



# Leadership Roundtable Meeting (LRT)

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**September 14, 2021**

## State Forester's Report

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Rob Farrell opened the meeting.

- ◆ Rob attended the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Twenty-six out of 58 State Foresters attended. No USDA Forest Service (USFS) staff attended due to COVID restrictions
  - Rob was elected as chairperson for the Southern Group State Foresters (SGSF) for 2022 and will serve on the NASF Executive Committee
- ◆ Reminded everyone when in VDOF official roles, don't discuss any political views.
- ◆ Working on budget proposals for upcoming budget process.
  - Please respond quickly to budget request information, budget deadline is October 3.
- ◆ Terry has hired the Watershed Program Manager.
- ◆ In process of interviews for the Hardwood Initiative Coordinator position.
- ◆ VDOF now has approved the first cost-share program practice for the Hardwood cost-share incentive.
- ◆ The Department Environmental Quality (DEQ) is updating the Chesapeake Bay Riparian Buffer Manual. DEQ is looking for expert assistance with the update. If you have any suggestions of partners send to Rob.
- ◆ Remember to report to Human Resources when family members test positive for COVID-19.
- ◆ Discussed VDOF partnership on LSR Grants, as well as various challenges related to capacity for implementing these grants.
  - Dedicating funding would work better than competitive funding.
  - Ranking process for LSR grants is very extensive.

## Presentations

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- ◆ None

## Change Proposals

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- ◆ None

## Updates

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### Easement Monitoring Program and Land Owner Questionnaires

- ◆ Sarah Parmelee (forestland conservation coordinator) reviewed the easement monitoring program and the land owner questionnaire survey.
  - Now using email to send out surveys. Current response rate is 97%.
  - Next year is a field monitoring year.
  - Putting together an annual easement newsletter to give land owners helpful information.

## Round Robin Updates

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### Prevention Program (Fred Turck)

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- ◆ Virginia Certified Prescribed Burn Managers training course will be held virtual on September 21-24. Seventy-two individuals are registered to attend.
  - VDOF staff are required to fill out the taskbook.

### Utilization and Markets (Sabina Dhungana)

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- ◆ The first meeting of the Statewide Utilization Team (SWUT) was on September 1.
  - The SWUT consists of members from partner associations; Virginia Tech, industry, and sister agencies that are all engaged in the forest products industry.
  - This new group is assembled to help the Utilization and Marketing Program focus future projects, grants and possibilities.

### Public Information (Michelle Stoll)

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- ◆ Cory Swift has been hired for the Public Information Specialist position and will start on September 27.
- ◆ Shared Stewardship Agreement signing and dedication of the Green Pastures will be September 24 near Douthat State Park.
- ◆ September 25 is Public Lands Day.
- ◆ Ribbon cutting for Charlotte State Forest will be October 19.
- ◆ Michelle is the SGSF communications liaison for Forest and Inventory Analysis (FIA).
- ◆ Please remember to logon to the VDOF intranet and set up your password. If you have any problems please contact Janet Muncy.
- ◆ Please be mindful of what you post on your personal social pages. Comments can reflect on the agency.
- ◆ When working on projects, remember to share with the LRT group at the beginning of project. Collaboration can be very helpful in sharing resources and smooth transitions.

### State Lands (Ed Stoots)

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- ◆ Closing on the Charlotte State Forest is on track for October 6.
- ◆ Working on Stanley Phase III which will be an additional 368 acres.

### Administration (John Colligan)

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- ◆ Interviews are coming up for the Finance Director position. There are five good candidates.

- ◆ Cardinal project phase-I is beginning next week. VDOF is in phase-II which will begin in spring.
  - Training will begin in November. Information will be delivered in The Branch.
- ◆ IFRIS analysis is finished. In process of looking at available options.
- ◆ Help Desk position begins September 27. The position will help staff, work with VITA and setup computers.
- ◆ Budget decision packages are due on October 3.

## Finance (Faye DiFazio)

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- ◆ Faye reviewed the special fund cash balances for the 2021 year.

## Water Quality (Matt Poirot)

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- ◆ Timber harvesting is down 10% for the year.
- ◆ Getting the word out about the Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers Program.
  - Information is on the VDOF website.
- ◆ Timber hauling is a challenge with lack of qualified drivers.

