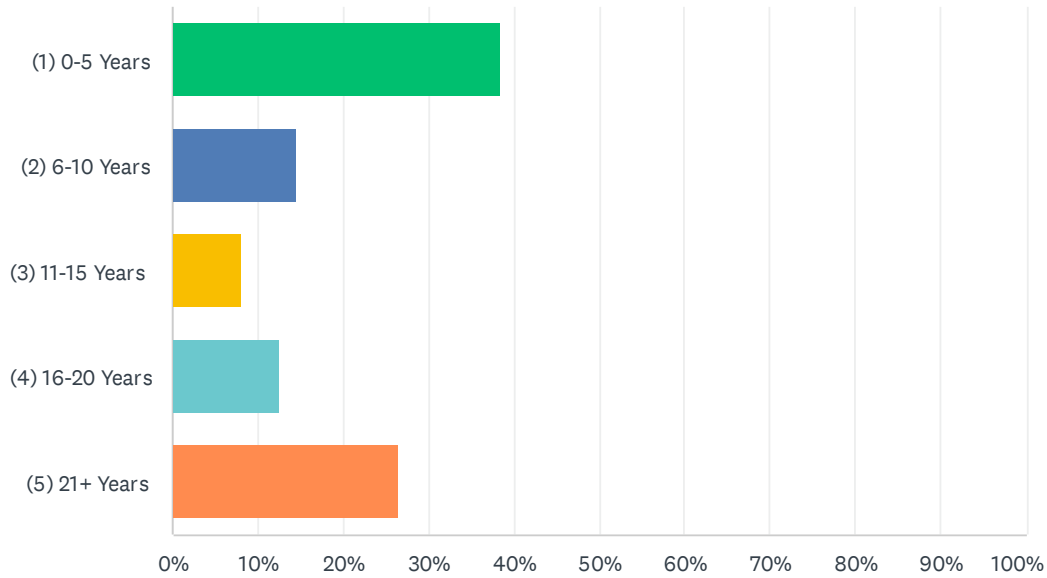


Q1 How long have you worked for DOF?

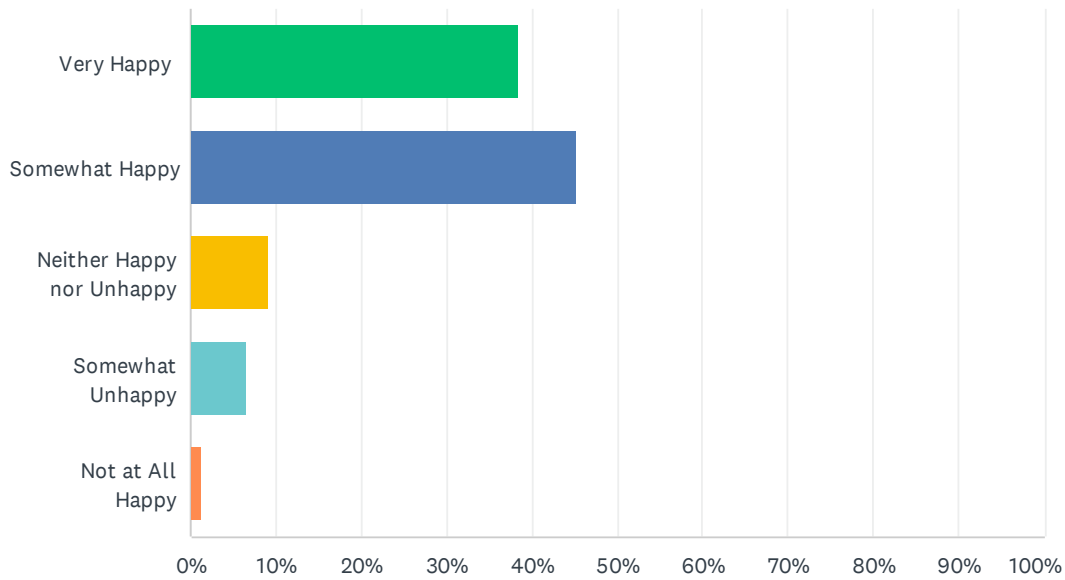
Answered: 159 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
(1) 0-5 Years	38.36%	61
(2) 6-10 Years	14.47%	23
(3) 11-15 Years	8.18%	13
(4) 16-20 Years	12.58%	20
(5) 21+ Years	26.42%	42
Total Respondents: 159		

Q2 How happy are you with your current role and responsibilities?

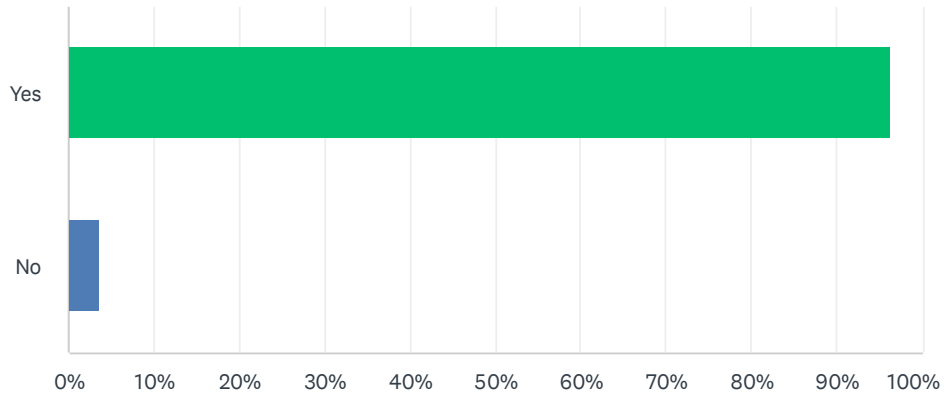
Answered: 164 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Happy	38.41%	63
Somewhat Happy	45.12%	74
Neither Happy nor Unhappy	9.15%	15
Somewhat Unhappy	6.71%	11
Not at All Happy	1.22%	2
Total Respondents: 164		

Q3 Are you proud to work for DOF?

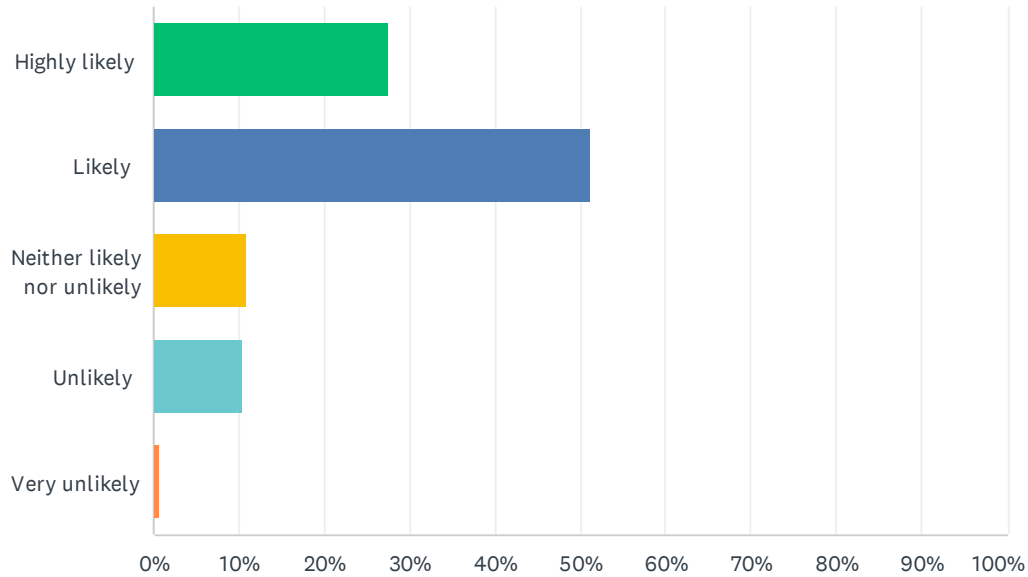
Answered: 163 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	96.32%	157
No	3.68%	6
TOTAL		163

Q4 How likely would you be to recommend DOF to a job-seeking friend, family member or professional acquaintance?

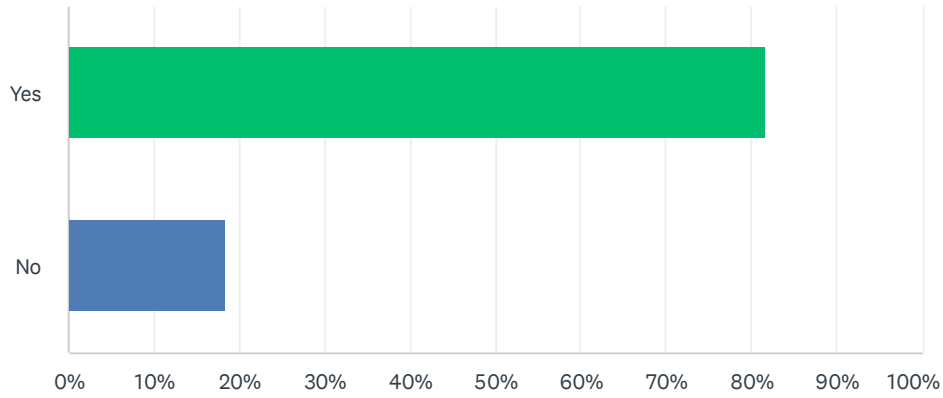
Answered: 164 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Highly likely	27.44%	45
Likely	51.22%	84
Neither likely nor unlikely	10.98%	18
Unlikely	10.37%	17
Very unlikely	0.61%	1
Total Respondents: 164		

Q5 Do you feel that your supervisor recognizes your efforts and accomplishments?

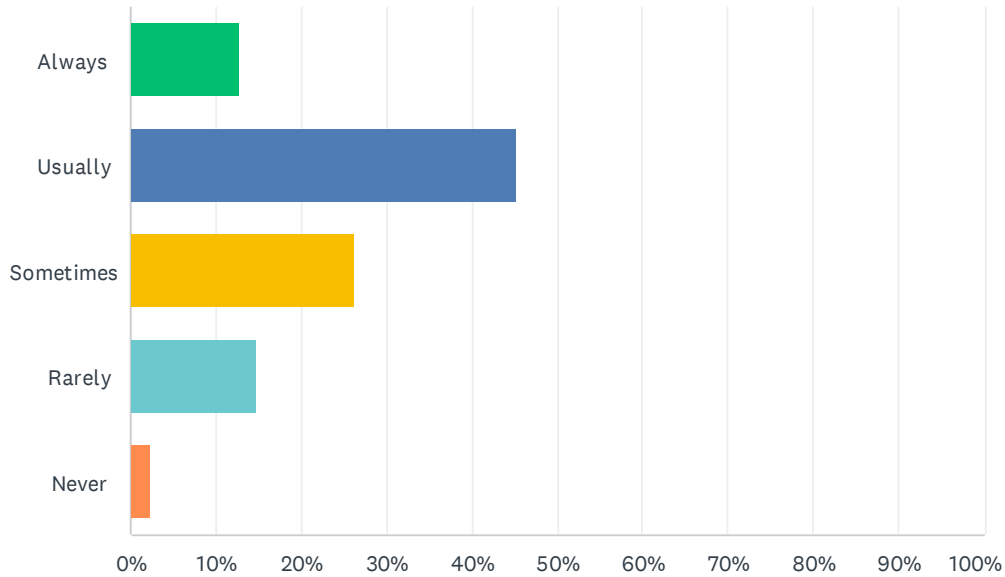
Answered: 163 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.60%	133
No	18.40%	30
TOTAL		163

Q6 How often do you feel that the chain of command would effectively relay your concerns or ideas to agency leaders?

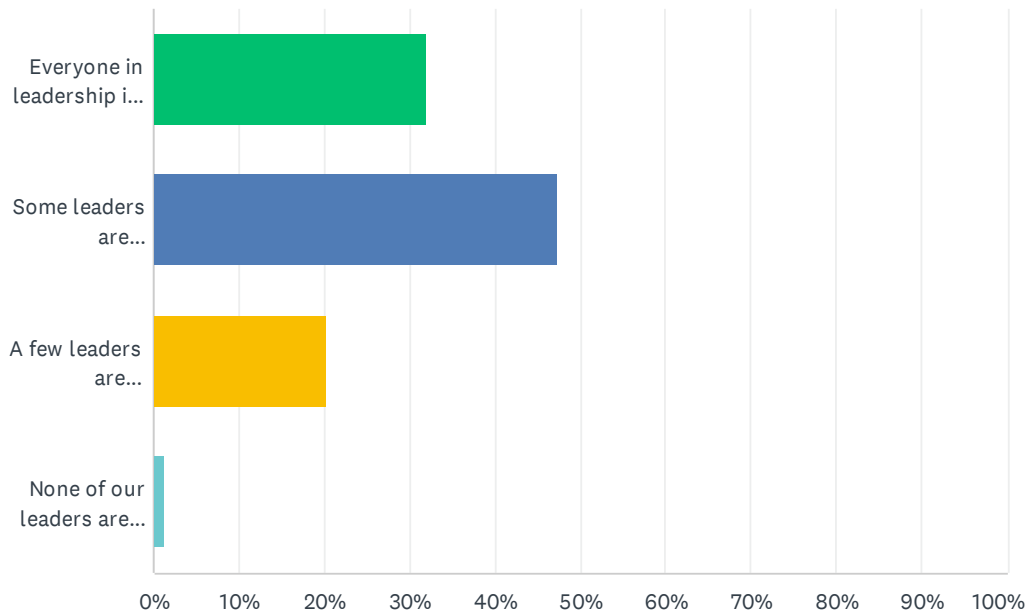
Answered: 164 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	12.80%	21
Usually	45.12%	74
Sometimes	26.22%	43
Rarely	14.63%	24
Never	2.44%	4
Total Respondents: 164		

Q7 Do you feel that DOF leadership is approachable?

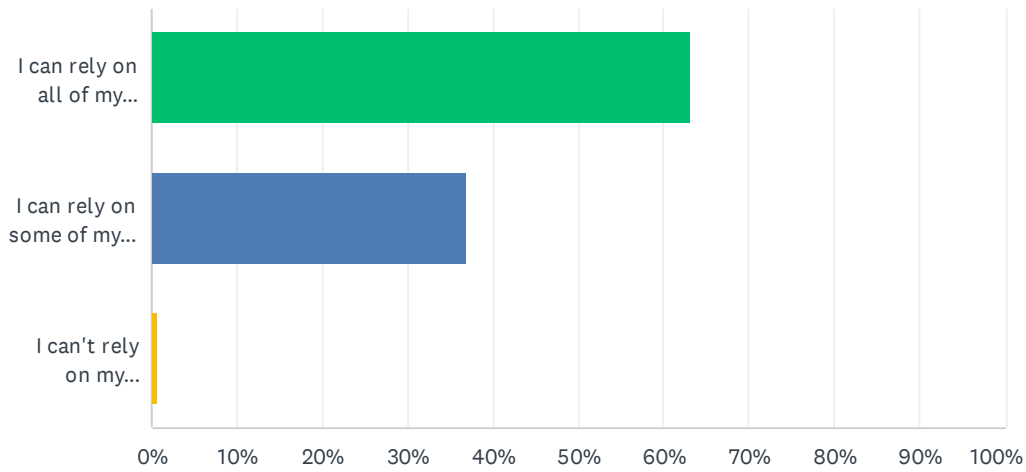
Answered: 163 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Everyone in leadership is approachable.	31.90%	52
Some leaders are approachable.	47.24%	77
A few leaders are approachable.	20.25%	33
None of our leaders are approachable.	1.23%	2
Total Respondents: 163		

Q8 Do you feel that you can rely on your teammates?

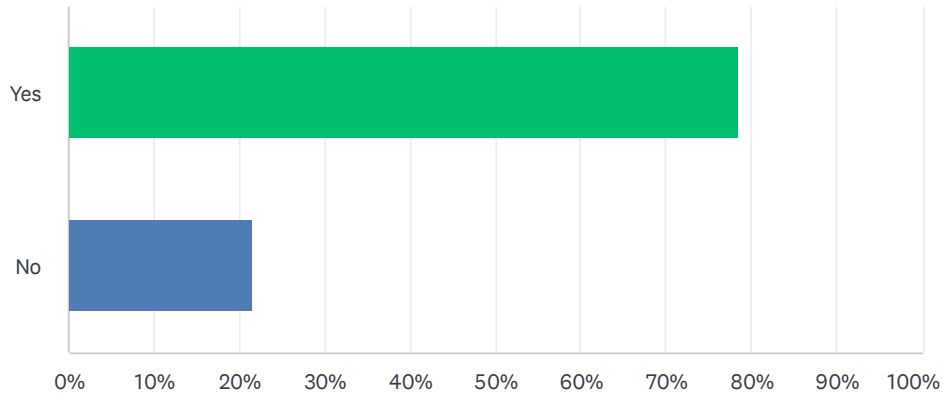
Answered: 163 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I can rely on all of my teammates.	63.19%	103
I can rely on some of my teammates.	36.81%	60
I can't rely on my teammates.	0.61%	1
Total Respondents: 163		

Q9 Do you have the tools and resources you need to perform your job well?

