



June 21, 2024

Upcoming Events

Biomass BMPs Webinar – Monday, June 24, 11 a.m. (See all-staff email invite sent June 17)

[2024 Forest Management Academy, Sweet Briar College](#) – Sept. 9 - 13

[Virginia Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Course](#) — Sept. 23 - October 4

Have an upcoming agency calendar event to share?

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

Policy Updates

The Capital Asset Management (CAM) team needs your assistance in ensuring your assigned vehicles are maintained properly and serviced on a regular basis. The CAM team works to provide DOF staff with the best equipment and vehicles to perform your duties. This is a reminder that you must follow [Policy 5-1 Fleet Management, Care and Maintenance](#). Vehicles and equipment assigned to you must be properly maintained. Operators are responsible for filling out form 5.1 Vehicle/Equipment Maintenance Record.

The CAM team has found several vehicles with inaccurate or missing maintenance records. Inventories and maintenance checks are important to ensure DOF has safe and properly maintained vehicles and equipment. If for any reason you are uncertain about the maintenance or repair of your equipment, please reach out to your Regional or HQ mechanic for assistance to keep you and others safe.

Heat Warning Issued for Virginia

The National Weather Service has forecast an excessive heat event for most of the Mid-Atlantic, particularly the Appalachian Mountains. Much of the region will be exposed to excessive heat and high humidity potentially through next week. If you must conduct field work during these conditions, limit exposure to the heat by working in the morning before the index rises, drink plenty of water and take regular breaks.

Agency Updates

Southern Group of State Foresters' 2024 Annual Meeting

State Forester **Rob Farrell** and committee leads attended the Southern Group of State Foresters' Annual summer meeting in Wilmington, North Carolina from June 3-6. Hosted by the North Carolina Forest Service, this year's theme was "Forestry Tools of Tomorrow: Pioneering new frontiers using AI and advancing technologies." Attending committees were water, forest inventory assessment, fire, forest management, geographic information system, services, and utilization and marketing.

Biomass BMPs Webinar – Monday, June 24, 11 a.m.

Join State Forester **Rob Farrell** and Water Quality Engineer **Rod Newlin** for an important discussion on the new biomass BMPs that DOF will incorporate into our timber harvest inspection program on July 1. Discussion will focus on the purpose of the BMPs, what harvests they will be applied to, a description of the three BMPs, and the notification and inspection process. Two Biomass BMP resource documents are now available on our website. A detailed description of the new BMPs: (<https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/Biomass-BMP-Narrative.pdf>) as well as enforcement guidance: (<https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/VA-Forestry-Biomass-BMPs.pdf>).

An invite to the webinar was sent to all staff on June 17. For those who would like to attend in person, this will be held in the HQ Training Room.

DOF Employee Service Awards Event

DOF held its annual employee service awards recognition event at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford on June 14. Bedford earned the somber distinction of suffering the highest known per capita D-Day losses in the nation, collectively known as the "Bedford Boys." After a memorial tour and luncheon, Deputy State Forester **Ed Zimmer** presented certificates to the recognized employees in attendance. The 2024 Award Recipients are: **Faye DiFazio**, **John Hisghman**, **Alan Sutherlin** and **Leslie Mace** with 35 years of service; **Janet Muncy** and **Dennis McCarthy** with 30; and **Rob Farrell**, **Amanda Davis** and **William Neff** with 25. Thanks for your commitment to the Commonwealth!



Nottoway Indian Tribe and The Nature Conservancy Meeting

On June 7, State Forester **Rob Farrell** and Deputy State Forester **Ed Zimmer** met with leadership from the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The meeting was attended by Chief Lynette Allston, Tribal Council Chair Denise Walters, Vice Chair Beth Roach, TNC State Director Bettina Ring, TNC Deputy State Director Bill Kittrell, TNC Associate State Director Nikki Rovner and TNC Pinelands Program Director Brian Van Eerden. This was the first meeting between DOF and the tribe's leadership since the U.S. Forest Service announced Virginia

was awarded Forest Legacy Program funding to acquire land for the Assamoosic Swamp State Forest. The funding requires that DOF develop a co-stewardship agreement for the property with the Nottoway Tribe. During the meeting, Chief Lynette gave a tour of the cultural center and an overview of the tribe's history. Topics of discussion included the tribe's current outreach, education and conservation initiatives.

