



March 4, 2024

Upcoming Events

[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 agency calendar event to share?

*Email **Mary Weaver** at Mary.Weaver@DOF.Virginia.gov*

Employee Updates

Abby Tenney has been selected for the Area Forester position in the Rappahannock District, primarily covering Orange and Spotsylvania Counties. Abby, who is a native of Augusta County, will graduate with a B.S. in Forest Resources Management with a minor in Wildland Fire Ecology from Virginia Tech this upcoming May. She has three summers worth of forestry internship experience, including serving as the intern for the Central Region this past summer. Since Abby will not be graduating until May, she will begin her employment with the DOF on June 10. Please provide Abby with a warm welcome you get a chance.



Agency Updates

Wildfire Activity

Over the last seven days, DOF has suppressed 19 wildfires which burned 678 acres and damaged or destroyed six non-residential structures. Agency response efforts over this period are credited with protecting 13 homes and 17 other structures with an estimated total value of just over \$3 million.

20th Annual Woods and Wildlife Conference

DOF participated in the 20th Annual Woods and Wildlife Conference held at the Daniel Technology Center on the Germanna Community College Campus in Culpeper. Hosted by the Virginia Tech Virginia Cooperative Extension, these full-day conferences provide information, tools and networking to assist private woodland owners keep their woods, and the wildlife that live in them, healthy and productive. A variety of topics were offered for owners of both large and small tracts, and both experienced and new owners. Over 200 participants attended the conference and to date, more than 2,500 woodland owners have attended a Woods and Wildlife Conference. Thanks go out to the Rappahannock work area who had five team members turn out to mix and mingle, teach a session, and staff the DOF booth.

Forestland Ownership and Management Meeting in Nottoway County

On Feb. 20 Regional Forester **Bryant Bays** and Forest Management Branch Manager **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 with lands in at least four Southside Virginia counties (and one from North Carolina!). The meeting was organized by Ebonie Alexander, Executive Director of the Black Family Land Trust and was also attended by representatives of USDA conservation agencies.

Hardwood Demonstration at Oakley Forest Wildlife Management Area

A Hardwood Demonstration project was recently completed on the Oakley Forest Wildlife Management Area in Spotsylvania County, the second demonstration on a Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) property. This project involved releasing crop trees using herbicide in a 28-year-old mixed hardwood stand. Herbicide was chosen instead of mechanical cutting in this case because the stand is on productive soil, so the trees are tall. Cutting competing trees would have been more difficult and dangerous for the contractor (Land + Forest Conservation from Fairfield, PA.) than on most crop tree release sites.



Mountain Gateway Students Tour Appomattox–Buckingham State Forest

State Forest Manager **Shannon Lewis** and State Forest Technician **Ian Morris** gave a tour to a professor and 12 capstone students from Mountain Gateway Community College. Tour topics included forest management and creating stewardship plans on the Appomattox–Buckingham State Forest.

Applications Now Open for the 76th Camp Woods and Wildlife

Do you know how to identify a dogwood? By its bark. What kind of tree fits in your hand? A palm tree.
Ok, no more forest puns...we can't "bear" it.

If you're still reading this...applications are now open for the [76th annual Camp Woods and Wildlife](#) to be held June 17-21 at the Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center near Appomattox. Camp Woods and Wildlife is an immersive forestry camp experience made possible through support from partner conservation agencies, organizations and businesses. Applicants must be Virginia residents 13-16 years old, in good academic standing, with an interest in natural resources, and cannot have attended this camp before. **DOF staff interested in working as a camp counselor** this year should reach out to Conservation Education Coordinator [Ellen Powell](#).



On the Air: Tidewater District Staff on Kilmarnock Radio Stations

On Feb. 20 Area Forester **Eric White** and District Forester **Ken Sterner** of the Tidewater District were interviewed live on two radio stations in Kilmarnock, 101.7 and 104.9. They answered questions from the broadcasters about the 4 p.m. burning law, safe debris burning and wildfire prevention.

Interagency Tour of Longleaf Pine Restoration Work

Director of Communications **Greg Bilyeu** and Communications Specialist **Cory Swift** joined communications and marketing staff from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to tour and learn about longleaf pine restoration. The tour featured talks from Forest Manager **Dennis Gaston**, Longleaf Pine Coordinator **Jim Schroering** and Sussex Nursery Manager **Josh Bennicoff**. The group visited TNC's Piney Grove Preserve, DWR's Big Woods Wildlife Management Area, Sussex Nursery and South Quay State Forest, among other sites.



Virginia Landowner, Easements and Acquisitions Partnership Meeting

The third meeting of the Virginia Landowner, Easements and Acquisitions Partnership group recently met at historic Tuckahoe Plantation outside of Richmond. This rotating agency-hosted meeting allows agencies to discuss successes, challenges and funding issues that impact agency missions. Hosted by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), the meeting featured agency collaboration in the easement and acquisition process, as well as legislative updates. Members agencies present were DOF, DHR, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

James River District Meeting at Lesesne State Forest

James River District team met at Lesesne State Forest in Nelson County for a program overview by Forestland Conservation Coordinator **Clint Folks**, a history of American chestnut work at the state forest, and a comprehensive safety briefing and workday. Training consisted of engine operation and drafting refreshers, dozer training and FiResponse training. The remainder of the day was spent working with Forest Manager **Jack Kauffman** and State Forest Technician **Ian Morris** to complete preparations for a controlled burn at the Lesesne State Forest.

