

2018-20 Executive Progress Report

Commonwealth of Virginia
Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry
Department of Forestry

At A Glance

The mission of the Department of Forestry is to protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians.

Staffing 233 Salaried Employees, 507 Contracted Employees, 279 Authorized, and 32 Wage Employees.

Financials Budget FY 2019, \$34.18 million, 56.37% from the General Fund.

Trends	↑ Demand for Forest Products	Key Perf Areas	➔ Wildfire Response
	↑ Urbanization of Rural Forest Land		↑ Forest Conservation
	↑ Invasive Pests and Species		↑ Water Quality
Legend	↑ Increase, ↓ Decrease, ➔ Steady	Productivity Legend	↑ Improving, ↓ Worsening, ➔ Maintaining

For more information on administrative key, and productivity measures, go to www.vaperforms.virginia.gov

Background and History

Agency Background Statement

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) was established in 1914 to prevent and suppress forest fires and reforest bare lands. Since our inception, we have grown and evolved to encompass other duties including managing the forest resource, protecting Virginia's waters, conserving Virginia's forests, administering the state lands program, managing two nurseries, and administering incentive programs for forest landowners.

During the last several years, VDOF has reorganized field operations, consolidated offices, become more mobile, developed specialized IT products and reduced staff as budgets have shrunk; forest industry has divested lands; more and more people have become forest landowners; generational shifts in land ownership are occurring; concerns regarding the sustainability of natural resources increase; emphasis on ecosystem services and the vital role forests play with regards to water quality and quantity grow; federal support decreases, and the emphasis on partnerships and grant opportunities expands.

Our first one hundred years was marked by forest fires and suppression, forest harvesting and reforestation, and the building of a strong forest products industry ranked third in Virginia's economy. Our second century started with excitement and challenges. The future will continue to encompass these critical services which will drive our economy and protect our environment well beyond the next 100 years.

Major Products and Services

Current data on the value of Virginia forest products supports its' importance to Virginia's economy. For 2018, Virginia's forest industry employed nearly 108,000 Virginians with an annual impact of \$21.5 billion to the state's economy, making it the third largest economic sector – behind agriculture and tourism – in the state. Protecting and enhancing the 15.8 million acres of forestland and serving the 521,000 (2018 State of the Forest) landowners who control 62 percent of the forestland are 233 dedicated professionals – 155 of whom are first responders – at the Virginia Department of Forestry.

In Calendar Year 2018, through fire prevention and fire suppression efforts, VDOF protected 382 homes and 368 other structures with a total estimated value of \$81 million. This was accomplished with a fleet of 12 specially-equipped wildland brush trucks, 89 dozer/transport units and 160 fire-equipped pickup trucks located across the Commonwealth.

For Fiscal Year 2019, 43,115 forested acres in Virginia were funded by the Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) Program. These funds go to Virginia landowners after a timber harvest to support their efforts to replant and grow the forests of tomorrow. This ensures a sustainable forest resource

for Virginia and that the ecosystem services, including water quality, carbon sequestration, recreation and air quality, provided by forests are available to all Virginians.

In 2018, the Virginia Department of Forestry monitored 4,777 timber harvests to ensure voluntary best management practices are working for the benefit of all. The inspections conducted by VDOF water quality specialists demonstrate a very high compliance rate among harvesting professionals. New and refocused assistance programs are emphasizing the critical role forests play in the health of the Chesapeake Bay and all those who rely on or use this treasured place. By providing valuable, unbiased, third-party, scientifically-based technical assessments and recommendations, VDOF directly impacts the success of Virginia landowners who strive to sustainably manage their forest resources for the greatest possible economic gain.

In addition to emergency response, forest management and water quality, VDOF has a number of other products and services that contribute to the agency's successful efforts to protect and serve all Virginians. These include 25 state forests, which provide abundant recreational opportunities, demonstrate the benefits of good forest management and financially support the communities in which they are located by returning up to 25 percent of the gross proceeds from timber sales and other profitable activities. Another valuable program includes our land conservation efforts, which aim to ensure working forestland remains intact and in the family that owns the property. In addition, our work in the forest health realm, identifying harmful insects and diseases as well as invasive species, strives to prevent forest loss and economic harm. VDOF is devoted to recognizing the importance of our community forests within the built environment. Cities and towns are complex ecosystems that link interacting human and natural components. Emphasizing these important linkages, we are able to convey the societal benefits these forests provide by helping to manage stormwater, conserve energy, reduce heat island effect, improve quality of life of residents and enhance resiliency of our communities. Striving to accentuate the connectivity between green infrastructure planning, management and maintenance of these forests, and their importance to our future development are essential to creating dynamic cities with economic, environmental and social benefits.