## Eastern Region (Bryant Bays)

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- ◆ Working on filling vacancies.
- ◆ A tractor and Incident Management Team (IMT) training will be held on September 28

## Senior Area Forester Representative (Jeremy Falkenau)

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- ◆ Holding a pre-LRT meeting with the Senior Area Foresters to discuss any issues or ideas to bring forward to the LRT meeting.

## Fire and Emergency Response (John Miller)

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- ◆ Virginia Certified Prescribed Burn Managers Training Course September 21-24.
- ◆ First Responder Virginia Conference September 22-24 at Virginia Beach.
- ◆ Honor Guard meeting on October 20 in New Kent.
- ◆ Looking into getting an exception for dozers on the new John Deere emissions.
- ◆ Headquarters IMT training rotation has changed, will be sending out a new list.
- ◆ Pack test is back to a normal basis at this time.
- ◆ Two full-timers are out west.

## Western Region (Chris Thompson)

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- ◆ Seeing an increased issue with coil packs failing in the new Ford trucks.
- ◆ Setting up interviews for mechanic vacancy. Have three forest technician positions opening.
- ◆ Mountain Valley and Shenandoah work areas worked together and did a basic dozer class for new employees.

## Central Region (Robbie Talbert)

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- ◆ Kinner Ingram has accepted a lateral transfer to the Rappahannock work area starting September 27.

- ◆ Russell Schmidt, forest technician in the Heartland work area, and Connor Goolsby, natural resource specialist in the Shenandoah work area, will start September 27.
- ◆ Three current vacancies open.
- ◆ One-third of Central Region employees have less than one year of experience.
- ◆ Kellie Walker, a student at Southside Virginia Community College has been selected for a short-term internship opportunity with VDOF and the Black Family Land Trust
- ◆ Central Region regional meeting is October 6.

## Website (Janet Muncy)

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- ◆ The Seedling Price Guide has been updated, printed and posted on the website.
- ◆ Topic sheets on Laurel Wilt Disease and Lantern Fly Information are complete.
- ◆ If you have information that needs to get out, let Public Information know as soon as possible and they can make a plan to get it on the website and social media.
- ◆ Eastern Region State Forest maps have been put out on the website and are in a downloadable format.
- ◆ Acorn collection has begun.
- ◆ 2022 calendar should go to print within the next week. Should be available late October.
- ◆ Working on the State Forest Report.
- ◆ Please fill out new employee forms and submit to IFRIS help to get them on the intranet and their logon to the intranet.
- ◆ Remember to submit calendar events on the intranet.

## Forest Resource Management (Dean Cumbia)

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- ◆ Hardware Initiative training September 21-23 at Holiday Lake.
- ◆ Reforestation Timberland (RT) 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration will be at the Virginia Forestry Association Summit September 30.
- ◆ Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) completed 92% of panel plots. Continuing to measure urban panel plots.
- ◆ Two FIA wage employees have completed their certifications.

## Forest Health (Dean Cumbia for Lori Chamberlin)

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- ◆ Laurel Wilt disease has been confirmed in Virginia.

## Forestland Conservation (Karl Didier)

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- ◆ Working on several land acquisition projects to close by end-of-year.
- ◆ Plan to close seven different easements by end-of year.
- ◆ Generation Next land owner training program is being held virtually. Next year the training will be in-person sessions.
- ◆ Planning to have a Generation Next training program for field staff next year in February. This will teach staff how to talk to landowners about the Generation Next program.

## GIS (Jason Braunstein)

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- ◆ Finished the Ag layers for Secretary Ring.
- ◆ Supporting IFRIS Help and GIS Help.

## Assistant State Forester (Terry Lasher)

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- ◆ Concluded interviews for the Watershed Program Manager.
- ◆ Gave a presentation to the Chesapeake Watershed Implementation Task #14 Task Force about VDOF's programs that could assist farmers with management practices to enhance cross agency collaboration and improve the Chesapeake Bay.
- ◆ Forest Products Association annual meeting is September 17-19.

*Minutes recorded by Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant*