



# Leadership Roundtable Meeting (LRT)

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**October 5, 2021**

## State Forester's Report

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Rob Farrell opened the meeting.

- ◆ Looking to find topics for discussion at the Leadership Roundtable meetings that would be useful for all.
- ◆ Would like to talk about the achievements over the past four years for each program area, especially how VDOF has taken the program to the next level
- ◆ Thanked the Forest Resource Management Team and the Public Information Team for the great Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration that was held at the Virginia Forestry Association Annual Summit banquet.
- ◆ New wireless ceiling projectors will be installed in the conference and training rooms.
- ◆ Finished analyzing IFRIS and looking at moving to ESRI platform for our mapping needs.
- ◆ Budget proposals have been turned into the Department of Planning and Budget for review and possible submission into the budget. Items submitted were:
  - Wildfire and Disaster Response Package – a responder position at each region, a training position in the Fire and Emergency Response Branch, fire-igniting drones and standard drones, and replace all Bendix radios.
  - Urban and Community Forestry Package – asked for additional funding that is primarily grants to expand the work VDOF already does, three regional positions and a planning position in Headquarters.
  - Information Technology (IT) Upgrade Package – transition IFRIS to a new updated program, IT position for information security, additional funding to upgrade fiber optics in five offices.
  - Reopen New Kent Nursery – funding to reestablish New Kent Nursery and replace seedling coolers.
  - Funding for a plan to remediate the fire towers.
  - Requested 1.4 million dollars to build recreation facilities on state forests.
- ◆ Director of Public Information Michelle Stoll introduced Cory Swift-Turner the new Public Information Specialist.

## Presentations

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- ◆ None

## Change Proposals

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- ◆ None

## Updates

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- ◆ None

## Round Robin Updates

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Rob requested everyone to report two or three top accomplishments/successes for their program area from the last four years.

### Eastern Region (Bryant Bays)

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- ◆ Established three community forester positions (transitioned from rural foresters) targeting large population centers – 2018-2020.
  - Last four years since hiring, 800 accomplishments/year including 20 urban tree planting projects, 42 urban plans.
  - Four years prior to hiring, 100 accomplishments/year.
- ◆ Created coastal resiliency program under Robbie Lewis.
- ◆ 30 state lands plans for 7,800 acres
- ◆ 52 buffer plantings for 109 acres

### Nursery (Ed Zimmer for Josh Bennicoff)

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- ◆ Containerized seedlings production: The tables under the pivot irrigation were expanded over the last four years and now has the capacity to hold 1.4 million trees. Over the last 5 years, we have grown 542,000 longleaf and 1,259,311 containerized loblolly.
- ◆ Shortleaf: This past year, we successfully seeded and grew 14,000 containerized shortleaf.
- ◆ Nursery's together: The nurseries produced 30,600,000 seedlings on average each of the last two years. Includes all species. Augusta has gone through a hardwood expansion and, this past year, fumigated seven more acres than in the past. Last year, Augusta ordered 5,400 pounds of acorns. This year we have ordered 13,750 pounds.
- ◆ Other species: We are producing a small amount of Atlantic white-cedar each year as well as beginning to grow native grasses for The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Bill Owen.

### Chief of Administration (John Colligan)

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- ◆ Consolidated number of servers from four to two.
- ◆ Created and deployed new public facing website and Intranet for the agency.
- ◆ Started the project to evaluate IFRIS system for possible redesign or replacement.
- ◆ Stood up the seedling website.
- ◆ Two tractor sheds built, Fluvanna and Goochland.

### Forest Health (Lori Chamberlin)

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- ◆ VDOF Emerald Ash Borer Program
  - This program has been funded by two separate LSR grants and has enabled us to provide financial assistance to landowners that wish to treat ash trees, as well as treat ash on state lands, and release biological control agents on public land. To date, we have cost-shared the treatment of approximately 1,700 ash trees, treated an additional 440 trees on state land, and released more than 16,004 parasitoid wasps for biological control.

- ◆ Forest Health Liaison Program
  - The first liaison positions began in December 2016, and since then we've had 15 VDOF staff cycle through these positions. This is a tremendous help to the program as it enables us to do more trapping and surveying work across the state. It also gives these individuals extra training and professional development opportunities.
- ◆ Tree and Forest Health Guide
  - A handbook for the diagnosis of urban and rural disturbances.

