

Policy and Procedure 7-5 DOF Services and Equipment for Forest Landowners

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Effective Date:	January 15, 2024		
Codes/Mandates:	<p>Code of Virginia §10.1-1105 Additional Powers and Duties of State Forester</p> <p>Code of Virginia §10.1-1106 State Forester to control forest reserves and funds; reforestation; preservation of timber, etc.</p> <p>Code of Virginia §10.1-1117 Specialized services or rentals of equipment to landowners, localities and state agencies; fees; disposition of proceeds</p> <p>Code of Virginia §10.1-1120 Forest Management of State-Owned Lands Fund</p> <p>Code of Virginia §10.1-1126 State Forester authorized to enter into agreements with federal agencies</p> <p>Code of Virginia §10.1-1130 State Forester to furnish seedlings and technical assistance</p> <p>Code of Virginia §10.1-1131 Authority of State Forester</p> <p>Code of Virginia §10.1-1132 Administration by State Forester; services rendered and</p> <p>Code of Virginia §10.1-1133 Fees for services; free services</p>		
References:	<p>DOF Private Consulting Forester Directory</p> <p>DOF Private Forestry Service Provider Directory</p> <p>Policy and Procedure 1-2 Freedom of Information Act and Responding to Requests for Records</p> <p>Policy and Procedure 4-1 Prescribed Burning</p> <p>Policy and Procedure 7-1 Forest Management Planning</p> <p>Policy and Procedure 7-3 Rural Forestry Laws</p> <p>Policy and Procedure 7-4 Rural Forestry Technical Procedures</p> <p>Policy and Procedure 7-6 State-Owned Lands Program</p> <p>Stand Assessment Tool (SAT)</p>		
Forms:	<p>Form 3.1 Request for Billing</p> <p>Form 3.23 Equipment Loan Agreement</p> <p>Form 4.10 Prescribed Burning Services Agreement</p> <p>Form 7.1 Forest Management Services Agreement</p> <p>Form 7.10 Forest Stewardship Program Application</p> <p>Form 7.12 Pine Planting Quality Field Tally Sheet</p> <p>Form 7.13 Pine Survival/Reproduction Field Tally Sheet</p> <p>Form 7.14 Hardwood Planting Quality Field Tally Sheet</p> <p>Form 12.1 Reforestation Tree Seedling Order</p>		

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PURPOSE

To establish conditions and type of service or forest management equipment that DOF offers for landowners.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of DOF to educate, inform and encourage Virginia’s private forest landowners to implement good land management activities on all forestlands in the Commonwealth. DOF may provide authorized services, supplies and equipment if requested by the landowner. However, DOF will always acknowledge the availability of private sector service providers and encourage landowners to use the private sector for services. Where free market alternatives are presently unavailable to the landowner, or the informed landowner chooses the agency to perform authorized work, DOF may provide the services. The agency shall seek to maintain pricing at market levels when performing services so as not to unfairly compete with the private sector service providers. DOF will promote the development and continuation of all private free market solutions, including forestry contractors, consulting foresters and other related service providers, which provide needed services to forest landowners in the Commonwealth.

DOF may offer Services to localities, using a Service agreement and current rates. DOF service on federally-owned land would only be allowed through special agreement between the leadership of the two agencies.

DEFINITIONS

“**Agency**” and “**DOF**” means the Virginia Department of Forestry.

“**Commonwealth**” means the Commonwealth of Virginia.

“**Timber Inventory**” means a survey of forestland to determine area, estimate its volume by species, products, size, quality or other characteristics condition for specific purposes, such as timber purchase, forest management or as a basis for forest policies and programs.

“**Timber marking**” means the process of indicating what trees are to be cut or otherwise treated. Prior to timber sales, it is advisable to mark with paint each tree to be harvested. One spot of paint at eye level and one on the stump portion will help determine whether unmarked trees have been cut.

PROCEDURES

Virginia Department of Forestry employees will perform their duties subject to the following conditions to ensure the success of the spirit of DOF policy:

- ◆ Enforce all laws mandated or authorized by the Code of Virginia for enforcement or administration by the DOF.
- ◆ Shall never engage in bias or favoritism when discussing private forestry services and providers of the services.
- ◆ Shall never provide specific prices of consulting or industry foresters' services with other consultants or landowners.
- ◆ Shall never discuss specific timber values as they relate to landowner's existing timber. However, the employee will recommend timber evaluation be done by consulting foresters.
- ◆ Shall recommend the professional services of consulting foresters to landowners and may provide landowners with a list of at least three consultant foresters who offer services in that area and who have notified the DOF and who are listed in the [DOF Private Consulting Forester Directory](#).
- ◆ Shall also encourage landowners seeking service provider information to research the provider’s credentials and work records, which may include checking with organizations like, the Association of Consultant Foresters, the

Virginia Loggers Association, and the Virginia Forestry Association. Landowners may also seek contractors online in the [DOF Private Forestry Service Provider Directory](#).