Customers

Customer Summary

At first glance, it might appear that our customer base is relatively small and less significant than it really is. But look more closely and you soon realize that every Virginian is our customer. Anyone who uses wood is a customer. Anyone who grows a tree or owns forestland is a customer. Anyone who hunts, fishes, traps, mountain bikes, hikes or bird watches is a customer. Anyone who gazes into a forest is a customer. And every person who drinks water or breathes air is our customer. We touch them all in one way or another. Unfortunately, many people don't quite make the connection between themselves and the forest resource.

Customer Table

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
Volunteer	Volunteer Fire Departments	155	597	Increase
Employer/ Business Owner	Forest Industry & Associated Businesses - all	2,500	15,000	Increase
Employer/ Business Owner	Harvest Professionals	300	5,000	Increase
Farm/Forest Owner	Private forest landowners	4,000	405,000	Increase
Non-Profit Agency (Boards/Foundations),	Non-Governmental Organizations - Virginia Forestry Association (VFA), Virginia Forest Products Association	26	60	Increase
Recreationalist	General Public	4,000	300,000	Increase
Resident	General Public - all	500,000	8,000,000	Increase

Finance and Performance Management

Finance

Financial Summary

Forestry receives funding from general fund appropriations, special revenue funds, federal grants and a trust fund. General fund dollars are received for two of our four service areas: Reforestation Incentives to Private Forest Land Owners and Forest Conservation, Wildfire and Watershed Services. Special revenue funds consist of revenue generated through seedling sales, timber sales, fire suppression services, professional forestry services and forest products taxes. Federal grants are received for specific projects within our mission to protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources. The trust fund exclusively funds the Matthews State Forest in Grayson County, a site of exciting improvements for the general public to enjoy.

The majority of the funding received for VDOF is for personnel and equipment. VDOF employees are stewards of the forestland and all field personnel are highly trained in forestry practices and fire fighting. Funding the rotation of bulldozer and transport units to ensure public safety and keeping up with technological advancements are VDOF's most pressing financial challenges. 41 dozer units were replaced in the 2016-18 biennium, some of which were almost 30 years old and far exceed our ideal rotation schedule of 20 years. In addition, information technology expenditures now consume more than 10 percent of the Agency's operating budget, and we expect that figure to grow even more in the coming years just to maintain the existing infrastructure. And the question persists as to how we can increase our use of – and pay for –

new technology to provide more and better services to our citizens in a time of shrinking resources. Several of our rural offices still have limited or no Internet access, when all require broadband to communicate and effectively serve Virginia's citizens.

Fund Sources

Fund Code	Fund Name	FY 2019	FY 2020
01000	General Fund	\$19,267,285	\$19,231,285
02124	Forest Mgmt State Owned Lands	\$60,000	\$60,000
02164	Land Preservation Fund	\$89,563	\$89,563
02180	Fire Programs Fund	\$150,000	\$150,000
02340	Reforestation Incentives Fund	\$2,399,800	\$2,399,800
02411	Dof Special Revenue Fund	\$2,900,401	\$2,900,401
02515	Nurseries Fund	\$2,620,229	\$2,620,229
02640	State Forest Fund	\$1,908,514	\$1,908,514
02800	Appropriated Idc Recoveries	\$300,000	\$300,000
07411	Mathews State Forest Fund	\$106,538	\$106,538
09016	State Forests System Fund	\$34,535	\$34,535
09262	Va Forest Water Quality Fund	\$40,000	\$40,000
09590	Long Term Mitigation Fund	\$15,000	\$15,000
10000	Federal Trust	\$4,290,153	\$4,290,153

Revenue Summary

VDOF revenue collections are received from a variety of federal and non-federal sources. Cooperative Forestry Assistance at \$3 million is a federal source of funding from the United States Forest Service. The non-federal sources of revenue earned by VDOF are just as sensitive to the economy. Forest Products Tax at \$2.5 million is a state tax paid by the forest products industry. This forest products industry drives seedling sales; DOF seedling sales are at \$2.6 million. VDOF seedlings are of exceptional quality grown from seed from state-owned tree orchards for reforestation purposes. State Forest lands and tree seedling nurseries are considered special revenue operations and receive no general fund support. VDOF supports all management of State Forest and Nursery properties through revenues generated from timber harvests, forest use permits, and the sales of seedlings.