## Research (Jerre Creighton)

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- ◆ Tree Improvement Research / Seed Orchards
  - Through ongoing testing and data analysis, we're able to identify the most productive parent trees in our loblolly pine seed orchards. The least productive were removed, thereby increasing the average quality of the remaining trees and scaling up the overall productivity of the orchard. As a result, we are now providing seed of higher value for VDOF nursery crop, with production of control-pollinated (CP), Virginia's Best, and Elite seedling offerings with average growth rates that are 97%, 78% and 65% greater than found in wild seedlings, respectively. From 2018 to 2020, our orchards produced a total of 9,462 pounds of loblolly pine seed – enough to grow 127,737,000 seedlings. Over the last 4 years, the weighted average growth rate of our collected loblolly pine seed has increased by 7.6% (i.e., the seedlings being planted from that seed will grow 7.6% faster on average than those planted four years ago).
- ◆ Pine Silviculture
  - Our collaboration and leadership role in the Forest Productivity and Forest Modeling Research have allowed us to contribute heavily to efforts to understand the effects of thinning and fertilization on both the growth and product yields of loblolly pine stands. Specifically, we've re-purposed our VDOF site-prep study to track the fate of applied nitrogen fertilizer through a mid-rotation ecosystem and ended our long-term thinning growth and yield plots by harvesting mature trees to be tested for lumber quality at the University of Georgia.
- ◆ Diminished Species
  - Through our collaboration with the American Chestnut Foundation, the VDOF's long-term breeding program at Lesesne State Forest has emerged as a leading source of genetic material for a new approach to American chestnut restoration involving DNA testing to define the pedigree of our best trees, small stem inoculations to test for blight resistance, and expanding the diversity of wild-type American chestnut genes in future select hybrids.
  - The native Virginia longleaf pine seed orchard has nearly doubled in size and has produced its first seed crops of northern source, native Virginia longleaf. In the last four years, our nursery has produced more than 540,000 containerized longleaf seedlings which have allowed nearly 1,700 acres of longleaf to be planted in the Commonwealth.
- ◆ Outreach / Education
  - In the last four years, 42 presentations have been delivered to approximately 2,100 attendees in both internal and external audiences, and 10 research reports have been published.

## Forest Resource Management (Dean Cumbia)

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- ◆ Contribute to development of the Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative
  - 2017 – Early Discussion with state forester and Board of Forestry sub-committee
  - 2018 – Hardwood Strategy Plan Development
  - 2019 – Stakeholders' meeting
  - 2020 – Hardwood Assessment Tool Development, Initial VDOF Hardwood Forester "Class of '20"

- 2021 – “Class of ‘21” VDOF foresters, incentive program development, established hardwood coordinator position
- ◆ Success of Pine Reforestation Program
  - 2015 – Report indicated overcutting of pine in smaller diameter classes
  - 2016 – Strategy developed
  - 2016-17 – Funding for RT General Fund match, established pine resource forester positions
  - Shift to site preparation vs. release for increased productivity
  - Tree Improvement Program – Deployment by family
  - Reforestation of Timberlands 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
  - 52,346 Landowners – reforested 2,013,312 acres, \$66,000,000 + invested Engagement with Black Family Land Trust – Heirs Property
  - Relationship development with partner group – enhanced forest management, land retention, present and future work.

## Utilization and Markets (Sabina Dhungana)

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- ◆ In the last four years, 12 forest products companies made a total of \$123 million investments in new or expanding wood products manufacturing that created a total of 648 well-paying jobs in both rural and urban areas in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These received support from the AFID grant.
  - In addition to these investments, Kristi Corp is investing \$1.1 million to establish a log load and fumigation facility, which will create 10 new jobs in the City of Suffolk. This is not an AFID grant project.
- ◆ The Commonwealth now has four mass timber buildings, which provides the foundation for mass timber promotion work that includes establishment of more mass timber buildings in the state and efforts to attract mass timber manufacturers in the Commonwealth to help utilize our underutilized pine resources and add value to existing forest products businesses by creating a new market for their products.
- ◆ The U&M Program created and hired a new forest utilization and marketing specialist to expand the program's deliverables by leading and providing support in solving the most pressing industry issues such as workforce.

