



February 26, 2024

## Upcoming Events

[Landowner Woods & Wildlife Conference, Northern Virginia](#) – Feb. 24

[Spotted Lanternfly Egg Mass Survey Training 2024](#) – Feb. 27, 12 - 1 p.m.

[Generation NEXT Mini-Workshops](#) – March 1

[DOF Targeted Training, Hardwood Management](#) – May 14-15

[2024 Virginia Interagency Wildland Fire Academy](#) – May 28 - June 1

[2024 Forest Management Academy, Sweet Briar College](#) – Sept. 9-13

Have an upcoming event to share? Email **Mary Weaver** at [Mary.Weaver@DOF.Virginia.gov](mailto:Mary.Weaver@DOF.Virginia.gov)

## DOF Employee News Mailbox *(New!)*

A new mailbox has been created by the Office of Communications dedicated to employee news, updates and announcements. Please use this email to submit ideas for Branch stories, ask questions or provide feedback on internal communications. [DOFemployeenews@DOF.Virginia.gov](mailto:DOFemployeenews@DOF.Virginia.gov)

## Employee Updates

Forest Management Program Manager **Todd Groh** has retired from DOF after 30 years of service. Todd served DOF in several capacities including Trainee Forester in Waverly, Area Forester in Lancaster, Northumberland, and then Botetourt Counties, then as the liaison between DOF and the Natural Resources Conservation Service before his role as a program manager. Todd managed many important programs including the Reforestation of Timberlands, Forest Stewardship, Land Use Tax, and cost-share program coordination.



Todd is moving to the Atlanta area and will be working with the U. S. Forest Service, assisting with several program areas including funding from the Inflation Reduction Act. Todd was recognized with an informal reception on Feb. 14. We thank Todd for his valuable service to DOF and wish him well!

## Agency Updates

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### *Wildfire Activity*

Last week, DOF suppressed 11 wildfires which burned 664 acres and damaged or destroyed six outbuildings. Agency suppression efforts over this period protected nine homes and 13 other structures. The largest fire over the last two days was the 525-acre Moore Hollow fire in Lee County.

### *Registration Opens for 2024 Interagency Wildland Fire Academy*

Full-time employees can now register for DOF's annual fire academy at Longwood University, occurring May 29 - June 1. Registration opens to all Feb. 26. [Details and registration](#). Courses provided this year:

S-212, M-410, Advanced Tractor: May 29th - June 1

S-230: May 29

S-231: May 30

S-131: May 31 - June 1

S-130 Field Day: June 1

New DOF employee registration + S-130 field day: May 30 - June 1

Hardwood Assessment Tool training: May 29 - May 30



### *IT or IFRIS Request? Use FORcast! (New!)*

**Effective March 1, all IT and IFRIS requests (phones, network (broadband), hardware, software, etc.) will need to be submitted to a new specific email address [FORcast@DOF.Virginia.gov](mailto:FORcast@DOF.Virginia.gov).** This is the first phase of DOF's new Forestry Catalog for Administration System Tracking (FORcast) tool to submit requests to Administration staff (IT, Finance, Grants, Budget and Facilities). The FORcast system allows you to track the status and progress of your requests to provide transparency and clear communication. By using the email [FORcast@DOF.Virginia.gov](mailto:FORcast@DOF.Virginia.gov), DOF Administration staff can act on requests consistently, promote cross-training and respond to you in a more efficient manner.

In order to test the system, FORcast will be implemented in a phased approach starting with all IT and IFRIS items. This will be followed by a roll out of the remaining Administration service areas in April.

### *Fire Department Grant Opportunities*

Volunteer Fire Assistance and Dry Hydrant Grants opened for the 2024 cycle on Feb. 15. These grants provide cost assistance for PPE, tools, equipment and dry hydrant installations. Encourage your fire department contacts to learn more: <https://dof.virginia.gov/wildland-prescribed-fire/fire-department-resources/>.

### *Roseburg Forest Products Visit*

On Feb. 14, State Forester Rob Farrell and Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer visited Roseburg Forest Products in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina to award former Board of Forestry member Brian Irvine with a plaque in appreciation for his service. After joining the Roseburg employees for lunch, Farrell and Zimmer toured the wood yard. Roseburg is a major forest products manufacturing company with a new sawmill facility that can potentially produce 400 million board feet of southern yellow pine lumber per year. Nearly half of the sawmill's logs are procured from Virginia landowners.

## Virginia Association of Forest Health Professionals (VAFHP) Conference

The 32nd annual VAFHP conference was held February 12-13th in Glen Allen. Over 160 forestry professionals attended, including several DOF field staff. Topics this year included updates on emerging pests, invasive plant species, strategies to manage trees near utility lines and turf, and pesticide safety. Forest Health Program Manager **Lori Chamberlin** gave a presentation on spongy moth defoliation and Invasive Species Specialist **Lindsay Caplan** gave a presentation on emerging invasive plants. Forest Health Specialist **Katlin DeWitt** is president of the VAFHP steering committee that plans the event each year.

## Winchester Students Learn About Forestry

Area Forester **Connor Goolsby** and Forest Technician **Lauren Charles** visited the Independent School of Winchester in Frederick County to teach 5-7-year-old students about forestry. The students enjoyed playing forestry games, looking at fire tools, and coloring leaves.



## Throwing Shade Virginia Program Begins March 1

Urban and Community Forestry Project Coordinator **Delaney Long** (pictured) and Communications Specialist **Cory Swift** recently visited Crow's Nest Greenhouse in Blacksburg to film a video about DOF's [Throwing Shade VA Program](#). Throwing Shade is a partnership between DOF and 10 nurseries across Virginia that offers a \$25 discount on select native trees and shrubs valued at \$50 or more during the spring. This will be the second year of the successful program, which is expanding this year. Delaney was also featured on Burke Nursery's monthly plant and gardening program to discuss Throwing Shade, the benefits of natives and what factors to consider when selecting species to plant. Throwing Shade runs from March 1 through May 1.



## Landowner Meeting

On Feb. 20, Eastern Regional Forester Bryant Bays and Forest Management Director Dean Cumbia met with a group of landowners in Nottoway County to discuss forest management and other land ownership topics. Approximately 11 landowners and family members attended, representing lands in at least four Southside Virginia counties (and one from North Carolina). The meeting was organized by Executive Director of the Black Family Land Trust Ebonie Alexander and was also attended by representatives of USDA conservation agencies. The meeting was informative for DOF, the landowners, and our partner agencies as we seek to foster improved land management.