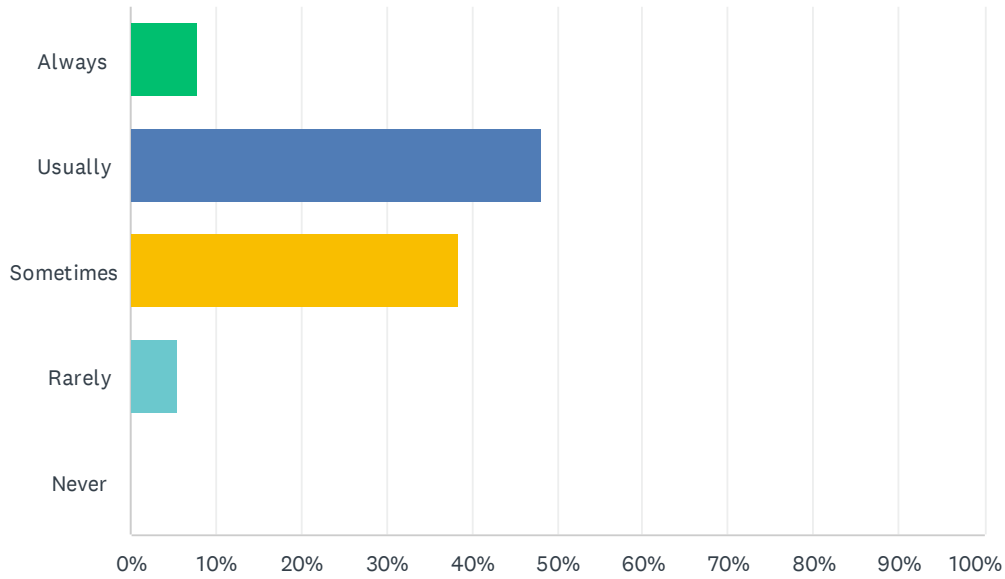
Answered: 163 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	78.53%	128
No	21.47%	35
TOTAL		163

Q10 Do you feel the agency clearly communicates expectations, goals, and strategies?

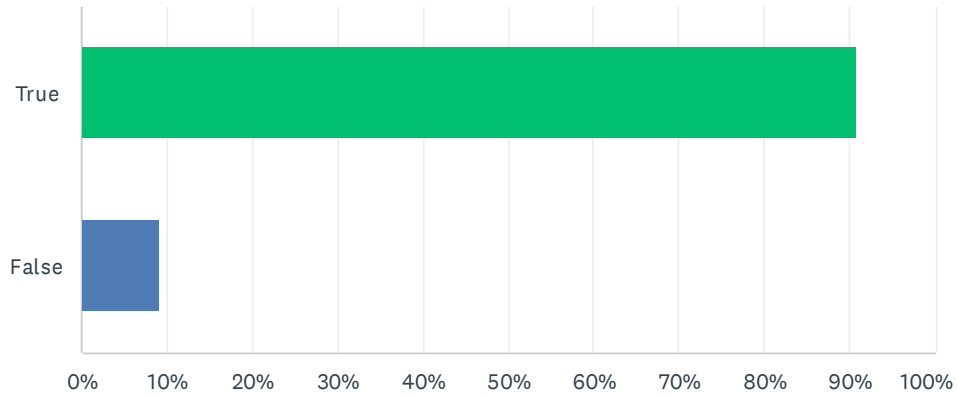
Answered: 164 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Always	7.93%	13
Usually	48.17%	79
Sometimes	38.41%	63
Rarely	5.49%	9
Never	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 164		

Q11 My work provides me with meaning and purpose.

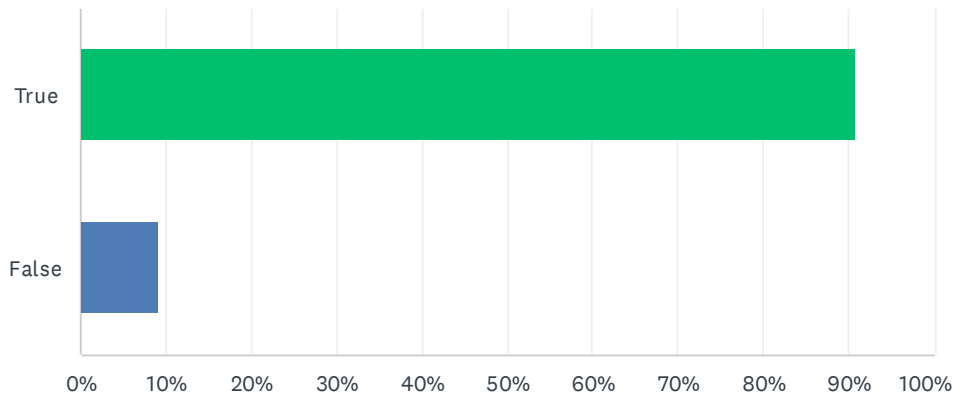
Answered: 162 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
True	90.74%	147
False	9.26%	15
TOTAL		162

Q12 Most days I look forward to coming to work.

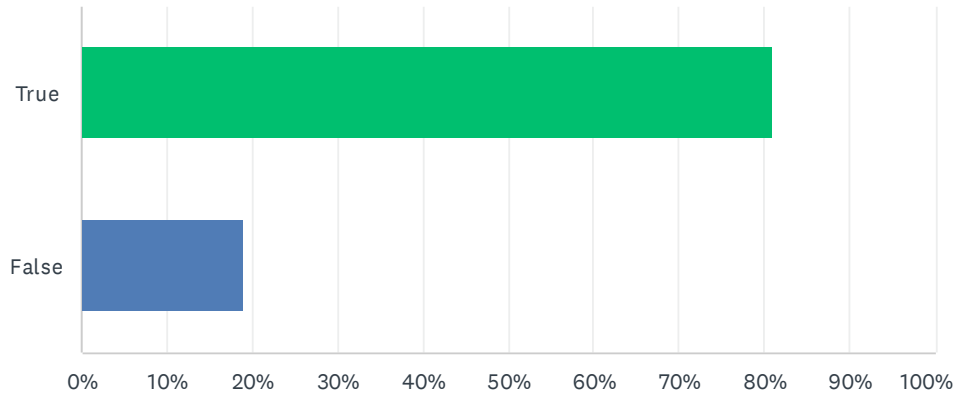
Answered: 163 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
True	90.80%	148
False	9.20%	15
TOTAL		163

Q13 My role at DOF challenges me in ways that result in professional and personal growth.

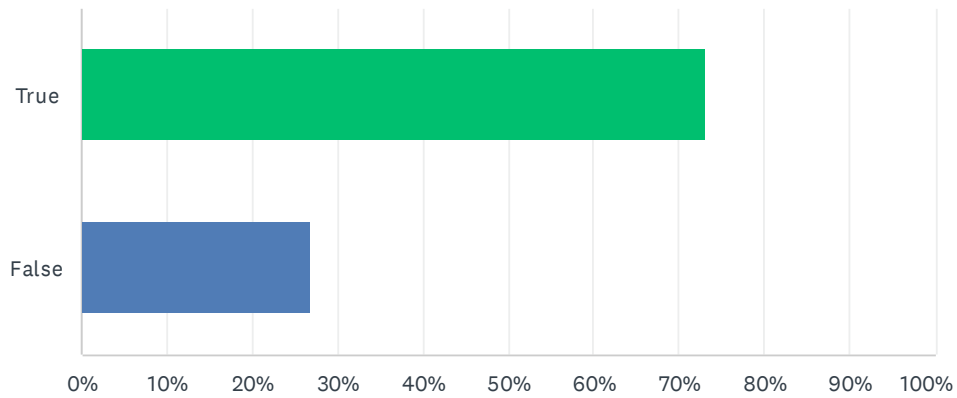
Answered: 164 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
True	81.10%	133
False	18.90%	31
TOTAL		164

Q14 I feel valued at work.

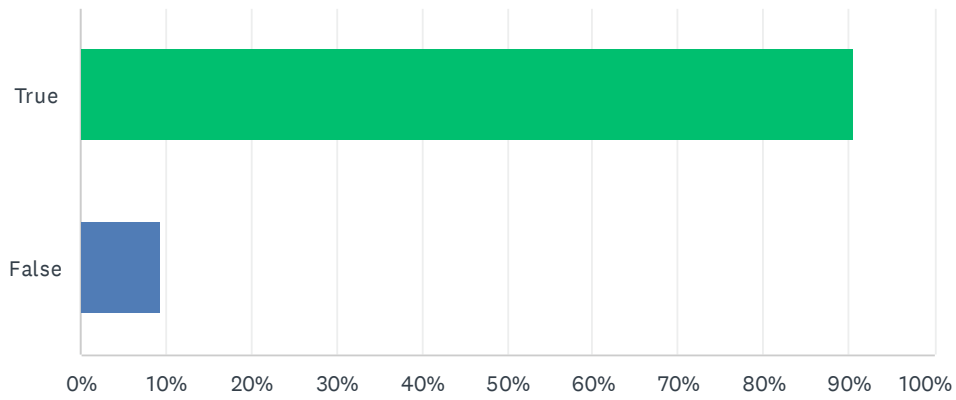
Answered: 160 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
True	73.13%	117
False	26.88%	43
TOTAL		160

Q15 I feel that my coworkers and I share common goals.

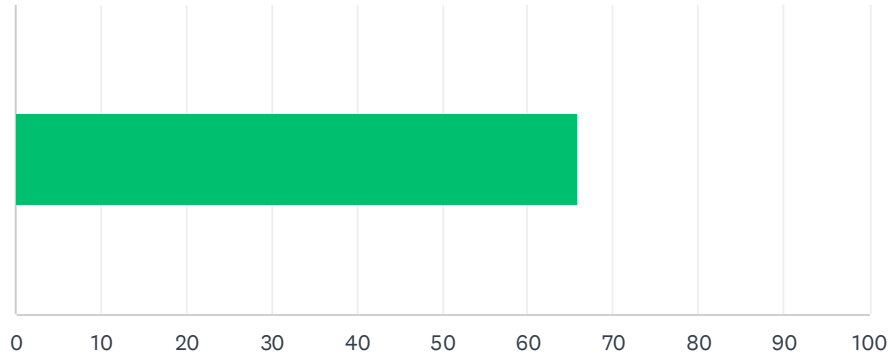
Answered: 161 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
True	90.68%	146
False	9.32%	15
TOTAL		161

Q16 On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest), how fulfilling would you say your job is?

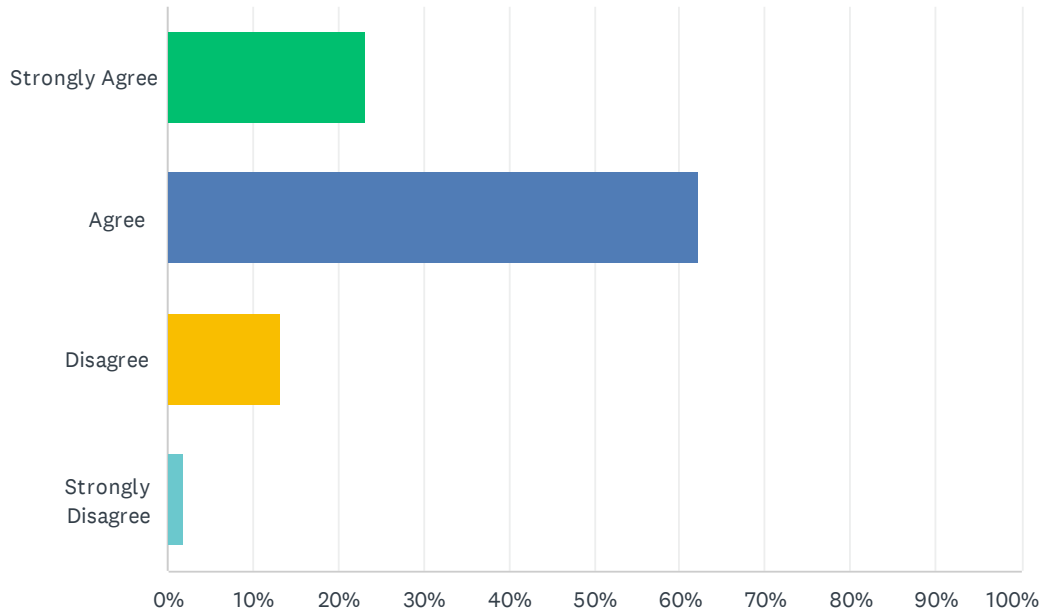
Answered: 164 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	66	10,810	164
Total Respondents: 164			

Q17 My manager provides detailed employee feedback so that I can understand if I am doing my job well.

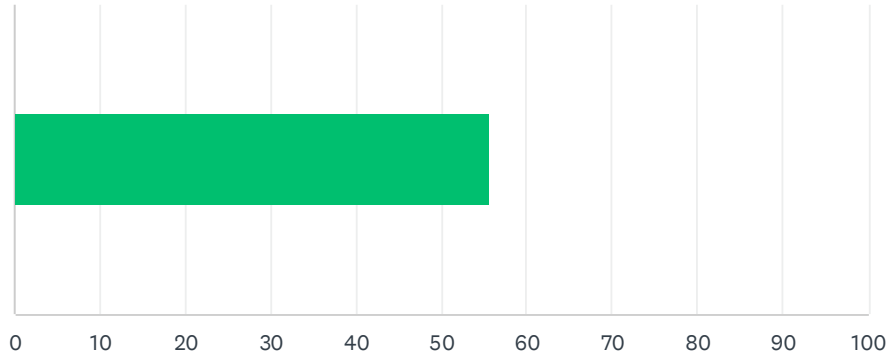
Answered: 159 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	23.27%	37
Agree	62.26%	99
Disagree	13.21%	21
Strongly Disagree	1.89%	3
Total Respondents: 159		

Q18 On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest). How satisfied are you with the way your company manages employees?

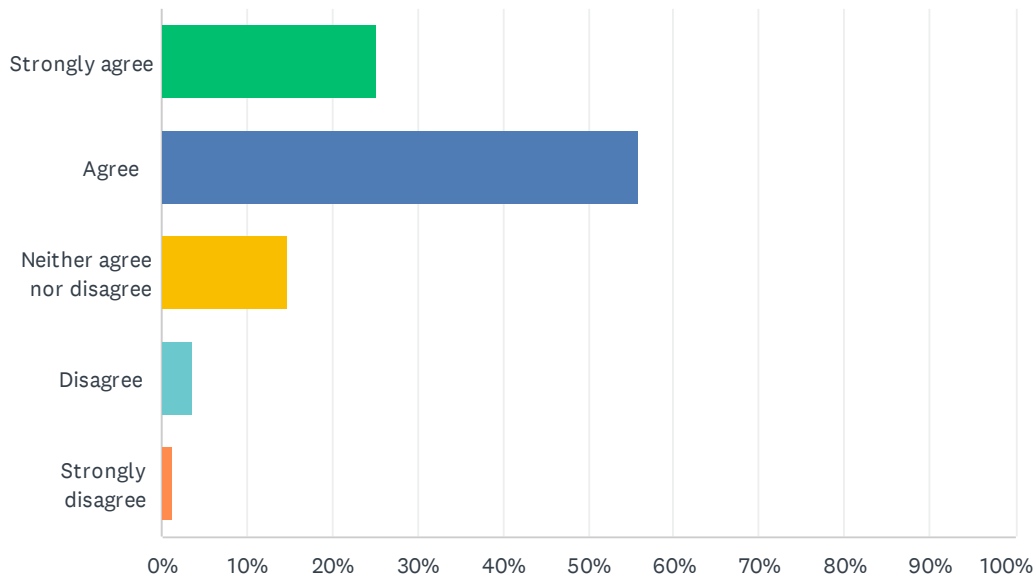
Answered: 162 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	56	9,027	162
Total Respondents: 162			

Q19 I feel safe doing my job in this work environment.

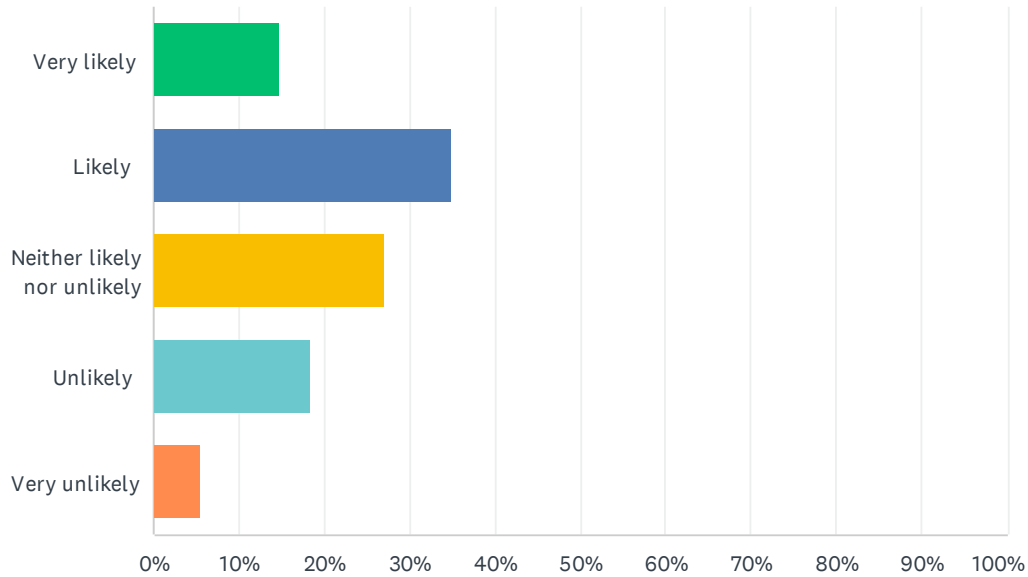
Answered: 163 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	25.15%	41
Agree	55.83%	91
Neither agree nor disagree	14.72%	24
Disagree	3.68%	6
Strongly disagree	1.23%	2
Total Respondents: 163		

Q20 How likely are you to pursue advancement or another job within DOF?