## Forestland Conservation (Karl Didier)

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- ◆ Despite challenges with staffing reductions and turnover, we've protected nearly 32,000 acres through easements since 2019, in addition to helping with several thousand acres of state forest acquisitions. This represents more than one third of our entire easement portfolio in less than three years of work, and includes the largest easement in Virginia's history, the Highland's easement in Russell County.
- ◆ Won funding for conservation projects through the Forest Legacy Program in each of the last four years, bringing approximately \$8 million to Virginia.
- ◆ Hired a new program manager, created and hired new positions focused on easement stewardship and monitoring, and have made substantial progress in restructuring our program through working with other programs within VDOF (Finance, Grants Management; State Forests, Watershed Program) to clarify and share responsibilities and regain institutional knowledge that was lost with staff reductions and turnover.

## Budget (Faye DiFazio)

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- ◆ Prepared the work papers for the Department of Accounts' certification for the Agency Risk Management Internal Control (ARMICS) attachment.
  - Overall, the controls are working and sound
- ◆ VDOF has met the following Department of Planning & Budget (DPB) deadlines:

- Capital Project Review
- New Spending Decision Packages
- Base Budget and Technical Biennial Adjustments

## Fire and Emergency Response (John Miller)

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- ◆ COVID-19 Response and Support
  - The VDOF filled a unique role with the Commonwealth's response to the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020. The VDOF's Incident Management Team (IMT) was requested by Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to provide additional planning and logistical support to the state Emergency Operations Center, which was working to coordinate state agency efforts with the pandemic response. The VDOF's IMT includes the agencies most experienced incident managers with previous experience managing emergency incidents all across the United States. The VDOF's team was utilized by VDEM to fill slightly different roles in both 2020 and 2021.
  - In the spring and summer of 2020, VDOF's IMT staff were assigned to support the state Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to help coordinate the overall operations, as well as to capture, assemble, and disseminate information related to the ongoing COVID-19 response of numerous state agencies. VDOF's IMT created and began using the Commonwealth's Incident Support Plan for the pandemic, which became the document to guide the daily response operation of Virginia response agencies. VDOF ultimately provided staffing for a total of 134 straight days during 2020, the VDOF's longest single emergency incident assignment ever.
  - In the late winter and spring of 2021, VDOF's IMT was called on again to lead the effort to plan, develop and coordinate public vaccination at numerous large Community Vaccination Centers (CVCs) throughout Virginia. VDOF's county-based staff provided decentralized personnel who were used to first identify and complete assessments of potential vaccination sites to ensure an equitable distribution of vaccination sites through the Commonwealth. VDOF's planning staff on the IMT coordinated VDEM's multiple daily coordination calls throughout the event, produced daily situational information to enhance coordination, and served as a key link between Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and local Health Districts to ensure efficient vaccination operations. A total of 20 VDOF personnel assisted with the overall vaccination effort in 2021, which spanned a total of 119 days.
  - In total, VDOF IMT members provided more than 4,300 staff days of assistance to support the COVID-19 response in both 2020 and 2021. (One staff day equates to one person working one 8 hour day).
- ◆ Training Success in Virginia's Certified Prescribed Burn Manager (CPBM) Program
  - In 2020, VDOF successfully moved its Certified Prescribed Burn Manager's certification course into an interactive, virtual format. (The new format replaces what used to be a three-day in person, classroom type format.) This was the first significant agency training event to be adapted into a virtual format and it shows how some creativity is changing the face of agency training for the public moving forward. Since moving to the virtual format, 110 students have been certified through two different offerings of the program. Virginia's CPBM program is recognized under Virginia Code of Law, providing a higher level of professionalism for fire managers in Virginia. Since the inception of the program, more than 1300 individuals have now completed Virginia's Certified Prescribed Burn Manager program.
- ◆ FiResponse Dispatching Application Development
  - Beginning in 2017, the VDOF worked with a contractor to develop an internet-based dispatching application. The goal was to utilize new technologies that would better link agency responders and the agencies dispatching offices to better coordinate real-time resource management and tracking in support of agency emergency response needs. In 2018, this effort ultimately led to the agency development of the FiResponse dispatching application, with the VDOF being the first state in the nation to utilize this emerging technology. This tool now links together agency responders and dispatchers to provide improved situational awareness across the agency, improves safety by providing cell phone-based tracking of agency personnel, and provides real-time incident information for agency cooperators.
- ◆ Wildfire Suppression

- Annual average over the last four years (2017 – 2020) – The VDOF suppressed 492 wildfires per year in Virginia, which burned an average of 5,158 acres each year. Based on these annual averages, 46 homes and other buildings were damaged or destroyed each year, with an annual total loss of over \$577,000. During this same four-year period, VDOF response efforts are credited with protecting more than 2,800 homes and buildings each year, with an annual protected value of almost \$79 million per year.
- ◆ Prescribed Burning Accomplishments
  - Over the last four years, VDOF personnel completed 1,465 prescribed burns, treating 26,452 acres.

