

# FORESTRY News



A Newsletter of the Virginia Department of Forestry

Summer 2009

**MISSION:** "We Protect and Develop Healthy, Sustainable Forest Resources for Virginians."

## URBAN STREAM RESTORATION

*Greg Estolle, forester, Tazewell County, Western Region*

Photographs often serve as a much better reminder than memory, or at least my memory. Take a look at the pictures and see for yourself whether this urban streambank is vastly improved or not. The streambank should continue to improve in structural integrity as the live stakes begin to grow – right now they are just beginning to establish root systems and leaf out.

This project started with the town of Bluefield getting together with the New River Highlands RC&D Council to explore grant funding for a water quality and streambank restoration project. One of the major concerns the town had was water undercutting a primary road; thankfully, this project has ended up also being a beautification project, and the town is now thinking about trying to make a small park out of the property. Of special note, this stream segment is the last above-ground section for quite a ways as the stream is piped underneath downtown Bluefield.

Other partners in the process include: Norfolk Southern, which is the landowner; NRCS, which did the



*Before restoration efforts*



*After restoration efforts*

## CONTENTS

Urban Stream Restoration.....	1
Message from the State Forester...	2
Youth Education .....	3
VDOF and Dominion Sow Seeds of Learning with Project Plant It!....	4
Arbor Day Artists.....	5
VDOF Hosts Chesapeake Bay Forestry Work Group Meeting....	6
Invasive Species Event in Rockbridge County .....	7
Forest Industry Builds New Picnic Shelter for Goshen Pass.....	8
Play Ball Smokey!.....	8
Fire Operations in the Wildland/Urban Interface Course .....	9
Ask a Lawyer!.....	10
Pulaski Fire Crew Helps with Fuels Reduction .....	11
PLT Goes to the Smithsonian.....	11
Cork Oak – The Eco-Friendly Product.....	12
VDOF Hosts International Conference on Ecosystem Services.....	14
Smokey Bear attends the National Trademark Expo .....	17
VDOF Assists in Community Tree Planting Project.....	18
Hardwood Tree Planting Expands in the Coalfields .....	19
Second Annual Go Green Day ...	21
VDOF Preps Students for National Competency Test .....	22
VDOF Assists with Chainsaw Safety Video .....	23
Human Resource News .....	24

Carl Garrison III, State Forester

Janet Muncy, Editor

*continued on page 3*

## MESSAGE FROM THE STATE FORESTER

Carl Garrison



Every five years, counties across the Commonwealth are required to develop and prepare comprehensive plans. The process is supposed to involve as much citizen input as possible as provided in the Code of Virginia §15.2-2223 through §15.2-2232. And our Agency should take an advisory role (and in some localities, mandated) to ensure that these plans take into account the values and benefits of our forest resources in this Commonwealth. While VDOF has generally done a good job of reviewing these plans, we – and the citizens of the Commonwealth – could probably do more to facilitate the development of these plans to be more inclusive of our forest resources.

Public input is vital to the development of a successful comprehensive plan but, sadly, that input is often limited in scope or, worse, non-existent. Without sufficient and thoughtful public comments, these plans are often driven by a handful of special interest parties. By not hearing the thoughts and concerns of the broader community, those involved in the development of the plan are left to their own devices to either interject what they think others might want or to follow the wishes of those few who have spoken up.

As we all know, the public will generally support open space almost every time. But if they aren't asked the question or think that someone else will take up the cause, these viewpoints are never heard. In most – if not all – Virginia localities, the default position is best described as "growth is good." And VDOF is not opposed to growth and development, but, unfortunately, that usually means we are losing open space through local land-use decisions without really having any discussion about it. Smart decisions are based upon smart discussions with the appropriate knowledge and advice. VDOF's role needs to be one that educates and provides that knowledge needed about our beneficial forested resources.

And without advocates who are vocal in their support, rural land will lose by default. There's simply too much at stake and too much to be lost otherwise.

What can you do? Well, for starters, do you know when your county's comprehensive plan is up for renewal? Have you taken the time to review the plan as we are required to do? Have you attended any of the planning meetings or public hearings? Have you offered your advice and counsel to those working on the comprehensive plan? If the answer is "no" to these questions, you need to get yourself (and our Agency) engaged in the planning process to ensure forested and open lands are available today and far into the future.

I urge you to be a leader in this regard. Let's all commit to doing all we can to be actively engaged in the comprehensive planning process in our localities. The economic and environmental health of the Commonwealth and her citizens are at stake – and it is one battle that none of us can afford to lose. VDOF has forest land conservation specialists available to help get you started.

## URBAN STREAM RESTORATION, FROM PAGE 1...

engineering work, and VDOF, which helped out with the planting aspects. Lives stakes, like willow and gray dogwood, were planted predominately to stabilize the banks, but some bareroot species, like hazelnut, were added in. Finally, 13 balled and burlapped trees of assorted species were brought out for two reasons. First, the trees are large enough to be seen and therefore not destroyed by a weedeater (which is supposed to be banned from the project area), and second, these larger trees add aesthetic beauty to the site.

When I first went back to the site after the construction efforts were completed, I was shocked by how much rock was utilized and wondered how this was better than what was present beforehand. Fortunately, there are photographs to go back and examine that showing sloughing banks all over the place prior to restoration. A little perspective sometimes does a lot of good.



*Before restoration efforts*



*New willow planted and staked*

*After restoration efforts*



## YOUTH EDUCATION

*Bob Boeren, forester in Roanoke, Craig and Botetourt counties, does his "Ranger Bob" talk on the importance of trees to the Preston Park Primary School students in the City of Roanoke during their Tree City USA Arbor Day celebration on Earth Day. The mayor, city manager, urban forester, and the Director and Superintendent of the Department of Parks and Recreation were present. Each student received a white pine seedling. This was the City of Roanoke's 14<sup>th</sup> year as a Tree City USA, and Bob's 15<sup>th</sup> year assisting the city with Arbor Day.*



## VDOF AND DOMINION SOW SEEDS OF LEARNING WITH PROJECT PLANT IT!

*Caroline Skelly, Project Plant It! Coordinator*

### PROJECT PLANT IT!



*Brian Lacey plants a tree with the Petersburg students.*



Arbor Day, the annual celebration of trees and the environment, had a very special meaning this year for two VDOF employees who played a big role in our agency's partnership with Dominion Virginia Power's Project Plant It! program.

In mid-April, third-graders at Chesterfield County's Bettie Weaver Elementary and Richmond City's Fisher Elementary were treated to high-energy forester presentations by Lisa Deaton, Project Learning Tree coordinator for the VDOF. She quickly engaged the students in several fun and interactive exercises to learn more about the important role of trees in the ecosystem.

In addition to talking about many items that come from a tree and acting out the life cycle of a tree, students also simulated the interior parts of a tree and participated in an activity to understand what a tree needs to survive. More than 150 kids at Bettie Weaver and more than 60 at Fisher thoroughly enjoyed the facts and games that Lisa shared with them.

On April 24, forester Brian Lacey gave 350 Petersburg students a hands-on lesson in planting a tree and caring for the environment. Third-graders at four elementary schools traveled to Lee Memorial Park in four field trips that culminated with a community planting event to dedicate a sapling in honor of U.S. military troops. In attendance, along with Brian, were representatives from Dominion, Petersburg Public Schools, the Willcox Watershed Conservancy, Ft. Lee and Petersburg Parks and Recreation.

"For some of these children, this was probably the biggest exposure to nature that they have ever had," said Cliff Davis, public information officer for Petersburg City Public Schools. "They stood beneath the shade of 'wild' trees, not the struggling, scattered saplings of the urban and suburban scene. They had pine needles and humus under their feet, not scraggly weeds and concrete. Hopefully, they also gained a sense of ownership, of this special place in the middle of their city, and will come back to visit it again, and to become part of its rebirth." Words that any VDOF forester can appreciate!

