

# Service Area Plan

## Department of Forestry

### Financial Assistance for Forest Land Management (50105)

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## Service Area Background Information

### Service Area Description

This service area consists of:

- Providing technical assistance to cities, towns and non-profit organizations.
- Making federal grants available to cities, towns, 501-c-3 non-profit organizations, other state agencies and educational institutions
- Coordinating the Tree City USA Program in cooperation with the National Arbor Day Foundation and the national Association of State Foresters
- Conducting or coordinating urban/community forestry workshops, conferences, seminars, field days, etc in cooperation with other state agencies and various organizations
- Providing appropriate training on urban forestry technology, issues and programs to DOF employees

### Service Area Alignment to Mission

The Urban and Community Forestry (U & CF) Program is aligned with DOF's Strategic Plan "DOF 2014....Shaping Virginia's Forests" in the following ways:

- U & CF encourages the conservation and management of forest land in urbanizing areas
- U & CF encourages the protection of unique and fragile habitats in urbanizing area
- U & CF encourages the enhancement of forested watersheds and protection and enhancement of riparian areas.
- Urban and community forests contribute to economic development in cities and towns
- Urban and community forests "... protect its atmosphere, lands and water from impairment or destruction (and provide) for the public benefit, enjoyment and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth..." Article XI, Virginia Constitution

### Service Area Statutory Authority

Forestry Title 02 Federal Farm Bill (USDA) provides grant funds and authority for state forestry agencies to authorize payments for approved urban forest projects.

Chapter 11, Forest Resources and the Department of Forestry, Article 2, Duties of the State Forester and General Provisions Section 10.1-1105, authorizes the State Forester to cooperate with counties, municipalities, corporations and individuals in preparing plans and providing technical assistance for the protection, management and replacement of trees, wood lots and timber tracts and the establishment and preservation of urban forests.....

§ 10.1-1128. Acquisition and administration: Each county, city and town acting through its governing body, is authorized to acquire by purchase, gift or bequest tracts of land suitable for the growth of trees and to administer the same, as well as any lands now owned by any such locality and suitable for the growth of trees, as county, city or town forests.

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#### Service Area Customer Base

Customer(s)	Served	Potential
General Public	4,200,000	6
Local governments	60	90
Local Planning Districts	10	20
National Non-Governmental Organizations	6	12
Other Federal Agencies	2	5
Other State Agencies	3	8
State Supported Educational Organizations	19	25

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#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Allegheny Energy**

Joint efforts to manage trees along utility right of ways.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **American Forests**

Joint efforts to promote the care and management of community trees

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Appalachian Power**

Joint efforts to manage trees along utility right of ways.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Community Colleges**

Cooperative educational workshops and networking opportunities.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Dominion Power**

Joint efforts to manage trees along utility right of ways.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **International Society of Arboriculture**

Joint educational and informational efforts aimed at improving and protecting community forests.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Local Governments**

Joint educational and informational efforts aimed at improving and protecting community forests.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Local Land Trust Organizations**

Joint educational and informational efforts aimed at improving and protecting community forests.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Local non-governmental organizations**

Joint educational and informational efforts aimed at improving and protecting community forests.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **National Arbor Day Foundation**

Joint efforts to promote the care and management of community trees

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **National Tree Trust**

Joint efforts to promote the care and management of community trees

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Regional Planning District Commissions**

Joint efforts to identify and quantify the value of forest cover in communities.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Society of Municipal Arborists**

Joint efforts to promote the care and management of community trees

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **University of Virginia**

Cooperative educational workshops and networking opportunities.

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#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **US Forest Service**

Cooperative agreements and joint projects to enhance a state and federal program.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **US National Park Service**

Cooperative agreements and joint projects.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Virginia Department of Transportation**

Tree Planting projects.

#### **Service Area Partners**

##### **Virginia Tech**

Cooperative educational workshops, research, community outreach and networking opportunities.

