



April 22, 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

Welcome to DOF!

Will Reed is our new Tidewater District Forest Technician. Will, a King William County native, comes to DOF with experience in logging, working for a family firewood and mulch business, and as a volunteer firefighter with the Mangohick Volunteer Fire Department. Will is working out of the Bowling Green office and primarily working in Caroline and surrounding counties.



Michael Dybowski is our new Tidewater District Area Forester. Michael joins the agency as a recent graduate from the University of Missouri with a degree in Natural Resource Science and Management - Forest Resources. Michael previously lived in the Chicago area and will be working out of the Tappahannock Office, primarily in King and Queen County.

Agency Updates

2024 Virginia Fallen Firefighters & EMS Memorial Service

DOF fallen firefighter **Rocky Wood** will be honored during the 27th Annual Virginia Fallen Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services Memorial Service at 12 p.m. on Saturday, June 1 in the Main Exhibition Hall at the Richmond International Raceway Complex. The event is open to the public. DOF's Honor Guard will be in attendance.

2024 Environment Virginia Symposium

The Commonwealth's premier environmental conference, the 34th Annual Environment Virginia Symposium was held last week in Lexington. The event brings together environmental professionals from government, non-profits, academia and industry to engage and discuss environment challenges and successes in Virginia. Governor Youngkin gave keynote remarks and Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matt Lohr and Secretary of Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources Travis Voyles also addressed attendees. State Forester **Rob Farrell** joined fellow natural resources agency heads on a panel moderated by The Nature Conservancy's Bettina Ring to discuss environmental opportunities and challenges. DOF, along with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Marine Resources Commission and Virginia Environmental Endowment, served as co-hosts for the conference.



2024 Logging Expo

The 39th Annual Expo Richmond was held April 12-13 at the Meadow View Event Park in Doswell. One of America's leading trade shows for the forest products industry, the EXPO featured 200-plus indoor and outdoor exhibits, educational sessions, and equipment demonstrations. What started as a modest event hosted in Crozet in 1960, EXPO Richmond has become the largest forest products industry trade show on the East Coast. DOF featured multiple booths covering forest health, water quality, utilization and marketing, urban wood and an outdoor demonstration site featuring the CharBoss portable biochar manufacturing unit.



Microsoft Training Classes Now Available

VITA is offering free Microsoft training opportunities for state employees this spring and summer. Various 90-minute training dates are available for Microsoft Forms, Approvals, Whiteboard and OneNote. To register for classes, see the announcement on the Intranet: <https://dof.virginia.gov/microsoft-training-opportunities/>. If you have questions, please email Forcast@DOF.Virginia.gov.

Student Engagement Task Force Survey

The Appalachian Society of American Foresters (ApSAF) Student Engagement Task Force is looking for feedback to help gain a better understanding of what you value in society memberships. **You do not need to be a member of SAF to take this anonymous survey.** After the completion of this survey, you will have an opportunity to enter for a chance to win a \$50 gift card! Please complete the survey by Friday, April 26 to be entered into the drawing: <https://forms.gle/5Ltfi5NDJRPG27g69>

Virginia Contracting Associate Certifications

Congratulations to Customer Care Specialist **Amy Leatherwood** and Program Support Specialist **Jennifer McClenney** who recently completed the Virginia Contracting Associate (VCA) certification through the Virginia Department of General Services, Institute of Procurement. The certification consists of 22.5 credits

and an exam. This course covers procurement ethics, resources, methods, evaluating, e-procurement, contract administration, compliance, surplus property and small purchase card use. Great job!

Trees Virginia Academic Scholarship

The Trees Virginia Academic Scholarship closed on Friday, April 5. These financial opportunities enhance the ranks of future urban forestry professionals by providing financial assistance to students studying urban forestry and related curricula at Virginia colleges and universities. The scholarships are awarded to applicants who best demonstrate financial need, academic excellence, and a clear commitment to a career related to urban forestry. In 2024, Trees Virginia received 19 applications from students pursuing associates, bachelor's and master's degrees across the Commonwealth.

DOF Joins Partners to Plant Trees at Great Dismal NWR

Blackwater Community Forester **Heather Gargano** and Urban and Community Forestry Project Manager **Delaney Long** worked alongside several partners to install 22 native trees and shrubs around the Jericho Trailhead and amphitheater in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Twenty people participated including local community volunteers and staff from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Defense and the Friends of the Dismal Swamp, which led the project with the goal of increasing tree canopy around the space and drawing more community involvement and public use.



Virginia Agricultural Development Officers Meeting in Richmond

Forest Utilization and Marketing Program Manager **Justin Barnes** attended the Virginia Agriculture Development Officers meeting at the Virginia Farm Bureau Office in Richmond. Justin spoke about the DOF Utilization and Marketing Program to numerous economic and industrial development authorities, VDACS employees and other attendees with various organizations from around the Commonwealth

Planting for Root Rot Resistance at Cumberland State Forest

On April 2, Research Manager **Zoe Bergman**, State Forest Forester **Mike Womack**, State Forest Technician Ian Morris, Research Workers **David Crouch** and **John Scrivani** along with Cassie Stark from the American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), planted 200 chestnut seeds at Cumberland State Forest to assess possible root rot resistance in different genotypes of American Chestnut. Although the well-known chestnut blight is the main killer of chestnuts, a fungal root pathogen of chestnut roots (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*), can cause mortality and dieback in poorly drained sites. A hybrid chestnut with both blight and root rot resistance represents the best chance for the functionally extinct species thus we are happy to collaborate with TACF to learn more about possible root rot resistance breeding. The group also planted a mix of white oak and wild-type and back-crossed American chestnuts at Lesesne State Forest



Forest Health Beetle Trapping

DOF Forest Health staff are participating in an early detection, rapid response (or EDRR) survey this year led by the U.S. Forest Service. This survey targets non-native bark and ambrosia beetles that could damage our forests if they became established. Traps with lures are set at 10 sites that are high-risk for importing, storing or recycling potentially infested solid wood packing material, dunnage, crating, pallets and other items. DOF field staff will monitor the traps every other week until June. Samples will be shipped to a taxonomist for identification, and additional surveys will be initiated as needed. DOF Forest Health staff are also surveying for southern pine beetle with similar traps. The results from this survey will help DOF predict population levels and potential outbreak locations.

Scout Replaces Conway Robinson State Forest Bridge

Scout Tyler Zbrzezny of Troop 581 from Gainesville worked with his fellow scouts, volunteers and troop leaders to replace an old bridge on the blue trail at Conway Robinson State Forest for his Eagle Scout project. The new 16-foot wooden bridge was completed last month and received high marks from State Forest staff.