Thanks to Lisa and Brian's enthusiastic participation and their passion for forestry and environmental stewardship, the VDOF's partnership was highly valued by members of the Project Plant It! team at Dominion. More than 29,000 students across the Commonwealth were enrolled in the program this spring and received a tree seedling to plant on Arbor Day.

*Lisa Deaton leads Project Learning Tree activities with Weaver students.*

## ARBOR DAY ARTISTS

*Ellen Powell, conservation education coordinator, Public Information Division*

Virginia Department of Forestry and the Virginia Museum of Natural History co-sponsored this year's Arbor Day Poster Contest. This annual contest is open to fifth-graders across the country. Posters must be original artwork, with no computer graphics or attached pieces. In Virginia, approximately 1,300 entries were judged at the school level, with more than 30 schools submitting a finalist for judging. The top 10 state winners were chosen by a panel from VDOF and VMNH.

This year's poster theme was "Trees are terrific...in cities and towns!" The grand prize winner was Michelle Nguyen, representing Linton Hall School in Bristow. A print of her poster was submitted for national judging. The complete list of winners is as follows:

**1st Place - Michelle Nguyen**

**2nd Place - Victoria Lopez Del Pino**

**3rd Place - Srujana Polana**

**Honorable Mentions - Madie Morgan, Ethan Elkins, Heewon Roh, Lisa Kripowicz, Cody Leonard, Montavius Wells and Troy Wayne Painter**

Winners and their families attended a luncheon and awards ceremony May 2 in Charlottesville. The students received a variety of prizes, as well as seedlings to plant at home, and participated in a tree-focused outdoor activity. The framed posters will be on display at the VMNH in Martinsville through this summer.



*Michelle Nguyen displays her first place poster.*



*Ethan Elkins and his mom identify their "adopted" tree on the VDOF Headquarters lawn.*

## VDOF HOSTS CHESAPEAKE BAY FORESTRY WORK GROUP MEETING IN LOUDOUN

*Dean Cumbia, director, Forest Resource Management Division*

*Judy Okay, riparian specialist, VDOF and Bay Program*

The Chesapeake Bay Forestry Work Group is a part of the larger Chesapeake Bay Organization. It's mission is to foster collaboration among the Bay states and the District of Columbia in forestry-related Bay cleanup efforts. Members include forestry and natural resources staff from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, the District, as well as non-government organizations. Current strategic initiatives focus on retention and conservation of Bay forests, riparian buffer establishment and expansion, and urban tree canopy expansion for resource benefits.

Virginia hosted the latest quarterly meeting, April 15, in Loudoun County at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. The focus of the meeting was strategies for working with local governments. VDOF land conservation staff Rob Farrell and Rob Suydam and Central Region Engineer Rodney Newlin made presentations on our conservation and water quality efforts with local government. Additionally, Joan Salvati, director of the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Division of DCR, shared the work that they are doing with local governments.

The afternoon session included a riparian tree planting project on the property. Judy Okay, riparian specialist, reports below on the project. Special thanks go to Bryant Bays, VDOF forester; Rodney Newlin, and Ron Circle, preserve manager, for lots of work in making this project and event a success.



### April 16, 2009, Judy Okay

The rain was falling heavy all through Tuesday night, and things had not changed much when the alarm went off signaling the new day. The Chesapeake Bay Forestry Workgroup had a meeting scheduled at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve in Loudoun County on April 15. The Banshee Reeks Manor House sits on the top of a hill and Goose Creek winds through the rolling farm land and forest. The "Banshee" (Gaelic term for spirit) was with us Wednesday because of the pouring rain, the misty spirit hung over the reeks (rolling hills and valley). But hardy as the forestry workgroup members are, they hopped on a wagon and rode down the hills (in the pouring rain) to Goose Creek and looked at the task before them.

The heavily grassed floodplain had bare areas that were prepared for a riparian buffer planting. Our hosts from the Virginia Department of Forestry had planting bars, tree seedlings, gloves, tree shelters and all of the equipment needed to get the trees in the ground, and the workgroup members were the muscle. The group planted sycamore, black walnut, river birch, hackberry and dogwood shrubs.

There were approximately 125 seedlings planted in a little more than an hour. As we rode the wagon back up the hill and looked back at the newly planted floodplain, the enthusiasm was hard to contain. There was a special feeling knowing you just did something special

## VDOF HOSTS CHESAPEAKE BAY FORESTRY GROUP, FROM PAGE 6...

that will last far into the future. For the workgroup members who promote riparian forest buffer plantings in the Bay watershed, this was a "lead by example" exercise. Everyone got into their cars to return to their home states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and other parts of Virginia. Yes, they were cold, they were wet, but they were proud of their work.



## INVASIVE SPECIES EVENT IN ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY

*Karen Stanley, forester, Rockbridge County, Western Region*

Fourteen volunteers armed with chainsaws, safety equipment, herbicide, loppers and a desire to eradicate some invasive species in Goshen Pass Natural Heritage Area came together May 2 for the Invasive Species Removal Day. Ken Mohler, Keith Brown and Karen Stanley from the VDOF partnered with DCR, Natural Bridge SWCD and VDGIF to put together this project. Ellen Powell provided education funds for supplies, while the Natural Bridge SWCD provided a boxed lunch. The USDA Forest Service also donated its *Non-native Invasive Plants of Southern Forests* handbook for all the participants.

The target was autumn olive, Japanese honeysuckle, garlic mustard and a few *Ailanthus altissima* along the natural area trail and shoreline of the Maury River. The group met its goal for completing a certain stretch of the trail and also had some education as to how to identify and remove invasives safely around aquatic environments.

Ken Mohler, VDOF technician, suggested the idea of partnering with the SWCD for a project after receiving Ellen Powell's email calling for statewide projects. The groups formed an enthusiastic partnership and the project was a success!



## FOREST INDUSTRY BUILDS NEW PICNIC SHELTER FOR GOSHEN PASS

*Karen Stanley, forester, and Ken Mohler, technician, Rockbridge County, Western Region*

Amidst some very unseasonably cold temperatures in early April, a motley crew of professional and amateur timber frame builders came together and donated time and resources to construct a new picnic pavilion in the Goshen Pass National Heritage Area. This project is an annual FTX (field training exercise) for VMI cadets to do service projects for the area. However, many local individuals, including Ken Mohler, Rockbridge County technician, put time and effort into making the project a success. Ken was on the project committee and worked with local sawmills to have the oak and cherry logs donated to make the timbers. W.R. Deacon and Sons sawmill and Blue Ridge Lumber both donated materials to the project.

Timber framing is a centuries-old building craft that uses exposed beams with carved joinery that fits together, and only carved wooden pegs to secure the structure. The Timber Framers Guild states, "Whereas typical light frame construction today involves many slender sticks of wood simply cut to length and nailed together, a typical timber frame structure requires a much smaller number of stout posts and beams, shaped at their connections to lock together. Light frame construction, even when carefully done, is considered rough carpentry, and in dwellings it is always concealed by finished walls and ceilings. Modern timber frame work, on the other hand, is generally exposed, and timbers can be as finely prepared as the skill and care of the craftsman allow."

Local timber frame professionals and volunteers from the Timber Frame Guild worked for a week side by side with VMI cadets and other volunteers to cut, carve and construct the beams and trestles for the pavilion. April 7<sup>th</sup>, a blustery cold day, was the actual raising, and involved much hand labor and a rented crane to place the pieces like a 3-D puzzle. All labor and materials were donated, and after the timber framers leave, the roofing has yet to be done to complete the structure, as well as a stone fireplace.



## PLAY BALL SMOKEY!

*Chris Thomsen, assistant regional forester, Western Region*

Smokey Bear journeyed to Salem Memorial Ballpark to enjoy America's "favorite pass time" and welcome some 2,000 spectators. It was mascot day, and Smokey was invited to join in the festivities along with a dozen or so other local celebrities.