Answered: 163 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very likely	14.72%	24
Likely	34.97%	57
Neither likely nor unlikely	26.99%	44
Unlikely	18.40%	30
Very unlikely	5.52%	9
Total Respondents: 163		

21. How would you describe your relationship with team members and other colleagues?
(111 responses)

1. All of the people in my district are great. I've learned a lot from each of them so far, and nobody has ever refused when I asked for help. I have a great group of coworkers.
2. At the local level very good. At higher levels of the organization not so much.
3. Good (19X)
4. Excellent with the most of colleagues, ok with supervisors, bad with one colleague.
5. I have a good relationship with other team members.
6. I feel like we all respect each other and get along well.
7. Very Good (11)
8. The only people who would understand if I described a day at work.
9. I get along with some and others I don't.
10. I get along good with them.
11. I have one team member and a few that are somehow involved in what is going on in the program. I would describe the relationship as professional. No hesitation to express our ideas and feelings with honesty.
12. Great relationship with my team members.
13. Ranging from best of friends that I know I can count on in a time of need, to some that I'm not sure I can count on. Most folks I work with fall into the first category.
14. Positive
15. Some relationships are strictly work related while others are more friendly and more than just someone I work with.
16. I have a lack of team members due to high turnover.
17. Positive relationship. I appreciate how willing everyone is to answer questions and help each other out.
18. We all wear many hats and have many duties. I can always rely on my colleagues to help when needed. I also make time to support them. We are all on the same team.
19. I have great interactions with personnel in both the field and HQ.
20. Team players
21. Garland Gray Forestry is like family most of the time. We try to be team players. I try to work smarter not harder.

22. I have an excellent relationship with most colleagues and team members. The nature of our work builds comradery.
23. With the turnover, I do not know half of them yet. I am very tight with the ones I have worked with for some time and can rely fully on them.
24. I have a great relationship with my team members.
25. great, open, and honest
26. Good. All my team members and colleagues are friendly, responsive, and want to be helpful. I expect my team members to be at least professional and polite, but many have gone beyond that to become friends. A second thought that is tangential to the question: Some are very focused on their individual role/responsibilities in VDOF that they fail to see the big picture of VDOF and people outside their sphere. Others keep the big picture in mind and perform their role to further the larger agency mission.
27. It varies, from extremely professional with most DOF employees, to frustrating/futile efforts to work with an extremely unmotivated and unprofessional staff at one facility.
28. Supportive, complimentary, very abundant
29. Everyone gets along very well, a good spirit among us.
30. I believe the former work unit was a very cohesive group. The district less so. I don't know that there was good ability to assign responsibility in the work unit was good, but the county assignment is re-establishing boundaries that we had in the past. The reduction of our numbers is impacting our ability to respond to fires especially now that folks will not be "forced" to cross county lines.
31. close relationships
32. We get along famously!
33. With peers, it's collaborative and effective. With management, I'm invisible at best.
34. OK but seldom hear directly on what I should be doing - not engaged it appears by leadership.
35. Get along with pretty much everyone. I enjoy working with my coworkers although I spend most of my time working alone. I would enjoy working with others more often, but my position doesn't have as much overlap with coworkers as some other positions do. I don't feel like I really know all of my coworkers super well.
36. I have great relationships with most of my coworkers and feel welcomed when in their presence.
37. My relationship with co-workers is good.
38. Friendly and professional, can rely on one another.
39. My team is very close knit and has a good working relationship.
40. Mostly positive, often have differing ideas of agency priorities or how the work should be done.

41. Great. Most colleagues in my work area and surrounding work areas support me when I have a question or need.
42. I get along well with most employees at DOF.
43. Family
44. Great with some and poor with the administrative staff despite efforts to have otherwise.
45. Excellent
46. Strong
47. trusting and respectful
48. Professional.
49. Disengaged
50. working, professional relationship with a friendly attitude
51. Professional
52. I have a good relationship with my team. It's open to collaboration and is a safe place to present new ideas. Other colleagues trust me to present sound ideas, but personality differences as well as infrequent opportunities to work together make each interaction unique, and sometimes guarded since the process of building trust is still being worked on. Overall, I believe our relationships to be good.
53. It is difficult to develop relationships with team members when they don't stay very long. The work usually brings people together, though. There are only a few people I don't get along with, but things are still at least professional.
54. Great
55. Average
56. I have a great working relationship with my team members and colleagues that I work with. There is mutual respect and willingness to go the extra mile to get the job done.
57. It's okay.
58. Very open and looking out for each other.
59. I believe we all have a great working relationship where we are all willing to help out one another at a moment's notice. I've asked for help plenty of times and received it willingly, and I believe I've responded to requests the same.
60. Friendly and goal driven.
61. For the most part, great. We respect one another and just want to get the job done in a safe and efficient manner.
62. Overall, I have a good working relationship with my immediate team and colleagues. There are some relationships that are not very good.
63. I have a great relationship with my team members.

64. Overall, I get along well with most of my team members and colleagues.
65. We can count on each other to help out when needed.
66. We are like family and have a really good relationship.
67. Friendly and willing to collaborate. Most of the time when I ask a question or make a request from other program managers or field staff, they are highly responsive. Some colleagues seem over-worked though and are unable to respond to me because of this.
68. mostly positive
69. I get along great with everyone I work with.
70. Mostly collaborative. There are a few that seem entrenched in their roles and are not open to feedback.
71. I have a good relationship with my coworkers.
72. Fun and rewarding
73. I feel as though senior leadership is approachable from someone in my position, located in HQ, but I also see how field staff might not feel the same way that I do. I have a good relationship with team members and value most relationships with colleagues.
74. It can feel like there is a gap between administrative levels as far as the day-to-day which leads to problems with expectations and realities.
75. I think that our area gets along really well.
76. We get along well, we complement each other's strengths, we each bring something different to the table and it improves our whole team overall.
77. My immediate co-worker and I work well together. We have had a long-lasting work relationship. Most of my colleagues work well together.
78. My relationship with my peers is very good. I have tremendous respect for them and learn from them all the time. My supervisor is unprepared for his role and does not contribute.
79. We work well together and communicate as often as possible.
80. Almost everyone is great to work with. Always helpful and thoughtful.
81. positive and productive
82. I feel very supported by my colleagues and can constantly learn from their experience.
83. Good
84. Family like
85. Perfect
86. Most of my team share the same vision and goals. Most but not all are team players.
87. We have good working relationship.

88. Very friendly, all team members have shown patience and taken the time to help me along in my training process.
89. I feel respected and that I have a good working relationship throughout the agency with all personnel. In the SHE districts I feel we have a solid group of individuals in all phases of our work details and that we work together well as a group.
90. Very positive. We have a mutual respect.
91. I enjoy working with team members and a small # of HQ staff.
92. I have a good working relationship with all of my DOF family.
93. Excellent teamwork, communication, and support from colleagues. Always willing to help each other succeed.
94. The field team is strong with employees who have been around for a few years.
95. Mutual trust and respect
96. Great, however the team I work with is already a small fraction of the DOF. We take care of one another and help each other out when needed.
97. We cooperate well together and are willing to help each other at the drop of a hat if needed. It is a positive atmosphere, and we have open communication about ideas or constructive criticism. My officemates and I don't always agree on everything and some of us have different views of certain aspects of the job or the agency, but our working relationship is not impacted at the end of the day.
98. I consider most friends as well as coworkers. Some have an excellent work ethic and others do not. This is where friction occurs.
99. There is a dichotomy within the agency now, between those who "have" and those who "haven't". With recent groups of retirements, the demographics of the agency have shifted from being a group of people who largely spent their entire careers, or at minimum, large chunks of their careers invested in the agency -to now being a split culture where what small percentages of employees that remain with multiple years of service (10+) are the extreme minority, and the remainder becoming a revolving door of 6 months -2 yearlong employees. It feels that most people do not want to even engage in getting to know someone, because of the attitude of "what's the point" if they're just going to leave. This of course has resulted in a clique atmosphere that can be unwelcoming at times, and absolutely has resulted in "gatekeeping" from the old guard. I have personally found that it's difficult to make and maintain both friendships at work, as well as professional relationships, because there is so much paranoia of "the other" or the "outsider" from group to group, that people within the agency now treat most others differently than how they did 5-10 years ago. My relationship has been okay with most people that I know well, including some newer employees, but I have absolutely witnessed the culture shift and it has been difficult to navigate at times due to the unwillingness of groups to intermingle.
100. Strong and close with some, distant and unsure with others.
101. I have a wonderful relationship with my team members. I have a good relationship with a very few colleagues in other areas. Most employees outside of my area, I have either no relationship with or have had some conflicts that seem to stem from lack of communication.

102. In general, there is mutual respect and trust among the members of VDOF that I work with.
103. Close-knit
104. Poor for most team members. Good for some. Same for other colleagues within VDOF - some poor, some good.
105. My colleagues are my favorite part of VDOF. Everyone is helpful, kind, and motivated.
106. DOF feels very siloed. I have great relationships with those I work with frequently. It is much harder to build relationships with staff in other parts of the state, which becomes challenging when we need to work together.
107. Workable
108. My team members and other colleagues are amazing. They inspire me and I know they all have my back and are willing to help.
109. Close working relationship within my team, although we tend to remain focused within our own areas of work.
110. Generally great
111. Excellent, even though I'm new people are very friendly and supportive.

22. What do you enjoy most about your job?

(148 responses)

1. I enjoy the freedom and the ability to work outdoors. I also appreciate the trust my supervisor puts in me to get my work done with very little supervision.
2. Serving the landowners and the public.
3. Helping others grow and advance.
4. working with partner organizations
5. there are always different tasks which presents different challenges.
6. Friendly coworkers and staff
7. Every day brings something different, whether it be new faces, new challenges, or new surroundings
8. Working with all the different people that I get to work with
9. Being outdoors
10. What I enjoy most is that I can quantify the results of my contribution of work.
11. there are always different tasks which presents different challenges.
12. Friendly coworkers and staff
13. Every day brings something different, whether it be new faces, new challenges, or new surroundings
14. Working with all the different people that I get to work with
15. Being outdoors
16. working with loggers and being outdoors
17. Being outdoors
18. What I enjoy most is that I can quantify the results of my contribution of work.
19. Making a difference for the constituents of the Commonwealth
20. Making a difference for and helping landowners in our service area. Helping ensure our natural resources are maintained for future generations.
21. Being able to have a flexible job and hours.
22. Time in the field and seeing people outside of the "forestry world" get the opportunity to engage with plantings and other tree related activities. Also prescribed burns and fire response.
23. Helping others (2x)
24. Being able to see the different people and working with the landowners and accomplishing things the landowners want to do.

25. The independence to make my own schedule.
26. My coworkers and having the freedom to plan out my work schedule in a way that works best for me.
27. The people that I work with both inside and outside the agency. Most everyone that works for VDOF does so because of a love for forestry, nature and being outside.
28. Instructing employees
29. Not attached to a desk
30. 10-hour workdays
31. When customers call, I have learned some much about the nursery and how it functions. That make me feel that I am about of DOF. Like to recommend new people to explore the possibilities to grow in and promote to a higher position. I have been here over 10 years thing s are constantly changing for the better.
32. Developing relationships in the community, mentoring new employees, and spending time in the woods discussing forest management and ecology.
33. helping landowners. field work.
34. Relationships with contacts
35. Variety
36. Variety and working with the public to help manager our forests.
37. Practicing forestry
38. Helping customers.
39. Working with great people
40. I have held both field employee and program roles at VDOF. As a field employee, I enjoyed serving landowners, the variety of tasks and topics we covered, and especially firefighting and prescribed burning. In my program role, I enjoy the ability to focus on a single aspect of forestry, assist and teach field staff, and have a larger impact on forestry in Virginia than I was able to have as a field forester.
41. enjoy doing what is expected of me.
42. people, and working in natural resource management.
43. Independence that comes from managers and coworkers trusting my competence and professionalism
44. Lots of variety
45. Working from home and freedom to make my own schedule.
46. Meeting new people and working outdoors
47. I enjoy the variety of tasks that may come up. Presentations, field work, Emergency response (at times), educational opportunities, and the like. I do generally something different in a different place every day.

48. freedom to plan your own schedule (most times) working outdoors working with outstanding teammates, working with great landowners.
49. The diversity of work experiences
50. Helping landowners manage their property.
51. It has the potential for positive impact to Virginia's environment and citizens.
52. practicing forestry
53. Helping landowners get projects done and working with coworkers when I get the chance to.
54. Getting to do something different and self-guide most of day-to-day scheduling.
55. Being outdoors and new challenges.
56. Helping the public responsibly manage their forests and sharing knowledge on the importance of conservation and natural resource management.
57. Flexibility and helping landowners.
58. Working outside, the diversity of tasks, helping landowners in Virginia
59. Freedom to make decisions without micromanagement.
60. Being outside
61. I enjoy the people and the flexibility.
62. The flexibility
63. Serving the field employees to make their ability to do their job the best that I can.
64. Working outside
65. freedom to do my job daily without oversight.
66. Helping people learn more about their trees and forests. Seeing rare plant communities and wildlife deep in the woods.
67. Flexibility of working at the desk vs. outdoors
68. Helping people manage their property and assisting folks through emergency response. Camaraderie with fellow employees.
69. Independence; flexibility; freedom to make my own decisions day to day; helping people make good decisions about their woods.
70. The days I get outside.
71. Working with people with manage the land so that it is more resilient while achieving personal and community objectives.
72. Being outside and dictating my day-to-day work.

73. the freedom and flexibility to create my own work.
74. The people
75. my coworkers
76. Comfort of working from home sometimes
77. Diversity in the work I do and the flexibility of my schedule. I enjoy working with external clients and helping them to succeed. I enjoy the people I work with and their eagerness to do a good job.
78. The flexibility
79. The drive to all the job done. No matter what it takes.
80. I enjoy meeting new people and exploring new properties/areas. This job offers a lot of diversity if you're willing to try new things.
81. Variability of the daily tasks and flexibility of work scheduling
82. Meeting different people and helping people.
83. My supervisor.
84. Different hats, helping landowners.
85. I love helping and supporting the field folks along with agency cooperators.
86. Most landowners are pleasant to deal with. I enjoy the field work of my position; I appreciate the freedom that I have to set my own appointments and having the state vehicle. I get along well with my coworkers.
87. seasonal change and variety
88. Helping people get a better understanding and appreciation of the world they live in
89. The variety of work that we do.
90. Realizing how much I've learned and developed since I started.
91. My job reflects what I studied in school. I feel lucky to be able to work to restore and protect natural systems.
92. helping landowners reach their goals.
93. Flexibility
94. The people. Almost everyone at the VDOF is good to work and converse with
95. Forest Management and fire response
96. Working with forests and their sustainable management
97. The atmosphere of the agency - caring, dedicated staff, and being a part of forest conservation/management efforts in VA. I also appreciate the flexibility DOF affords with teleworking and/or flex time which provides for some work-life balance.

98. I enjoy having a job that aligns well with my personal values, knowing that the work I do has a positive impact on communities and the environment, and getting to do this work with a great group of people.
99. Working with my peers towards improving and protecting natural areas.
100. Making a difference regarding our natural resources and our interaction with them
101. The folks I work with
102. Interaction with the public and sharing the story of how important natural resources are to society.
103. The diversity within the day-to-day job. Being able to manage my own to-do list and be self-sufficient. The freedom to be self-motivated to ensure task are completed.
104. Being outside.
105. I love my co-workers, the landowners, and the partners I interact with. It is a pleasure to work with them. My job function and my tasks align very well with my personal interests and my skills.
106. Time off
107. Helping the public
108. Helping assist landowners with managing their property for their goals and for the future.
109. productive but relaxed environment, helping others.
110. improving speed and accuracy where possible
111. making impactful changes to communities and environments
112. making sure that all my work is done in a timely manner so that all my numbers are high.
113. Ability to help others.
114. Building relationships with the community
115. Making my own schedule, working alone.
116. The confidence my supervisor has in us has led to not micromanaging us.
117. Being in the woods daily and helping people
118. 1) The people 2) Helping in the greater good of conservation 3) The freedom to complete my work without micromanagement
119. the flexibility
120. I have always been an individual that enjoys a variety in my work details. In the technician position we have a wide variety of job details. I am one of those more fortunate individuals that have received opportunities to work in many agency level details as with my local work details. I appreciate the confidence from the agency that has been shown to me personally. I enjoy meeting people in my day-to-day work details whether is co-workers, harvest operators, landowners or whoever it may be. No day is the same.

