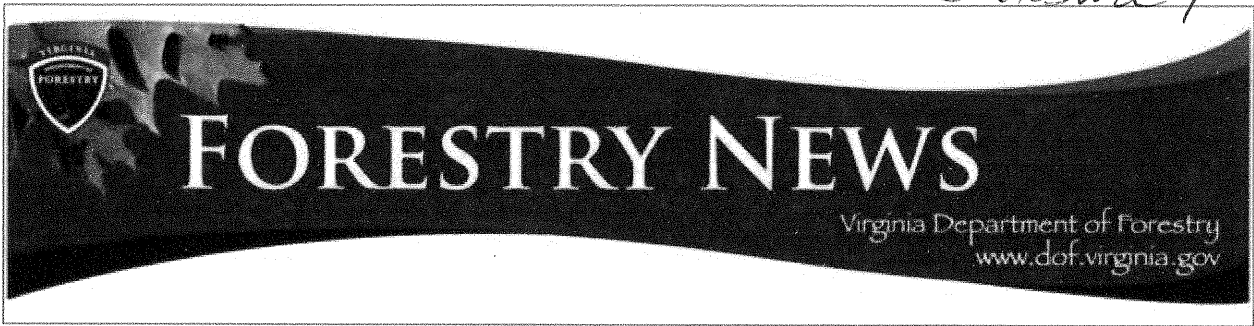


Enclosure 4



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October, 2011

Big Woods State Forest Dedicated

The Big Woods State Forest – a 2,188-acre pine plantation in Sussex County near Wakefield – became Virginia's 21st state forest and first to be dedicated in southeast Virginia. The property is considered to be an ideal location to restore a functional pine savannah ecosystem with a wide diversity of plant and animal life.



Big Woods State Forest and Wildlife Management Area encompass more than 4,400 acres. Officials describe the property as one of the largest protected blocks of southern pine forest left in Virginia. The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) will manage their respective properties.

The state bought the land from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which owns the adjoining 3,200-acre Piney Grove Preserve. The preserve is home to Virginia's rarest bird, the red-cockaded woodpecker, a federally endangered species found only in pine savannah forests of the southeastern United States. Piney Grove is home to approximately 70 red-cockaded woodpeckers.

VDGIF will place artificial nests for the woodpeckers in mature pine trees to support restoration efforts for the birds. VDOF intends to plant longleaf pines on its portion of the woods in the hope of reviving the trees. Southeast Virginia once boasted 1 million acres of longleaf pine; today, the number is about 1 percent of that figure.

Big Woods straddles both the Nottoway River and Blackwater River watersheds, the source of drinking water for more than 700,000 residents in southeastern Virginia. Thus, the property protects those watersheds and helps reduce the frequency of flood events.

VDOF purchased the property with conservation bond money combined with federal U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy funds and money from the Virginia Land Conservancy Foundation, administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in 2010.

Reducing the Risk of Fire on the Mountain

A team from VDOF's FireWise program and members of the National FireWise Community inspected

property in the Chinquapin Estates on Wintergreen Mountain in Nelson County. A representative from Congressman Robert Hurt's office was also present. They met with Wintergreen Fire and Rescue to review how the fire department had used grant funds to reduce wildfire risk.

The area suffered damage from Hurricane Isabel in 2003. The destructive storm ripped down a tremendous number of pine trees. These downed trees created a significant fire threat to the woodland home communities on Wintergreen Mountain. Sixty lots on the mountain were identified initially as being a severe fire threat to the entire community. Four years and about \$21,000 in grants later, only eight troubled lots remain.

"Our main goal is to reduce the danger of a massive wildfire from breaking out on the mountain and wiping out about 4,000 homes," said John Miller, director of resource protection. "VDOF and our FireWise partners want to do whatever we can proactively to limit the potential damage to woodland homes communities." These communities are often remote to fire departments, which can have a difficult time defending homes surrounded by flammable brush and debris.

Learn more at www.FireWiseVirginia.org.

Forests 2 Faucets Incentive Program Expands to Include Greene, Fluvanna Counties

A pilot program designed to link landowners' financial interests and their forestland management practices to urban consumers of the municipal water supply in the South Fork Rivanna River Reservoir Watershed has been expanded to include the entire Rivanna River Basin – opening eligibility to much of Albemarle, Greene and Fluvanna counties.

The goal of the \$400,000 Forests to Faucets grant program is to influence landowner behavior in a way that reduces the costs of the water resource to both urban and rural users. Funding for the program comes from a grant from the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities that the VDOF received in early 2010.

Buck Kline, VDOF's director of forestland conservation, said, "Expensive, engineered technologies address the pollutant of concern but often contribute little to improving other environmental values, such as air quality, biodiversity or carbon sequestration. This project will move beyond basic research to increase forest cover and the ecosystem services forests provide."

According to the 2010 Census, 120,000 people call the Rivanna River Basin home. The basin is the principal water source for 82,000 people in the Charlottesville area. Most of the property in the river basin is privately owned. The program is designed to maintain and expand forest cover in the watershed through financial incentives to landowners.

Landowners wanting to learn more about the forest management practices being funded and program eligibility should contact program coordinator and VDOF Forester Erik Filep at 434.971.1526 or visit the project website at <http://foreststofaucets.info/>.

Logger Incentive Program Resumes for Southern Pine Beetle Prevention

The Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program provides financial incentives for loggers to conduct pine thinnings. These activities create healthier forests and reduce the occurrence and impact of bark beetle outbreaks. Smaller stands also need active management, but loggers may avoid these sites since the fuel costs associated with moving large equipment long distances can be unprofitable. Incentives make these necessary management practices in smaller stands attractive to loggers.

This year, one significant change to the program is that thinning jobs may occur only on parcels that are 5-25 acres in size, instead of the previous range of 10-40 acres. A landowner may actually have

up to 40 acres of pine of any age class on his property and still qualify; however, the thinning operation cannot exceed 25 acres for any one application. A tract with more than 40 acres of pine of any age class is not eligible. The financial incentive for each application continues to be \$2,000.

Interested parties should contact their VDOF county forester for an application. The forester must approve each application. Other details about the program can be found on our website at: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/mgt/cip-fact-pbbp.htm>

Virginia's Tree Seedling Store Now Open

Virginians looking to plant trees on their land in the spring will have to go no farther than their computer. The VDOF opened its online tree seedling store September 30.

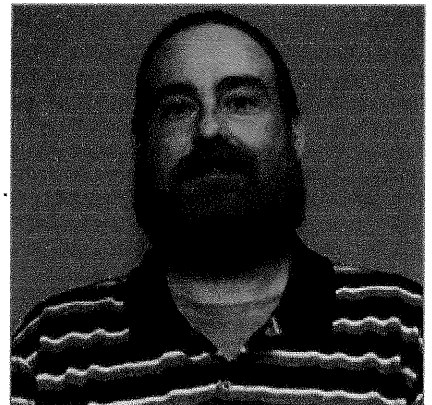
Every year, VDOF offers hardwood and pine bareroot seedlings. This year, VDOF has expanded its loblolly pine offerings. The six varieties available this year range from 25 percent to more than 60 percent in improved growth and yield, when compared with unimproved seedlings. Seedlings are available in quantities as low as 10 and 25. A brief video describes the offerings on [Forestry TV](#), the agency's YouTube site.

"Our seedlings are bred and grown in Virginia soil," said Josh McLaughlin, nursery forester, "and our pine seedlings use the best genetics from our tree improvement program. Landowners who plant trees as an investment should take a look at what we have available this year. And, if you want to add trees to your property but have a smaller area to plant, the smaller quantities we offer may be exactly what you need."

The VDOF's two tree nurseries grow and sell 24 million tree seedlings each year.

Faces of VDOF

Jonathan Smith is VDOF's new technician for Scott County. He has his associate's degree in agricultural technology from Virginia Tech. He previously worked for the Mountain Castles Soil and Water Conservation District as a conservation specialist.



After more than 30 years with VDOF, Sue Tennant retired October 1. Sue joined the agency as a forester trainee, became the forester for Prince Edward County and, ultimately, area forester. Sue served as assistant regional forester in the Farmville area since July 1, 2000.

Fire Prevention Week October 9-15, 2011

Fire safety should be practiced all year long, and National Fire Prevention Week helps focus our attention fire safety and prevention. Many potential fire hazards go undetected because people simply do not take steps to fireproof their home. During the week of October 9 - 15, take some time each to review these points, since most hazards can be easily addressed.

- Install and maintain a working smoke alarm outside of every sleep area and remember to change the batteries twice a year.
- Designate and practice two escape routes from each bedroom.
- Teach everyone the "Stop, Drop, and Roll" technique in case clothing catches on fire.
- READY – During wildfire season, take responsibility and prepare long before a wildfire threatens your home.
- SET – When wildfires threaten your area, pack your vehicle with your emergency items and valuables.