The ballpark is home to Salem's newest professional baseball team, the Red Sox. They are the Class A affiliate of the Boston Red Sox and play in the Carolina League. The Red Sox are just the latest Salem team to embrace Smokey and his fire prevention message. VDOF has a long history combining fire prevention and baseball in this sports-minded city. In past years, VDOF and the USFS have sponsored annual Smokey Bear nights with minor

## FIRE OPERATIONS IN THE WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE COURSE IN HALIFAX COUNTY

*Dave Snyder, assistant regional forester, Central Region*

On April 18 and 19, 2009, the Virginia Department of Forestry held a Fire Operations in the Wildland/Urban Interface Course in Halifax County. Cluster Springs Volunteer Fire Department hosted the training with members from Virginia and Midway Volunteer Fire Departments attending for a total of 21 students. This course provided the students with the skills and knowledge to size-up a wildland/urban interface incident; evaluate the potential situation; order and deploy the necessary resources, and apply safe and effective strategy and tactics to minimize the threat to life and property. The importance of building working relationships to implement unified command effectively was emphasized. Responding to an interface fire is a shared responsibility and cooperation from all parties involved is necessary to have effective and safe incident management.

One of the highlights of the training was a demonstration of the use a helicopter to make water drops that was on contract with the Department of Forestry. Pilot Mike Creasy talked about the most effective use of the helicopter on a fire and how to safely work around the helicopter. Al Brooks, technician in Lunenburg County, brought one of the Department of Forestry's engines and went over the equipment on the truck and how it can be set up for structure protection. Alex Williamson, technician in Halifax County, was lead instructor for the course and Dave Snyder, assistant regional forester assisted with instruction.



*Pilot Mike Creasy briefs students on the use of helicopter water drops on fires.*



*Al Brooks, technician in Lunenburg County, reviews the capabilities of VDOF engines.*

## PLAY BALL SMOKEY, FROM PAGE 8...

league teams affiliated with the Pittsburgh Pirates, Colorado Rockies, and Houston Astros.

Pictured with Smokey (l to r) are Q-bear, Roanoke College's Rooney the Hawk sandwiched between a pair of Red Sox, Misty and The Baseball Nut.



## ASK A LAWYER!

*Denny McCarthy, assistant regional forester, Western Region*

Jason McGhee, technician in Patrick County, and I took a common phone call recently. You've probably had this one, too, but if not, here's some information that might help you handle the call when you do. I later found some good advice on "Lawyers.com", perhaps that site will come in handy for you sometime soon....not for a bad reason I hope! And maybe this will initiate some additional conversations about "act of god" and how it relates to the wind storm taking place outside my office window today.

Question: My tree fell onto the property of my neighbors doing significant damage... they say I'm liable, my lawyer said it is an act of god and I'm not responsible... What can you do for me? (This question is often turned around as the call is received from the claimant.)

It has been my experience and training to know that one of the first responses should be to clarify what we cannot do. Because of "risk and liability" concerns, it is not the practice of VDOF to get involved with hazard tree assessments or valuations of property (timber), or property damaged. Instead, recommend a long list of "For Hire" arborists and forestry consulting professionals, and let them take on that liability. Ultimately, the first step should be to recommend that the caller consult his or her own lawyer, but the following facts about this type of dispute should help shed some light on how the matter might play out in civil court; whether or not they have the case to warrant exercising a lawyer, and potential cost.

The following is paraphrased from an excerpt from [real-estate.lawyers.com](http://real-estate.lawyers.com):

A landowner has a duty of reasonable care to anticipate and guard against what usually happens or is likely to happen. A failure to do so is negligence. However, reasonable care does not require you to foresee or guard against that which is unusual or unlikely to occur. Liability will be based on specific facts of the case. A primary consideration will be that the tree fell down during a windstorm. Being able to show that other trees and limbs fell during the same storm would tend to show that the owner of the tree did not breach his or her duty.

However, if there were obvious signs of decline, such as flagging or branch die-back, poor crown health, bleeding, rot and decay, insect infestation, etc., or if you had any other reasons to believe that the tree was in poor health or strength, then the owner of the tree could likely be shown to have breached his or her duty of care, and could be found liable, despite the fact that the tree was thrown during the storm. Since there were signs and symptoms, the fall should have been expected during such conditions. The signs, as listed above, would be the cause; the windstorm simply caused the tree to fall prematurely.

The moral of the story is, if you have any concerns about a tree on a property line, you should fully document any signs, symptoms or indications that it is a hazard tree beyond its proximity to assets, as well as document attempts to communicate those observations with the owner of the tree (which helps to establish the opportunity to "foresee"). If you're the owner of a tree that is showing signs of decline, know that you may be liable for any damages that it could do in a fall; act to mitigate the risk, or suffer the consequences.

## PULASKI FIRE CREW HELPS WITH FUELS REDUCTION IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

*Brad Wright, mitigation specialist, Western Region*

For the last two springs, the Pulaski County Wildland Fire Crew has helped the Laurel Ridge Community outside of Blacksburg in Montgomery County with the reduction of fuels within a 30-foot zone around homes. This is to reduce the threat from wildfires to these homes by creating a defensible space around them that meets national Firewise standards. Each year, during the community Firewise work day, the fire crew serves as the work horse to get work done for homeowners that are not able to do it themselves due to health problems. With the help of the Pulaski Fire Crew and grant money from the VDOF, as well as the hard work of community homeowners, the community gained its Firewise USA recognition in 2008 and is steadily working on maintaining it.



Outside of helping the community meet its Firewise goals, the crew members are able to meet some of their own training requirements and keep their skills up to be ready for wildfire response. Crew members are able to work on task books, such as Faller A & B, Squad Boss and Crew Boss, in a hands-on manner similar to that of a wildland fire. This helps the members develop leadership and job skills that will make them better and safer firefighters.

Anytime a crew can come together for training or a work project like this, it helps build the camaraderie and cohesion of the crew to make it better.

Thanks to the Pulaski County Fire Crew for its efforts to maintain a highly-trained and experienced Fire Crew, as well as its help the Firewise program.

## PLT GOES TO THE SMITHSONIAN

*Lisa Deaton, forest education specialist, Public Information Division*

Forty teachers attended a recent Project Learning Tree workshop at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History to learn about the new Dig It! the Secrets of Soil exhibit. During the workshop, teachers took a very close look at soils from central and eastern Virginia. Several school divisions in Virginia were represented.



## CORK OAK – THE ECO- FRIENDLY PRODUCT

Tracy McDonald, FIA forester,  
Resource Information Division

Well, as we all know, the latest trend in the news today is for the consumer to be eco-friendly by investing or purchasing items that will not harm the environment.

Last May, I decided to purchase oak floors for my house. You're probably thinking, well, big deal! Yet, the flooring I purchased was not from our native white or red oaks but cork oak found in the Mediterranean region. The eco-friendly part about this tree is that it doesn't have to be cut down to harvest the bark for commercial use. Now that's some sustainable harvesting!

### Characteristics of Cork

The cork oak (*Quercus suber*) is a medium-sized, evergreen tree which grows in southern Europe and northern Africa. It grows up to 65 feet tall with a thick, light gray bark with deep, reddish-brown ridges and a low dividing trunk. The simple, dark green leathery leaves are ovate to elliptical in shape with smooth or wavy teeth and a white fuzzy underside and branch out alternately. They grow one to four inches in length and 0.05 to 2.5 inches in width. The twigs are light gray-brown, fuzzy with pointed, reddish brown clustered buds. It grows in acidic soils, in full sun and requires a moderate amount of rainfall. The acorns are 0.8 to 1.8 inches long, with a scaly cup that covers  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the nut and matures in one season.

The life span on this tree ranges from 150 years to 250 years of age. The cork plantation does not get harvested until the trees reach maturity between 25 to 30 years, and the bark on each tree can be harvested every nine to 12 years. The bark's color is reddish brown when stripped in late spring or early summer. The cells are swollen allowing easy tear without damaging the tree. Once completely stripped, the tree quickly grows new layers of cork to restore its protective barrier.

### Cork Production

The main production of cork is grown in Portugal, Spain, Algeria and France. The cork oak forests have been producing bottle inserts for centuries, making up 70 percent of the cork market. The wine industry is important when it comes to the vitality of these forests and laborers who work them. More than 100,000 people depend on the

cork industry for their livelihoods in the seven regions of the Mediterranean, producing approximately 300,000 tons a year. Today, Portugal produces about 60 percent of the cork production.

For flooring, cork sheets or pieces are cured, boiled and pressed. Scraps are recycled for use, which means only small amounts of the bark are wasted. Once in the factory, the stripped bark is boiled to make it easier to remove the woody outer layer and to make the bark more elastic so that it can be flatten out more easily. The bark is then sorted into



## CORK OAK – THE ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCT.. FROM PAGE 12...

various thicknesses, which are sorted into different qualities. These different qualities determine the sale price, which varies considerably from \$2.00 to \$20.00 per square foot depending on the shape, style and colors available.

### Benefits

The unique properties of cork flooring consist of thermal insulation, sound proof and elasticity. Cork is soft, durable and shock absorbent aiding in joint support with less strain on your feet, legs and back. It is waterproof, allowing the floors to be mold and mildew resistant due to a natural waxy substance, called suberin. The floor is slip resistant compared to other hardwood or laminate flooring, making it safe for both children and pets. Lastly, cork is also fire resistant and will not spread flames or release toxic gases during combustion.

Indentations caused by heavy furniture are not a problem because the cork fibers spring back. After having the floors for a few short weeks, my dog – during a thunderstorm – deeply clawed a small section of the floor. I added a little water and then some furniture oil to the scratches and within a week the cork began to slowly repair itself. Today, the scratches blend in with the pattern of the floor. Keep in mind, the dents and scratches do not repair overnight, it may take up to several months depending on how severe the floor was dented or scratched.

Cork flooring is not for those individuals who prefer a shiny and smooth texture to a rugged, speckled pattern. This floor has a personality of its own and I love the way it feels under my bare feet. For cleaning, all that is required is a vacuum. Broom and water if you feel that the vacuum did not pick up all of the dirt residue. In my opinion, cork may cost a little more than hardwood, but the benefits outweigh the price.

### References

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## VDOF HOSTS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

More than 250 people gathered in Charlottesville March 12 and 13 to hear from a group of internationally known experts on the financial markets that are emerging for forest landowners in the realm of ecosystem services. The Virginia Department of Forestry, in collaboration with Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia Tech, hosted the event that drew people from Virginia, 10 other states and several foreign countries.

Over the course of two days, nearly 25 speakers covered topics from "Enhancing Landowner Access to Emerging Ecosystem Service Markets" and "Carbon Registries: Standards and Protocols" to mitigation banking and nutrient credit trading. The following is a compilation of remarks as summarized by 17 VDOF employees who attended the conference.

Matthew Smith, director of ecosystem services for Forecon EcoMarket Solutions LLC, said there are emerging opportunities for US forests as they sequester about 10 percent of total industrial carbon emissions. Landowners willing to produce credible and verifiable forestry offset projects from sustainably managed forests will be able to receive an income stream for doing so. This income stream would be "complementary" income in the same vein as hunting leases.

Dan Spethmann of Working Lands Investment Partners LLC discussed "net present value" of land investments and how marketing other values, such as carbon storage and wetlands, might positively impact investment land holding. Using a large ranch in Texas that he manages for a client, he described how the landowners are using the property to meet multiple goals. The ranch includes timber and open land as well as riparian zones and a duck pond. He said that the owners ought to receive funds for the forest management being conducted according to the stewardship plan that was developed for the property.

In some cases, partnerships are established to achieve common goals. In the Lower Mississippi Valley, TerraCarbon LLC has brought together private landowners, non-governmental organizations and government agencies to finance hardwood afforestation through the forest carbon market. David Shoch, the company's director of forestry and technical services, said, "This partnership has made possible the planting of more than 24 million trees on 80,000 acres. That's means we've sequestered more than 26 million tons of carbon since the project began in 1999.

According to Janice McMahon of Environmental Services Inc., the key component of any carbon trading program is the verification process. "A third-party verifier, one who has no vested interest in any deal being brokered, will ensure the credit generator (landowner), credit purchaser (emitter) and the trading platform (market) are protected." This is



*One of many display booths at the Ecosystem Services conference.*

especially true in the absence of government oversight – an issue that may be addressed very soon.

Robert Doudrick, national ecosystem services coordinator for the USDA Forest Service, presented an overview of federal support for market-based conservation and the potential for ecosystem services markets. As directed by the 2008 Farm Bill, the US Secretary of Agriculture is responsible for facilitating the measuring and marketing of ecosystem services. By establishing technical guidelines for measuring ecosystem services, it will be

*continued on page 15*

VDOF HOSTS  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON  
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES,  
[FROM PAGE 14...](#)

easier for landowners to participate in these markets as they further develop. Many of the efforts thus far are focused on carbon as a response to global climate change.

The Environmental Defense Fund's Will McDow stated that one measure must become the standard as there are now seven different measures for a "unit" of carbon. Proposed legislation at the federal level will likely dictate the methodology used in the future.

Sandra Brown of Winrock International told the gathering that there are many types of carbon registries, all with different purposes, and that the global compliance market is in the billions of dollars annually while the voluntary market handles millions of dollars each year.

William M. Ferretti, Ph.D., vice president of the Chicago Climate Exchange, described how a voluntary cap and trade program works to reduce emissions of all six greenhouse gases through offset projects in North America. Companies have agreed to voluntary caps on carbon emissions. Once a company reaches its limit, it must purchase credits to offset any additional emissions. In early March, the market price was \$1.85 per metric ton of carbon. The Chicago Climate Exchange brokers the deals with units being sold in 100-metric-ton contracts. According to Ferretti, the average forest can sequester between 0.5 and four metric tons of carbon per acre per year. This would provide landowners with \$2 to \$8 of revenue per acre per year.



*Ridge Schulyer, legislative aide to  
Congressman Tom Perriello*

Dominion Virginia Power's Chief Environmental Officer Pamela Faggert said the utility supports greenhouse gas offsets. Two ways offsets can be created are by reforestation and managed forests. The offsets must be "real, additional, verifiable, permanent and enforceable," she said. To demonstrate Dominion's commitment to the further development of ecosystem service markets, Ms. Faggert announced a donation of \$250,000 to the Virginia Department of Forestry for the creation of a software tool that will help evaluate the ecosystem services provided by an individual tract of land.

Virginia Tech Professor Randy Wynne, Ph.D., is spearheading the project to develop the software tool. His efforts are focused on developing a Web-based interactive mapping and database tool that will enable landowners to add individualized inputs at the tract-specific level to existing GIS databases that will generate verifiable potential credits that can be achieved through specific management scenarios on their property.

Because it's one of the most developed markets, there was a lot of discussion on carbon at the conference, but it wasn't the only topic addressed. Nutrient credit trading was another popular topic receiving significant attention.

Allen Brockenbrough, water quality monitoring coordinator at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), presented information on what is considered the most successful point-source program in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Focusing on nitrogen

## VDOF HOSTS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, FROM PAGE 15...

and phosphorus, this cap-and-trade system focuses on point-source to point-source trading among existing facilities and a point-source to non-point-source trading reserve designed to accommodate new and expanding facilities. Facilities that exceed their cap must purchase credits from other facilities or acquire credits by paying for enhanced best management practices (BMPs) or into the state's Water Quality Improvement Fund.

The Virginia Nutrient Credit Exchange was created to allow permit holders to form a non-stock corporation to coordinate and facilitate trading by members. The legislative authority to do so was sought by the Virginia Municipal Association of Wastewater Agencies in collaboration with the DEQ and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Christopher Pomeroy of AquaLaw PLC said the exchange is guided by a 10-person elected board comprised of eight public and two private facility members to ensure that all parties involved have a positive outcome that's both good for Virginia's environment and Virginia's businesses.

The Chesapeake Bay Nutrient Land Trust LLC (CBNLT) was formed through public/private partnership efforts to focus on water quality strategies that provide landowners with multiple benefits, which include the ability to maintain "heritage" farms and landownership; an increase in environmental stewardship, and additional income. According to CBNLT's Brent Fults, the organization became the first private entity in Virginia to generate non-point source offsets. House Bill 2168 provides the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) with the clear legal authority to use offsets as a method for reducing nutrient pollution from permitted storm water impacts developed through quality engineering solutions. The law also provides an opportunity to reduce nutrient pollution from agricultural and developed lands.

Wetland and stream mitigation banking in the Commonwealth was also discussed. These "banks" are complicated ecological, financial and legal structures, according to panelists Michelle Henicheck (DEQ), Steve Jones of Environmental Services Inc., and Janice Cessna of Wetlands Studies and Solutions Inc. The act of creating wetlands and restoring streams requires extensive hydrological modeling and design to ensure that appropriate water flows are provided to the project area and that restored streams can accommodate the energy of that water flow. State and federal regulations are aimed at preserving and enhancing wetland and stream functions and are based on a no-net-loss concept that applies to both acreage and functionality. Requirements vary by site. While emergent wetlands require one acre of mitigation for each acre affected, forested wetlands require two acres for each affected acre.

Mitigation banks may sell credits only in a restricted geographic region, so a detailed analysis of the credit market for that area must be done prior to starting a project. In addition, the legal and financial arrangements must be made to: cover costs of 10 years of project monitoring; guarantee reconstruction in the event of failure, and provide for perpetual maintenance of the project.

BayBank is a multi-credit, online market for ecosystem services under development by Sustainable Solutions Inc. James Remuzzi said the system, designed for landowners within the 64,000-mile Chesapeake Bay watershed, integrates aerial photography, tax parcels, soils, vegetative cover, streams and water cover with GIS software to quantify ecosystem markets for a specific property with a goal of connecting landowners and market traders in a "highly transparent manner to build confidence in the system."

Lastly, Michael Bean of the Environmental Defense Fund discussed species conservation banks. Species conservation banks are driven by the Federal Endangered Species Act and related state laws. While similar to wetland banks in many respects, species mitigation banking has no preference for creation or restoration versus conservation, and species mitigation can have a larger market service area than wetlands banking, which is restricted to a particular watershed.

## SMOKEY BEAR ATTENDS THE NATIONAL TRADEMARK EXPO IN ALEXANDRIA

More Than 7,000 Attend Two-Day National Trademark Expo April 10-12

Fred X. Turck, assistant director of prevention, Resource Protection Division

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) highlighted the vital role trademarks play in the global economy and private and public sector.

The Expo featured exciting, interactive exhibits that illustrate the many kinds of trademarks – sound, configuration, color, motion and scent; the history and evolution of trademarks, and appearances by famous trademarked characters including the Pillsbury Doughboy, Popeye, Olive Oil, Dennis the Menace, Betty Boop, Curious George, M & M Candy, Sprout and, of course Sm,okey Bear. Companies exhibiting at the Expo include Microsoft®, Burberry®, NASCAR®, UPS® and Owens Corning®, and many others.

Friday's opening ceremony was attended by thousands of people including Alexandria school children. It began with a parade of 25 trademark characters; music from the Air Force Band's Ceremonial Quintet; speeches, and a ribbon cutting. The children broke into spontaneous dances while the Air Force brass quintet played. They screamed with delight and broke into loud applause as the various trademark costume characters were announced. It ended Saturday when the USPTO's normally quiet weekend campus sprang to life with thousands of kids and their parents flocking to the National Trademark Expo.

Expo visitors learned about the vital role trademarks play in the global economy at 15 exhibit booths and by attending educational workshops. Debbie Cohn, deputy commissioner for trademark operations, expressed delight at the response. "This was the greatest Expo we have ever held. All of the volunteers who worked on the Expo did a tremendous job. Because of them, we had a greater variety of exhibitors; the most costume characters ever, and an educational component and the focus on children that added a whole new dimension to the event."



Jon Dudas, under secretary of commerce for intellectual property and director of the USPTO, said, "Trademarks are all around us – we encounter at least 1,500 a day. So, it's fitting that we celebrate the vital role they play in our economy and the assurance of quality they provide consumers. The Expo is also an opportunity to highlight the government's efforts to combat counterfeit goods, which cost Americans billions of dollars each year."

A special thanks to Jim McGlone, urban forest conservationist, and Terry Lasher, assistant regional forester, for seeing that Smokey made it safely from his home in woods, through the mixing bowl, to DC and back. Nearly 60 years ago, Smokey made his first trip to Washington on his way to the National Zoo after he recuperated from his injuries, which occurred on a wildfire in New Mexico.

## VDOF ASSISTS IN COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING PROJECT

*Randy Short, forester, Washington, Lee and Scott counties, Western Region*

The Virginia Department of Forestry recently partnered with Bristol Virginia Utilities (BVU) and Alpha Natural Resources to plant approximately 14,500 trees in Washington County. The project was initiated by BVU to plant a tree for every one of its customers. BVU is the local utility provider for the Bristol and Washington County area. BVU, along with Alpha Natural Resources, an energy provider based in Abingdon, paid for the entire project.

The trees were planted on two landowners' tracts in the county. Randy Fleming, VDOF technician, and Randy Short, VDOF forester, provided technical assistance and also did site preparation work by scalping the sod with the tractor plow. Both planting areas consisted of agriculture lands, which were converted to forest. One of the planting areas is immediately adjacent to the famous Virginia Creeper Trail and South Fork of the Holston River. The Creeper Trail is an old railroad grade, which has been converted to a highly used multi-use recreational trail. Therefore, the project was highly visible, and we received many comments from trail users during the project. All were very positive!

A variety of tree species were planted. Different hardwood species were planted on the higher quality sites and along the riparian corridor, while white pines were used on the marginal sites. The tracts were planted by two different contract crews. The Department of Forestry was involved in the project from the beginning and assisted with cost estimates, species selection, site preparation and the tree planting. Randy Fleming said, "It felt really good to be involved in a project which helps offset our environmental impact, as well as have a positive influence on our community." Randy also enjoyed doing the site preparation as well. "There's nothing like being able to get out and make some dirt fly!" he said while doing the scalping.

With the normal to above-normal amount of precipitation we have been getting, tree survival should be very good. The landowners are very excited about the project and have been instrumental in providing a suitable location to do the tree planting. With the increasing interest in carbon sequestration and mitigation and global warming, BVU hopes to make the tree planting an annual event. If so, we already have a list of sites lined up for planting!



## HARDWOOD TREE PLANTING EXPANDS IN THE COALFIELDS

*Adam Cumpston, forester, Russell County, Western Region*

The coalfields of Southwest Virginia have seen an unprecedented surge in the number of hardwood tree plantings on reclaimed mine sites this year. This trend started with the creation of the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) in 2004. ARRI is a coalition of groups who are committed to restoring mined lands back to their pre-mine use as productive forests. In addition to planting more high-value, native, hardwood trees on mined sites, ARRI is also interested in increasing the survival and growth rate of planted trees through research. This research, conducted by Virginia Tech and the University of Kentucky, has led to the creation of the Forestry Reclamation Approach (FRA), which is the framework by which mined sites are planted. In the past, heavy equipment was used to level the land before planting, which would create compaction issues. According to the FRA, the ground should be uncompacted with a good growth medium for at least the top four feet. The FRA also emphasizes proper planting techniques for both early successional species and high-value hardwood trees. Many of the mining companies in the

area are beginning to shift from past practices of conversion to grassland or pine forest and they are beginning to employ the FRA as they begin to see it is cost effective. To increase public awareness of reforesting mined lands, the Virginia Department of Forestry has partnered with the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, the United States Office of Surface Mining, and other local groups to conduct educational tree planting programs, which have mostly been geared toward children. Many of the trees planted were provided by Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Company.