121. The opportunities to work with different individuals every day and the wide variety of job duties. Every day is something different.
122. Assisting and educating landowners and citizens.
123. The variety of projects and the challenges that sometimes can test your patience and resolve. Most importantly I enjoy the people I work with
124. Sense of purpose through serving and protecting others, the camaraderie from those I get to work with, and being outside in the woods nearly every day.
125. Being outside and working with landowner. Knowing I have a positive impact on the people I work with
126. Interacting with internal customers to meet their needs and solve problems.
127. The ever-changing task and jobs that need to be accomplished, and they change threw out the year. Some are the same as line painting, and timber sales, but I can travel the state and work in a bunch of different areas. Also, I am not tied to a desk, my office is whatever piece of equipment I chose to operate that day.
128. The opportunities I've had to work with people from all over the country and the world and make lasting friendships. And the fact that I've been given those opportunities to gain those experiences. It's something different every day, and I look forward to coming to work every day. The flexibility within each day and within the agency; if there is something you have an interest in, the agency usually supports you in pursuing that interest. The traditions, culture, support, and camaraderie within the state and federal forestry and fire world (not necessarily within DOF).
129. Being outdoors
130. Managing trees in a way that I feel is benefiting both the public and wildlife.
131. freedom to do my job.
132. Freedom, flexible schedule/work environment. Being in the field and setting my own operational tempo has absolutely been the number one thing keeping me with the agency. There have been many "benefits" to working for DOF that have gone to the wayside, with the flexibility and freedom of working out in the field becoming the last remaining bastion of why it's "good to work here".
133. The diversity, flexibility, and ability to be working outside.
134. Working with landowners, helping them get their projects completed. Also, seeing my team members succeed and develop.
135. I enjoy the people that I work with. I enjoy doing my best to make sure that they have what they need to make this an enjoyable work environment.
136. the challenges of emergency response, problem solving and working with cooperating agencies
137. I like making a difference.
138. Interacting with everyone and helping them do their jobs as well. I also really enjoy the pace.
139. Scenic views.
140. Working outside with wonderful people.

141. I love that my job is both highly autonomous and creative. I feel like what I do makes the world a better place.
142. getting my work done without micro-managing
143. Being part of bigger picture
144. Putting trees in the ground where they wouldn't have been without me. Reaching out to new groups of people. Helping make the world a better place.
145. Service and support of our county employees
146. Variety
147. The diversity and importance of the agency's mission
148. The people, the work and the environment, especially feeling valued.

23. What four words would you use to describe DOF's agency culture?

(117 responses)

1. Freedom, teamwork, agency first
2. Overextended, disengaged, bureaucratically bound.
3. Hierarchical, top-down, acquaintances not friends or family, slow-to-adapt.
4. positive friendly connected autonomous
5. Friendly and welcoming
6. Dedication, Dedication, Dedication, Dedication
7. Trees are the answer.
8. sectionalized, underappreciated, fearful.
9. Challenging, Rewarding, Exciting, Fun
10. Autonomous, flexible Disengaged, not paying attention to some important programs.
11. Not in the click
12. Go Do Your Job
13. Open Caring Motivated Fun
14. fun, motivated, passionate, rustic
15. Future
16. Unknown Friendly
17. Today it feels porous.
18. Chain of Command.
19. One big happy family.
20. motivated, pleasant, visionary, leading.
21. the yellow shirts and green pants white hats and a new bk radio
22. Exciting, Great, Dynamic, and Challenging
23. Highly dependent upon regional leadership. At times, scrutinizing, unpredictable, and undervalued. However, locally, the culture is team oriented, hardworking, passionate, and invested.
24. Professionalism. Service. Conservation. Prevention?
25. Top Heavy Plays favorites
26. Improvement with accountability, deadlines.

27. Dysfunctional, self-centered, disconnected,
28. friendly, laidback, helpful, professional
29. Respected restrictive exclusive cheap.
30. Dedicated Reactionary Overwhelmed
31. hard working, good folks
32. Hard-working Dedicated Service-oriented Supportive
33. It's like a family.
34. Safe place to learn.
35. stuck in 1970 overall.
36. underpaid, autonomous, overextended, stratified.
37. "Can do", "Committed", "Dedicated", but on a "Downward Slide."
38. Hard working, efficient, helpful
39. Top-down, reactive, political
40. passionate hard working supportive autonomous
41. Community Undervalued Helpful Stewardship
42. We need work more that topic.
43. Connected, motivating, collaborative, and rewarding.
44. Do more with less.
45. Dedication, comradery, diverse skills
46. Flexible, Comfortable, Friendly, Steady
47. Family
48. I refer to VDOF as just like the Cajun Navy but with more expensive stuff. 30 years ago we had 350+ field employees, now we are operating with 140. Somehow, due to the dedication of our special folks, we get it done. I worry about the extremely low field staffing level.
49. Friendly, Inclusive, fun, strong
50. professional. dedicated. respected. Safe
51. Down-to-earth Helpful Caring Environment Brave but overwhelmed
52. Waning. Distant. Small. GOBN.
53. Siloed, Disengaged, Reactive, Disconnected

54. friendly, professional, flexible, spread-out
55. Overworked friendly people.
56. Inclusive, Demanding, Overworked, Underpaid
57. relaxed (at times) underprepared scientific unapproachable.
58. Close, genuine, nice, family
59. Always begging to get what we need.
60. Fun, work, disorganized and personable
61. Friendly Family Work Environment
62. Can only speak to Western Region culture as I do not see the other two region's folks very often, but I would say: We're in it together
63. Friendly, respectful, knowledgeable, accountable
64. Used to be better.
65. Independent, Resilient, Risk Averse, Challenging
66. Disconnected; political; understaffed; frugal.
67. teamwork, service, beneficial, top-heavy
68. Dedicated, professional, knowledgeable, supportive.
69. Flexible Family Laid back Inclusive.
70. Welcoming, expectation of hard work, values self-reliance, supportive of innovation.
71. currently unstable, top-heavy
72. This question sums it up.
73. Can-do Resilient Silos Uncommunicative
74. Good work, crappy pay.
75. Connected, helpful, dedicated, involved.
76. Caring, committed, reasonable, sometimes lagging the trends.
77. hardworking, dependable, humble, relatable
78. Hard Working and fun
79. Flexible, friendly, turnover, underpaid.
80. superficial, disjointed, impersonal.

81. Dependable - Collaborative - Professional – Committed
82. Good old boys' system
83. open, relaxed, productive ... "siloed" (across regions and programs)
84. Engaged, caring, hardworking, ever-learning.
85. close, family, caring, fun.
86. Tradition, conservative, self-confident, cautious
87. Family, hardworking, dedicated, and determined.
88. preservation, conservation, fire awareness/suppression
89. Commitment, loyalty, stable, mission driven.
90. Positive, encouraging, supportive, motivated.
91. Passionate. Dedicated. Friendly. Focused.
92. Honesty, Respectful, Understanding, Improvement
93. It is difficult to pick just 4 words. specialists, preferential, divided, pauperized.
94. Family Caring Collaborative Professional
95. Hardworking, Independent, Committed, Family
96. helpful, hopefully, willing, unsupported
97. welcoming, supportive, caring, responsive.
98. Self-reliance, jack of all trades, fire, get it done.
99. "Good On The Surface." The agency meets its number-based goals and looks good on the political side. But in the day-to-day, I'm afraid of the agency losing any sense of employee loyalty, pride, and passion. We should be proud to wear the DOF shield, acknowledge that we represent the agency, and have a strong sense of duty. I think DOF was built on a strong agency brand, but I feel that we are losing that to some degree. We need to understand our agency values (and Wildland Fire organizational values) and hold people to it. Don't get me wrong, I love my job and I have zero plans to leave the agency. I am proud to work for and represent VDOF. I came across the DOF history book, "That's The Way It Was... The First 75 Years" from 1989, and I found myself wishing that parts of DOF today were "the way it was" after reading the history and endless stories and messages. There are several great quotes from that book: "The Department is a feeling, a passion, if you will, of those who have served during "trying" times of long days and nights, few resources and little help." "It was all part of becoming part of the family." "The Department of Forestry is people, pride, and performance."
100. changing, becoming a business
101. professional, helpful, caring, open.
102. Cliquish, corporate, progressive, political
103. family like, common interests

- 104. Growing, evolving, shifting, progressing
- 105. Absence of communication and consistency
- 106. Capable, timely, competent, professional
- 107. dedication, family, responsive, helpful
- 108. Low moral, secretive, favoring, no hiring within
- 109. open, welcoming, safe, secure
- 110. Clique, lazy, confused, dictatorial.
- 111. Antiquated, masculine, uncooperative, paramilitary.
- 112. Busy, busy, challenging, interesting.
- 113. four words not enough
- 114. Flexible, Autonomous, Casual, Connected
- 115. friendly, teamwork, fun, purpose
- 116. Integrity, dedication, commitment, open
- 117. Collaborative, supportive, friendly, respected.

24. What are your current short-term and long-term career goals?

(119 responses)

1. I would like to establish a career in natural resources, which might involve additional schooling.
2. Open to most any possibility.
3. Try to maintain sanity, persevere.
4. be engaged and productive, learn and become educated in more advanced repairs.
5. Unknown
6. Keep leading my coworkers towards a common goal and advance my position if possible.
7. I'm very near retirement.
8. ST. Stay healthy. Train new employees. LT. Retire
9. to advance in the agency or a different company as far as possible
10. Unsure of goals within VDOF
11. Start a phase in the program to benefit the agency and forest landowners for the next 25 year.
12. Prepare for retirement!!!
13. Short-term: Do the best I can do. Long term: retirement
14. To improve my family's living situation and provide for their needs. Also, protect the integrity of our natural resources.
15. Unsure
16. Helping others
17. Short term- to continue working for the agency long term district forester or other manager position.
18. Achieve more certifications. Retire from the State of Virginia.
19. Short-term goals are to navigate all the agency changes with grace and understanding. Long-term goals are to work within the spaces that I can make the agency better.
20. Develop a vibrant Safety and Training program. Expand the Safety and Training program staff.
21. Still looking at the job. Want to learn more.
22. Working out this year and spending more time with my family.
23. Short term - establish work-life balance. Long term - further develop leadership skills, maintain positive work culture in day-to-day surroundings, and seek out higher pay.
24. continue with trainings when possible. managing county workload more effectively

25. Long - Non-Short - stay busy.
26. I have tried to move forward in this agency for a long time and have usually been insulted for my efforts. I will hang in there until retirement or find work elsewhere.
27. I would like to be eligible for benefits. Just because I'm part time does not mean I don't work as hard and full-time employees.
28. more training
29. Pursue advanced training and degree to allow movement into other aspects of forestry.
30. Make it to retirement.
31. one goal: stay healthy and productive until retirement.
32. Do my current job to the best of my ability. Be recognized for my good work and take on larger projects and roles.
33. Stay in my current job and make it to retirement!
34. Short-term: Succeed in my current role as tech. Long-term: Advance into a position working with conservation and education.
35. Assist newer employees in their career growth, retire.
36. Keep on doing the important work of conservation in the field with minimal interference from administrative or political agendas.
37. Become more efficient in my job.
38. Short and long-term, try to continue making an impact given agency priorities and the feeling that I don't fit here.
39. retirement in next 3 years
40. Short-term I want to continue to gain knowledge and confidence so that I can be as helpful as possible to landowners. I also want to work to improve communication and relationships with coworkers and external agencies so that we can all collectively paddle in the same direction and provide clear, concise information and assistance to landowners in Virginia. My main long-term goal is to always be in a career that motivates and challenges me in ways that help me improve my skills while remaining fun and interesting. I also want my career to be one with a good work/life balance that also allows me to provide for my family without financial worries
41. Short term I would like to gain as much knowledge and experience with leading people on wildfires. Long-term I would like to increase my knowledge about forest management and become move up into another position eventually.
42. Want to master my position and moved up to a better position with VDOF.
43. My short-term goal is to excel in my responsibilities as an area forester, and my long-term goals are to pursue leadership and/or specialist opportunities within the agency.
44. Short term: understand policy/procedure and forest management techniques enough to deliver quality results long term be comfortable and confident.

45. I'm at an age where I plan to retire in about three years so don't really have any additional career goals.
46. Finish college - Find a better paying Career.
47. Finding a position that meets my financial goals and aligns with my unique skillset.
48. learn from senior coworkers, advance within DOF,
49. keep on keeping on.
50. Stay in current job until retirement Possibly find a simpler job with equal pay.
51. Better communication skills. Retirement.
52. Career Advancement
53. Make good decisions day to day and continue to improve my area of responsibility; Look for opportunities to grow & learn while supporting the growth of newer employees; Continue to advance where possible while maintaining preferred residency / location; Have an enjoyable job / role in natural resource management that supports my life & family needs.
54. I don't plan to move to other roles. There are very few opportunities that I would be interested in. I have more than enough work as is. I would not want to take on a role with even more responsibilities.
55. Short-term: Continue in this role Long-Term: Potentially consider regional leadership roles
56. Develop skills for my current position, and if I can afford to, I would like to remain at DOF.
57. continue learning as much as a can and grow as a leader. Assistant regional forester.
58. I plan to stay in my current position but would leave DOF for better pay. I see colleagues in private industry making more than double DOF salaries.
59. To continue my job and see where life takes me.
60. Short term I would like to change positions to a county closer to home. Long term I would like to advance to a leadership role where I can help new employees grow and advance their careers with our agency.
61. Short- and long-term goals are the same - make a difference for the resource and the people of the commonwealth.
62. Short term - learn the aspects of my new roles better long term - ensure consistency and prepare other staff that may be interested in moving into the program; succession planning, pass on program knowledge.
63. I am currently waiting for advancement opportunities to open and looking outside of the agency.
64. Retire within 1 year.
65. Both short and long-term goals are to continue giving my best to help my peers excel at their objective.

66. stay safe, enjoy the beautiful things, don't let bureaucracy ruin the view.
67. Retiring in 87 days
68. Have a job where I can be part of the community and be flexible enough to spend plenty of time with my family. At my point in life, I'm focused more on my family than I am my career advancement.
69. To continue growing with the department and become more proficient at my job for the foreseeable future.
70. I plan to complete my current commitments under my program and pursue a similar position in watershed stewardship.
71. improve my skills so I can better serve landowners/fight fires, share my knowledge with newer employees.
72. retirement
73. Short-term: continue to build leadership skills Long-term: pursue an executive level position with the VDOF or other organization
74. I want to continue to deliver good forest management advice and stay up to date on industry trends, long term I don't know- I'm just trying to make it to Friday.
75. Enjoy my job and make enough money to live comfortably.
76. Short term-overhaul of existing silos of operations within programs and implement new, standardized systems - shifting paper processes to electronic to allow for greater efficiencies for staff and customers; knowledge sharing so that there is more cross-trained staff and less of a void when staff depart. Long term is harder because I feel as though there are not many options for advancement in my current role, other than a promotion from my existing position.
77. Short term I would like to grow in my current role. Long term, I would like to be able to advance as opportunities arise.
78. Short term is to be a better forester, not sure about long term yet.
79. Happy where I am at long term. Just to be better at my current position each day.
80. I enjoy what I am doing right now, I have considered working toward a Program Manager position, but I am not there yet.
81. My career goals would be to increase salary in current position. I enjoy what I do now, but DOF does not increase pay for employees. We get cost of living raises, but inflation is extremely high. It is not a raise when insurance goes up every time, we get a "cost of living" raise. There is no opportunity for employees to increase their pay. At one point, DOF decided to do a career path and increase pay by 10% each step they complete. Then they didn't have the money for it. A lot of older employees moved up to Specialist but couldn't go higher up due to funds. That was a great incentive. First step was 500.00 bonus, second step was 10% raise, then third step was 10% raise. That would help increase moral and opportunity. My long-term goal would be to reach my maximum salary pay in my pay band, but it is impossible.
82. None

83. My short-term and long-term goals are pretty much the same - I want to stay up-to-speed on the legal and political aspects of what I do and the technology I use.
84. Retire and retire.
85. become an expert in my current role, complete a certification program to keep learning and bring new competencies to the agency.
86. Enjoy my work while making enough money to maintain my current lifestyle.
87. retire here.
88. Do the best job I can in my current position.
89. Short-term- gaining as much knowledge about wildland firefighting and water quality. Long-term- move up the ranks in DOF.
90. Short: complete probation and required training. Long: obtain an AAS in Forestry and acquire an area forester position.
91. learn different aspects of my job and continue building relationships within the agency. Long-term-A leadership position.
92. Goals is to keep improving in my job.
93. Short term - master my position in developing conservation easements. Long term - see the easement program and my role expand.
94. Continue learning and improving myself in duties and task while teaching others my life experiences as they relate to my job, strive to show integrity as a professional face for the agency in every task or detail I am involved with. Happy with the technician duties and responsibilities, do not have a desire to move to another job necessarily. Earn a comfortable living while enjoying my job till retirement in 10-15 years.
95. To be in position to facilitate effective and efficient change both at the field and upper management levels. To continue to practice forestry in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner.
96. Continuing to provide quality service to the citizens of VA. Retirement
97. Short- & long-term goals are to remain in my current role for the foreseeable future.
98. Short term: Continue to become more knowledgeable and proficient at my job long term: Retire with a successful career in Forestry.
99. improved learning as a short-term goal, long term goal - retire and mentor younger generation.
100. Obtain additional certifications relevant to my position.
101. Work on every SF in the State. Expand my formal education in forestry, and forest products. Make the place I work out of look as good as it did in its heyday.
102. Be someone that others respect and trust. Be a "go-to" for others. Continue gaining fire experiences and opportunities. Explore other fire qualification options. Develop my leadership skills and hone natural abilities. Grow my professional knowledge. Become more confident in my

knowledge and abilities. Become efficient and an expert at the things I already do. Not just "good enough". Constantly improve the quality of my work throughout my career. Represent the values of Duty, Respect, and Integrity. Retire from VDOF. To be even a fraction of a person as Rocky Wood.

