. Contact **Todd Groh** at Todd.Groh@DOF.Virginia.gov for additional information.

First Annual Matthews State Forest Youth Hunt

On Sept. 16, DOF and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) offered a deer hunting workshop for youth hunters at Matthews State Forest. Ten participants learned about deer biology, hunting techniques and safety, ethical shot placement and more. Five of the workshop's participants were then randomly selected to partake in the first annual Matthews State Forest Youth Apprentice Hunt on Sept. 30. Paired with a mentor, the youth hunters spent the morning learning in the field, with two hunters harvesting their first deer. Thanks to our partnership with DWR and the work of Western Region personnel, the event was a tremendous success and plans are already in place for next year's workshop and hunt.

Drone Aerial Spray Demo

Matthews State Forest hosted a drone aerial spray presentation and demonstration. With decreasing tract sizes and increasing spraying costs, drones may have a use in doing forestry site prep and invasive species control that requires precision spraying. The demonstration was informative but additional testing is needed to determine whether drone applications on state-owned lands will be effective.



Natural Resources Festival in Russell County

Forest Technician **Collin Sapp** and Area Forester **Bill Miller** assisted the Clinch Soil and Water Conservation District in Russell County along with other agency partners at their Natural Resources Festival. More than 200 6th grade students and 19 teachers from Russell County middle schools attended. DOF staff taught tree identification and fire prevention at their station. The event took place at the Russell County fairgrounds.