Performance

Performance Highlights

National Leader in Wildfire Suppression: The Department of Forestry (VDOF) is a recognized national leader in the delivery of wildfire suppression services, incident management and personnel development training for emergency responders. In 2019, VDOF hosted the 19th Virginia Interagency Wildfire Academy. VDOF trains nearly 1,000 wildland firefighter students representing more than 10,000 hours of total training annually.

State Forest Certification: All of VDOF's state forest lands received both Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and American Tree Farm System certification. Following a week-long audit, no major or minor non-conformances with certification standards were found. In addition, three areas were identified as exceeding the standards:

1. Providing recreational opportunities for the public;
2. Support of research on state forests; and
3. Providing educational opportunities promoting sustainable forestry.

Timber theft legislation to assist landowners: VDOF worked with major Virginia forestry and landowner associations to develop code language to assist in the prevention and prosecution of timber theft and fraud. The legislation that passed in the 2019 General Assembly session was submitted by the forestry and agriculture associations and establishes penalties for businesses that do not honor agreements with landowners. VDOF will assist landowners with existing agency resources initially in order to determine the scope of the problem in Virginia.

Nationally-Recognized Firewise Program: The main goal of Firewise is to educate homeowners and localities in the wildland/urban interface on how to design, construct, landscape, and maintain their homes and property to avoid destruction during a wildfire. VDOF has been a leader nationally in the promotion and expansion of the Firewise Program.

Award-Winning Succession Planning Workshops: VDOF, in collaboration with Virginia Cooperative Extension and other public and private partners, delivered the fifth offering of Focusing on Land Transfer to Generation "NEXT". The in-depth course provides families the information

needed to ensure a smooth intergenerational transfer of their property and ensure continued management of their forest resources, keeping critical forestlands intact. As a result of the workshops, almost 52,000 acres of land is expected to remain forested and "family owned".

Clean Drinking Water: The VDOF Water Quality Program has been touted as the leading water quality program in the South. VDOF is the leader in the statewide logging inspection audit program in the South and is supporting a Southeastern Regional attempt to provide consistent auditing of logging jobs across state boundaries.

High-Quality Seedlings: Two VDOF tree seedling nurseries produce approximately 40 million softwood and hardwood tree seedlings for reforestation and general conservation. Seedlings are available for sale to private landowners and industry owners to help with their reforestation needs and to provide future forest product raw materials.

Improved Quality of Life for Urban Communities: VDOF developed an important program to determine a community's Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) (the layer of leaves, branches and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above). UTC provides many benefits to communities including improved water quality, conserving energy, lowering temperatures in urban areas, reducing air pollution, enhancing property values, providing wildlife habitat, facilitating social and educational opportunities, and providing aesthetic benefits.

Tree Planting in Urban and Rural Areas for Water Quality

Urban forests are a critical ecosystem for improving water quality to benefit the Chesapeake Bay clean-up efforts. The Urban and Community Forests program helps Virginia communities maintain and enhance their community forests and raise citizen awareness of the multiple benefits these forest provide: clean air, storm water management, community revitalization, community health and wellbeing, business district enhancement, aesthetics and the all-important contact with nature. This important program meets the vast majority of the population where they live and work. An increasingly important focus of the program is to lessen impacts from development in the Bay watershed by promoting green infrastructure planning and implementation. As the eastern seaboard anticipates more flooding, urban and community forestry has much to contribute to coastal resiliency. This will be an area of continuing focus for VDOF as we develop strategies to assist localities. In addition, the U&CF program oversees the Tree City USA, the Tree Campus USA and the Tree Line USA programs. Through the VDOF the U&CF program has supported 129 cities and towns, 57 counties and 10 military bases, 112 non-profit organizations, Planning District Commissions and Soil and Water Conservation Districts with education, grants and project assistance. To date the program has contributed \$606,608 to 146 projects contributing to long-term and sustained tree canopy cover. This effort has resulted in approximately 50,000 trees being planted and over 17, 837 volunteer hours.

Longleaf Pine Restored in Virginia: VDOF is highly engaged in restoring native longleaf pine to the landscape of southeast Virginia, which had been nearly exterminated over time. Significant accomplishments include harvesting cones (seeds) from the last remaining longleaf stand, producing seedlings, establishing a new seed orchard, addition of the new 266-acre South Quay State Forest, and the production of 500,000 longleaf pine seedlings annually for replanting throughout the state at VDOF's Garland Gray Forestry Center.