## Urban and Community Forestry (Lara Johnson)

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- ◆ To date, VDOF has assisted in completing 247 tree planting projects totaling \$977,867 spent resulting in more than 66,447 trees planted in Virginia communities. These projects have accumulated 26,776 hours in volunteer time and matched more than two times the invested dollars with \$2,046,932 for these projects.
- ◆ Over the past five years, VDOF has passed through \$1,045,113 in federal dollars to 125 grantees as seed money to help create sustainable community forestry programs in Virginia. These grantees have accumulated more than 126,279 volunteer hours on projects and matched these grants almost 4:1 with \$4,002,585.
- ◆ U&CF program staff updated the Virginia Tree Steward Manual that was 10 years old in 2020. This manual supports hundreds of volunteers across the state and is being used by developing programs in Hopewell, Culpeper and Staunton. It is also being used as a model to start Tree Steward Programs in Oklahoma and Maryland.
- ◆ Virginia has become a national leader in conducting citizen-science-based urban heat island studies developed by the Science Museum of Virginia and has completed more studies than any other state. VDOF has financially supported and/or participated in 11 of the 12 studies completed over the past four years. Virginia is also the only program of the southern states using this heat island data to prioritize limited state funding for tree planting projects.

## Assistant State Forester (Terry Lasher)

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- ◆ The conservation team has focused on three approaches. Efficiency in programs, creating opportunity, and following through with action. This is demonstrated through these success stories:
  - Turf to Trees program with DEQ - \$350,000
  - Sentinel Landscapes. Potential to identify issues and provide action on implementation and conservation projects on approximately 8 million acres.
  - Created the Forested Watershed Program.
  - Recruited the VDOF's first Commonwealth of Virginia Engineering and Sciences Fellow.
  - Healthy Watershed Forests Program and associated legislative changes to FOIA and Economic Development Authority.
  - Increases in Water Quality Improvement Fund dollars to VDOF for urban forestry project implementation.
  - Established the James River Buffer Program. All these projects have generated more than \$1.4 million in new programming.

## Public Information (Janet Muncy)

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- ◆ Website
  - Provides an improved tool for outreach and a much-improved site for visitors to find needed information
  - First searchable agency directory
  - First Find a Forester search to connect landowners directly with their local forester
  - First searchable business directory for consulting foresters, loggers and other forestry service providers

- Interactive state forest map, consistent and complete state forest information
- Integrated blog into website
- Integrated intranet into website (not VPN dependent)
- Robust, searchable Resource Library
- First month of the new website had 5,650 visitors, September visitors 24,740
- Various state forest pages always in the top 10 pages visited (Conway Robinson, Channels, Fire Laws, Fall Foliage, Tree ID often among the top 10 pages)
- ◆ Publications
  - Continued to build our online publication resources
  - Published the Forest Health Guide – an in-depth resource for field staff
  - Return of VDOF wall calendar
  - New design and format for the annual State of the Forest report
- ◆ Increased Public Visibility
  - Tremendous public visibility
  - First Mountain State Forest Dedication with Governor
  - Heirs Property Celebration with Governor and Ralph Sampson
  - Smokey Bear Birthday Celebration with Governor
- ◆ Additional Celebrations/Milestones
  - Garner Building Dedication
  - State Forest 100th Anniversary Celebration
  - RT Program 50th Anniversary Celebration

## FIA (John Pemberton)

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- ◆ In past four years, FIA has produced 153 analysis reports on a wide variety of forest resource characteristics (105 or 69% of these were for internal clients use (FRM, Regions, U&M, FH), while 47 or 31% were for external clients (primarily forest industry).
- ◆ During this period, VDOF completed the 10th survey of Virginia’s forest and collaborated with the USFS in Knoxville on creating of the “**Virginia’s Forests, 2016**” publication. The 11<sup>th</sup> Survey should be completed a year from now and the next iteration of “**Virginia’s Forests**” started in 18 months.
- ◆ In past four years, the FIA program has hired 21 field assistants. Six are currently employed with the FIA program, five have taken VDOF regional full-time positions, eight are working with other natural resource agencies or NGOs, two are in other professions.