*Sixth-grade students learn more about tree planting in an outdoor tent classroom.*

The first event to take place was at the Splashdam area near Haysi in Dickenson County. The event was organized by Gene Counts, who is a member of Friends of the Russell Fork and brother to VDOF's Steve Counts. This selected site had been mined in the past and a variety of hardwood trees along with some scattered eastern white pines were present. This area was an example of early reclamation methods, which included heavy soil compaction. Trees were capable of growing in the soil, but this area would never amount to a productive forest of high-value trees due to the severe compaction. An area approximately two acres was cleared off and an excavator was brought in to dig up and loosen the soil. After site preparation was completed, about 150 high school students from Haysi and Clintwood planted 1,900 hardwood trees. A few blight-resistant American chesnut trees were also planted. In addition to tree planting, students also heard educational lectures covering FRA and wildlife habitat provided on reforested mined lands. Gene is hoping this area will serve as an outdoor classroom for students to learn about mine reclamation and forestry.

The next tree planting day was hectic since there were two separate planting events occurring at the same time within



*High school students planting trees at Splashdam in Dickenson County.*

## HARDWOOD TREE PLANTING EXPANDS IN THE COALFIELDS, FROM PAGE 19...

three miles of each other. Both of the plantings took place near Coeburn in Wise County. High school students from Wise County Christian School planted 400 trees on one area. Before the planting took place, teachers worked with the students in the classroom to develop math skills, such as determining the number of trees per acre on different spacing grids. The other area was planted entirely by volunteers who planted nearly 2,000 hardwood trees in less than half a day. This area had a creek running through it, so in addition to reforestation, a riparian buffer was also created.

A couple of trends that have started to emerge this year include more involvement from coal companies and reaching across state lines to include students from other states when planting is near the state line. A prime example of these trends is the planting that took place near Appalachia in Wise County. This planting was sponsored by Cumberland River Coal Company and included 6th graders from Scott County, Virginia, and Letcher County, Kentucky. Although they had only a few short hours in the field, 125 students planted nearly 400 hardwood trees. The students also received an educational program on wildlife habitat.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Virginia Department of Forestry has partnered with the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, and the US Office of Surface Mining to host an Arbor Day event in Hurley, which is in Buchanan County. This year, we were lucky enough to have Chris Stanley with TECO Coal sponsor Arbor Day and assist with planning. The number of people who attended this year's event was more than three times as many from last year's event. Approximately 350 students and 100 adults were present for a total of 450 people! Every 6<sup>th</sup> grade student from Buchanan County Public Schools, students from private schools, and home-schooled children attended the event. Students were also brought in from Majestic Knox Elementary School in Kentucky making this an interstate event. Even though it was a cold, windy day, the students could find shelter for the educational stations inside a large enclosed tent. When it was time to plant, the students received assistance on correct planting technique from resource professionals from various agencies. TECO Coal had the event professionally catered, which gave a hot meal to each student helping them warm up after planting in the cold. In addition to 900 hardwood trees, a few American Chestnut trees were planted by the students. Dr. Bob Parris of the American Chestnut Foundation said this is the first active mine site to have the back-crossed American Chestnuts planted. Tom Shope, US Office of Surface Mining Regional Director, commented as he left, "Virginia has raised the bar for Arbor Day Events." Preliminary planning has already begun for Arbor Day next year. Hopefully, Virginia can continue to have a progressive outlook on the reforestation of mined lands and continue to raise the bar.



*Sixth-grade students planting trees at Arbor Day in Hurley.*



*Chris Owens provides instruction to students at the Splashdam site.*

## SECOND ANNUAL GO GREEN DAY

*Zach Olinger, forest management and education specialist, Matthews State Forest*



St. Patrick's Day has long been tied with the color green. In recent years, the word "green" has taken on a new meaning. It seems every day, we hear more and more about "green" lifestyles and "going green". While much of this green talk may be rhetoric or corporate propaganda, there does seem to be an unprecedented awareness and concern of environmental issues in this country. In keeping with the spirit of St. Patrick's Day, March 17<sup>th</sup> seemed like the perfect day to host the second annual "Go Green Day" at the Matthews State Forest. Go Green Day is an event where the general public is invited to participate in different activities and learn about ways they can be a little "greener".

The VDOF worked with the New River SWCD to coordinate the event, but many agencies and groups presented programs or set up demonstrations or displays. Hardwood seedlings provided by Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Company were given away. V&M Recycling collected feed bags and hay bale wrapping from farmers, and Walmart collected several items for recycling, including tires, batteries, used motor oil, plastic grocery bags and clear plastic.

Scheduled presentations were made throughout the day, including topics such as: bio-diesel production by Red Birch Energy; bee keeping by Brushy Mountain Bee Farm; conservation easements by the New River Land Trust; forests and climate change and timber sales by VDOF; home canning, wind power and blueberry production by Cooperative Extension; rain barrels and organic gardening by the Master Gardeners of the Blue Ridge, and a presentation and orchard tour conducted by the American Chestnut Foundation.

Attendees also had an opportunity to see demonstrations of charcoal making, and small scale wind- and hydro-power production.

The organizations that set up displays and provided information to visitors included: VA Cooperative Extension; the Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program; Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries; Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation; Resource Conservation & Development; Conservation Services; Master Naturalists; Virginia Outdoors Foundation; Farm Service Agency; NRCS; Grayson Natural Beef; Turman Hardwood Flooring, and Vaughan-Basset Furniture.

Throughout the day, more than 300 people attended. Hopefully, St. Patrick's Day of 2010 will see the third annual Go Green Day.

## VDOF PREPS STUDENTS FOR NATIONAL COMPETENCY TEST

*Chris Owens, technician, Dickenson County, Western Region*

Early in February, I was contacted by Clintwood High Schools' VoAg teacher Mrs. Susan Wylder. She wanted to know if I could assist her and her class with the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) tests that dealt with forestry, logging and wildlife. I spoke with Adam Cumpston, who is the forester in Dickenson County, and asked if he would assist with this task. Neither of us had heard of the test, so we did a little research and found that the tests are prepared by an independent, non-profit organization. The tests are aimed at assessing students' preparation to enter the workforce after taking vocational or agricultural classes. These tests are much like SOLs in that they are standardized tests. Dickenson County schools have just adopted the tests this year. Unlike the SOLs, there are not years of old tests to look at and pull information.

Mrs. Wylder gave us the information she had, including a list of topics that could be on the test. The list included tree identification, use of topo maps, skidder safety, forest management, chainsaw use, forest pests, sawmill operation, fires suppression, prescribed fires, BMPs, and many other topics. We told Mrs. Wylder we would do the best we could to cover all the topics.

Armed with the knowledge of what the students would be required to learn, and our knowledge of the topics, we set out to convey as much information as possible. We were scheduled every Thursday to give a talk to the class. Adam and I split the topics between us depending on the experience we have had with each topic, to offer the students the best information we have available.

Every Thursday at 8:30 a.m., Adam and I gave a talk on a different topic. We found out that this was a daunting task to try to cover all the topics, since some of them are semester-long classes in college, and we are attempting to cover the subjects in a few hours. The students seemed eager and willing to listen, so it was a pleasure to speak and relay the information we possess on the each topic. Sometimes, however, the classroom was not the right environment to cover some topics.

