



News Release

For Immediate Release
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VDOF 18003

Virginia's New State Forester Named

Rob Farrell has been selected as State Forester of Virginia. He is the eighth State Forester in the 104-year history of the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF). Farrell was appointed by Governor Ralph Northam Friday afternoon.

Farrell has worked for VDOF for 18 years, starting out as an area forester, and then holding the position of assistant director of forestland conservation before taking on the role of deputy state forester in 2012. Farrell also served as acting State Forester of Virginia from January through April 2014.

"It's an honor to be appointed as Virginia's state forester by Governor Northam, and I look forward to leading the Virginia Department of Forestry in support of the Northam administration," Farrell said. "The agency's mission remains the same. We will protect Virginia's forest and citizens from wildfire and we will be ready to respond to other natural disasters and emergencies. We will continue to help forest landowners manage and grow their forests. We will work with Virginia loggers to get the wood out of the forest with the least impact possible. We will support and grow the forest products industry in Virginia because having strong markets for forest products is the key to having healthy managed forests."

Virginia is home to more than 16 million acres of forestland, 10.6 million of which are owned by families or individuals. The forestry industry employs more than 107,931 Virginians and contributes about \$21 billion annually to the state's economy.

"Trees and forests are critical for water quality and for human health and we will increase our efforts to demonstrate that trees are the answer to many of the issues that we face in Virginia today," said Farrell. "We will continue our innovative work in forestland conservation, and increasing the benefits that Virginians derive from trees in our towns and communities. "

"Governor Northam has stressed the importance of collaboration amongst state agencies, the importance of clean air and clean water and the need to balance economic development with environmental protection," Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry and outgoing State Forester of Virginia Bettina Ring said. "Rob has strong relationships and is well respected within the forestry community, among landowners and the VDOF's many conservation partners. Under his leadership, VDOF will continue to demonstrate the importance of working forests in our environment."

(more)

Farrell is a Virginia native who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in forestry at Virginia Tech.

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The Virginia Department of Forestry protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. Headquartered in Charlottesville, the Agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. VDOF is an equal opportunity provider.

With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$21 Billion annually.