#### **Service Area Products and Services**

- Provide technical urban/community forestry information and assistance to local governments and community groups who need this information and help to develop and maintain community forests.
- Provide assistance to educational institutions through federal grants. DOF works with schools to determine where grant funds can be used to help further the development and maintenance of community forests.
- DOF assesses and conveys federal grants to qualified segments of the customer base to further the development and maintenance of urban and community forests.
- DOF provides conferences, seminars and workshops relating to urban and community forestry to interested parties in urban and community forestry.
- DOF promotes and administers the Tree City USA Program in Virginia.
- DOF develops and funds publications which provide technical information, contact information and resource assistance.
- DOF co-sponsored and helped organize and orchestrate four of the Governor's Conferences on Greenways and Trails in Virginia completed in 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2005.
- DOF has funded or supported with staff the following projects: Luray - Hawksbill Greenway(phases 1, 2, 3 & 4), Marion Riverwalk, projects in the Roanoke Valley Greenways system, Blacksburg and Christiansbury connectors to the Huckleberry Trail, Shenandoah River Blueway, Winchester Green Circle, Town of Broadway, Town of Pennington Gap, Wytheville Greenway, Lower Appomattox Greenway/Blueway, Brushy Blue Trail Master Plan, and the Virginia Capitol Trail

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#### **Factors Impacting Service Area Products and Services**

Funding is the primary factor impacting this service area. The service area represents the act of primarily offering federal grants to communities interested in the development and improvement of their community forests.

#### **Anticipated Changes To Service Area Products and Services**

DOF recognizes a strong interest from communities in the service area. Historically, DOF receives more requests for federal grant funding than appropriated funds. If funds are increased, DOF anticipates greater interest and more applications from communities for the federal funding.

#### **Service Area Human Resources Summary**

##### **Service Area Human Resources Overview**

The agency has a tradition of long-serving, loyal employees. Of our current 260 employees, 63, or 24.23% have over 25 years of service to DOF and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The median years of service for our employees is 16 years. Our median years of service is above the state's overall average of 11.50 years of service.

The long years of service leads to a higher average age in the agency. The median age for our employees is 45 years old. This median age is slightly above the state's overall average employee age of 44.5 years old. Of our workforce, 35.76% are age 50 or older and 20% are age 30 or younger. The highest percentage of employees, 40.38%, are 45 to 55 years old.

Looking at specific roles, the agency's Natural Resource Specialist II (Forest Technicians) are an average of 46 years old and average of 18 years of service. There are 81 employees, or 30.8% of the agency, in this role. Our Natural Resource Specialist III (Foresters) are an average of 40 years old and average 12.3 years of service. There are 69 employees, or 26.2% of the agency, in this role.

DOF employees are predominately male. A total of 213 employees, or 81.92%, are male and a total of 47, or 18.08%, are female. The Commonwealth of Virginia overall has 52.9% of its employees who are female and 47.1% who are male.

Looking more closely at the distribution of females in the agency, the largest concentration of females is in the Administrative and Office Specialist III role. Of the agencies 47 females, 23, or 48.94%, are in this role.

The agency has a total of 161 employees in Natural Resources Specialist roles. Of these employees, 11, or 6.83%, are females and the remaining 150, 93.17%, are males. The agency has a total of 32 employees in Natural Resource Manager positions. Of these employees, 3, or 9.38%, are females and the remaining 29, 90.62%, are males.

In terms of race, 249, or 95.77%, of our employees are white. The remaining 11, or 4.23%, of employees are black. Overall, the state's employees are 68.15% white and 28.76% black.

In Fiscal Year 2004 (FY '04), the agency lost 35 employees. This leads to an overall turnover rate of 12.6%. However, 13 of the employee who left were due to layoffs. Therefore, our non-layoff related turnover rate is 7.7%. Statewide, the turnover rate is 10.79%. DOF's voluntary turnover rate is below state average.

Looking closer at turnover, 8 of the 13 laid off employees chose to retire with an enhanced retirement package. Of the non-layoff related turnover, 3.1% of the turnover rate, or 8 employees, was due to retirements.

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The remaining 4.6% of the turnover rate, or 12 employees, was due to resignations. The biggest reason for leaving was a better job which generally equated to more money.

Another factor effecting the agency is the geographical location of our staff. Of our 260 employees, 66, or 25.38%, are assigned to Charlottesville. However, this number is deceptive. It includes our Building and Grounds staff, which in actuality travel throughout the state to work and are rarely in Charlottesville. It also includes members of our Forest Protection, Forest Health, and Forest Management teams who generally work the majority of time out of our regional or county offices. Having staff spread throughout the state makes covering for vacancies caused by retirements, resignations, extended absences, etc. difficult.