- ◆ Shall never offer timber buyer specific information concerning a landowner's timber.
- ◆ Shall never accept any gifts or other gratuities of any value from consulting, industry foresters or other service providers as these might be perceived as encouraging favoritism or be a conflict of interest.
- ◆ Shall never represent any private party or serve as a fiduciary for any private party in any timber evaluation or volume estimate work, bid openings, contract awards, or be a party to any sales negotiations. However, agency staff may serve as agents for services on Virginia State Forests and other State – Owned Lands.
- ◆ Landowner personal information is addressed in [Policy and Procedure 1-2 Freedom of Information Act and Responding to Requests for Records](#).

DOF Landowner Services

DOF can offer a number of services to rural forest landowners to assist them in meeting their forest management objectives. A signed landowner service agreement is necessary to authorize DOF to bill and collect the service fees. There are several types of service agreements and may vary depending upon the type of service.

Other DOF Services offered, covered by other agreements:

Land Use Plan Preparation

See [Policy and Procedure 7-1 Forest Management Planning](#). DOF Foresters prepare brief Forest Management Plans for landowners to meet county specific requirements of Forestry Use-Value taxation. Landowners must complete, sign and submit the [Form 7.1 Forest Management Services Agreement](#) to request this service.

Equipment Rental

DOF has specialized forest management equipment available for rent to landowners and contractors including those listed below. Type and availability are based upon inventory and demand. Landowners and/or contractors must complete, sign and submit the [Form 7.1 Forest Management Services Agreement](#) to request the equipment.

- ◆ Mechanical tree planters (farm tractor drawn) for open land tree planting.
- ◆ Sod scalper/sub-soiler (farm tractor drawn) to remove sod and/or sub-soil land prior to tree planting in open land.
- ◆ Heavy mechanical site preparation equipment, rolling drum chopper (heavy bulldozer drawn) for flattening brush and small trees, and heavy bush/bog disks, both for preparing cutover forest land for reforestation.

Timber Marking

Properly trained DOF personnel may mark timber as outlined below. See [Policy and Procedure 7-4 for Rural Forestry Technical Procedures](#).

- ◆ **Demonstration:** As a way to show and teach forest management practices and techniques, DOF may mark pine or hardwood stands of up to five acres at no charge. No agreement needed.
- ◆ **Private Land Marking:** For areas greater than five acres. Use [Form 7.1 Forest Management Services Agreement](#). The current service rate and project minimum applies.
- ◆ **State-Owned Property** (not owned by DOF): Management of State Lands is addressed in [Policy Procedure 7-6 State-Owned Lands Program](#). Marking on these lands would be done through a prior- approved State Lands project. No separate service agreement is needed. Lands owned by the Departments of Conservation and Recreation and the Department Wildlife Resources are handled in a separate fashion. Contact the State Lands Coordinator regarding these projects.
- ◆ **Local Government:** DOF may provide marking services on these lands. Use [Form 7.1 Forest Management Services Agreement](#). The current service rate and project minimum applies.
- ◆ **Federal Lands:** DOF does not provide marking service on these lands, unless under special agreement.

Tree Planting Coordination

When an informed landowner specifically requests, DOF will provide tree planting coordination.

Tree planting coordination Lands:

- ◆ **Private Land and Local Government Land:** Use [Form 7.1 Forest Management Services Agreement](#) or [Form 12.1 Reforestation Tree Seedling Order](#). The current service rate and project minimum applies.
- ◆ **State-Owned Property not owned by DOF:** Management of Non-DOF State Lands is addressed in [Policy and Procedure 7-6 State-Owned Lands Program](#). Planting Coordination on these lands would be done through a prior-approved State Lands project. No separate service agreement is needed. Lands owned by the Departments of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Wildlife Resources are handled in a separate fashion. Contact the State Lands Coordinator regarding these projects.
- ◆ **Local Government:** DOF may provide tree planting coordination services on these lands. However, DOF should make local governments aware of private service providers. Use [Form 7.1 Forest Management Services Agreement](#). The current service rate and project minimum applies.
- ◆ **Federal Lands:** DOF does not provide tree planting coordination service on these lands, unless under special agreement.

