



April 15, 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

Agency Updates

Service for James Ward

A service for fallen DOF firefighter **James C. Ward** was held on April 6 in Gate City. In attendance was State Forester **Rob Farrell**, Deputy State Forester **Ed Zimmer**, Chief of Fire and Emergency Response **John Miller**, Western Regional Forester **Brad Carico** and numerous full- and part-time DOF staff. Western Region Fire Specialist **Russell Proctor** gave remarks that were followed by a flag presentation by Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matt Lohr and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Terrance Cole on behalf of Governor Glenn Youngkin. The Governor also ordered all flags in the Commonwealth to be flown at half-staff in James' honor. Ward was escorted to his final resting place by a Weber City fire truck followed by a procession of DOF and partner first-response vehicles. An experienced DOF part-time firefighter who had worked with the agency since 1998, Ward passed away on March 30 while fighting a wildfire in Scott County.



DOF Visits Crow's Nest Greenhouse

Urban and Community Forestry staff set up an informational table at Crow's Nest Greenhouse in Blacksburg, one of the participating Throwing Shade VA nurseries to talk with customers about the benefits of native trees and shrubs, and provide information on new tree selection, placement and planting.



Sweet Briar College Planting

On March 29, DOF staff joined students from Sweet Briar College in Amherst to plant over 200 shrubs on its college property in Amherst County. Area Forester **Garrett Evans** and Program Support Technician **Josie Briggs** worked with professor Dr. Lisa Powell and consulting forester Ches Goodall to coordinate, plan and execute the project. The shrubs were sourced from DOF's Augusta Nursery with assistance from Program Support Technician **Monica Davis**. A dozen students from the college's Sustainability Club participated in the event and learned more about forestry in Virginia in the process. State Forest Technician **Ian Morris** helped to prepare the site last fall by subsoiling the site and the college incorporated manure from their equine facilities to enhance the soil. Forest Health Program Manager **Lori Chamberlin**, Forest Health Specialist **Katlin DeWitt**, and Forest Management Program Manager **Dean Cumbia** also assisted with the project. Sweet Briar has become a good partner with DOF. The campus has over 3,000 acres of land, many of which are forested and are actively managed. The college was the site of the 2023 Forest Management Academy and will again host again this year.



Last Week to Register for Statewide Wildfire Training Academy

Only a few spots remain for the classes below! Register before midnight on April 15: <https://cvent.me/WPEzw7>

- S-230: Crew Boss
- S-231: Engine Boss
- M-410; Facilitative Instructor



Spongy Moth Survey at Devil's Backbone

Forest Health program staff visited Devil's Backbone State Forest in Shenandoah County to conduct spongy moth egg mass surveys on March 27. Spongy moth is an invasive insect from Europe that causes damage to trees when caterpillars emerge in the spring and feed on the foliage of many hardwoods. Defoliation at Devil's Backbone was observed from an aerial survey last June. Follow-up ground surveys are now being conducted to count egg masses. Results of these surveys will be used to predict damage levels for this year and determine if treatment is warranted.

Chestnut Seedling Planting in Bath County

On March 27, Research Manager **Zoe Bergman** and Research Assistant **David Crouch** met with American Chestnut Foundation staff to provide hybrid chestnut seedlings for a restoration planting on private land in Bath County. The two landowners have been planting hybrids from DOF's orchard at Lesesne State Forest for the past six years. They have taken great care and maintain these plantings in the mountains of Appalachia and DOF will help to monitor the planting. These types of restoration plantings offer insight to what our reintroduction efforts may look like in the coming years.

DOF Renews Fire Ant Compliance

DOF has renewed our Fire Ant Compliance Agreement with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The Red Imported Fire Ant is a [quarantined](#) invasive species in southern Virginia. Fire ant mounds are common in fields, edges of wooded areas, cutovers, and logging roads. As stated in our compliance agreement, DOF staff must inspect all trucks and equipment for loose, uncompacted soil before moving out of the quarantine. All uncompacted soil must be removed before leaving quarantine, which helps prevent the spread of this invasive species into new areas.



Community Forest Revitalization Program Webinar

DOF partnered with The Green Infrastructure Center and Virginia Tech's Community Design Assistance Center to host a webinar about the Community Forest Revitalization Program. Eligible communities are encouraged to apply for assistance on the [DOF website](#). The program encourages locality and citizen involvement in creating long-term and sustained community forestry projects and programs in underserved and disadvantaged communities. The program also provides technical assistance that communities can apply for including canopy forest maps, urban wood services, community forest master plans, tree inventories and conceptual design services among others. Application deadline is April 25.

Annual Trees Virginia Board Retreat

DOF staff and members of the Trees Virginia Board attended the annual Trees Virginia Board Retreat in Richmond on March 26 and 27. The retreat included a field trip to different Urban and Community Forestry Projects that have taken place in the Richmond area among several partner groups such as DOF, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Groundwork RVA, Richmond Parks and Rec, and community volunteer groups. The Board also finished revisions to their strategic plan.

2023 Southern Region Forest Health Story Map

DOF's Forest Health Program collects a large amount of forest health data each year, all of which is shared with the U.S. Forest Service Southern Region to be compiled with data from all the other southern region states to make a story map summarizing forest health in the region. View the 2023 story map here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c05bd7624b564dfa8ecc54d572c9975b>

FY25 Forest Management Cost Shares Available in IFRIS

The new 2025 Fiscal Year (FY25) Cost Share is here! New programs for the Hardwood Initiative Cost Share and Reforestation of Timberlands have been established in the Integrated Forest Resource Information System (IFRIS) with initial interim regional allocations. Each Cost Share Program Summary can be found in IFRIS -> Reports -> Cost Share Reports -> Cost Share Program Summary with details on limits, project prescriptions, and rates. Staff may now begin enrolling projects for FY25 and should promote the DOF Cost Share Programs throughout the year by entering the landowner's planned project prescriptions into IFRIS to generate and send the application to all interested landowners. The DOF website will be updated around May 1. For more information contact **Dean Cumbia** at Dean.Cumbia@DOF.Virginia.gov.