Conservation Easements Recorded: In Fiscal Year 2018, VDOF permanently protected 7,018 acres of open space through 18 conservation easements; the agency now holds 172 easements covering roughly 60,000 acres. VDOF easements continue to reflect the goal of conserving large blocks of forestland, perpetually preserving the sustainable flow of products, functions and values from our woodlands and serving as the backbone for a \$21.5 billion economic engine.

Selected Measures

Measure ID	Measure	Alternative Name	Estimated Trend
M411SA12003	Percentage of wildfire responses that are 30 minutes or less.	Wildfire Response	Maintaining
41150103.011.001	Number of acres protected from conversion to development.	Forest Conservation	Improving
411.0003	Statewide Best Management Practices implementation percentage	Water Quality	Improving

Key Risk Factors

Lack of or Potential Loss of Markets: Robust markets for wood products are critical to provide the financial incentive for landowners to invest in and manage their woodlands. Loss of markets contributes to a lack of management and increased risk that forestland will be converted to more developed uses, thereby depriving society of the many benefits that forests provide. Challenges in numerous wood products markets continue to present challenges for the agency and forest landowners across the Commonwealth. There remains a general lack of markets for low-grade material, which greatly impacts the ability to effectively manage for higher-quality hardwood stands. The recent closing of the Verso Paper mill (formerly Westvaco) in Luke, MD has had a significant impact on an already limited market for pine and hardwood pulpwood, especially in the northwest quadrant of the state. On the positive side, the growth/drain ratio for pine, especially in the important wood basket area of Southside Virginia, has improved and the resource has continued to grow.

Changes in Land Ownership: Much of Virginia's forestland resides in the hands of private ownership (61%). Many of these forest landowners are people who are either of retirement age or soon will be. A wave of intergenerational transfer of ownership has begun and larger waves are anticipated. VDOF has had great success helping forest landowners plan for this transition, but it is estimated that tens of thousands of landowners are potentially being left to figure it out on their own, or divide or sell their forestland. We have 521,000 family forest owners who control the majority of Virginia's forestland and 75 percent of the available timber supply. Seventy percent of this forestland is owned by the aging population and only three percent have some sort of succession plan in place for their transfer. This is placing a huge acreage of our forestland at

risk for conversion and fragmentation within the next two decades. This situation almost guarantees that millions of acres of private forestland are at risk of being lost by the families who have cared for the land for generations. In addition, large tracts of forestland are being divided into smaller parcels, which increases the challenges associated with proper forest management and economic stability.

Invasive Pests and Species: Multiple invasive insects are currently impacting or have the potential to significantly impact Virginia’s forests. The emerald ash borer is an aggressive insect that attacks and kills ash trees and is expected to nearly remove ash trees as a component of our forest. The spotted lanternfly is Virginia’s newest invasive insect, first found in Winchester in 2018. This pest will feed on 70 different host plants including walnut and poplar as well as orchards and vineyards. This is will certainly be an agricultural pest and a nuisance to landowners, but research is still ongoing to determine how much of an impact this pest will have on forestry. The Asian longhorn beetle has not yet been found in Virginia, but has been found in other parts of eastern North America in New York, Massachusetts and Ohio. It feeds on maple, as well as a handful of other hardwoods and costs of eradication efforts can be extremely high. The gypsy moth continues to affect our hardwood forests. The caterpillars feed on hundreds of different tree species, but prefer oaks. The gypsy moth has defoliated 75 million acres in North America since 1970, but the slow-the-spread program, a region-wide coordinated effort between the USDA and 10 states has prevented the infestation of more than 130 million acres. Invasive plants are an ongoing problem in our forests and new species continue to be introduced.

Agency Statistics

Statistics Summary

A summary of Department of Forestry accomplishments are listed in the table below. Some of the results are cumulative and others are expressed as annual accomplishments - either on a calendar year or on the state fiscal year which is July 1 - June 30.

Statistics Table

Description	Value
Wildfires – homes and structures protected in Calendar Year 2017	2,673
Wildland firefighters trained by Department of Forestry in Fiscal Year 2017	982
Harvest professionals trained by Department of Forestry in Fiscal Year 2017	430
Timber harvest sites inspected by Department of Forestry in Fiscal Year 2018	4,777
Conservation easements held by Department of Forestry – 50,000 acres protected against development	172
State forests – Virginians enjoy a plethora of recreational activities on 70,000 acres	24
Communities assisted by Department of Forestry with forest and/or tree resource management	129
Seedlings produced in Department of Forestry nurseries in Fiscal Year 2018	32,000,000

Management Discussion

General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

The Virginia Department of Forestry works with forest landowners and forest product producers to ensure the forest resource is healthy and sufficient to meet demand... today and in the future. We work with landowners and localities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to plant forested buffers adjacent to the waterways that feed into the Bay improving water quality and enhanced benefits. We identify communities at risk of wildland fire and work with them to create Firewise communities to mitigate risk. In the past decade, our Forestland Conservation Division has secured more than 172 conservation easements on nearly 60,000 acres of valuable forestland. Together, we can ensure our working forests stay that way in perpetuity. We created the award-winning program Generation Next to teach forest landowners how to successfully pass ownership to a new generation of forest landowners. We honored those who have kept their land as working forestland and in the family for 100 years or more through our new Century Forest Program. We pioneered the successful cost-share program that makes pine forests less susceptible to southern pine beetle through thinning operations on small tracts. We monitor the spread of invasive pests and advise landowners how to protect and grow their valuable trees. We take great care and perform preventative maintenance and training to keep our staff, trucks, engines and fire plows/dozers mission ready.

VDOF must continue to develop a trained cadre of public safety professionals ready to answer the call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Whether the call goes out to suppress a wildfire or to assist in the removal of trees following a hurricane or ice storm, VDOF’s 155 emergency responders stand ready to assist.

In addition to the expanding traditional forest products industry, new demands are being placed on our utilization and marketing effort. Emerging markets for biomass energy, animal bedding, specialty and non-timber products, and agro-forestry require that we become more adaptive, creative and flexible in our advice to landowners as they contemplate replanting after a harvest.

Information Technology

VDOF is committed to using technology in the most effective/efficient manner to support evolving business needs. For customers, access to professional guidance provided by VDOF staff continues as a cornerstone. A majority of staff support field operations through assistance to landowners, on-site harvest inspections, land conservation activities, forestry education and research, and maintenance of forestlands. Field

personnel are organized in 22 service areas and many work out of small local offices. Challenges exist for communication and network connectivity due to wireless voice and data service limitations in less-populated rural areas of Virginia. Customers expect information to be available as needed in a variety of channels. The agency has an internet presence through a static, non-interactive site. The agency has begun a project to upgrade the website into a more comprehensive and interactive business tool to provide better information, resources and timely service to our customers, agency and business partners, and staff. The agency has embraced social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter, to engage our various constituencies and communities.

VDOF supports existing infrastructure and systems while implementing new projects to move the agency forward as necessitated by technology and business changes. Agency technology infrastructure (i.e., network hardware, personal computers, servers, telecommunications) is managed through Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA). The Integrated Forest Resource Information System (IFRIS), a customized application built and managed by VDOF, maintains records and reporting metrics on agency-specific programs. IFRIS development began in 2004 with business modules added over time. An upgrade completed in 2015 addressed an end-of-life GIS server and updated the database management, web and operating systems. In 2017, Forestland Conservation Easement Monitoring module was completed. A project to integrate cost-share programs (Reforestation of Timberlands) was just completed during the fall of 2018. Along with IFRIS, agency-specific information is stored on network file shares. Changes and upgrades to IFRIS are challenging because we lack a dedicated funding source for the system. IFRIS is critical to our ability to carry out our core mission and a dedicated source of funding for system maintenance and upgrades is needed.

Improving workflows by upgrading agency forms to include electronic signatures and fillable data as a first step, with a move in the future to a document management system. The FiResponse project resulted in the development of a web application for dispatch purposes and a corresponding mobile application for installation on responders' smart phones to review status and resources available. In addition, the agency maintains an online store to sell tree seedlings. Maintaining an efficient and secure online presence is critical to our business and essential to support our efforts to make trees available to landowners for planting.

Workforce Development

VDOF's Maximum Employment Level (MEL) is 279 but only 233 classified Full-Time Employee (FTE) positions are currently filled. The operations of the agency are also supplemented by seasonal, long-term, part-time employees. Almost 80 percent of VDOF's employees are considered part of the mobile workforce. More than half of VDOF's workforce are sworn law enforcement officers and are also qualified as first responders to suppress forest fires and support local, state or federal emergencies.

