



Virginia Department of Forestry Report  
For  
Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts  
Quarterly Meeting (Conference Call) – September 29, 2020

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**Agency**

- Agency is still awaiting impact to budget due to COVID 19 impacts, although we are being allowed to fill some critical vacancies.
- The VDOF has been involved in assisting the Virginia Department of Emergency Management COVID-19 response by providing incident management positions to VDEM. VDOF has also assigned one Emergency Management individual to VDEM for Hurricane season preparedness.
- VDOF has been supplying firefighting personnel to assist with the western wildfire outbreaks. Resources have been provided to California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and Texas.
- 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, mask wearing and hand-washing.

**Forest Management**

- VDOF is working with the Black Family Land Trust on a U. S. Forest Service grant to provide forest management services and programs to underserved minority landowners in southside, Virginia. This program provides free management plans and other project services to assist those landowners in managing their forest resources, additional funding has been provided through EPA for assistance with underserved landowners for the Chesapeake Bay cleanup initiative assisting with Riparian Buffer establishment and the conversion of Turf to Trees.
- Training on hardwood management has been provided to a group of VDOF Foresters by the U. S. Forest Service Southern Research Station as part of the State Foresters Hardwood Management Initiative.

**Water Quality**

- The VDOF participated in an on-line SHARP Logger Training Update Class in May. This is supposed to be a Face-to-face training meeting but due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was conducted as a webinar with 107 attendees present from across the state on BMP Monitoring results and methods for improvement in certain categories. This program is now available to Loggers as a recorded session and the short-term future of several training efforts for loggers will be done virtually for the near term
- 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. Report can be found here: [http://www.dof.virginia.gov/infopubs/bmp-reports/BMPs-Imp-Monitoring-2019\\_pub.pdf](http://www.dof.virginia.gov/infopubs/bmp-reports/BMPs-Imp-Monitoring-2019_pub.pdf)
- The first three quarters of BMP Monitoring has been completed for 2020 and the agency is on-track to complete monitoring by the end of the year.
- VDOF is accepting applications for the Riparian Forest Buffer Tax Credit program. Landowners that have harvested timber during the 2020 calendar year and have retained a forest buffer (Streamside Management Zone – SMZ) are eligible to receive a tax credit based of 25% of the value of the timber retained in the forest buffer up to a maximum of \$17,500.