#### Service Area Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Position Summary

Effective Date:	
Total Authorized Position level .....	0
Vacant Positions .....	0
Non-Classified (Filled).....	0
Full-Time Classified (Filled) .....	0
Part-Time Classified (Filled) .....	0
Faculty (Filled) .....	0
Wage .....	0
Contract Employees .....	0
Total Human Resource Level .....	0

#### Factors Impacting Service Area Human Resources

Natural Resource Specialist II (Forest Technicians) and Natural Resource Specialist III (Foresters) are our first responders for wildland fires. In particular, the Forest Technician is typically the primary person in a county responsible for wildfires. Firefighting is physically demanding work. In addition, individuals in these two roles are our primary responders for disaster relief throughout the state. (This function is coordinated by the state's Department of Emergency Management.) Again, disaster relief functions involve physically demanding work. Having the average age for these individuals continue to increase raises concerns for the future.

As stated earlier, DOF's county Forest Technicians and Foresters are the primary responders for wildfires and disaster relief. We have a large number of vacancies in these positions, which leaves gaps in coverage and, ultimately, leads to slower response time to emergencies. The slower response time in turn could lead to more acres burned by wildfires and, due to the large urban interface in the state, more homes lost, damaged, or seriously threatened. Also, state citizens could be left without assistance in disaster situations.

State employees were not given a salary increase in Fiscal Year 2002 or Fiscal Year 2003. Over the last 10 years, the state has lagged the market in the percentage of annual increases given to staff. In addition, the state has never funded its pay-for-performance system. All these factors have led to both salary compression and state employee salaries lagging the market. This has contributed to both turnover and recruiting challenges. In particular, the agency has a difficult time attracting qualified, experienced candidates for open Forest Technician and Forester positions.

A low number of DOF employees are interested in promotional opportunities. Some employees either do not want to move geographically to accept a promotion or do not want supervisory and/or higher level responsibility. In addition, salary compression issues also make promotions less attractive. Many

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employees believe that the difference in salary for a supervisory or management position is not adequate. This has made recruiting for supervisory and management positions in the agency more difficult and challenging.

The agency has some current critical training needs. They are in the areas of forest health, Excel, PowerPoint, customer service, and public relations. To help address these needs, the agency established a new agency-wide Training Coordinator position. The individual hired for this position is in the process of implementing a comprehensive training program. The major elements of the program will be implemented by October 1, 2004. The program will be fully implemented by July 1, 2005. A Training Committee was established to assist the Training Coordinator with monitoring and reviewing the training program. Please see Section 8 for the Training Program Procedures.

One other area of concern is the on-call status of our primary responders for wildfires and natural disasters. These employees are on-call during the Spring and Fall seasons, which are a total of approximately 20 weeks each year. Currently, staff are not given any additional compensation for being on-call. This has not been a significant issue with our long-serving staff. However, newer employees are questioning this practice and pushing for on-call compensation. We anticipate this to become a greater issue in the future.

The major reason for the high percentage of males in DOF is that the Natural Resources fields, in particular Forestry, are male-dominated. Forestry is not a field that women traditionally enter. The women who do enter the field are highly recruited by both the Federal government and private industry. The Commonwealth of Virginia's lags the market in salaries. Therefore, we generally are unable to compete with either the Federal government or private industry in attracting female candidates.

As with gender, the major reason for the high percentage of whites in DOF is that the field of Forestry is not one that minorities traditionally enter. Again, the minorities who do enter the field are highly recruited by both the Federal government and private industry. As stated above, the Commonwealth of Virginia's lags the market in salaries. Therefore, we generally are unable to compete with either the Federal government or private industry in attracting minority candidates.

#### **Anticipated Changes in Service Area Human Resources**

Our high percentages of employees with lengthy years of service and approaching or over age fifty leads to a high number of employees who are eligible for full retirement. In 2004, 34, or 7.64%, of our employees are eligible for full retirement. Within the next ten years, 94 of our employees, or 36.15%, of our workforce will be eligible for full retirement. This has the potential for fundamentally changing the agency and leading to large gaps in needs.

The agency has some current critical training needs. They are in the areas of forest health, Excel, PowerPoint, customer service, and public relations. To help address these needs, the agency started the process of implementing a comprehensive training program. The major elements of the program were implemented on October 1, 2004. We anticipate the agency's training program to continue to evolve over the next 3 to 5 years. In order for the program to be effective, it needs to be adequately funded.

