



July 3, 2024

Upcoming Events

[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

Changing Times – DOF Facility Use

Just like any organization that’s been around for more than 100 years, DOF has seen a lot of changes over its history. These have been dictated by the changing needs of the forest resource, the broad forestry community, and expectations of society at-large. For most of the agency’s existence, our employees had broad license to use various DOF facilities for personal use, including shop facilities, meeting rooms, and quarters across the state.

The personal use of our shop facilities was discontinued years ago for obvious liability issues.

Beginning immediately, we will also be discontinuing the use of quarters for any type of personal use.

Welcome to DOF!



McCray Sawyers will be serving Franklin County and the surrounding southwest Virginia area as the Franklin Area Forester. McCray enjoys fishing and hunting, especially spring turkey hunting. McCray comes to us from Virginia Tech with a Master of Forestry, as well as Emory and Henry College where he studied Environmental Science. McCray’s father, Clay Sawyers, previously served as the Patrick County Forest Technician.

Please welcome **Abby Tenney** as the new Area Forester for Spotsylvania County. Abby was the Central Region Intern last summer and decided she wanted to work with DOF more after graduating this spring from Virginia Tech with a degree in Forest Resource Management. Abby grew up in Staunton and enjoys hiking and bicycling in free time.

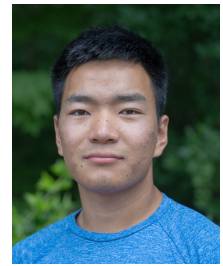




Mary Bennett is excited to join DOF as the new Tidewater Sentinel Landscape Coordinator. She has a passion for wildlife and strong background in conservation and restoration throughout the southeastern coastal plain. Most recently, she worked with the Elizabeth River Project as their environmental scientist focused on urban restoration of tidal marshes. She holds a Master of Wildlife Science from Auburn University, where she spent many hours exploring longleaf pine stands while studying resource selection of the Southeastern pocket gopher. Mary currently lives in Norfolk and is eager to work with landowners throughout the Tidewater region.

Meet the Summer Interns!

The Urban and Community Forestry program has welcomed **Utshab Rai** as a summer intern. Utshab is currently studying at Bridgewater College. He will join us on various projects and outreach events to learn more about urban and community forestry.



Joining DOF's Forest Management branch as a summer intern is **Laurel Finney**, a graduate of Radford University and is pursuing a master's degree from Virginia Tech in Natural Resources. Laurel served for several years in the military and will be joining forest management staff to assist and learn about DOF's many forest management services and programs. In her free time, Laurel enjoys reading, photography, hiking and art crafting.

Define Mansour has been hired as the Eastern Region summer intern. Define is currently working towards a forestry degree at Virginia Tech. As an intern, Define supports various forest management work including harvest inspections, easements, landowner services and more. When she's not studying or working, Define enjoys backpacking and traveling.



Gabriella Creaser is supporting DOF's conservation program as the Conservation GIS Intern. Gabriella is a graduate of Elon University and has a master's certificate in GIS from the University of Denver. Gaby hopes to build her GIS skills by supporting various conservation projects. Gaby also enjoys cooking, crocheting and spending time outdoors, especially on a paddleboard.

Aaron Hiss has joined DOF this summer as a Finance and Procurement Intern. Aaron is working towards a business degree at the University of Virginia. In his internship role, Aaron assists DOF finance and procurement staff with preparing financial statements, asset documentation and auditing purchases to ensure state policies are being followed. Aaron enjoys tennis and listening to music in his free time.



The Office of Communications has welcomed **Bailey Fulk** as summer intern. A rising Senior at Bridgewater College, Bailey will be using her writing skills to support various outreach, content and publication projects. In her free time, Bailey enjoys hiking and exploring public lands with her dog.

Agency Updates

76th Camp Woods and Wildlife

The 76th Camp Woods and Wildlife was another great success, with 53 campers (majority female for the first time ever) from 25 Virginia municipalities. Campers learned about wildlife, natural resource careers, plant identification, prescribed burning and much more. This camp would not be possible without the full-week and part-time staff, presenters and helpers who contributed their week to giving our campers a fun, educational experience. Twelve agencies, organizations and businesses contributed staff time to camp this year. Thanks go out to all our DOF staff counselors.



