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

Issued By:	Robert W. Farrell, State Forester — Digitally signed by Robert W. Farrell Date: 2022.10.18 15:42:04 -04'00'
Effective Date:	October 1, 2022
Codes/Mandates:	Code of Virginia §10.1-1105 Additional Powers and Duties of State Forester Code of Virginia §10.1-1106 State Forester to control forest reserves and funds; reforesting; preservation of timber, etc. Code of Virginia §10.1-1117 Specialized services or rentals of equipment to landowners, localities and state agencies; fees; disposition of proceeds Code of Virginia §10.1-1120 Forest Management of State-Owned Lands Fund Code of Virginia§10.1-1126 State Forester authorized to enter into agreements with federal agencies Code of Virginia §10.1-1130 State Forester to furnish seedlings and technical assistance Code of Virginia §10.1-1131 Authority of State Forester Code of Virginia §10.1-1132 Administration by State Forester; services rendered and Code of Virginia §10.1-1133 Fees for services; free services
References:	Policy and Procedure 1-2 Freedom of Information Act and Responding to Requests for Records Policy and Procedure 4-1 Prescribed Burning Policy and Procedure 7-1 Forest Management Planning Policy and Procedure 7-3 Rural Forestry Laws Policy and Procedure 7-4 Rural Forestry Technical Procedures Policy and Procedure 7-6 State-Owned Lands Program
Forms:	Form 084 Hardwood Reinspection Field Tally Sheet Form 3.1 Request for Billing Form 3.23 Equipment Loan Agreement Form 4.10 Prescribed Burning Services Agreement Form 7.1 Forest Management Services Agreement Form 7.10 Forest Stewardship Program Application Form 7.12 Pine Planting Quality Field Tally Sheet Form 7.13 Pine Survival/Reproduction Field Tally Sheet Form 7.14 Hardwood Planting Quality Field Tally Sheet Form 12.1 Reforestation Tree Seedling Order

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PURPOSE

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

POLICY

It shall be the policy of VDOF to educate, inform and encourage Virginia's private forest landowners to implement good land management activities on all forestlands in the Commonwealth. VDOF may provide authorized services, supplies and equipment if requested by the landowner. However, VDOF 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, VDOF 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. VDOF 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.

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

DEFINITIONS

"Agency" and **"VDOF"** 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 VDOF policy:

- Enforce all laws mandated or authorized by the Code of Virginia for enforcement or administration by the VDOF.
- 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 VDOF and who are listed on the VDOF Consulting Forester list.
- 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.

- 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.

VDOF Landowner Services

VDOF 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 VDOF to bill and collect the service fees. There are several types of service agreements and may vary depending upon the type of service.

Other VDOF Services offered, covered by other agreements:

Land Use Plan Preparation

See Policy and Procedure 7-1 Forest Management Planning. VDOF Forester prepares 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

VDOF 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 VDOF 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, VDOF 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 VDOF:** Management of State Lands is addressed in Policy-Procedure 7-4 Rural Forestry Technical Procedures. 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:** VDOF 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:** VDOF does not provide marking service on these lands, unless under special agreement.

Tree Planting Coordination

When an informed landowner specifically requests, VDOF 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 VDOF:** Management of Non-VDOF 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 or the Forest Management Branch regarding these projects.
- **Local Government:** VDOF may provide tree planting coordination services on these lands. However, VDOF 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:** VDOF does not provide tree planting coordination service on these lands, unless under special agreement.

VDOF 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. The landowner will make specific agreement directly with the contractor regarding terms and price.
- VDOF 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.
- VDOF 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.
- VDOF 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 Form 084 Hardwood Reinspection Field Tally Sheet. The VDOF will communicate the results and recommendations to the landowner.

Planting Services provided at no charge, the VDOF 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 sketch 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

- VDOF 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, VDOF 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:** VDOF does not provide timber inventory on private land. This is a private-sector service provider function.
- **State-Owned Property (not owned by VDOF):** 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. No separate service agreement 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:** VDOF may provide timber inventory services on these lands. However, VDOF 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**: VDOF does not provide timber inventory service on these lands, unless under special agreement.

Other VDOF 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 VDOF 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	Todd Groh Digitally signed by Todd Groh Date: 2022.10.12 17:26:29 -04'00'
Forest Resource Management Coordinator Name (Print)	Forest Resource Management Coordinator Signature
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