103. short term - make everything the best I can long term - stay here until retirement.
104. Short-term career goals would involve continued professional development of resume-worthy skills and qualifications. Long-term career goals involve either promotional opportunity within the agency that result in higher salary/leadership opportunities,
105. current short term is to expand my knowledge with forest management practices as well as fire suppression and command tactics.
106. Continue to advance when opportunities present themselves.
107. I would like to feel that my strength could be utilized and an opportunity for growth would present itself. If it doesn't, I will be looking for other opportunities.
108. I would enjoy opportunities to participate in decision making discussion of the agency, especially in the fire and emergency response fields.
109. Would like to stay at DOF. Would like to move in a higher position.
110. Short-term is to continue to do my best and be financially stable. Long-term I'd like to grow, learn and prepare myself to move up into higher level positions.
111. Meet or exceed job expectations; maintain peace; find a position that gives me greater purpose.
112. Short term--do a great job where I am now. Long term, I don't see that much room for advancement within DOF. I will likely have to move agencies to progress much further.
113. stay updated when needed.
114. Retirement...
115. short term; get trained and keep learning; long term; be able to make a living that is enough to support myself.
116. Provide the best service possible in my current position.
117. make the agency more efficient.
118. More than likely, I will have this role until I retire in a few years.
119. short-term is to support staff and collaborate and assist when needed. Long-term, is to increase administrative functions to work effectively and efficiently across the agency.

25. How can we improve teamwork at DOF?

(123 responses)

1. I'm not sure. My experience with my immediate coworkers has been very positive, and it feels like we are all pulling in the same direction.
2. Begin listening to the ideas and concerns of field personnel within the agency. I have heard good suggestions of how things could be streamlined and improved to better serve the public, be quickly dismissed, or not even considered.
3. Fully staffed.
4. Annual review process (EWP) should incorporate feedback of employees for their supervisor (indirectly through the supervisor's supervisor or HR, to encourage honest feedback) and possible colleagues reviews (closer to a 360 review), instead of just a one-way review of an employee by their supervisor.
5. increased awareness of the benefits and advantages of working as a team, maintaining good open lines of communication
6. Communication
7. I see nothing wrong with our teamwork.
8. Reduce turnover.
9. have everyone at the field level doing the same job so there no matter who you go to they can help you with any question you have, ex make all the technician forester and have everyone do a forester and technician job at the same time, this will help improve knowledge of the land being manage and provide better service to landowners.
10. Not sure
11. First identify programs and identify who is really part of the team. Some programs are not equally on the decision table.
12. Increase pay so that new hires will be stay longer once they are trained and not have the turnover that we have now.
13. Stop promoting the fact that the reduction of field supervisors improved agency culture.
14. Communication from department to department
15. less disconnect between field staff and HQ staff
16. Self-motivation
17. Stop doing meaningless activities and allow us to work together on projects and work that needs to be done instead of pulling us away from the field to do team building exercises.
18. Develop tasks or projects that require more teamwork.
19. Communication and transparency are key. In my tenure here it is the worst I have seen it. This is most likely due to all of the recent agency and state changes. Some of this is way out of VDOF's control but we can do better and should.

20. Better inter-agency communication.
21. Its great
22. Sometimes the communication does not always get passed on to DOF staff.
23. Show consistent support and appreciation from leadership.
24. Hire team players.
25. Teamwork is not always applicable.
26. Work as a team more often.
27. Keep people accountable with time frames and deadlines.
28. Change the management culture.
29. Keep the ones we have, provide incentives for this.
30. Make sure all team members are helping with the workload.
31. more openness and understanding.
32. Teamwork at VDOF among field staff is generally very good. Teamwork at program level is generally okay. Vertical teamwork relationship between field staff to supervisors/administration/program managers is poor. I'm not sure how to improve vertical teamwork. Field staff must believe their supervisors/administration/program managers are there to help deliver agency goals to citizens, which is delivered by field staff. Field staff must understand the unique roles of agency leadership. Both must understand and respect the importance of the other. I think the only way to improve is through communication (listening, explaining [not just telling], and both adapting to meet realistic expectations of others [learned through listening]) and spending time together. This gets to question 7- how approachable is agency leadership. I did not perceive agency administration to be approachable until I got to know them, understand personalities, and know what to expect. Rob, Ed, or Terry writing the message to go along with distribution of the branch helps a great deal, I think. Program managers have always seemed approachable to me, from the very beginning of my time at VDOF. The best ones have approached their role as supporting field staff.
33. Better communications from CO to field and vice versa. Move further away from my program is the top priority.
34. listen (really listen) to the concerns of the field staff.
35. Mentorship program
36. Projects that involve interaction with others, working side by side
37. More shared excel sheets.
38. Improve morale.
39. I suspect a refrain will be communications. We have tackled "silos" in the past but never succeeded. I feel we are erecting more with the move to districts. Of the 4-word descriptions,

there is a sense of more of us and them today than there probably was in the work unit approach. Why is it that those not in the field are not restricted during spring and faux fire seasons? That does not help to build cohesion. I think this has been a long-term gripe with the field. It also seems we continue to do things because we always did them. Certainly, there are things we can cut at this lower MEL.

40. Keep the administrative "BS" out of the field.
41. Upper management would need to listen more to the workers in the trenches. Many have been here as long as or longer than management, have equal education and knowledge, and have good ideas that might work.
42. leadership becoming more engaged at what is really going on.
43. Over the past 6 months or so I have personally felt like more of a team than I had previously. It helps to have consistent recurring meetings and activities that you can do in conjunction with coworkers. The biggest issue with teamwork in my specific situation is that my main team is spread out throughout the entire state making it hard to do work together on a regular basis. It could help to highlight different sections/ people within DOF monthly so everyone can get a better idea of what they do in the agency. I know there are plenty of people who work for DOF that I don't really know what their job entails.
44. Continue employee trainings and meetings.
45. Understanding some people has more experience than other. To be patient with the ones less experienced.
46. Continue providing opportunities to highlight the importance of diversity and inclusivity.
47. Apply common sense to management decisions. Address problems more directly to be less disruptive.
48. Improve leadership to a more servant-based leadership model.
49. Better internal communication, clear and practical strategic plan
50. Get together more often.
51. Most people are very easy to get along with. There are always a few "bad apples" that make things difficult for everyone. I doubt there's a way to avoid that in any workplace.
52. better pay.
53. A
54. Team building exercises, lunches, etc.
55. i would rather that we not
56. We have made some great, new hires in terms of teamwork potential. We are so spread out geographically trying to get everything done that we don't spend much time together anymore.
57. Facilitate better and more efficient Forest Management Plan content/creation, particularly since many foresters are not forestry trained prior to employment.
58. Train leaders to use team-oriented leadership strategies.

59. Opportunities to get to know & work with other employees. -- District Supervisors providing direction & framework for District Members to interact on both personal & professional levels. Regional Meeting "meet & greets" ...
60. Some specialist roles are not really a part of any team. Creating one might help.
61. Increase team size through sound hiring practices (i.e., right person for the right job vs desperation hiring), Increase field staff positions so that the workload is manageable, increase salaries across the board so that people are less inclined to seek secondary employment and more likely to be able to participate in team-building events. Increase visibility of and recognition by Executive Team members to field staff, but only if positive. C-suite team should know have at least one "war-story" experience that they can recall about each employee in VDOF on demand. Building teamwork from the top begins with knowing your team.
62. Maybe we can give the districts ideas on how to develop teamwork.
63. continue to hire the right people that can foster great relationships with their coworkers.
64. More Team Meetings
65. Retain employees. The constant revolving door of employees is not conducive to good teamwork. Employees are in constant state of either training new employees or being trained as a new employee. This is extremely bad for our external customers as there is no continuity of service.
66. Have supervisors provide accurate expectations to all employees while providing a clear chain of command. Do a better job recruiting using benefits to attract and retain new hires for long term retention so that the culture is not one of come and go. I feel the HR and recruitment process is lacking and this fosters a lack of desire to bond with other employees.
67. More communication and training opportunities
68. I feel that the agency has done well over the last few years encouraging more team meetings and events. This has translated into our team gathering for timber marking projects and prescribed burns.
69. We should make decisions on what our core duties are and eliminate as much of the surrounding noise as possible. We avoid even the smallest change when it comes to services provided. This increase in focus would improve teamwork because we would not be pulled in so many different directions.
70. Consistent and clear messages. Focus on the things that we do well, too many times I believe most of us feel stretched very thin because we are trying to do everything. (Sometimes of our own accord). There are times when you are off, not working, but you do not really feel off. Give everyone clearly defined roles and space to complete the task.
71. The executive leadership needs to listen to their agency and make the changes folks have been asking for years. Communication from HQ's is essentially non-existent.
72. Our district works well together now.
73. DOF needs to go to bat for pay increases at benefits that will help their employees, especially the ones that have stayed.

74. Hire more trained foresters. Hire more competent forestry technicians. Encourage DRF's and RFs to visit the field more regularly, to see what their staff are doing.
75. Recruit, Hire, and Keep good employees.
76. Better communication between field and admin staff
77. More opportunities to network with other employees. I'd love to see the agency bring back the 2-3 day all employee camps. It's hard to work with people you don't know....
78. I think more opportunities to share information about program initiatives and explore ways programs and initiatives intersect could lead to improved teamwork.
79. even application of policies & procedures, share internal lessons learned reports/AAR details so we can review & learn from them as a team.
80. keep employees.
81. Clarify expectations, hold all units equally accountable to those expectations, communicate more freely, engage in joint projects.
82. Place more responsibility and decision-making capacity on district and field staff.
83. More meetings or shared site visits between foresters/technicians. We work alone most of the time.
84. Better communication, less tolerance for staff who are overly critical/negative, zero tolerance for staff who share sensitive information, implementation/overhaul of processes, more training in short bursts and support of processes by all levels of management. To reduce turnover, have periodic scheduled conversations with staff to provide them with information on possible career paths (HR, not direct supervisors - particularly for younger staff - i.e., how can I expect to progress here at DOF?) –
85. Better communication
86. More communication and involvement with other niches and administrative levels within the agency.
87. More interaction and understanding between headquarters and some field offices/work locations.
88. District-wide trainings are good.
89. Teamwork at the field level feels strong, there are many opportunities that exist where field staff come together to accomplish projects (tree planting, burning, outreach programs, etc.) Encouraging support staff and HQ/Program staff to participate in such projects may help break down some of the "us/them" talk about field staff and HQ staff.
90. Consistency
91. Look for more opportunities to work together on projects, work toward a common goal/outcome and when the goal is met, celebrate as a team.
92. I have gotten a lot out of the whole agency meetings and the occasional talk like that given recently by Jerre Creighton or when Rob presented the Hardwood Initiative. I think those in-service type trainings are great to get to know what your colleagues do and that reveals opportunities to work together and support each other's programs.

93. Raise salary.
94. Making us a team would require a long-term holistic training program for all the employees from secretaries to department heads to the leadership team. Fiscal should have to buy food for a fire at 800pm with a cashier that cannot take off the taxes or codes it wrong. They should also have to be able to show someone how to plant a tree correctly. (Just as the field has to code a cc statement not field work total data entry). Leadership should have to respond to a wildfire and must suppress and perform law investigations the reporting and the summons issuance (in the roughest area of the county) at least once. Create specialists based on the Water Quality system where a specialist takes work off the field does not add work or a form to fill out or a survey to complete. Perform projects that a forester would have had to have done. Not a survey about why we are not doing them, then fuss that we are not doing the survey.
95. department-level strategic planning around the DOF vision and mission (perhaps adopt "operational excellence" as a component for those of us who work in administration)
96. Increased understanding and communication of each person's responsibilities.
97. have a family fun day.
98. Team building exercises and challenges.
99. Trust employees, less micromanaging in other programs and regions. Allow and support creative freedom.
100. DOF teamwork is already well improved.
101. Increase communication and connectivity of conservation and field staff.
102. I feel as an agency we try to have a model of every person to do everything. We are not all the same and each person has different skill sets and abilities. Most people don't have the ability or desire to do certain job details and then there is a tendency for that to cause friction within teamwork. Maybe a way to develop more specialty kind of positions in our districts, say like Law Enforcement, Equipment operators small and large, IT, Forest management etc.
103. Provide more opportunities for teambuilding activities, better employee recognition, and continue to improve on communications at all levels.
104. Make work fun and make employees feel GENUINELY appreciated.
105. Cannot be improved :)
106. Less workload to allow for more opportunities/ designated times for team building events.
107. team building and bonding. Having upper management show support to the field. treat everyone fairly.
108. Continue the out of state fire assignments (i.e., engine strike team to TX.) I was afforded the opportunity to learn/practice many fire tactics and experience in the 14-day assignment to TX. Also spending the time and working hard with other DOF employees strengthened the teamwork within the DOF family. I started some new friendships and built upon others. In the day-to-day operations most of the field staff is doing our own things most of the time by ourselves.
109. Let us get together more often and socialize. Agency-wide and regional meetings are okay, but we have a set schedule, things to do, and places to be which separates us. We only

see some people once or twice a year, and it would be nice to get to spend more time with them catching up and enjoying time together without formal guidelines or activities that inhibit socializing. We are too constrained by regional or district boundaries sometimes. The stories in "That's The Way It Was..." were stories of people working with others, traveling all over the state to help with projects, get things done, or just simply work together. I've been here over 5 years but less than 10, and I've only been to 4 field offices other than my own, 1 of those being outside my region, and have only done any kind of work in maybe 5 of the old work areas, 1 being outside my region. We need to get out and get to know places and people better. It's sad that there are people who have been here for decades, and they didn't even know who Rocky was.

110. supervisors should not make more work than can be done by staff. Weed out employees that do not want to work.
111. Forced collaboration and integration has seemingly been a failure. Things such as large meetings where everyone is expected to work as a team have resulted in hushed grumbling and complaining after the fact, where people who never wanted to be part of teamwork in the first place have only gone along with it because they were forced to. This has been detrimental in some cases, as those individuals who don't want to be there will actively work to be non-supportive. Conversely, opportunities that I have been given where people ***voluntarily*** associate with a given function, have seemingly had the best overall teamwork. An example of the GOOD teamwork has been the recent SE Compact engine details to Texas, Oklahoma over the last few years. Most, if not all, people who go on these assignments ***want to be there***, and it has resulted in some of the absolute best working environments I've had over my entire time with the agency. Some of the best teams, team building, bonding, and professionalism has taken place on the SE Compact strike teams. I believe integrating a more voluntary focus on teamwork activities ultimately is how we build the best teams, because people are passionate and dedicated to things they WANT to be involved. This can be further promoted by making the pathway to success and opportunity run parallel to voluntary engagement. In essence, the few who do not want to be team players, who end up being the drags at large events, shouldn't be forced to integrate, yet at the same time, those of us who willingly choose to voluntarily work in teams should see the benefit of doing so.
112. Keep improving and using good communication throughout the agency.
113. Promote being more open and transparent.
114. Communication. Be more aware of how and to whom a change, a policy and a procedure impact and get that information updated, out there and then have accountability. Everyone should be doing the same task the same way.
115. Continue to improve communication from leadership down and across regions and programs.
116. Increase moral, hold people accountable, hire within if someone is qualified for the job, don't be secretive about things, be transparent, recognize people for their work let them know they are doing a good job.
117. I think the communication all around can be improved. Not everyone is on the same page for certain things.
118. Communicate, not denigrate. Be open to listen to ideas instead of ignoring, laughing them off, told to be quiet, etc.
119. Better communication from top leadership about agency matters. More opportunities to hear directly from leadership as the chain of command doesn't always flow back down.

120. Before we can improve teamwork, DOF needs to overhaul its agency culture. This is the least welcoming agency I have ever worked for at a state, local, or federal level. As a newcomer to DOF I have encountered an astonishing amount of disinterest to outright hostility from fellow employees. I think there is serious skepticism and lack of trust when it comes to new people, programs and ideas. I wonder if this comes from DOF's paramilitary structure? Or if it's a byproduct of being in a highly autonomous male-dominated agency? To be frank, I believe this mentality is so deeply ingrained in our more senior staff that I don't think they are capable of change. Therefore, I would focus on hiring the next generation of enthusiastic, friendly, eager new staff and treating them well. Train them the right way and try to destroy the highly siloed structure we have now. DOF will also have to find a way to compensate the field better if we have any hope of retaining them.
121. Improve relations between HQ team and other areas. It feels separated.
122. Relax the chain of command structure and expectations for employee communications.
123. Better communication from leadership down on policies and procedures.