Longleaf Cooperators of Virginia Meet at New Kent Forestry Center

Longleaf pine is a greatly diminished species in Virginia, and significant work is occurring toward restoration of this important forest type and ecosystem. The Longleaf Cooperators of Virginia (LCV) includes agencies, groups and individuals dedicated to restoration, including DOF. On June 20 and 21, LCV held a retreat at the New Kent Forestry Center, with eight members attending and Forest Management Coordinator **Dean Cumbia** representing DOF. The purpose of the retreat was to begin the process of updating Virginia's longleaf pine restoration plan. Robert Sutter of Enduring Conservation Outcomes facilitated the retreat. A full meeting of the LCV will be held on August 27, and several subcommittees will be formed to work on elements of the plan, with a completion goal of Dec. 31.



Lunch and Learn Event in Williamsburg

On Thursday, July 27, Urban and Community Forestry staff organized a "lunch and learn" gathering for regional urban and community forestry and water quality staff. Urban and Community Forestry Manager **Lara Johnson** led participants on a tour of William and Mary's arboretum campus to learn about common urban shrubs and trees, including cultivars and which species are best for various scenarios so these staff are better informed to advise urban landowners. Forest Health Specialist **Kaitlin DeWitt** then presented on scale insects, covering identification, impacts and management.



DOF Staff Featured on Podcast

Conservation Forests LLC produces the "Hardy Woods Podcast" series, which shares knowledge about eastern hardwood forests and what they mean ecologically, culturally and economically. The group recently invited DOF staff to talk on several episodes, including Hardwood Coordinator **Joe Rossetti** to speak on forest management and Research Manager **Zoe Bergman** to speak about invasive species and (coming soon) American chestnut research. The podcast can be streamed on various platforms including Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/51MeDSvsCXbZZtZOiTsSxe>

Ongoing Efforts to Protect Ash Trees Against Invasive Emerald Ash Borer

On Monday, July 24, Urban and Community Forestry Manager **Lara Johnson** and Forest Health Project Coordinator **Amanda Conrad** waded into the swamp of Cypress Bridge Swamp Natural Area Preserve in Southampton County to treat seven Carolina ash trees. Carolina ash is one of several increasingly rare ash species in Virginia that DOF is committed to protecting from the invasive emerald ash borer. Johnson and Conrad were also joined on Friday, July 28 by Forest Health Manager **Lori Chamberlin** and Natural Resource Specialist **Ben Wassum** in Bedford County to treat the third-largest green ash tree in Virginia (pictured). This champion tree is located at the Claytor Nature Center, owned by the University of Lynchburg.



Southern Pine Beetle Survey Results

Every spring, DOF conducts a southern pine beetle (SPB) survey by placing beetle traps in high-risk areas with a high concentration of pine. Forest Health staff sort all the insects that fall into the traps, and count the number of southern pine beetles and predator clerid beetles. This data is then entered into a U.S. [Forest Service Pine Beetle Prediction Portal](#), which models the potential for a SPB outbreak within the counties where traps were placed. Based on our 2024 data, the probability of a southern pine beetle outbreak is highest in Chesterfield County (8.3%), followed by Dinwiddie and Cumberland counties (2.3% and 1.5% respectively). These probabilities are low compared to other areas in the south, but we will continue to monitor populations and track beetle activity throughout Virginia. Please enter Forest Health Ground Observations (FHGOs) in IFRIS as you come across SPB spots in the field; this will help improve the accuracy of SPB predictions in the future.

DOF Interns Tour Urban Forestry in Harrisonburg

Urban and Community Forestry Manager **Lara Johnson**, Forest Utilization and Marketing Specialist **Joe Lehnen** and Urban and Community Forestry Partnership Coordinator **Molly O'Liddy** took DOF interns to the City of Harrisonburg to meet key partners and tour successful urban wood projects. Among the projects toured were the urban wood storage/drying operation managed by the city, the Kiester Elementary School outdoor classroom and the JMU arboretum learning forest. Interns were able to ask questions and understand how many programs within DOF cross over to ensure a project's success.



“It was great to have our DOF interns visit one of the most successful urban wood and urban forestry municipality programs in Virginia! Our day in Harrisonburg aligns with the program goal of introducing the next generation of planners, resource managers and potential wood artisans to the importance and value of our urban forest resources,” said Lehnen.