Part of the training program includes specific training for new employees, in particular Forest Technicians and Foresters. This training is necessary to ensure consistent application of the department's programs and functions. Again, in order to fully implement new employee training, it needs to be adequately funded.

As part of the agency's training program, an annual Forest Management Academy has been established. This is an efficient, cost-effective way to train our professional staff. The first academy is scheduled for

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September 2005. Adequate funds will need to continue to be available to allow us to offer this necessary, annual training to staff.

DOF is instituting its own pay-for-performance type system in order to help address some of the salary issues. Each position within the agency will have a career path consisting of 3 levels –Level I, Level II, and Level III. The career paths are competency based. Each level of the career path has a task book which outlines the required competencies the employee must demonstrate. After passing their probationary period, all new employees will be required to complete Level I of their career paths. Advancements, with bonuses or salary increases, are available for employees who have completed their task books for Level I, Level II, and Level III of their career paths. Promotion decisions are based in part on employee performance. The first phase of the implementation process was with the Forest Technician career path, which was implemented on October 1, 2004. The Forester, Program Support Technician, and Equipment Repair Technician career paths are scheduled for implementation on October 1, 2005. Career paths for all other positions are scheduled for implementation on October 1, 2006. We anticipate this program to continue to evolve for 3 to 5 years after full implementation.

A more detailed breakdown of the agency's human resources, issues, and plans can be found in the agency's Department of Human Resource Management's Workforce Plan (See DHRM Policy 1.90, <http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/hrpolicy/policy.html>).

#### **Service Area Financial Summary**

This service area provides financial assistance to non-profits. DOF administers federal grant programs which are funding sources direct to communities and non-profits to develop and maintain urban and community forests and funding for voluntary fire department training and equipment. DOF provides technical information and advice and oversees the federal grants to ensure funds are used appropriately. Financial assistance for forest land management is funding is entirely from Federal sources.

	<u>Fiscal Year 2007</u>		<u>Fiscal Year 2008</u>	
	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Nongeneral Fund</b>
<b>Base Budget</b>	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$300,000
<b>Changes To Base</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>SERVICE AREA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>



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## Service Area Objectives, Measures, and Strategies

### Objective 50105.01

***Increase community, i.e. local government, interest and involvement in the identification, inventory, establishment, maintenance, care, and preservation of trees and forest cover within their community boundaries.***

This service area involves working with local governments and communities to increase the interest, development, and maintenance of community forests and trees within Virginia communities. DOF provides information, leadership and financial incentives to communities who wish to develop and enhance their community forests for the general welfare of the public and the community.

#### This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Improve the stewardship, health, and diversity of the forest resources.

#### This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 50105.01.01**

##### ***Tree City USA***

**Measure Type:** Outcome

**Measure Frequency:**

**Measure Baseline:** This is a new measure for DOF. Baseline data is currently being developed per USDA Forest Service guidelines.

**Measure Target:** Certify the progress of 5 communities (cities and towns) to the project level, 5 to the formative level, 5 to the development and 5 to the sustained level per USFS allocation formula guidelines by July 1, 2007.

##### **Measure Source and Calculation:**

DOF provides technical assistance, advice, grant funding and information to communities to help the community become more involved with actively managing its urban forest resources. Communities move along a continuum starting at the project level, moving to the formative level, development level, and concluding at the sustained level. DOF will measure the number of communities that have reached these various levels, with DOF assistance, in accordance with guidelines and definitions developed by the USDA Forest Service.

#### Objective 50105.01 Has the Following Strategies:

- Categorize Virginia communities into the various program levels using USDA Forest Service Guidelines.
- Target UC&F grants and technical assistance to communities interested in upgrading their community tree program to the next level.
- Promote the benefits of urban and community forestry to community officials through workshops, conferences, publications, and other media.

### Objective 50105.02

***Increase the number of Greenways and Blueways in Virginia.***

Initiate the start up of three greenway/blue way projects anywhere in Virginia. Greenways are defined as an environmental corridor which may or may not have a recreational component. A blue way is a waterway used for recreation and aesthetic purposes. DOF initiates these projects through grant funding, educational opportunities, networking, and technical assistance.