On April, 9 2009, we met the students at Wes Stanley's house. Wes has a piece of property in Clintwood and has always been willing to let us use it as a sort of outdoor classroom. While we were there, I covered chainsaw safety and OSHA regulations for chainsaw use. Adam covered forest management, and Mrs. Wylder covered tree identification. Mrs. Wylder wanted us to prepare a quiz for the class to see if they had been paying attention to our talks in the classroom. Once we were back in the classroom, Adam and I came up with a quiz to see what they remembered from our talks. The students did very well.



As for Adam and me, we will have to wait for the final test to see if we passed. The class was scheduled to take the NOCTI test in the middle of May. We hope that we gave them the information they needed to do well on the test, and in their future endeavors as productive members of society.

## VDOF ASSISTS WITH CHAINSAW SAFETY VIDEO

*Adam Cumpston, forester,  
Russell, Dickenson & Wise  
counties, Western Region*

According to data released from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the mining industry has the second-highest fatality rate per 100,000 employees. Only the agriculture industry (which includes forestry, fishing and hunting) has a higher rate of death on the job. So, when Ted Farrish, training specialist with the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), contacted Chris Owens, Dickenson County technician, to assist with a chainsaw safety video, Chris saw an opportunity to instruct miners on the safe use of chainsaws. The Mine Safety and Health Administration is responsible for the health and safety of miners nationwide.

Ted Farrish and Eddie Walters, MSHA's audio-video production specialist, traveled from the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beaver, West Virginia, to film the training video. As one of the few Class C fallers in the region, Chris was the lead subject for the video, which focused on the aspects of safe chainsaw usage and mission planning. Adam Cumpston, forester, and Bill Miller, assistant regional forester, served as extras when additional people were needed in the scene.



*Chris Owens fells a tree to demonstrate cutting methods.*

The filming began indoors at the Haysi Volunteer Fire Department where mission planning and personal protective equipment (PPE) were discussed. The second part of the video was shot in the forest to demonstrate the proper use of the saw. Some of the information covered in the video included tree size up; starting the chainsaw; use of PPE; carrying the saw; sharpening the chain; transporting and storing the saw; different cuts (bore versus back cut); felling trees; escape routes; safety zones, and cutting spring poles. Chris fell several trees of varying sizes to give the crew several shot options to use when they put the video together. The film crew hopes to begin editing the film shortly.

This training video will be used by miners and mine contractors across the country. The film will be available as a DVD and as an online training course. The filming took place on an abandoned surface mine, which was slated to be planted back to native hardwoods and American chestnut this spring.



*Chris Owens shows how to properly store a chainsaw and fuel for transportation.*

*Chris Owens demonstrates proper sawing techniques for MSHA videographer.*



### WELCOME!

**Justin Dillon** is our new technician for Bedford County in the Western Region. Justin served as a part-time firefighter in Botetourt County, a wildland firefighter for the Florida Division of Forestry and served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

**B.J. Butler** is our new technician for Isle of Wight County in the Eastern Region. B.J. recently received his bachelor's degree in forest resource management from Virginia Tech. He served as an intern in the Central Region and also as a part-time firefighter for VDOF.

**June Flora** is our new fiscal technician in the Fiscal Division. She comes to us from Greene County Department of Social Services handling accounts receivable and other fiscal functions.

**Justin Barnes** will join the Central Region as technician in Fluvanna and Goochland counties on July 10. Justin is a West Virginia University grad with forestry experience at the U.S. Army's Aberdeen Proving Grounds and Fort McCoy.

### NEW ARRIVALS!

**Larry Mikkelson**, forestry program analyst in the Forestland Conservation Division, and wife, Lise, became first-time grandparents. Noah Jeffery Mikkelson arrived March 4 weighing 8 pounds, 7 ounces. Noah's proud parents are Mark and Samantha Mikkelson.

**Connie Young**, lead worker at Garland Gray Forestry Center, and Harold Young, have a new grandson. Harold is a former VDOF mechanic. Jacob Gabriel Noreau made his appearance April 6, weighing in at 6 pounds, 11 ounces. He and his parents, Shannon and Joe, live in Tennessee. Everyone is doing great.

**Clara Rowe**, administrative specialist in the Eastern Region, is a grandma again. Clara's daughter and son-in-law, Lisa and Robert Hundley, had a baby boy May 4.

Matthew Owen weighed 8 pounds, 8 ounces. Everyone is doing great.

**Greg Estoll**, forester for Tazewell County in the Western Region, and his wife, Jennifer, welcomed a new son to their family. Peter Gregory Estoll was born May 26.

**Ellen and David Powell** welcomed a new daughter to their family a little earlier than expected. Ellen is the conservation education coordinator in the Public Information Division and David is an assistant regional forester for the Central Region. Rowan Grace Powell was born June 3 weighing 3 pounds, 8 ounces. Rowan is in the UVA NICU, but both she and Ellen are doing well.

**Mike Womack**, forest management specialist at the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest, and wife, Christy, welcomed their fourth son to the family. Baby Ethan Luke was born June 7 weighing 6 pounds, 11 ounces. He is welcomed home by big brothers, Brandon, Ryan and Adam.

**Kirby Woolfolk**, forester for Nottoway County in the Central Region, and wife, Carly, welcomed their first child. Cora Parlier was born June 19 weighing 7 pounds, 13 ounces.

**Chad Stover**, technician for Rockingham County in the Central Region, and wife, Whitney, welcomed their first child. Carter Chapman was born June 19, weighing 7 pounds, 13 ounces.

### WEDDING BELLS!

**Jay Bassett**, technician for Sussex County in the Eastern Region, was married April 25. We wish Jay and his wife, Donna, a long, happy marriage!

### MOVERS AND SHAKERS

**Shannon Lewis**, forester for Halifax County in the Central Region, moved into the technician position for Appomattox County in the Central Region.

**Alex Stace**, forester for Southampton County in the Eastern Region, transferred to forester for Halifax County in the Central Region.

**Dave Houttekier**, technician for Appomattox County in the Central Region, moved to the technician position in Caroline County in the Eastern Region.

**Paul Stoneburner**, regional technician in the Central Region, transferred to the Madison County technician position May 1.

**G.T. Hendrick** is our new longleaf pine/southern pine beetle specialist in the Resource Information Division. He received his bachelor's degree in forestry from Virginia Tech and has been working as an FIA technician. G.T. starts his new duties July 10 and will be working out of New Kent Forestry Center.

### RETIREMENTS

**Ernie Thompson**, Headquarters mechanic, retired effective March 1. We wish Ernie a long and happy retirement!

**Steve Pence**, forester for Fluvanna County, retired February 1. Best wishes in your retirement!

### DEPARTURES

**Bart Pfautz**, technician for Chesterfield and Powhatan counties, left VDOF July 6. He and his wife will be volunteering for the Peace Corps. Best wishes in your new adventure!

**Paul White**, technician for Fluvanna and Goochland counties in the Central Region, left VDOF March 9. We wish him the best in his future endeavors.

**Michelle Quesenberry**, technician, Buchanan County in the Western Region, left VDOF July 9 to pursue other interests. Best wishes!

**Ben Parsons**, water quality specialist in the Western Region, left VDOF July 10. Good luck with your new job!

### CONDOLENCES

**Jim Bowling**, technician for Nottoway County in the Central Region, lost his mother, Catherine A. Bowling of White Sulphur Springs, WV, March 14.

**Albertine Turner Boush**, retired secretary in the Portsmouth office from 1973-1984, died April 7 at the age of 90.

**Dave Stoner**, retired Fiscal Director, passed away May 17.

**Richard Thomas**, assistant director for operations in the Resource Protection Division, lost his mother, Margaret Delbridge Thomas, of High Point, NC, June 23 at the age of 91.

**Connie Young**, lead worker at Garland Gray Forestry Center, and Harold Young, lost Harold's father, Robert "Yancey" Young, at the age of 78. Mr. Young and Harold used to work at Garland Gray Forestry Center.

