



Virginia Department of Forestry Report
For
Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
Quarterly Meeting (Conference Call) – April 14, 2020

Agency

- Budget approval for 4 new watershed forester positions (provided things don't change due to the current COVID-19 emergency). A Watershed Coordinator to be based at VDOF Headquarters in Charlottesville and one Watershed Specialist position to be housed in each of our administrative regions. These positions will focus on Chesapeake Bay WIP initiatives as well as land conservation
- The VDOF has been involved in assisting the Virginia Department of Emergency Management COVID-19 response by providing incident management positions at the EOC.
- VDOF continues to operate in a business as usual fashion with most personnel operating remotely with access by cell phone. Field work continues while following CDC Guidelines for social distancing and hand-washing.

Forest Management

- The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Cost-Share is back for 2020! This reimbursement program offers financial aid to individual landowners, municipalities, homeowners associations, universities, non-profits, etc. Reimbursements are 50 percent of direct treatment costs (injection treatments of emamectin benzoate only) up to \$1,250 per landowner and \$5,000 per organization. Open enrollment will be April 1 - June 22 but we will certainly be flexible with timing and method of submission, considering the current pandemic. Please refer questions to Meredith Bean (emerald ash borer coordinator) meredith.bean@dof.virginia.gov, (434) 220-9034.
- Garland Gray Forestry Center has completed its lifting and packaging of this season's loblolly pine with a total of 26.1 million seedlings packaged.
- Augusta Forestry Center has completed its lifting for this season. Orders year-to-date total 956, and 3.8 million seedlings have been graded and sold.

Fire Protection

- Fire Season is currently underway, no burning before 4 PM!

Water Quality

- 2019 BMP Implementation Monitoring has been completed and shows that BMPs are continuing to be implemented at a very high rate of 95% statewide and the tract median score for those tracts within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed is 96.9%. Of the 240 sites visited, 4 sites (1.8%) had some issues that proved to be a risk to water quality if a rain event occurred, and none of those sites exhibited active sedimentation. The logging community continues to do an exceptional job in the protection of soil and water quality.
- Through April 1, 94 Riparian Forest Buffer Tax Credits applications have been processed with 185 individual tax credits issued for the 2019 tax year (it is still early yet). This has provided eligible landowners with tax credits of \$591,334.50 on timber valued at \$2,616,951.43 retained in 1,460 acres of streamside buffers during harvest, and we are not finished yet for the year. This is the largest number of tax credits and buffer acres associated with this program since it was initiated in 2000.