



## NEWS RELEASE

March 31, 2024

**Contact:**

John Miller

John.Miller@DOF.Virginia.gov

(434) 962-3484

### FIREFIGHTER TRAGEDY IN SCOTT COUNTY

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**– At approximately 5 p.m. on March 30, a Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) part-time firefighter died while fighting a three-acre wildfire on Garland Drive in Scott County.

Firefighter James C. Ward collapsed while working with a hand crew. He was transported to Holston Valley Medical Center in Kingsport, Tennessee where he did not recover. A resident of Scott County, Ward was an experienced DOF part-time firefighter who had worked with the agency since 1998. He leaves behind a wife and son. The cause of the fire, contained yesterday, remains under investigation.

“It is with a heavy heart that we share such sad news on this Easter afternoon,” said State Forester Rob Farrell. “Please keep James’ loved ones and his firefighter family in your thoughts and prayers. And remember, everything you do to prevent wildfires helps protect our brave first responders.”

Over the last two days, DOF firefighters suppressed more than 30 wildfires which have burned approximately 1,000 acres in southwestern Virginia.

###