**Tracy McDonald**, FIA forester in the Resource Information Division, lost her father, Bill Gibson, May 4 at the age of 83.

**Joe Street**, information systems manager in the Resource Information Division, lost his father March 25. Joseph C. Street, died following an illness at age 56.

**Jean Green**, former headquarters receptionist from 1977-1983. Jean died February 25 from cancer at the age of 71.

**Donna Hoy**, State Forester's office, and **Sandy Mills**, Resource Protection Division, lost their brother, Wesley Sullivan. Wes died after a battle with cancer at age 58 on February 20.



Rebecca Woodson ~ June 1 (HQ)  
Deborah Luna ~ June 2 (CR)  
Donald Davis ~ June 5 (ER)  
Mary Altizer ~ June 7 (WR)  
Justin Hancock ~ June 9 (ER)  
Joseph Street ~ June 11 (HQ)  
Margaret Carpenter ~ June 12 (HQ)  
H.F. Jones ~ June 12 (WR)  
David Stone ~ June 12 (CR)  
Adam Smith ~ June 14 (CR)  
David Edwards ~ June 15 (WR)  
Bryan Alexander ~ June 16 (ER)  
Gerald Crowell ~ June 16 (CR)  
Vanessa Blick ~ June 20 (FC)  
Carolyn Haggerty ~ June 22 (FC)

Dennis Vaughan ~ June 24 (CR)  
David Powell ~ June 25 (CR)  
David Guadarrama ~ June 26 (FC)  
Timothy Hackney ~ June 26 (CR)  
Brenda Taylor ~ June 26 (HQ)  
Todd Edgerton ~ June 28 (HQ)  
Edward Furlow ~ June 30 (CR)  
David Slack ~ June 30 (ER)  
Matt Thurman ~ June 30 (WR)  
Susan Tennant ~ July 3 (CR)  
Donald Giegerich ~ July 6 (CR)  
Robert Farrell ~ July 7 (HQ)  
Kevin Keith ~ July 8 (WR)  
Joshua McLaughlin ~ July 9 (FC)  
William Hall ~ July 11 (CR)  
Stephen Morris ~ July 13 (CR)  
Kenneth Thomas ~ July 13 (WR)  
David Schnake ~ July 14 (ER)  
Kenneth Sterner ~ July 14 (ER)  
Dennis Gaston ~ July 15 (SF)  
Paul Geyer ~ July 15 (Ret.)  
James Jarvis ~ July 15 (CR)  
Adam Cumpston ~ July 16 (WR)  
William Shumaker ~ July 17 (SF)

Michael Salyer ~ July 19 (WR)  
David Jones ~ July 20 (WR)  
John Scrivani ~ July 20 (HQ)  
Chris Sullivan ~ July 20 (WR)  
Junius Miles ~ July 21 (SF)  
Anne Skalski ~ July 22 (HQ)  
James McGlone ~ July 23 (CR)  
Vance Blick ~ July 24 (FC)  
Drew Arnn ~ July 25 (CR)  
Philip Carpenter ~ July 25 (HQ)  
Tammy Ingle ~ July 26 (SF)  
Nelson Jarvis ~ July 27 (ER)  
Sandra Mills ~ July 28 (HQ)  
Chris Thomsen ~ July 30 (WR)  
Joseph Rossetti ~ Aug. 3 (CR)  
Jimmy Steele ~ Aug. 6 (Ret.)  
Charlie Yopp ~ Aug. 6 (WR)  
Leonard Tennant ~ Aug. 10 (Ret.)  
Miller Adams ~ Aug. 12 (CR)  
Wanda Colvin ~ Aug. 12 (HQ)  
Richard Inge ~ Aug. 13 (Ret.)  
Brian Lacey ~ Aug. 14 (ER)  
Dennis McCarthy ~ Aug. 14 (WR)  
Larry Estes ~ Aug. 15 (FC)  
John Seaquist ~ Aug. 16 (Ret.)

Charles Rammell ~ Aug. 18 (Ret.)  
William Butler ~ Aug. 19 (ER)  
Timothy Dameron ~ Aug. 19 (FC)  
Heather Dowling ~ Aug. 20 (ER)  
Donald Hixson ~ Aug. 20 (Ret.)  
Scott Bachman ~ Aug. 21 (ER)  
Michael Aherron ~ Aug. 22 (CR)  
Kathy Frazier ~ Aug. 22 (Ret.)  
Debra Zimniewicz ~ Aug. 22 (WR)  
Pickett Upshaw ~ Aug. 23 (ER)  
Charles Wright ~ Aug. 23 (ER)  
Andrew Brown ~ Aug. 25 (CR)  
Thomas Snoddy ~ Aug. 26 (CR)  
Bradley Williams ~ Aug. 26 (HQ)  
Peter O'Brien ~ Aug. 27 (Ret.)  
Warren Coburn ~ Aug. 28 (ER)  
Martin Aguirre ~ Aug. 31 (FC)  
Daniel Johnson ~ Aug. 31 (Ret.)

05/18/2009

Dear Mr. Garrison,

We are writing to compliment you on the extraordinary service we recently experienced in working with one of your area foresters, Mr. Rich Steensma, in Northumberland County. My husband and I contacted your department about a year and a half ago after we bought a waterfront home in Reedville, VA. We had the great fortune of being directed to Mr. Steensma to help us understand what we needed to do to reforest our small (3.5 acres) property.

We were thoroughly delighted with Mr. Steensma's wealth of knowledge, patience and professionalism as he listened to what we envisioned for our property over the coming years and then collaborated with us to pick out suitable tree species; estimate the numbers we needed; evaluate planting methods, and prepare for follow-up maintenance. He even followed up in writing with a comprehensive, easy-to-understand cost estimate and instructions. While Mr. Steensma arranged for us to get some donated tree seedlings, we also purchased seedlings from your Forestry Center and were also delighted with the service they provided.

Though our project is relatively small given the nature of the work your department does, it was nonetheless an intimidating undertaking for two homeowners to install 1,500 saplings. I know that these tree seedlings would not have made it into the ground this past spring if it wasn't for Mr. Steensma's encouragement and support. We know we have work ahead of us in maintaining these seedlings over the coming years; we are hopeful that this can be done properly with the expert advice we have received from Mr. Steensma.

Thank you for your efforts in making such high-quality services and people available to citizens of the Commonwealth!

With our best regards,

Kimberly Marsh and Charles Buki, Reedville, VA

12/16/2008

Dear Mr. Stoots,

I am not sure if I am contacting the correct person or not. You are listed as the Regional Forester for the Western region so I am guessing that you are the "head" guy over the other foresters in that area.

I am writing to inform you that Forester Randy Short went far beyond the call of duty to help me with a project I am working on with regards to the Fire tower located in Mendota. I was trying to find a way to get a photo(s) of it when I contacted him – hoping maybe there were some on file somewhere I could get a copy of. I was not even sure of the name or location of this particular fire tower. Randy answered my inquiry very quickly and had it figured out in no time by what little detail I could give him. He went far beyond the call of duty by, not only looking for photos on file for me, but by actually going there and taking them for me and mailing them to me! I won't bore you with the details of my project. It is just part of a Christmas gift for someone special who spent a lot of time there when he was growing up. I never dreamed that I would be able to get actual up to date photos! It is so refreshing to know there are people still out there who will take time to do the unexpected for someone. Someone who will go far beyond what their job requires.

In my opinion, you have a very valuable employee in Randy Short and I wanted to take the time to let you know. I am not sure what your procedures are on congratulating an employee on a job well done, but I hope you will use this letter on my behalf to do that. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to email me back or contact me by mail or phone. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Dana Trull, Clyde, NC

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**Submit articles to:  
Janet Muncy, editor**

**[janet.muncy@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:janet.muncy@dof.virginia.gov)**

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