26. What training or development opportunities would most interest you?

(95 responses)

1. New and evolving technology.
2. more advanced technical repair
3. Unknown
4. I enjoyed the DOF-All meeting in June last year, it was nice to see old friends and meet new ones.
5. First Aid
6. Fire (5X)
7. Communications
8. Leadership
9. Emerging markets and impacts of energy development in Virginia.
10. Wildland fire, wilderness first aid (would be applicable to our line of work), arboriculture.
11. Fire investigation Timber cruising for hardwood Setting up and selling timber process to get more information to landowners about the process and what they should expect from the consultants we recommend.
12. Professional skills....
13. Manager coaching and mentorship of employees.
14. So, Eva has changed this year, learning everyday has been a challenge, but I like a challenge it makes you stronger in your job. The new cardinal leave program has been my great opportunity to network for other DOF employees. This is having been good training for me.
15. Program area specific certificates and trainings to further develop expertise. E.g., ISA arborist
16. Forest management trainings are always beneficial in professional growth.
17. I am always interested in hearing advance forest management concepts.
18. Information on all of the solar farms that are being installed and how they are / will affect forestry in VA.
19. Getting more part time positions full time.
20. hardwood training, better fire training
21. Advanced degrees, cross-training on topics complementary to forestry (ecology, wildlife, hydrology, forb/grass/prairie management, prescribed fire practical training such as TREX)
22. after 40+ years of resource management, I think you covered it well.
23. Both soft and hard skills workshops and courses

24. Geographic Information Systems
25. Conservation and tax incentives for landowners.
26. Forest management academy
27. Forest products and development of new uses
28. Making use of the latest technological innovations. We should be the cutting edge on technology as it relates to forest management. We are not.
29. GIS training. Drone training.
30. Fire and Forestry field trainings would be more enjoyable than classroom-based classes.
31. Any training or development that will put me in a better work environment and position.
32. Trainings and academies that are already provided, such as Fire Academies, Longwood, and regional management academies.
33. Forest management (class and field), IFRIS mapping, process of completing a project.
34. Learning how to use Cardinal confidently.
35. working with other agencies
36. Providing full-time year-round dispatch coverage for the safety of our field employees
37. advanced wildland fire training, more up to date course on herbicides, BMP's
38. budget management
39. Fire training and annual Vegetation Management Training
40. Social Media content. The agency is still missing the boat with regards to public knowledge and perception of existence and responsibilities.
41. Clear path for career advancement.
42. Outside / Other Agency training. How do others do it. Training Exchanges
43. leadership, forestry and habitat management training. Prescribed burn training like TREX events
44. Leadership, team-building skills, relationship-building skills (as folks nowadays seem more averse to the work needed to build meaningful and lasting relationships--both personal and professional)
45. It is difficult to complete some task books due to not having certified staff in the same geographic area.
46. all leadership training/manager training.
47. procurement training
48. New technologies
49. I would like to cross train in other positions to be more vital to DOF.

50. Supervisory roles, following policies and procedures, safety.
51. I think our employees could all benefit from a large fire simulation training that could provide new and old employees with some suppression tactics/strategy. I believe this would be beneficial for new employees who have never been Incident commanders. This could also help develop better tactics for future large incidents.
52. We need to focus on the basics. Starting with physical fitness, basic forestry, and basic firefighting. We are in danger of becoming an agency of professionals that can't legally call themselves foresters and can't walk up a hill.
53. Time management
54. Forest management for pine management. Also, time management skills. Some technology training, for improved efficiency.
55. new innovations, research, technology. Maintaining certifications.
56. I'll have to think on this. I think the dept. does well at offering training.
57. Not sure yet everything is still new to me.
58. scenario practice with my district
59. Additional leadership training or be engaged in agency-wide initiatives or projects.
60. Training from consulting foresters or loggers on selling timber. We get the academic side of things, but it does not always translate to industry.
61. Prescribe burning in understory environments, why it's important, how do we do it efficiently.
62. I think DOF could benefit from quick, monthly trainings on various topics - everything from email etiquette to a series of "Did you know?" We must be better with onboarding/training new staff so that they are better prepared to quickly contribute to the team. Also, staff in non-program areas are sometimes interested in learning more about the work done on the ground.
63. GIS, mentorship opportunities (both to serve as a mentor and to be a mentee), leadership.
64. More opportunities for in person fire trainings
65. More training for new hires in the forestry field.
66. Items that focus on "soft skills." We receive plenty of training and opportunities to increase our technical knowledge in forestry and fire management. There is very little formalized training on public speaking, writing plans and correspondence to landowners, basic customer service (returning calls or messages in a timely manner), and these are skills that we must possess from Day 1.
67. More fire opportunities to increase qualifications. The only way we can increase our pay is to move up in the IQS system and work with federal government to help increase our yearly income.
68. More in-service training as described above.
69. grants management, advanced Excel, organizing learning plans to develop and deliver DOF-specific training.

70. a few colleges classes.
71. Wildland fire classes
72. invasive species, assistance with a degree program.
73. More trainings during the year
74. Grant writing/applications. Stream and wetland restoration.
75. Continuing the fire training, investigative path
76. All that expose me to every aspect of the DOF.
77. Technology
78. Training on the latest technological advances in gathering and processing data should be provided at the appropriate levels for all staff. Also - fire safety, safety, SAFETY!
79. Continue with progressing through Fire Matrix - Fireline Medic/ Emergency Wilderness Medicine - Search and Rescue - Radio/ Communications Training
80. zoom presentation skills, new technologies that will help in our job,
81. Procurement/construction
82. Always more fire training, and advanced classes on dozers (the old mountain dozer course.)
83. Women in fire events/groups (fire, not forestry/natural resources). The conference a few years ago was great, but it was just an HR ploy to check a box and look good, but the follow-up was empty. Leadership development. Fire-related training and development. The National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center has several opportunities that we should try to get involved with or try to learn from and make our own opportunities. Same with the Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges. There are opportunities out there to get employees the proper training and experiences to gain qualifications in legitimate ways (emphasis on legitimate). More advanced classes offered at Longwood or fall fire academies. We are supposed to be the best at what we do. The only way we can be the best is by working and training to set ourselves up for success.
84. more invasive identification and management, and I'd love to see more updates about research by other agencies that relates to forestry.
85. hardwood management
86. Aviation related training opportunities would be phenomenal. Getting our people into real heavy equipment training roles is also going to be paramount to our continued deliverance of a high standard for fighting fire, especially as we continue to lose our experienced staff to retirements etc. I feel as though we are approaching a cliff where we're soon going to lose a large chunk of our real experience and will be left lagging so far behind it will be incredibly difficult for us to step up. Outside of fire, I feel that there are several employees that would benefit from forest management training outside of foresters. The truth of the matter is we are not attracting job candidates with a background in Forestry like we used to. Granted, there are certainly still some applicants, however most folks with a degree in forestry or related field are going to higher paying jobs. This is resulting in a lower standard of employee with regards to sound scientific knowledge behind forest management. We have been relying too heavily on university training to gain these skills, and now that we've lowered the standard, it's starting to catch up with us. My honest

opinion is that every single employee within the VDOF should be able to speak intelligently and informatively on forest management, even if their day job is not being a forester or even technician. We should ***all*** have some minimum standard of knowledge when it comes to talking to the public or even cooperators. This isn't the fault of our employees, but it can be remedied by offering more in-house training/on-the-job education.

87. fire incident command and tactics trainings, fire investigations classes, beginner to intermediate forest management classes
88. Leadership development
89. Anything to help with our jobs.
90. I'm open to any training and development, none specifically come to mind.
91. Tree ID Class! Chainsaw for beginners.
92. diagnostics of tree illnesses! invasive species management on a large scale
93. I could see a benefit in a secondary training focus for employees who are beyond our basic training matrix.
94. Learning more about the agency.
95. Team building for the administrative team and the ELT.

27. If another employer offered you a position at a 10% increase, would you consider accepting?**Why or why not?**

(148 responses)

1. Yes. 10% would be a significant salary increase for me and would make saving retirement money and planning for my future easier. While I would like to stay with the Agency, an opportunity of with that kind of increase would be hard to ignore.
2. Probably would, may not take 10 percent increase if potential employer made employees feel appreciated.
3. Yes, better work conditions and more money.
4. Yes. The pay, agency culture, and creativeness of my position are not strong enough to keep me.
5. No, enjoy the benefits of working the DOF and the friendliness and the people of DOF.
6. Yes, it would be deserved given our qualifications and certifications.
7. Somewhat, I am not sure that 10% alone is enough to justify moving to the private sector.
8. No. Been here 43 years no need to change now.
9. Money is not everything and I cannot answer this without more information.
10. yes, because i feel like the work we do does not reflect how we get paid and being on call 24/7
11. 365 days of the year and get no extra pay for it we feel underpaid as a staff.
12. Yes, family welfare.
13. No, I have invested much in my career, and I love what I do the best I would do is to approach the Executive, they may see a need for adjustment.
14. Yes
15. I would if the work to life balance was similar. I must make sure I do what is best for my family.
16. No, it would take more than that 20% possible.
17. No
18. Raise
19. Depends on what the position is, if it is same responsibilities and duties yes and I would ask for more currently. If it were more responsibilities, then no because 10% would not even cover having more responsibilities.
20. No. Not enough of a pay increase to justify the change. Cost-of-living is high, where I live.
21. Not at this point, because I am new to the agency and feel that I am being given many opportunities to gain experience and take trainings. I appreciate the myriad of experiences that this job provides.

22. Yes. It is a little about money but more about being poorly managed. My supervisor will be the cause if I leave VDOF because I really like what I do.
23. No, I am incredibly pleased with my current job. I am also vested in VRS to start over on my retirement.
24. Yes, if that position was something I was interested in and did not have fire responsibility.
25. Maybe would look at the job and placement.
26. No, I just wanted to work out this year.
27. Yes, VDOF does not consistently provide pay raise increases as employees gain expertise and add increasing value to the Agency. Salaries do not come close to matching cost of living expenses and the work that is asked of us, or salaries offered from partner organizations.
28. Yes, depending on the employer.
29. I would evaluate the entire hiring package.
30. All things being equal, which they often are not, yes.
31. depends on situation.
32. Yes, not going to happen here.
33. I would consider, it is difficult to get ahead financially in today's economy.
34. Maybe if it had benefits. Even just paid holidays.
35. I may, inflation has destroyed the common paycheck.
36. Sure. It would be foolish not to consider it. I would not accept it though. I enjoy working at VDOF and there are many intangible benefits. Plus, I have been here too long to leave!
37. No Enjoy my job.
38. No, but I would ask DOF to consider the same increase - and recognize my talents/experience.
39. No because I like my job here and feel valued by my coworkers and managers. But DOF could also offer a 10% pay increase to retain good employees and attract new, qualified workers too.
40. It depends on who, what the position was, that's more important than the increase
41. At my current salary I am finding it next to impossible to find a house. I wish there was a program to help first responders afford a house in their given responding area... We are asked to live in certain areas to respond to fires, but I feel some of our salaries do not reflect the reality in today's world of making this happen. I am not the only one who is having trouble with this.
42. Yes, we are so behind times its crazy. We are expected to issue summons and do law enforcement with a fire rake for personal protection. We test 50 and over with a one mile walk and then send them to arduous duty on a mountain. We need an early retirement. We are not firefighters or law enforcement but expected to be without any compensation. Stand by during fire season should be compensated for the extra hours.

43. I would consider it especially if I was able to leave the area during fire season.
44. Not at this point in my career. Frankly, 10 percent of our salary level for newer employees (or even longer term) is abysmal. Younger employees that leave are certainly getting more than that in most cases, and they are certainly not restricted in their new position.
45. It would have to have some other significant rewards to accept just a 10% increase from where I am now. Salaries are low as it is.
46. No. Too many unknowns about a job at which you have never worked.
47. If I did not have to move and if the employer had a better appreciation for my skills, i.e., a more fulfilling job. It's not about the money at all. I'd take a lower salary for the above conditions.
48. No - too close to retirement.
49. Yes, simply because the pay at DOF compared to other agencies/ companies seems to always be on the lower end. This is one of my main concerns with my current position. I really enjoy the work; however, I still need to be able to pay for certain necessities. I do not currently own a home, have a car payment, have a child or even a pet (all of which I would like) and I still feel consistently worried about finances and how much I make/save. The cost of living now, vs. how much it was 30-50 years ago is drastically different and it seems like similar positions to the one I have now would have been able to afford those things 30-50 years ago without as much worry. Like most people in the agency, I did not get into Forestry to become rich, however, there are certain things in a modest life that I would hope a career like mine could pay for comfortably. Although I certainly do not want to think about money and base decisions solely on salary, I think I would be doing myself and my family a disservice if I didn't consider it in the equation. I also think that a more competitive salary will inevitably lead to less turnover and vacancies throughout the agency which will help us to better serve people throughout the state.
50. I would consider another job offer but it would depend on what type of position being offered. A 10% increase may not sound like a lot but to combat inflation and provide for a family every penny counts.
51. I would consider if I liked the job, I would be doing. It is about feeling comfortable doing what you like.
52. I personally wouldn't consider it at this time. I am currently extremely happy with the duties of my job, the pay, and benefits. It feels as though the current agency leadership is doing everything, they can improve working conditions for employees, like requesting pay raises and bonuses. I also think that I can benefit the agency as much as I am benefiting from it and see myself pursuing a long career with DOF.
53. Possibly but benefits are a large factor.
54. Yes, I would consider accepting. My number one concern here is maxing out on salary and the current salary not keeping up with cost of living. We did not get in this field to make money, but it would be nice to be more closely compensated with other related industries and could help with employee retention.
55. Yes, agency is still behind on pay. Times are tight. Do not forget about people who work in the field!
56. Depends on the position, but probably not because 10% is not much.

57. No, I like my job and where I am. Of course, more money is tempting but at this point in my life I'm not looking to move.
58. Probably not, I am extremely comfortable where I am.
59. Yes, my salary does not reflect my current certifications, the cost of living, or what other agencies are paying.
60. No. It is not commensurate with my value as an employee.
61. No, it would have to be a 50% pay increase. I like this job but it should pay higher to stay competitive.
62. depends on the work schedule and location. I like what I have going on now.
63. Yes. I would be a fool to not consider a pay raise, especially if that job does not include first responder duties.
64. Yes, if it would not detrimentally affect retirement. \$ makes the world go round.
65. Yes, if the company had a positive culture, quality leadership, high performing team, advancement opportunities, fulfilling work and comparable benefits.
66. Salary? yes. Money is always a factor especially for lower-level positions.
67. Yes. My personal life is important, and I can do more things I enjoy outside of work if I make more money. Also, my time is very restricted working for DOF. I must turn down a lot of activities because of being on call. The longer I stay at DOF, the more I miss.
68. No. I am happy with what I do, and the benefits of this job (both personally and professionally) far outweigh a measly 10% increase. Now, a 200% increase might pique my interest...
69. Yes, if they also offer regular increases for when I stay with the employer and if I work to get certifications that benefit them.
70. DOF has struggled in the past to match offers brought to them.
71. Yes, if the opportunity was right.
72. Probably not, I like it here.
73. Maybe
74. I would consider it. State employee salaries have lagged industry far too long. Current salaries for industry foresters in the field are ranging from 70k-110k with 5 years' experience and DOF techs and foresters are 34k- to 60k after 30 years of service?
75. No, because I know the value of our benefits here, but do all the employees...I do not think so. Do better in really driving that home. We need to recruit from the outside and stop pulling from other State groups. It only harms our state partners.
76. If the job has less responsibility and similar health insurance, then it would something to consider.
77. Probably not for 10%
78. No, because I doubt, they would offer the same amount of non-monetary benefits such as leave,

flexibility in schedule, and comradery.

79. I would consider it due to what I mentioned earlier. There are times when you are off, but you are always thinking in the background that something is going to come up. We are first responders, but over the last two decades we get involved in a lot more than just fire and storm response. Fires in fire season, snow/ice storms, hurricanes, covid, and the list could go on. I know we are all-hazards, but it seems like it happens more often. This makes it hard to plan for your day-to-day job and again you are always looking over your shoulder just wondering what is next to derail you from your main job. Some real like the all-hazards response and that is great, we need that. But others, not just me, feel burnt out after a while. The thought of having a job where you are not on call all the time is appealing sometimes.
80. Yes, I would consider the offer. I do not want to leave the agency at all but there are numerous things that need to change, and it is not about the money.
81. Yes, about to retire.
82. 50/50. I would for the pay because as an agency people are not getting paid for the number of work/responsibilities they are tasked with. On the other hand, I enjoy working with the field folks and my team.
83. I would consider it. Currently, field staff are asked to enforce fire laws, and we are poorly trained and poorly equipped for this aspect of our job. Also, there is a vast disconnect between the regional office and field staff.
84. Currently too close to retirement. After that yes
85. No. I am retiring. 10 years ago, I would because the pay is so bad for what we do. A 10% increase and reducing risk from firefighting would be attractive.
86. At this point in my career, I wouldn't accept it. However, If I had been here less than 5 years, I would highly consider it.
87. Currently no. I am still working on becoming proficient at my current job so I wouldn't want to start something new that I must relearn.
88. Possibly if benefits were similar.
89. Probably not
90. Yes, but that is all things being equal.
91. Yes - if it is a challenging opportunity. I like to be challenged and am open to pursuing those challenges.
92. Yes. Benefits are good but fire isn't exactly a get rich career.
93. Probably not, I like my coworkers and flexible work schedule.
94. It depends on what the job is, if it was in a similar field then I would consider it
95. would depend on many factors - expected travel time, teleworking options, promotion/position, specific responsibilities, etc. I would like to think that I would stay at DOF because I do enjoy the working environment, and I'm aware that not all agencies offer a "family" environment - that is important to me.

