

**Virginia Department of Forestry**  
Partner Update June 2023

**Top Takeaways:**

1. Having an Area Meeting? We'd love to join you! Contact [Caitlin.verdu@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:Caitlin.verdu@dof.virginia.gov) to schedule a visit.
2. Need help with riparian forest buffers? Call us!
3. Hardwood Initiative Updates (See below)

**Watershed Program**

- Let us help you plant riparian forest buffers!

Reach out to Caitlin Verdu at [Caitlin.verdu@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:Caitlin.verdu@dof.virginia.gov).

- At last, we successfully hired a facilitator to begin work on a Statewide Riparian Forest Buffer Action Plan

This plan will emphasize:

- o Coordinating outreach to landowners to better match landowners to best-fit programs
- o Increasing the capacity for planting and maintaining buffers
- o Setting realistic goals and timelines for implementation
- o Improving recording and reporting protocols

**Hardwood Initiative: Changes to Incentives**

The Hardwood Initiative Cost-Share is available for forest landowners statewide. The focus of the program is on promoting active forest management to improve existing hardwood forest. Rates are increased from previous years effective July 1 and landowners are encouraged to contact their local DOF forester to learn more.

A Hardwood Initiative Tax Credit is available for the first time for the 2023 tax year. It offers up to a \$1000 state income tax credit for taxpayers who implement hardwood Best Practices. This can be used in addition to cost-share to help with any expense above the cost-share amount. In addition to management practices in existing forest, the tax credit may be used for hardwood afforestation planting. Taxpayers with tree plantings are encouraged to contact their area forester to learn more about program specifics.

**\*\* Very Important!** DOF staff is receiving training on the cost-share and tax credit throughout June!! While we encourage people to contact their local forester for more, **do so after July 1\*\***

Virginia Department of Forestry and the Commonwealth are serious about our commitment to improving Virginia's hardwood resource. Please help us encourage landowners to do good hardwood management to improve the resource for themselves, their heirs, and the entire Commonwealth.

### **James River Buffer Program**

- The James River Buffer Program is a flexible cost-share option for landowners looking to install a riparian forest buffer. The program is run in partnership with the James River Association and is funded by the Virginia Environmental Endowment.
- For more information or to apply for this program, visit the website at: <https://www.jamesriverbuffers.org/>

### **Silvicultural Water Quality Program**

- The Logger BMP Cost Share Program allocated \$564,000.00 of funding for 57 projects directly related to stream crossings on timber harvest operations during the time period of January - June 12, 2023.
- Riparian Buffer Tax Credit Program provided tax credits totaling \$566,373.30 on timber valued at \$2,681,626.33 that were retained in SMZ's on 68 timber harvests during the 2022 Tax Year.

For more information on these updates or anything else DOF, contact the Watershed Program Manager Caitlin Verdu at [Caitlin.verdu@dof.virginia.gov](mailto:Caitlin.verdu@dof.virginia.gov)