## Water Quality (Matt Poirot)

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- ◆ 17,543 timber harvest operations inspected on 795,473 acres.
- ◆ 72,936 harvest inspections occurred on the 17,543 harvest sites for an average of 4.16 inspections per harvest.
- ◆ 71 SHARP Logger Programs conducted on best management practices (BMPs) for timber harvest professionals training 2,023 loggers.
- ◆ 28% reduction in water quality enforcement actions in the past four years compared to the 10-year average, take away message is that the program is working as designed, which is, enforcement is designed to decrease violations.

- ◆ 51 Logger BMP Cost-Share Program projects accomplished with WQIF funding that provided 49 sets of portable stream crossing bridges that will continue to provide water quality protection for the next 5-10 years.
- ◆ First Forest and Drinking Water forum held to link water utilities to the value that forests play in drinking water supply and quality.
- ◆ In the past four tax years, there were 359 Riparian Forest Buffer Tax Credits issued on 5,658.3 acres of buffers retained during timber harvest. Tax credits of \$2,332,181.54 were issued on timber valued at \$10,182,024.20 retained in forest buffers. This is an increase in acres protected of 20.5% over the previous 4-year period.
- ◆ The BMP Implementation rate on timber harvest sites statewide for Virginia has been averaging 95% over the past four years and, in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, the rate is 95.6%. The goal of the Watershed Implementation Plan is to reach a rate of 95% by the year 2025, we have been successful in maintaining that rate for the past four years.
- ◆ Water Quality (WQ) personnel in each of the three regions have been supplied with drones and are using them successfully to evaluate water quality issues on harvest sites. The Western Region will have (or already has) four WQ drone pilots and drones. The Central Region has three WQ drone pilots and drones, and the Eastern Region has one WQ pilot and drone.
- ◆ iPads have been supplied for field data collection to all water quality staff in each region for BMP audits.

## Human Resources (Hector Rivera)

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- ◆ Changed the requirements of being called a forester.
- ◆ 30% of hiring diversity growth in the department.
- ◆ Brought back the educational tuition and educational paid leave program.
- ◆ Held an all agency meeting
- ◆ Revamped the employee service awards.
- ◆ Initiated a paid internship.
- ◆ Raised entry level pay.

## Public Information (Michelle Stoll)

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- ◆ Large presence at events.
- ◆ Increase presence on social media.
  - Created Field Notes and Blogs.
- ◆ Project Learning Tree has lead the country in natural resources education.
- ◆ Hosted the Southern Group State Forest meeting.

## Shared Stewardship / Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) (Ed Stoots)

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- ◆ Round Mountain West GNA (1<sup>st</sup> one in Virginia) covering more than 222 acres in Bland County consisting of two timber sales on the Eastern Divide Ranger District. Project brought more than \$90,000 to VDOF.
- ◆ Ewing Mountain GNA project to implement on the Mount Roger's National Recreation Area potentially bringing more than \$100,000 to VDOF.
- ◆ Potts Creek GNA project to implement on the Warm Springs / James River Ranger District potentially bringing more than \$70,000 to VDOF.

- ◆ Green Hill Restoration Project (developing) on the Glenwood-Pedlar Ranger District and adjoining Moore's Creek State Forest.
- ◆ The North Shenandoah Mountain Restoration Project covering more than 128,000 acres of public and private lands in Rockingham County, VA and Pendleton County, WV.

## State Forest (Ed Stoots)

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- ◆ 100-year celebration of the Virginia State Forest System in 2019.
- ◆ Completion of the Matthews Capital Project in 2018 that concluded the build out of an more than \$3 million project that was completed without any General Fund support. New entry/access road, parking and other infrastructure work such as electrical, water well, restroom facilities, pavilion, and renovation of two large homes. Funds obtained for the project came from grants and funding from the Matthews Trust.
- ◆ Certification of our State Forest System to both Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) and American Tree Farm Standards (ATFS) starting in 2018 with audits maintaining certification standards since.
- ◆ The hiring of two additional state forest staff to help manage the expanding opportunities and additions of state forest lands.
- ◆ The acquisition of 5,776 acres of additional state forest land; 200 acres adjoining Big Woods State Forest (Turlington), 5,003 acres of Stanley Land and Lumber property to become the Charlotte State Forest (expected closing in November 2021), and the 573-acre First Mountain State Forest.
- ◆ Acquisition of a new State Forest Cruise Program (Forest Metrics) along with handhelds to enter data directly from the field into the program used to setup timber sales on state forest and state-owned lands.