96. The additional benefits of working for VDOF would outweigh a 10% salary increase, so I while I may consider it, a 10% increase would not be enough for me to accept a position outside of the agency.
97. Yes. DOF salaries can be challenging, especially during tough financial times and although raises come, they are typically limited, especially if maintaining the same position.
98. I would consider it, but very unlikely to accept due to the work the DOF does and the close-knit agency culture.
99. Possibly,
100. I'm not sure I would. The health benefits, flexible work schedule, and a pension are particularly important to my current situation. I am enjoying what I do, and I enjoy the people I work with. The increase in pay would be helpful, but it may be at the cost of some of the flexibility I currently have in this job, which is particularly important as a full-time employee raising a family. Plus, working as a state-employee is a fairly "recession-proof" and now "pandemic proof" job. I was fortunate to still have a job through some very uncertain times.
101. Absolutely. Our agency is one of the lowest paid agencies in the state. There is no opportunity to increase pay in the job title that we do. I do not want to move up in the agency and must work in Charlottesville. I love serving the people in my community. For the people who want to stay in a county level role, there is no way to increase pay. We get 3% every so often, but it's not every year. Pay is way we have such a high turnover. DOF needs to fight for their employees and give justification why we need more funds.
102. Yes, don't have very strong ties to the Department
103. I would consider it. While I enjoy my work with VDOF and appreciate the agency and its mission, we are not paid on par with our peers at other VA agencies.
104. No, I have been here too long.
105. Yes, other employers are offering similar benefits (i.e., health care)
106. No, I enjoy my job and career here at the DOF, but let's be real if you are going to ask about our salaries. The salaries for DOF Foresters and Technicians are not off just by 10% more like 30-40%
107. Yes, I would consider it if it progressed my career path faster than is currently feasible at DOF and potentially offered more remote work options.
108. yes. Inflation.
109. Yes, because I am unsure of when I might be able to achieve the 10% raise at DOF.
110. It depends on the job description, but I probably would. I cannot afford to work at the current salary forever.
111. No, it's not about the money.
112. Not currently and not at this stage in my career.
113. If it was a promotion yes gladly

114. Depends on if it would meet the same work/life balance.
115. Probably not. VDOF has always support family life which has allowed flexibility. Continue to allow flexibility in schedules.
116. No, I would not accept because I love my job
117. Absolutely! Always eager for expanding my role and income.
118. A person always needs to better themselves in whatever avenues possible, whether it be work ethics, training opportunities, financial benefit or whatever. As always before in my life I would look at the total picture one cannot solely based decisions on money, but we all work for compensation, and it would have to be considered.
119. Absolutely. I really enjoy what I do with the DOF and like the overall atmosphere that this job provides. However, I will always do what is best for myself and my family. I would always consider the pros and cons of any new opportunity compared to what I currently have with the DOF.
120. No, I have too many years invested and 10% of a meager salary is not very meaningful.
121. Yes, because our salaries are sub-par.
122. Possibly depending on roles/responsibilities, because 10% is a big boost in salary and would provide me and my family more financial stability.
123. the increase would have to be greater. I have too much time invested here. If I were younger yes. DOF offering people more money would help with retention or paid on call time
124. Not currently. I enjoy my job and value DOF's mission.
125. The above statement is too vague to answer. If I assume the offered position is the exact same roles and duties, work schedule, same style of direct supervisor, and benefits as the one I am currently in at the DOF; honestly, I would possibly accept, but I would have to think on it before. The joke is that many lower field staff have to work two jobs. The DOF job for the benefits, and the side one for the pay.
126. No. You'd be hard-pressed to find a better place to work than VDOF. The grass would not be greener on the other side.
127. Yes, as much as I enjoy my job, I am not making enough money to save for my future.
128. Probably not at 10%. After 30 years of service, yes, depending on who the employer is.
129. No extremely satisfied with my position.
130. Yes. The biggest reason is inflation. Annual inflationary numbers are outpacing even cost of living increases, to the point that what annual raises we have gotten (which have admittedly been numerous and in generous amounts) are STILL not keeping up with inflation enough to see any meaningful increase in salary. This is such an issue now that even 10% does not fully rectify the problem. Other agencies have seen across the board salary adjustments to reflect the jobs market, often being larger agencies. Why is the VDOF still lagging so far behind as it pertains to salary? Realistically, none of our field staff should be making under \$40k, ***minimum***, even as a new employee. Experienced field staff with years of training and certifications should be making much more. The USFS is a good example of the salary increases that would retain more

employees. Having step increases and pay scales that trigger with years, experience, certifications etc., goes a long way for retention than simply being at your hired salary band plus whatever annual raises are afforded by the legislation.

131. Coming to DOF I left a career fire dept with 10 years of service and took a 5K/year decrease to find a more enjoyable career path, 2 years in this position I feel like I made a good decision, at this time would not leave just for a pay increase.
132. Depends on the specific job duties and additional benefits package offered, but yes, I would at least consider. Pay has been an issue for many years so any increase would be enticing.
133. Maybe. But finding a new position for 20% or more would not be difficult.
134. It would depend, of course, on other factors. I would look at the offer, but the salary increase by itself would not be the determining factor.
135. Yes, aside from switching positions with the agency, there are limited opportunities for advancement in the job I currently reside in. I hope that VDOF can create career pathways where employees can have the opportunities to be compensated for trainings & qualifications as added bonuses. It's hard to be expected to be a first responder when you are not compensated appropriately.
136. It depends on what the job was and if it was a state agency. I have too many years to go to the private sector. That is why I haven't left.
137. I would because I always need to increase my income, but it would have to be very similar or offer me a lot all around to make me accept it.
138. Yes. Hopefully, a greater sense of purpose. A fresh start.
139. Yes. I am underpaid for the work I do.
140. Not currently. I enjoy what I do and want to continue for now. And when I do move to a different employer, I am confident I will earn more than a 10% raise.
141. would depend on the situation.
142. Probably not
143. If there was opportunity for upward mobility, then yes. I cannot support myself on this salary and an increase would help combat inflation.
144. It would also depend on the other compensation involved, mainly VRS and health insurance.
145. No, too late in my career.
146. I would always consider, but 10% would not be enough.
147. Would depend on the benefits that accompanied the increase and location.
148. No, not at this time, I feel valued and trusted at DOF.

28. Do you feel your supervisor treats all team members equally and fairly?

(142 responses)

1. Yes (106X)
2. No (7X)
3. At the local level yes, in higher levels of the agency not so much.
4. Somewhat, more responsibility is placed on some shoulders than others.
5. I do not have enough information to that question.
6. Not really present until a problem presents itself to them.
7. Sometimes, that is where the communication comes in.
8. Too early to tell.
9. For the most part
10. I do, my supervisor is very fair and recognizes strengths and weakness' well and encourages us in a positive way.
11. No sure?
12. Yes, our supervisors treat everyone equally and with respect. All my supervisors have made it clear that they are available to hear any questions or concerns.
13. He tries to make the best use of the different skill sets we have. He is not a natural-born provider of compliments or appreciation.
14. My supervisor's contact and communication are minimal. It is equally applied.
15. For the most part
16. In my office, yes
17. My supervisor does an excellent job.
18. My supervisor genuinely cares but has a good relationship with some other people more.
19. I can see some favoritism within DOF but no more that you would see anywhere else. I do not think it rises to a level to be overly concerned about. However, as a supervisor, it is something to always be aware of and be careful not to become best friends with subordinates.
20. He tries, but I am not sure he always checks policy before making a decision. I think it is just inexperience, not lack of trying.
21. Mine does, others do not
22. Somewhat. Seems like some areas get all the new things, and others do not even when asking.
23. Seems to. I cannot say I have always felt that way with some of my previous supervisors, but perhaps those times where I felt I was being held to a higher standard than my peers has helped me to get where I am today.

24. No. My supervisor is not knowledgeable about the work our team does, the agency, or its processes. He relies too heavily on all his underlings to perform his job, which is unfair across the board, but he is particularly dismissive of the contributions of the women on his team.
25. as much as possible
26. Not all the time. I have seen first-hand that there is a level of favoritism across the agency at various levels.
27. My supervisor, yes. Other supervisors, definitely not.
28. for the most part
29. Absolutely. I am fortunate enough to have one of the best people in the agency as my supervisor.
30. Immediate supervisor, yes. Up the ladder, no.
31. My current supervisor, yes. Previous supervisors, yes and no. There is a culture in the DOF across most districts that any problems that come up should be treated with the "shotgun approach". In short, a one-size-fits-all solution. In some cases, this is appropriate, however, in many other cases - this only serves to punish people who aren't the primary source of problems as equally as the ones who are. Conversely, success is also treated in many cases as an "equal and across the board" approach. The industry term for this has become "equity", and while it may not have been the subject of leadership meetings, I can tell you through this survey what most people are only saying in hushed tones and whispers - that this sort of "equality of outcome" is becoming a huge concern for so many. Similar to the above answer about allowing voluntary contribution to teamwork, the idea of "we all simultaneously win or lose" has stifled creativity and effort. Many people in the field feel as though their efforts as the team player or "go getter" are not appreciated if they are rewarded as equally as the person who doesn't want to be involved in anything, and conversely are punished as equally as the person who is the primary problem. I know two individual people who have left the agency who have each cited this as the primary reason for leaving above all else, while a handful of others have at least mentioned it as being a problem.

29. Do you have any additional comments or concerns that senior management needs to be aware of?

(80 responses)

1. The agency seems to have little regard for employees with more years of service. Considering the starting salary for a forester with no experience is now \$40,000, it appears that my experience and qualifications are only worth a little more \$500 annually to the agency and that doesn't seem appropriate. That's only ~1% average annual increase in base pay. I'd like to see some effort on the part of the agency to make pay for experienced employees more fair, equitable and in line with the new starting salaries of these positions. Evaluations often emphasize the things that didn't get accomplished and often ignore the extra accomplishments that far exceed initial goals. This is troubling when we spend so much time hitting the high spots and often have the "extra" time to get to the "other" things.
2. Doing good forestry seems to have taken a back seat to special projects and bureaucratic compliance. Esprit de corps seems to be only at the team or frontline level if there. Buy-in is not sought from personnel, it is dictated. I have become a yes person and that is all the DOF wants of me.
3. Maybe periodically put info and articles in the newsletter pertaining to the value of teamwork.
4. The department needs to be clear on the exact responsibilities of employees.
5. Keep up the good work.
6. Delta Dental is a sinking ship. It is getting harder to find offices that accept it. Two dentists have suggested I am better off without it because Delta patients are "second class citizens".
7. At times, there are so many changes that come in short period when employees are busy, not able to meet numerous short deadlines. Too many important notices in the branch instead of direct communications from supervisors. Not effective that way!!
8. Hiring practices need to be looked at. Don't predetermine who is hired for a position before you know who the applicants are.
9. DFs (at least mine) are doing their best but stretched too thin to be truly effective. Training needs to be (at least partially) off-loaded from front line supervisors and standardized across the agency.
10. There seems to be a disagreement about how much of an impact turnover is having on our agency. The impact being felt by field staff is VERY significant and could lead to serious issues. Workloads are already high enough and constant training and covering gaps causes additional stress and frustrations. Especially as we continue to add new programs on top of the ones already in place.
11. Would be helpful to have some kind of guide regarding what all the positions in the agency do. Sometimes it is unclear what everyone's roles are, and it would be helpful for new employees to see how all roles in the agency are important and how they connect.
12. The main one would be ability to compensate for our fire season having to be on standby because for some people the springtime is the time, they are able to do some things outside of their county but with the current response to fires many people are stuck at home having to cancel plans because they might have a fire. Yes, this has always been an issue, but it seems the older generation understood this, but the newer generation of employees are hard to keep because they do not understand why they must stay without being compensated. Also, the 4pm

burn law is a waste of time when people can write exemptions to burn multiple acres and not get in any trouble but someone trying to burn a pile of leaves in the ditch line with a water hose is written a ticket and must appear in court. Yes, this is a state law but either make it no burning period or just get rid of the law.

13. District Foresters are undertrained and underexperienced as new supervisors. Create an intensive in-house training program for new supervisors.
14. I feel senior management is very open to any suggestions I have made about the agency.
15. We used to do training one on one, I realize that we do not have a full staff. Hopefully there can be some training involved in the present future. The Charlottesville Headquarters has been my network for questions when I needed answers. Everyone has been so great. Sometimes it is good to have a team meeting with other co-workers that do the same job we do. You learn how to perform your job duties to best of your capabilities. It is amazing when you have those meetings that can get more out of the training.
16. As employees hit the 2–3-year mark, this is often a time when our best new hires jump over to a better paying organization. Field employees are also very aware when someone gets hired on as a brand-new employee and making more or the same as someone who has served many years.
17. Please, if you hear nothing else, quit giving this type of stuff to us in the middle of spring fire season. Many of us are logging 50-to-60-hour weeks. This is our busiest time of year. None field personal continually put deadlines and workloads on us that could easily be done at an alternative time of year. They seem oblivious as to what are lives are like at this time of year.
18. It is good to see the Department is giving potential Technicians an opportunity without a 4-year degree, this needs to happen more.
19. To keep more part time people, you need to offer them incentives. Paid holidays, retirement eligibility even if it's 2 for 1. Too many companies hiring with higher pay and benefits. You have to offer something to get people to stay. No need for overtime/comp time when you have part time employees.
20. rules and policies are not applied uniformly throughout the agency.
21. Keep field informed. The good and the bad.
22. The agency has some very talented people. I get frustrated when I'm not kept in the info loop - seems at times no one cares about the individual or their efforts to get the job done well and to the highest standards.
23. Work to address "us" vs. "them" mentality if it comes up. We're all on the same team. Keep avenue open for interaction with various work units, HQ, nursery, state forests.
24. If there are governmental programs to help state employees/first responders find and afford housing this information should be made readily available to employees. I have asked several mortgage lenders; all they know of is some breaks from the bank at close out.
25. I feel that the state forester has not kept up with the 100 or so field people. Our benefits for firefighting are nonexistent.
26. The broken record will continue to skip. The level of salary is not where it needs to be. New grads are often getting 10K higher offers. Current employees leave for 15-20% more. Nothing will change without better pay. Maybe not even then. Benefits are great, leave earning is great. Just don't take any leave in the spring or the fall (yes, I know there is procedure to take leave but

then there is a limited number of people to respond to fires due to the number of field staff available). BTW fires happen all year, what is so special about spring and fall. Get rid of fall and call it what it is, spring 4:00 pm ticket season.

27. DOF has lost the intimate relationships it once had with landowners in favor of paper pushing. There is too much emphasis on passing the buck on to consulting foresters or other contractors and landowners do not have impartial representation for forestry projects.
28. I think some of the new job listings and HR rules has changed too fast. I have witnessed inconsistencies with advertising as well. For example, I was told there needed to be three people applying to do interviews but then a few weeks later that is no longer a rule.
29. People with more experience need to teach and be patient with people that has less experience, and it is in the learning process.
30. One area where I feel the department could improve is its technological capabilities. I think it would improve worker productivity to ensure all offices have reliable internet and updated office hardware.
31. Do not pay part-time positions more than your full-time employees.
32. Some people are too eager to burn, creating dangerous environments.
33. Better Pay
34. Until we come to grips with our base salary for starting field employees, increase staffing levels in the field, and provide retirement benefits and stand-by pay, we will continue to have a revolving door of new hires. We simply cannot compete with other government agencies in base pay. The VSP had a similar problem and addressed it honestly and are experiencing better retention as a result.
35. Great comradery within our agency.
36. Our EWP's are asking for more than one person can possibly accomplish.
37. The agency is half the size of 1990's workforce 460/230 yet we have more responsibilities and expectations than ever before. Growing the agency is the only way to "better" serve the public, adequately, and with the ability to do it safely.
38. Employee recognition has dwindled. We are working hard, and few are saying Thank you.
39. We will only stop hemorrhaging employees when we bring salaries to a competitive level. We hear about the unseen benefits constantly (i.e., time off, etc.) but that doesn't put food on the table. If the salary is to stay within the current range, then side work is to be expected. The need to account for each side-gig to upper management to ensure there is no "conflict of interest" needs to go away in this instance. With increases in inflation and cost of living, people need to feed their families. If they're available for fire response and are getting their EWP tasks accomplished, there should be ZERO input into an employee's use of time while not at work.
40. There are some very capable and very talented people working for DOF. I stay for the people I work with daily. We are viewed by the public as a competent and necessary agency. This image is threatened when we cannot maintain people and when we cannot fill positions. Our staff are constantly in dangerous work environments, and although we try to maintain a culture of safety, the fact is our lives are on the line in this job. It would be nice to be paid accordingly. This can be such a rewarding (and fun) career. It is just tough when we advertise positions that never get applied to, or when they are, get rejected because of salary. It is hard to blame the applicants

when the skills and certifications for this job can pay much better elsewhere, especially when inflation is climbing much faster than our salaries. I have noticed improvement since my time here. I am happy they are increasing the starting salaries. It is really affecting our agency in a negative way, and already affecting our public image. It takes time to train new staff, so even when we get one to accept a position, it will be years before they are ready to manage a fire. Perhaps most importantly, our inability to maintain a well-staffed and well-trained agency means we cannot achieve our core mission by meeting the readiness plan. The people that speak out have been saying many of the same things for a long time because they care. It has been difficult to watch new staff get overwhelmed with the current staffing issues. I hope the senior management team will fight for us as we continue to improve and provide excellent service.