The biggest challenges in workforce development that VDOF faces are the development of a diverse workforce, succession planning and competitive compensation to attract highly-qualified applicants. In an effort to address some of the gaps, our executive leadership championed a plan towards increasing opportunities via the recommended and approved change to the Forester title criteria within the Virginia Code, which now provides an alternative credentialing path into a forestry career. An agency apprenticeship program is sought in order to attract veterans and minorities to enter the field of forestry with no prior experience. Positively, by leveraging retirements, VDOF was able to restructure vacancies into entry-level and developmental positions that support succession plans for information technology, human resources and public information careers.

Nonetheless, continual work is needed to sustain operations across the Commonwealth. Presently, 22 percent of VDOF's workforce is eligible to retire with unreduced retirement benefits. Within five years, this number increases to more than 35 percent. Alarming, if those eligible to retire with reduced retirement benefits desire to do so within the next five years, this number increases to more than 50 percent of the workforce. Within these figures are the most experienced maintenance staff, forest technicians and a significant number of department heads/directors. Succession planning is necessary to sustain successful programs, operations and response that support the agency's mission. VDOF has been creative in seeking external partners for training and is fortunate to have the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute as a resource, yet budget constraints have limited our ability to make these resources available to more than a few employees each year. VDOF is also fortunate to have a federal grant cover training expenditures for wildland firefighters each year. However, the most efficient way to transfer VDOF institutional knowledge from its most experienced employees lies in an apprenticeship program that pairs the apprentice credentialing process with mentors that are within two to three years from an unreduced retirement.

Overall, VDOF has maintained an average attrition rate of 7 percent for the last three years, which is significantly less than the statewide average of 14.5 percent. We suspect that this rate will increase as we encounter more employees eligible for retirement. Hence, our ability to be an employer of choice hinges on leveraging flexible or alternative schedules, and telework opportunities – but such programs ought to be complementary to competitive salaries. Competitive salaries for employees in the natural resource manager and specialist positions in the private and federal sector continues to be the main reason for attrition of employees with less than five years of state service. The state code requires that our forester positions are specialized professionals with a four-year degree with a specific accreditation, yet due to budgetary constraints, we often offer starting salaries in the mid \$30Ks. Even though VDOF recently implemented budgetary actions to ensure forest technician (do not need the four-year degree) starting salary is in the low \$30Ks rather than upper \$20Ks, our ongoing compensation analyses substantiates that a forester shall yield a starting salary in the high \$30Ks if we were to retain and attract the best talent to join VDOF.

Physical Plant

VDOF owns approximately 137 buildings located throughout Virginia supporting agency programs and services. They include offices, mechanic shops, warehouse and storage buildings, greenhouses, quarters (sleeping rooms), and assorted sheds for fire bulldozer and transport storage, fuel and paint, tree seedlings, cone drying, etc. In addition, VDOF has access and land easements for 20 fire towers (some up to 75 years old) and owns approximately 68,000 acres of state forests and another 1,800 acres of land in forestry centers/tree nurseries, tree improvement plots, tree seed orchards, small donated lots for office buildings, and the property around the Charlottesville Headquarters. Most of the office buildings were constructed more than 40 years ago and have had additions and renovations over the years. Many systems in the buildings are deteriorating:

including plumbing, HVAC systems, foundation slabs, doors and windows original to the buildings, and electrical wiring that is outdated and incapable of delivering technology required for a modern facility. Also, VDOF has several modular office buildings located across the state originally approved by the Division of Engineering and Buildings under temporary building permits, many of which have been in place for more than 20 years. The agency has a maintenance reserve fund that provides funding for routine maintenance of agency facilities, but it isn't adequate to address failing HVAC and electrical systems as well as the long list of other significant repairs and maintenance to our buildings. Some agency facilities need to be decommissioned and new facilities constructed.

The agency has bulldozers used in firefighting operations. These pieces of heavy equipment need to be maintained under cover in secure staging areas throughout Virginia. VDOF received funding to build 24 tractor garages throughout the Commonwealth to protect this important and expensive firefighting equipment. The agency is in the process of negotiating with localities to build the garages.

Capital investments and maintenance reserve funds allow VDOF the flexibility to mold our activities to reflect public priorities as we strive to protect and develop healthy forest resources. Demands on our forest resources grow with increasing population and VDOF must meet the needs to educate the public on both the economic and ecological benefits of forest management.