DOF Tree Planting Coordination tasks:

- ◆ Pre-planting site inspection and recommendation for site preparation, species, trees per acre, timing, and number of trees to plant.
- ◆ Prepare planting map, IFRIS-based.
- ◆ Make landowner aware of tree planting contractors and/or direct them to the [DOF Private Forestry Service Provider Directory](#). The landowner will make specific agreement directly with the contractor regarding terms and price.
- ◆ DOF will communicate with the landowner-chosen contractor regarding specifications and schedule for planting.
- ◆ Coordinating delivery of trees from nurseries to coincide with planting contractor arrival and planting production.
- ◆ Instruct crews on proper handling of seedlings, required spacing and correct planting techniques.
- ◆ Provide a map of planting site and arranging to show site to contractor.
- ◆ DOF will do planting quality inspections, as outlined in [Policy and Procedure 7-4 Rural Forestry Technical Procedures](#), record information on [Form 7.12 Pine Planting Quality Field Tally Sheet](#) or [Form 7.14 Hardwood Planting Quality Field Tally Sheet](#).
- ◆ Notify landowner when the project is complete.
- ◆ DOF will conduct a re-inspection of the site at the end of the first growing season (pine) using [Form 7.13 Pine Survival/Reproduction Field Tally Sheet](#) or toward the end of the second growing season (hardwood) using [Stand Assessment Tool \(SAT\)](#). The DOF will communicate the results and recommendations to the landowner.

Planting Services provided at no charge, the DOF will:

- ◆ Developing a reforestation plan for planting projects, whether the project is under a cost share program or not. This plan would include tree species, trees per acre, spacing and a detailed map of the area to be planted.
- ◆ Check to confirm seedlings have been planted to approve cost share or Alternate Management Plan.
- ◆ Inspect the area to determine seedling survival and/or the need for further treatment, the winter following planting.

Equipment Loan

- ◆ DOF has non-power tools that may be loaned and no charge for forest management work. Use [Form 3.23 Equipment Loan Agreement](#) to record tools that are being loaned to landowners. Type and availability of the equipment is based upon inventory and demand. A maximum of 10 planting bags and/or bars may be loaned to any individual or company.
- ◆ Loan of other small non-power tools will be based on availability and at the discretion of the District Forester.
- ◆ If planting equipment is lost, damaged, or not returned, Area field staff should submit a [Form 3.1 Request for Billing](#), to have the landowner billed for the replacement cost. Attach a copy of the [Form 3.23 Equipment Loan Agreement](#) to the [Form 3.1](#) and submit to the Finance Office.

Timber Inventory

On some lands and under special circumstances, DOF may provide timber inventory services. Timber inventory requires training and experience, as well as knowledge of market conditions and therefore should only be done by qualified employees.

- ◆ **Private Land:** DOF does not provide timber inventory on private land. This is a private-sector service provider function.
- ◆ **State-Owned Property** (not owned by DOF): Management of State Lands is addressed in [Policy and Procedure 7-6 State-Owned Lands Program](#). Timber inventory on these lands would be done through a prior- approved State Lands project, and no separate service agreement is needed. Lands owned by the Departments of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Wildlife Resources are handled in a separate fashion. Contact the State Lands Coordinator regarding these projects.
- ◆ **Local Government:** DOF may provide timber inventory services on these lands. However, DOF should make local governments aware of private service providers. Use [Form 7.1 Forest Management Services Agreement](#). The current service rate and project minimum applies.
- ◆ **Federal Lands:** DOF does not provide timber inventory service on these lands, unless under special agreement.

Other DOF Services

Services must be in accordance with policy as outlined above. They must also be directly related to the management, improvement, or conservation of forest resources. Prior to offering these services, area staff should gain approval through DOF Regional leadership.

- ◆ **Forest Stand Plans, open field planting exams, general field visits** – no fee, no agreement needed.
- ◆ **Prescribed Burning** – See [Policy-Procedures 4-1 Prescribed Burning](#) and requested through a [Form 4.10 Prescribed Burning Services Agreement](#).
- ◆ **Forest Stewardship Plan** – [Policy and Procedures 7-1 Forest Management Planning](#) and requested through a [Form 7.10 Forest Stewardship Program Application](#).
- ◆ **Tree Seedling Delivery** – will be provided on a case-by-case basis, but most often will only be provided to landowners who have agreed to the Tree Planting Coordination service, and have signed the [Form 7.1 Forest Management Services agreement](#).

AUTHORITY

This policy and procedure is issued by the Virginia state forester.

INTERPRETATION

The director of forest resource management, assistant state forester and deputy state forester are responsible for the interpretation of this policy and procedure.

APPROVAL

I certify that this policy and procedure is approved and ready for publication.

Todd Groh

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