41. our senior management team must find a way to increase salaries to be competitive with other government agencies and private industries. Either raise salaries or at the least have a built-in way to raise pay through step increases based on training or ability to perform at a higher level. VDOT has step increases for employees. Several other VA state agencies have built in step increases after required training is completed. NC Forest service has excellent system where employees receive pay raises after completing skill blocks. Employees at each of these agencies do not sit their base pay for ever waiting on a raise from the general assembly. This should be PRIORITY 1 for our senior management team. When we can no longer hire degreed foresters and technicians in forester and tech roles something must change. We have too many field folks that have no forestry background giving unsound forestry advice to landowners and other stake holders. Unfortunately, I have heard senior managers say to a room full of employees "don't even mention salaries" when everyone sees the constant turnover and inability to hire good skilled employees. The lack of applicants for DOF jobs should be alarming to our managers. I have tried to recruit good applicants for several open jobs, but it is nearly impossible to get someone good for \$16-\$19/hr. I hope it isn't the case, but it almost seems that we have our heads stuck in the sand and refuse to find a solution to address these issues. We are certainly seeing the effects of poor retention when you look at the lack of forestry knowledge of our field staff and lack of experience in forestry. An even larger problem is and will be the lack of trained and experienced fire fighters. Currently it is very difficult to put together enough instructors to even consider having our fire academies. Many of the folks who continually instruct at the academies are getting burned out and are not as willing to participate. Possibly some stipend for the extra work it takes to prepare and conduct trainings could be an incentive. In the last couple of years, I have noticed many of our field folks who are typically trying to cover multiple areas due to vacancies, working on their days off and in some cases losing leave just trying to get the job done. I certainly fit in this category having lost significant amounts of leave and working on my days off just to keep my head above water (my fault). This leads to folks getting burned out and looking for better pay for the hours they are working. DOF is a great place to work but we must do better for our employees. To have and retain the best people we must pay for them!
42. Salary discrepancy between new hires and current employees is off (PSTs). Salary increases and salary uniformity in the Department is needed. This will help with turnover in several positions.
43. This agency has always treated me right. I would like to see us develop some kind of employee merit-based raise system, so that we can retain some of the good new employees that I've acquired over the past few years. This agency needs to find a way to spread more of the wealth downward to employees that are doing most of the leg work AKA the Forest Technicians and Foresters. I believe we need to reassess the EWP system and look for a way to incentivize employees that go the extra mile for the agency and the public.
44. Cardinal has really hurt the regions' ability to manage people and productivity. Perhaps it's capable of all the same things as IFRIS but a bicycle can operate in the fast lane of I81. It's a major roadblock. We're probably going to keep getting non forestry trained people that stay with us 5 years or less. Plan for it. We need programs to get folks up to speed quick but not over invest in them. Maybe, formal on the job mentor kind of training. It would also keep our seasoned employees engaged as teaching requires refreshing one's knowledge.

45. Help us to stay focused and implement the items that were discussed during last year's special project with Robbie. Provide clarity to the whole agency about who does what in the main program areas of fire, management, water quality, easements, forest health.
46. Senior management and HQ staff need to hold their employees to the standard as the field staff as well as hold them accountable when they do whatever they want. Numerous things have been brought up over the years and nothing has been corrected.
47. We need senior management to fight for pay and firefighter retirement for our employees. We need to have some sort of benefit to retain people, or we will continue to lose them to other places of employment. We have some in this agency that are one of one and are working 50 plus hours a week and only claiming 40 because they don't have anyone else to do the job and the field needs support especially during fire season. The agency is a skeleton crew, and we need more positions to help. Other agencies go to bat and fight for raises and compensation for their employees. People need to be appreciated and feel appreciated for holding things together through COVID plus being understaffed and underpaid.
48. It seems that the trend in the VDOF over the past ~10 years is to move positions from the field and put them in HQ. There's nothing wrong with adding some positions in HQ, but it should not be done at the expense of the field. Also, I feel it is a disservice to hire non-foresters and put them in forester positions. It is setting the individual up to fail, and it doesn't serve the landowner well. Finally, it would be good to see upper management fight to increase pay and benefits to field staff. It seems at times that they are indifferent, and other times they are doing what they can to reduce salaries.
49. I think senior management is already aware that pay for a job that requires being on call 24/7/365 for hazardous duty is inadequate.
50. I think adding more staff to fill vacancies in a timely manner and support any new initiatives is very important.
51. Pay employees more.
52. We have few leaders in leadership roles.
53. The agency has a communications problem. I spend half my time trying to find information that should have already been made available. Some leaders do not look to proactively share information. They'll provide it when asked, but that often occurs after a problem or issue arises that could have been prevented had the person shared the information at the onset. Communication is simple - just get the information to the person that needs it in a timely manner. Sometimes, I think the agency tries to overly complicate its information sharing process.
54. Just want to say thank you for all that you do, day in and day out. DOF is a multi-faceted agency with many moving parts and activities, and it is very clear that senior management cares about the agency, the staff, and all the customers.
55. Give supervisors more tools to reward their staff with. Timber tokens are great, but none have been given none to hand out. Pats on the back are great, but 'atta boy' is just an 'atta boy' after a while.
56. Please work on establishing a better Employee Recognition Program, particularly Years of Service. Whether a person has worked for DOF for 1 year, 3 years, 10 years, or 20+ years, any time dedicated to working at this agency represents a milestone that deserves recognition. We spend more time at work than we do at home with our families; add in time on a fire, an

educational program, assisting with trainings and it's even more time we are giving to VDOF. We give so much of ourselves to the agency we should be recognized for doing so.

57. I would like our senior management to treat us for the roles that we fulfill. Our agency tends to call us titles, but at the end of the day they do not really consider us those titles. What are we and where do we stand with our job roles? We do several roles such as law enforcement and fire response. We are even considered all risk/all hazards. I want DOF to recognize us in these job roles and pay us appropriately for what we do. If you ask our upper management, they are quick to tell others we do Law Enforcement. We are not law enforcement due to lack of training. I am all for us doing law enforcement. There is no law enforcement agency that would consider our "basic law" training adequate. Our agency is lucky that we have not had an incident occur while writing a 4PM violation. Our agency would say, Oh it's just a 4pm law. It's not a big deal. Most traffic stops start out as a simple traffic infraction yet turn deadly. When you walk back to your truck and get inside to write the ticket, how does the individual know we aren't calling in a background/warrant check. We don't know who we are approaching, we don't know what they may be wanted for. So, we assume that we are just doing a simple 4pm ticket, but it could end badly. DOF's answer is if you feel unsafe, ask law enforcement to go with you. How do you now its unsafe until it's too late? Why do we need to tie up other law enforcement resources when supposedly we are law enforcement? When the state gave law enforcement raises, we didn't get one. When it comes to retirement, we don't get LEO retirement. DOF is quick to tell people we do law enforcement but let's be real.... We are not law enforcement. Either give us the training and pay or let's get out of it. This is coming from someone who use to do a lot of law enforcement. Now, I don't bother with it as much because we are not supported. This applies to fire fighting. DOF wants to tell everyone that we are fire fighters, but we are not compensated for what we do. We don't even get any compensation for days we are following a fire readiness plan. This year, we got 1000-dollar bonus. Everyone knows that it will be taxed, and it really doesn't add up to much. Upper management who has not actively worked fire think that we have freedom in fire season. The minute you plan to do something you get a call. I like fire. I want to do fire. But it is so inconvenient to sit at home for no compensation. Fire departments do not want to wait on DOF employees when it comes to fire response. Therefore, the readiness plan looks good on paper, but what fire department wants to wait 1 hour for DOF to respond. So, really, we cannot do anything during fire season, but sit home. We carry fire tools, we carry water, we have red lights/sirens, we must pass physically fitness test for fire response, we follow a fire readiness plan, and we carry fire gear. We are fire fighters. We should get hazard pay or fire fighter retirement of 25 years. We are exposed to a lot of the same hazards structural fire fighters experience. Burning rubber, burning plastics, smoke, driving, hazard trees, and chainsaws to name a few. A lot of structural fire fighters don't fight more than a dozen house fires a year. Sometimes we respond to more than that. We work on qualifications and move our way up in qualifications, but not compensated for any of the advancements we make. We need to be recognized by DOF that we are fire fighters and DOF needs to justify this to Richmond. Finally, pay is an issue. DOF knows our pay is terrible. Charlottesville has higher paid employees than field employees. But, without the field employees there would be no need for the higher up employees. Our turnover rate is primarily related to pay. Most employees I have talked to leave the agency for more money. We wouldn't have the turnover rate if DOF would justify the pay for our employees. But don't forget about the loyal employees who have stayed for 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 years. It is easy to give new hires more money, but what about loyalty to the ones who stuck it out through thick and thin. I love the agency when I started, but I can see more and more why the "old timers" were disgruntled. I work hard no matter what. I enjoy my job. I will not sacrifice my work ethic due to pay, but I can see why some people do. I have good work ethic and pride, but I wish DOF would see it. DOF can say the pay is out of their hands, but we get more money for so many other projects. Why can we not articulate to Richmond why our employees deserve a much-needed raise. I know our agency is supposed to get a 5% raise coming up and there was some talk about getting 7% raise at end of year. I thought it was 5% plus 7%, but I recently found out that it was 5% plus 2%. What a crusher. I was like yes; we are finally going to be given a 12% raise. Nope. Inflation is like 7%, so that isn't going to help the employees. I wish DOF would value their employees. I think giving employees good quality raises and recognizing them for their

hazardous duties would really improve employee morale. I have seen the morale of our employees go down in my 15-20 years of employment. It's sad, because in my head I still have another 15 to 20 years to go. I wonder what this agency will be like in the next 20 years. Will we every reduce turnover rate? Will we ever increase pay more than what inflation/cost of living will be? I don't know.

58. Question 5 - My experience, knowledge in my program area, efforts, and achievements relative to my supervisor are undeniable and therefore I can't say they aren't recognized by him, but I am not happy about that situation.
59. Nothing would be done.
60. Lack of new employee on-boarding, which may be the reason for quick turn-around.
61. holistic training would help the HQ know what the field staff is going through and at the same time would help the field know what the HQ staff had to do behind the scenes that the field never sees.
62. Ensure DOF employees have proper credentials when in the course of their duties. Example: a State ID to properly identify themselves, a Badge number to enforce VA forestry laws.
63. Continue to allow flexible schedules and support teleworking.
64. Thank you!
65. I wish the agency would figure out some way for people who stay in the same position to get financial incentives through training levels, job performance or however it may be without taking what is considered as promotions by the agency levels. Persons who have extraordinary evaluations levels consistently and consistently perform more work than what their job title requires. I see we have people that want better financial revenue and take promotions as a avenue to get there but may not be the better fit in the position but it accomplishes the better compensation box. For myself I am 100% happy as a technician but I am stuck in this compensation rut with the current system. I work hard to perform at a high level in whatever task the agency asks me to be involved in, but the compensation remains the same. I enjoy the opportunities and deeply appreciate the confidence that the agency has entrusted in my abilities and experience. I have been given so many opportunities beyond my technician daily duties which I will be forever grateful for, I just wish there was some system to reward those people who except responsibility to do more.
66. I believe they are doing the best they can with the resources provided. However, they need to do a better job understanding the issues we have at all levels. For me, one of our biggest issues is hiring and retention. I know everyone is tracking this issue, but we need realistic changes to make an impact.
67. you need to increase salaries while at the same time solving the compression problem. We are not hiring quality employees with the education/experience we need. Those who have dedicated their lives to the agency are making less than kids coming out of college with somewhat similar jobs for better employers and federal agencies. You also need to solve the fire standby issue that we have had forever. Times change and you have made some attempts to improve things, but if people cannot drink alcohol and do other things while off, they are on standby and should receive some sort of compensation like other states do. Carefully study how ALL state forestry agencies handle the situation. If you solve this problem, you solve retention and morale problems.
68. This is a great agency to work for and an extremely fulfilling job. It would be great to see more efforts towards keeping salaries of existing employees competitive with not only other agencies, but also with those of new hires within the agency. It would be great to see more incentives and

efforts towards employee retention, to help the agency succeed in keeping those assets(employees) that it already spends so much time and money investing in.

69. They really need to do a salary study. DOF can be a great place to work, and the benefits and flexibility of the job are great. The cost of living just doesn't keep up with the salaries. If a college degree is required for the job pay a college degree salary.
70. We need to develop strong, quality employees and leaders (fire leadership classes are highly valuable) and build resilient teams. Employees get discouraged for many reasons, though dedicated employees are here for the long haul. We don't recognize or reward employees as much as we should. If someone always does a great job and works hard, we add on more and more responsibilities and expectations, because we don't have enough employees with a similar work ethic or know-how to spread out the responsibilities. Those employees work hard for decades and end up with nothing to show for it other than a few timber tokens. Brand new employees make more money than they do, there aren't applicable or desirable advancement opportunities for them, and they eventually stop wanting to go above-and-beyond or raise their hand for opportunities. Newer employees don't care about looking professional, or they don't understand that they represent DOF and what that means.
71. Our annual 5% pay increase is not nearly enough to keep up with the annual increase in cost of living.
72. Senior management should be required to use their leave and restricted to several work hours per week. When they work all the time, they create more work than people can possible do. Excellent employees have not applied for advancement positions because of who the supervisor is. The excess work also crushes employees and tends to send great employees looking for other jobs. If an advancement gives you a 10% salary increase but requires you to work 20 % more time, did you really gain anything? It only makes sense if money is sole motive for advancement--just a thought.
73. I know this is heavily on leaderships mind, so I do not wish to make this comment in any sort of accusatory tone, yet more of a "contributing to the conversation" sort of tone: The recent LODD of Rocky Wood has just confirmed for so many of us what we were all silently thinking - that the way we've been doing business was going to end up getting someone hurt or killed. I think we must give Rocky's legacy the due diligence it deserves by taking a cold, sober, hard look at how we do things. We have become so spread thin across so many agency programs, that the standard answer has become "do more with less". If a county employee leaves, their responsibilities are simply given to the closest county employee. We have gone, as an agency, from formerly having multiple employees per county, to an agency that now has multiple counties per employee. And this issue has only gotten worse as time has gone on. We have gone from county employees being given an extra county, to in some cases two extra counties or more. Along with these additional counties, come additional duties of forest management, fire, equipment, etc. For every new county they're expected to work, there are 10 more logging jobs, and 10 more fires per season. Along with extra equipment and resources. All of which are expected to be kept up with at or above the same levels as what would be expected with a single county. Whether or not this is the agency's intent is irrelevant, this is how it's being rolled out into the field, and this is the perception that field staff have. I think we are going to absolutely must look at what things we're doing well, and continue to focus on those, and then look at what things are causing us to spread so thin and make some changes. I won't go as far as to armchair quarterback the incident in Buchanan County to say what, if anything at all, could have been done differently - but I will say that every single person I've ever worked with in the field has confirmed that there are times we've been spread so thin trying to accomplish so many tasks, that we're doing 100 things only a little-bit okay, instead of doing 10 things really well. This naturally starts to cut into people's ability to efficiently (and more importantly, safely) do our jobs. When we're trying to keep up with meeting 5 landowners, writing a handful of plans, while also responding to fires and keeping all equipment not only in serviceable condition, but also presentable condition, things end up taking

priority one way or another. And just like with a fire, you can either address that change in priority and reassess your strategy and tactics, or you can keep doing what you're doing and see what happens. I think all of us know which one works.

74. Communication in this agency (not in my department) is sorely lacking and it impacts my ability to do my job daily. This is a relatively small agency and no forethought seems that it is always reacting and never proactive.
75. The morale really needs to be kicked up. We didn't even have a Christmas party last year. The all-agency events need to have breakout that interest ALL employees. Not every employee works in the field or is close to retirement. Also, it would be nice to see what our employees do in the field when we have all agency events.
76. Since last summer when Rob said VDOF was going to look at ways to change/improve agency communication - communication has gotten much worse. This includes at all levels. I know this review is harsh. It is not directed at any one person, rather there are many in this agency that make things difficult or create a poor culture if one does not fit in or agree with their ideas (even while agreeing on larger VDOF mission goals). That said, there are good people. Thank you for asking these questions. I sincerely hope some good changes will be made.
77. See teamwork response above. Also, I frequently hear that we cannot find applicants for our entry level positions. Occasionally I hear folks complain that this younger generation doesn't want to work hard or get their hands dirty, and that's just ridiculous. No one wants to graduate college, move to the middle of nowhere, and work a dangerous job for \$30K a year. It's not at all about working hard, it's about offering a reasonable quality of life for employees. VDOF needs to figure out its compensation package or provide other incentives (Ex. higher education credits, advanced training opportunities) if we want to attract recent grads.
78. Too many extra projects in addition to regular job duties. Hire additional grants manager.
79. The ongoing issue is salary. I understand it is hard since we are the state, but it feels like we are the least paid department in the government. The raises are not working to combat inflation. There also needs to be some cleanup after the past management of the HR team. It made a divide between executives and the rest of the team. False promises, insensitive comments, etc. did damage to the trust between headquarters and everyone else.
80. Clearly define priorities at all levels.