



# Senior Management Team (SMT) Meeting

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March 5, 2024

## State Forester's Report

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Rob Farrell opened the meeting.

- ◆ Rob discussed items that are currently in the General Assembly Budget. Some of the items were:
  - Invasives Species Plan 940
  - Policy Position
  - Creating the Office of Working Lands here at DOF (OWL)
  - Tree Preservation options for localities
  - Forest and tree canopy conservation plan
  - Possible raise for state employees between 2.5% - 3%
  - Forest Sustainability Fund award eligible counties a maximum of 4% and a minimum of 0.5% of the available funding in any given year.
- ◆ Legislation to authorize DOF to transfer Sandy Point State Forest to the Mattaponi Tribe has been dropped for this session. County lobbied against it.
- ◆ Working on Biomass BMPs.
  - Taking Secretary Lohr out to a BMP Audit to show him the process.
  - Parik Patel is working with Timmons to get a REC eligible check box in on the harvest inspection form.
- ◆ Working on Strategic Plan with four goals.
  - Will be sent to SMT with Goals and Objectives.
- ◆ DOF won the **Commonwealth Award of Merit in the category of "Extended Events and Observances" for last fall's acorn collection outreach efforts ("The Campaign in a Nutshell")**
  - Received a letter from Senator Mark Warner for the great job on acorn outreach
  - Thanks to the Communications Office for their hard work getting this story out.

## Presentations

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None

## Change Proposals

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None

## Updates

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### Deputy State Forester (Ed Zimmer)

- ◆ Discussed the purpose of the Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings.
  - Discuss information that comes out and how it is incorporated in DOF.
  - Items are for discussion, how they affect the department, address any concerns and come together to figure out how to make things work.
- ◆ Headquarters staff, please make sure the Headquarters Itinerary schedule is filled out weekly!
- ◆ Current list of services on the Business Directory located on the website.
  - Would like to add Invasive Species Management to the list.
  - Are there any other services that need to be added?
  - Please review list to see if any can be removed.

### Chief of Administration (Amanda Davis)

- ◆ SMT has been very helpful with discussions.
- ◆ Document clean-up day was February 26 and 6,000 pounds of paper and 300 pounds of old uniforms were shredded.
- ◆ Public Service week is May 5-11. HQ and Central Regions are having their event on May 8 at the headquarters building.
  - Eastern Region, Western Region, State Forests and Nurseries will have an event in their areas.
- ◆ When reporting hours in Cardinal HMC, report actual hours worked exempt or non-exempt.
- ◆ Report work as you work it. There is some concern that overtime would not be captured correctly.
  - David Powell will write up some scenarios of overtime pay schedules for the field and present to finance to ensure the correct overtime is being captured.

### Executive Assistant (Mary Weaver)

- ◆ An event committee has been created to plan and coordinate events for the department.
  - Committee consists of Mary Weaver, Amy Leatherwood, Sandy Mills, Josie Briggs, Amanda Davis and Kathy Albertson.
  - The events will be:
    - Public Service Week in May, as described above.
    - Themed event in August. This year will be Smokey Bear's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.
    - Holiday Party – December
  - Committee will meet as needed. If anyone has any ideas or suggestions for an event, please contact someone on the event committee.

### Fire and Emergency Response (John Miller)

- ◆ Longwood Fire Academy registration is now open to the public. Spots are filling up quickly.
  - Governor may visit a day at the Academy if his schedule allows.
- ◆ A new fiResponse update has been pushed.
- ◆ Accident Report for past month

- One injury, no medical attention and no loss of work.

## Office of Communications (Greg Bilyeu)

- ◆ Camp Woods and Wildlife applications are now open.
  - Anyone interested in volunteering this year please contact the Office of Communications.
- ◆ The Throwing Shade program is open again this year for select nurseries.
- ◆ A new logo has been developed for “Trees are the Answer.”
  - You’ll start seeing on a variety of items.
  - A good conservation starter.

## Field Representative (David Powell)

- ◆ Cardinal HMC still seems to be an issue for field staff. Will continue to identify FAQs and get answers.

## Information Technology (Parik Patel)

- ◆ The new help desk system Forcast
  - IT is testing the new Forcast System as of March 1.
    - If all goes well Finance and Facilities will began using it April 1.
  - Please send **all** IT requests through the Forcast email - [FORcast@DOF.Virginia.gov](mailto:FORcast@DOF.Virginia.gov)
  - This system will be tracking time and will be able to identify if a different department is holding up the process.
- ◆ New Human Resources process software
  - Standardizing process of IT requests for employees onboarding and offboarding
- ◆ Switching old IFRIS servers to new ones.
- ◆ Meeting with ESRI to negotiate price.
- ◆ Jim Pugh retired, position was moved back to IT and will be GIS/Hybrid.
- ◆ Taking the H://commondridge structure and moving to online Sharepoint. Getting a contractor to help set it up.

## Central Region (Robbie Talbert)

- ◆ Central is coordinating the fall fire training this year.
- ◆ There two vacancies in Central Region.
- ◆ The Regional retreat will be in southside Virginia.

## Finance (Lauren Sumner)

- ◆ Offices in the Finance Office have been rearranged.
- ◆ The new Buyer Specialist Vanessa Blankenbaker started on March 11.
- ◆ Working on the Inventory process that requires more discussion.
  - Continue to send Form 26’s until new solution is completed.
  - Hoping to get an intern to assist with the inventory.
- ◆ Most PSTs have had their meals and lodging restrictions permanently lifted to better serve Emergency Response logistics and training needs.

## Eastern Region (Bryant Bays)

- ◆ Meghan Mulroy-Goldman will be acting DRF while John Hisghman recuperates. Dave Slack will be acting District Forester until Jeremy Falkenau can be replaced.
- ◆ Have good candidates for the Brunswick position.
- ◆ Working on cleaning out the attic storage at Tappahannock.

## Forest Resource Management (Joe Rossetti for Dean Cumbia)

- ◆ Todd Groh's last day was February 14. His position will be evaluated and posted soon.
- ◆ The Annual Forest Management Academy is scheduled for September 9-13.
- ◆ Working on cleaning out the chemical building to dispose of unneeded chemicals.
  - Reworking the eye washing area.
- ◆ The Callery Pear Bounty is scheduled for April 20 at the Headquarters Building.
  - This will allow landowners to remove Callery Pear and replace with a different tree.
  - Landowners need to register ahead of event.
- ◆ Forest Health is hiring a P-14 to help with invasive species.
- ◆ Reforestation of Timberlands Committee met last month to discuss RT rates and will present results to the Board of Forestry at the March 21 meeting.

## Facilities (Richard Schmidt)

- ◆ Accident cards are in all vehicles, will have specific instruction cards for types of vehicles.
  - 25 accidents in the last year.
- ◆ A smaller UTV is coming to sample and see if it is a good replacement for the bigger UTV's.
  - All ATVs have been hauled off to be auctioned.
- ◆ Rekeying of master locks is 90% done in the Western Region, starting in the Eastern Region.

## Human Resources (John Habel)

- ◆ Intern positions have been posted.
- ◆ New Employee Training will be held in conjunction with Longwood Fire Academy in May.
- ◆ Tentative dates for the Employee Service Awards will be May 21 or 22.

*Minutes recorded by Mary Weaver, executive assistant*