International Farm Transition Network Annual Meeting

Assistant State Forester **Terry Lasher** and Office of Working Lands Program Manager **Amanda Scheps** attended the International Farm Transition Network (IFTN) Annual Meeting in Richmond. A network of service providers from different professional backgrounds, IFTN was established to assist farm businesses successfully transition to successors. Participants included attendees from across the U.S. and Ireland. The conference included a site visit to a fourth-generation farm.

Newport News Tree Planting Project

DOF Urban and Community Forestry staff visited a large planting project installed last spring at a school in Newport News. More than 70 students assisted with planting 300 trees to reforest a portion of the school grounds. Students helped plant seedlings, install shelter tubes and stakes. The successful planting will be followed with maintenance days with the local Tree Steward group.

Forest Inventory and Analysis VA2022 Survey

The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data from the VA2022 panel has been processed and is now available to FIA data users. Some results of note include an estimate of 15,959,400 acres of forestland, a loss of 36,060 acres since VA2021. Also, the pine growth to drain ratio has improved to 2.06:1.

Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants

DOF has awarded 144 Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grants totaling \$245,308. These grants are made available to rural volunteer fire departments across the Commonwealth to provide important tools and protective gear to increase capacity of fire departments to assist DOF with wildland fire suppression. Funding for the VFA grant program is provided to DOF from the U.S. Forest Service. DOF distributes 100% of the funding directly to rural fire departments.

Spongy Moth Damage Surveys

Forest Health Specialist **Katlin DeWitt** and Forest Health Project Coordinator **Amanda Conrad** conducted an aerial survey for spongy moth in the Northern Shenandoah Valley on June 4. Through this survey, it was determined that there are more than 60,000 acres with defoliation in this region of Virginia. Along with ground surveys that DOF forest health staff have completed in several counties this month, the gathered data will be used to create a comprehensive map of spongy



moth damage for the 2024 field season. DOF will be issuing a joint news release with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to raise awareness and promote locality-assistance programs.

Ash Treatment Season

DOF, as well as contractors located around the state, are now treating ash trees to protect them from the destructive and invasive emerald ash borer. In an effort to protect surviving ash trees on state lands, DOF staff have recently treated trees at the agency's offices in Charlottesville (Headquarters), Warrenton, Woodstock and the Lesesne State Forest in Nelson County. On June 13, Blackwater District Forester **Lucas Marcek**, Urban and Community Forestry Specialist **Heather Gargano**, Area Forester **Scott Bachmann**, and Forest Management Intern **Laurel Finney** helped treat 23 ash trees on the Paul D Camp Community College Campus in Franklin. These trees have been treated every few years since 2019. DOF also has an [ash treatment cost share program](#) to help landowners offset treatment costs. Eighty-five cost share applications have already been processed by Forest Health Project Coordinator **Amanda Conrad**. The application deadline is June 24.

Virginia Farm Bureau Forest and Natural Resources Committee Meeting

Deputy State Forester **Ed Zimmer** attended the Virginia Farm Bureau Forest and Natural Resources Committee meeting at the WestRock papermill in Covington. He provided an update on the items impacting the agency and forestry from the last General Assembly session and participated in a tour of the state-of-the-art papermill.

North American Bat Monitoring Program

DOF is assisting the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources and Virginia Tech with the collection of acoustic data for the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat). DOF's State Forest staff are placing acoustic detectors in the Cumberland, Prince Edward-Gallion, Sandy Point and Dragon Run state forests. Through the application of coordinated, standardized, long-term data collection, NABat addresses knowledge gaps on bat species in the face of multiple threats.

Chestnut Bagging at Lesesne State Forest

Research Manager **Zoe Bergman** joined staff with the American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) earlier this month at Lesesne State Forest in Nelson County to bag hybrid American chestnut flowers for controlled pollination. The practice of bagging refers to placing a paper-bag around immature female flowers. When they become receptive, pollen from known parent trees is injected into the bag. The flowers will develop into burs seed pods within their bags and for collection in the fall. TACF has begun a new program called the best x best crosses. DOF is choosing chestnuts that have been evaluated (genetically and through visible traits) for their blight resistance and their "American-ness" ratings. If trees fall within a certain threshold of ratings, they are included in our best x best crosses. All of this is done to move forward the process of restoration of this important tree.



DOF Assists JMU Industrial Design Students

James Madison University's Industrial Design Department is conducting a month-long summer session entitled "Topics in Industrial Design – Skin on Frame Kayaks" in which students are led through the process of constructing a kayak by the session's end. Participants gain hands on experience with proper milling techniques, wood grain evaluation, steaming wood for pliability and frame construction. All wood used in the class is sourced from urban and community trees. DOF provides technical assistance and support to the JMU Urban Wood Program.