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DOF currently supports conceptual planning of greenways and blueways. Provide organizational support to appropriate non-profit organizations. DOF currently supports the Virginia Capitol trail between Richmond to Williamsburg to be completed by 2007.

#### **This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:**

- Improve the stewardship, health, and diversity of the forest resources.

#### **This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):**

- **Measure 50105.02.01**

##### ***Greenway and Blueway Development***

**Measure Type:** Output

**Measure Frequency:** Annually

**Measure Baseline:** This is a new measure. DOF will track and report each Greenway and Blueway created from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006 as a result of assistance by DOF.

**Measure Target:** Establish 3 Greenways/Blueways by July 1, 2006.

##### **Measure Source and Calculation:**

DOF will document the number of Greenway and Blueways created as a result of DOF supported federal grant funding, educational opportunities, networking or technical assistance. An official greenway/blueway is deemed as such by validation by DOF, DCR and local community. DOF guidance compliments DCR and other organizations.

#### **Objective 50105.02 Has the Following Strategies:**

- Develop tools for presentations relating to Greenways, environmental benefits of trees/forest, and their economic values.

#### **Objective 50105.03**

##### ***Increase participation in the Tree City USA program while maintaining participation of existing communities already in the program.***

This service area involves working with cities, towns, urban counties, and military installations to help them meet the standards of the Tree City USA program. DOF can accomplish this through technical assistance, grants, and local program support. The Tree City USA program standards are considered minimal standards for a community to have a recognized urban/community forestry program.

#### **This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:**

- Improve the stewardship, health, and diversity of the forest resources.

#### **This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):**

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- **Measure 50105.03.01**

**Tree City USA**

**Measure Type:** Outcome      **Measure Frequency:** Annually

**Measure Baseline:** DOF maintains an annual count of communities in the Tree City USA Program.

**Measure Target:** Maintain participating communities in the program and document the certification of at least one new community on an annual basis.

**Measure Source and Calculation:**

Tree City USA is a national program of the National Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters and is administered at the state level by each state's forestry agency. It is DOF's responsibility to review new applications and recertification to see that each applicant meets the program's four standards: (1) community tree board; (2) community tree ordinance; (3) spending of \$2 per capita on the community tree program; and (4) public Arbor Day observance. Through technical assistance, grants and leadership, DOF can help communities meet these standards. DOF measures the success of the program by reviewing, approving, and tallying all new and recertification applications annually.

**Objective 50105.03 Has the Following Strategies:**

- Distribute Tree City USA outreach tools to local DOF foresters.
- Identify communities with strong potential to qualify for Tree City USA status in a 1 -3 year time frame and target technical assistance and grants to that community.
- Maintain a data base of tree ordinances for Virginia communities that conserve as a model for communities wanting to participate in the program.
- Participate actively in activities of existing Tree City USA communities to maintain their commitment to the program.

**Objective 50105.04**

***Provide available financial resources to rural voluntary fire departments to provide training and the acquisition of small equipment and wildland personal protective equipment.***

The grants are awarded for organizing, training, and equipping rural fire departments. The target for the program this year will be to provide the financial assistance needed to purchase fire suppression equipment, communications and to provide firefighter resources. Service to wild land urban interface communities and wild land personal protective equipment is emphasized. This program has provided the vehicle for good local relationships between the Department of Forestry and volunteer fire departments. The net result is a strong unified fire protection program in every rural community in the Commonwealth.

**This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:**

- Protect the citizens, their property, and the forest resource from wildfire.

**This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):**

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- **Measure 50105.04.01**

***Rural Voluntary Fire Department Assistance***

**Measure Type:** Output                      **Measure Frequency:** Annually

**Measure Baseline:** The average number of rural voluntary fire departments who received funds via the grant between 2001 to 2004 was 85

**Measure Target:** DOF will try to assist 120 rural voluntary fire departments.

**Measure Source and Calculation:**

Upon the completion of the fiscal year, DOF will count the number of voluntary fire departments who received funds under the federal volunteer fire assistance grant.

**Objective 50105.04 Has the Following Strategies:**

- Notify rural voluntary fire departments about the volunteer fire Assistance grant funding.
- Assist voluntary fire departments with the applications as needed.
- Evaluate the voluntary fire department applications and needs in a timely fashion.
- Disperse funding based on need and program requirements.