## State-Owned Lands (Ed Stoots)

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- ◆ The selling of more than \$1 million of timber from various state-owned lands that is funding forest management projects on state-owned lands throughout the Commonwealth.
- ◆ More than \$400,000 provided to implement projects on state-owned lands without any General Fund support.
- ◆ More than 77 state-owned lands properties with either management plans written, or properties evaluated since 2018. Encompassing more than 10,000 acres of forested land.
- ◆ Development of policies and procedures for the State-Owned Lands Program, and development of memorandum of understandings (MOU's) with Department of General Services (DGS) on the process and management of state-owned lands.
- ◆ Riparian buffer projects to occur on the Department of Corrections (DOC) – State Farm Property, and the DOC Craigsville Detention Center in Augusta County. Initial planning phases point to the use of \$100,000 from the State-Owned Lands Fund to help fund both projects in 2022-23.
- ◆ Two projects co-funded with water quality funds and state-owned land funds that demonstrate proper establishment of a "ford crossing" on Department of Behavioral Development and Health Services property near Catawba that replaced an undersized culvert impacting water quality, and an access road with culvert crossing (60" pipe) established on the Department of Corrections Goochland Women's Center.

*Total acres of projects implemented to improve / manage forested lands throughout the Commonwealth due to the State-Owned Lands Program & Good Neighbor / Shared Stewardship Programs:*

- ◆ *State-Owned Lands = Close to 900 acres of project work, and over 8,000 acres of written forest management plans.*
- ◆ *Federal Lands (USFS) = 222 acres in progress + 101,500 acres to do under agreement, + and potentially under development 500 acres = 102,222 total acres.*

## Central Region (Robbie Talbert)

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- ◆ The VDOF has really expanded our drone program. Although we received the grant in 2017, the program did not begin in earnest until January 2019. In 2017, we had 0 drones and 0 pilots. We now have 16 drones and 22 pilots. We have flown approximately 790 flights since 2019. The average time savings of completing the work range from 25-35%.
- ◆ In an effort to place more focus on urban and community forestry in Northern Virginia, the Central Region created the "Potomac Work Area," which includes Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties. This work area is staffed by a senior area forester and two urban and community forestry specialists and involved converting two traditional area forester positions to urban and community forestry specialists positions. Since its establishment in 2019, urban projects in this four-county area have increased from 82 in 2018 to 191 in 2020.
- ◆ In 2020, the VDOF, led by Rodney Newlin, Kevin Dawson, Matt Poirot, and our Public Information Office developed a water quality training video aimed at training agency employees as to how we would like them to interact with loggers and others in the timber industry regarding enforcement of our water quality laws. The video has been used on numerous occasions and provided a level of consistency in application of water quality laws across the state.
- ◆ The VDOF continues to be a core component of the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute (VNRLI). Over the past five years, 10 VDOF employees have graduated from the program, and we have a full-time employee that serves as part of the VNRLI faculty.

## Western Region (Chris Thompson)

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- ◆ Increased overall forest management productivity in the region during the midst of a pandemic with constant employee turnover.
- ◆ Initiated plan and gained approval for loggers receiving pre-harvest planning from VDOF to earn credit in Virginia's Sharp Logger Program.
- ◆ It remains a challenge to hire and retain qualified personnel for our forest technician and area forester field positions. In the past four years, we have filled eight of 32 positions and have three positions currently open.

## Deputy State Forester (Ed Zimmer)

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- ◆ There are a lot of new positions coming on board. If anyone is in need of additional vehicles let him know.

## State Forester (Rob Farrell)

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Some of the VDOF accomplishments that came to mind for Rob:

- ◆ Completed the Strategic Plan.
- ◆ Went back to a five-day work week.
- ◆ Revised the Readiness program.
- ◆ Full match for Reforestation Timber (RT) every year.
- ◆ Planting acres are up.
- ◆ Maintaining our 95% Best Management Practices (BMP) compliance.
- ◆ Hardwood Initiative Assessment Tool and Hardwood Initiative Coordinator Position.
- ◆ Dedicated program manager for watershed along with regional positions.
- ◆ Stewardship agreement

- ◆ Timber code changes.
- ◆ Created the Chief of Administration and Assistant State Forester positions.

Thank you for all your efforts, it's been a great four years. Looking forward to another four.

November Leadership Roundtable meeting canceled.

Will schedule a Hardwood Initiative Webinar for first week of November.

Minutes recorded by Mary Weaver, executive assistant