Helping Contractors Better Serve Landowners

Hardwood Coordinator **Joe Rossetti** and Forest Management Intern **Laurel Finney** met with Advanced Custom Applications, Inc. (ACA), to demonstrate herbicide application techniques. ACA is a new business with services that include herbicide application for both hardwood and pine forest management. Joe demonstrated the basal bark, foliar, hack-and-squirt, and cut stump methods to apply herbicide (using water) and then gave ACA staff a chance to try. Joe also demonstrated the ArborJet Lance, a specialized tool to apply a pre-measured amount of herbicide to woody plants. ACA offers ground and drone applications, and individual plant treatments. Contact information for ACA can be found in the online DOF Service Provider Directory.

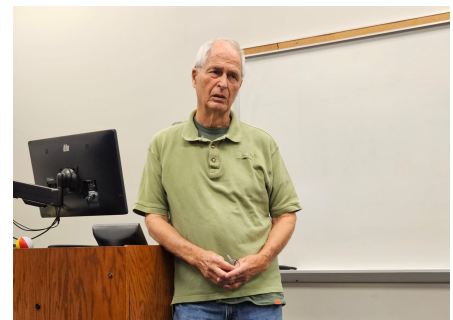


Hardwood Initiative Helps Contractors and Landowners Alike

Hardwood Coordinator **Joe Rossetti**, Forestry Business Development Specialist **Brian Gillispie**, District Forester **Matt Wolanski** and Area Forester **Stuart Baker** met with the owner of Appalachian Growth Forestry Services and a Shenandoah County landowner. The landowner reached out to the company to discuss selling timber after noticing his forestland was in decline. The company owner had attended a training on the Hardwood Assessment Tool and Hardwood Initiative Cost Share and recognized an opportunity to help the landowner manage his property to improve the forest, merchandize trees late in the decline process, and increase oak regeneration. The meeting on-site gave everyone the chance to see the property, meet the landowner, and discuss planned management activities to best achieve the landowner's objectives. The landowner anticipates performing some of the work himself and hiring a contractor for the remainder.

Author John Maclean Shares Stories and Insights with DOF

On June 27, the Central Region hosted author John N. Maclean and roughly 50 DOF staff at Piedmont Virginia Community College in Charlottesville. Known for his five books detailing fatal wildland fires—including *Fire on the Mountain*, *Fire and Ashes*, *The Thirty Mile Fire*, *The Esperanza Fire*, and *River of Fire*—Maclean shared insights into his writing process and the enduring impact of these tragedies on survivors, colleagues, and families of the fallen firefighters. Audience discussion delved into Virginia's current fire landscape, reviewing recent fall and spring fire seasons, along with emerging trends in Virginia and the Southeast. Maclean also shared a letter of appreciation from JD Foster, president of the private Rapidan Camps, where Maclean is a member, acknowledging the assistance DOF provided during the Quaker Run Fire for protecting the camps. Maclean extended his gratitude to DOF for hosting him and expressed his appreciation for the warm reception he received from everyone present. A recording of the presentation can be found here: https://youtu.be/p5VyAed0x_w



DOF Shows Appreciation for Norman Long

On June 28, DOF held an appreciation event to recognize longtime agency cooperater Norman Long, who first began helping DOF as a member of his high school Keep Virginia Green firefighting crew. In 1965, he was commissioned as a State Fire Warden, and was an early leader and chief of the Frog Level Volunteer Fire Department in Caroline County. Long was a long-time logger, procurement manager, and logging supervisor for Flippo Lumber Corporation in Hanover County, also managing site preparation, reforestation and thinning of Flippo timberlands. Additionally, Long served on the Reforestation of Timberlands Board from 2001 to 2003 and contributed to the development of DOF's Forestry best management practices to improve water quality. Attending the event were active and retired DOF staff, loggers, consulting foresters, mill personnel and family.



Help Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Survey Game Bird Populations

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources needs your help to survey wild turkey and ruffed grouse populations. From July 1 to Aug. 31, use the forms below to record turkey and grouse observations including date, county, number of birds and if possible, sex and age.

There are two different forms:

[Volunteer Form](#): for those who don't routinely drive a DOF vehicle and would like to just record observations to and from work or during their own time.

[Staff Form](#): For those who are routinely driving a DOF vehicle and track their mileage for the months of July and August. This part of the survey is critical for us to get estimates of broods and # of turkeys seen per 1,000 miles.

Submission information can be found on the forms. If you have any questions, contact Katie Martin: Katie.Martin@DWR.Virginia.gov. Data from the 2023 survey can be found on DWR's website: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/blog/2023-wild-turkey-summer-brood-survey-results/>

