

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Agency Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission Statement:

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

Agency Vision:

We envision a healthy, abundant forest resource providing economic and environmental benefits to the Commonwealth on a sustained basis. We see a resource whose scenic beauty enhances natural surroundings and whose protected environment supports clean water and wildlife. We further see a diverse forest resource as a part of natural ecosystems. We envision the economic benefits of forest industry to be in balance with the environmental values of the resource.

We envision the Department as the most effective forestry agency in the nation and as a leader in managing and protecting the resource.

We see an agency built on solid technology backed by strong ethics, one that is able to stay ahead of change and is quick to respond to citizens' needs, and one that is a leader in providing forest resource information. We see the Department responding to its employees' needs through leadership characterized by open communication.

We envision a focused, well trained, creative workforce who are adaptive to change and who have the time and tools to provide exceptional forestry services to landowners, citizens, and organizations. We see employees who are knowledgeable, motivated, pro-active and enabled to make decisions. Finally, we envision a workforce whose professional unbiased recommendations impact positively upon an informed public and whose efforts result in complete customer satisfaction.

Agency Values:

- **IN DEALING WITH OUR CUSTOMERS WE BELIEVE IN:**

Exceeding customer expectations by delivering quality products and services in a responsive professional manner.

Treating customers courteously, honestly, and respectfully.

Actively listening, appreciating, understanding and responding to customer needs.

Being trustworthy professionals who seek to ensure the integrity of the forest resource.

- **IN WORKING TOGETHER, WE BELIEVE IN:**

Providing a well trained, well equipped, technologically advanced and responsive workforce.

Communicating in an open honest, effective manner.

Being helpful and supportive to one another, demonstrating the spirit of cooperation/teamwork and mutual trust and respect for each other.

Providing a working environment that fosters quality and creativity, rewards team performance, is challenging and enjoyable.

Clearly defining, communicating and understanding our vision, strategies, goals, objectives, roles and responsibilities.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Agency Executive Progress Report

Current Service Performance

In 1914 DOF began providing leadership over the monumental task of protecting Virginia's approximately fourteen million acres of forestland from wild forest fires. With one State Forester Director and just a few other people, the agency began the enormous task of building a leading state forestry agency.

Almost 100 years later, DOF has grown, emerged from Bureau and Division levels of other state agencies to a full Department status under the Secretariat of Agriculture and Forestry. We provide world class forest wild fire protection, and forestry and conservation services to assure the sustainability of the forest resource for future generations. DOF is the only state agency with mandates and a mission to deliver forestry programs and services to Virginians.

In addition to forestry protection and management services, DOF is one of a few state agency members of Virginia's Emergency Response Team (VERT) and has worked with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to provide help to Virginians during many emergencies, including several ice, snow and hurricane storms. DOF is a leader in emergency response, incident command organization, and multiple large forest fire incident management. DOF is prepared to assist in the Virginia's Homeland Security in addition to its forestry mandates.

DOF provides sophisticated forest wild fire protection, prevention and mitigation services to complex forest and human community issues which did not exist in 1914. Virginia's population has grown from approximately 2 million people in 1910 to over 7 million today. Demand is intense for homes in forested communities and property values are higher than ever. DOF now serves greater numbers of people, more complex forest and community relationships, and the highest property values in history.

Development pressures are intense, like never before over the entire Commonwealth, for homes, commercial, and industrial needs. Forests are harvested and changed to new uses at a rate similar to Virginia's early colonial historical rapid pace of converting forests into much needed agricultural uses. These land use changes have placed incredible demand on landowners and leaders, who otherwise would prefer to maintain farms and forests forever. DOF is part of the problem solving effort to maintain a sufficient base of sustainable forests for future generations. DOF delivers unbiased, scientific based information about forests to planners, legislators, landowners, local governments, forest products industry, and the public.

Market and economic pressures have dramatically changed the way the forest products industry conducts business. DOF provides unbiased scientific - based information on forest resource type, estimated quantity, availability and forest health to existing and prospective businesses.

Managing the forests in the remaining rural parts of Virginia is still a full time effort of DOF's forestry staff statewide. Providing valued third party scientific assessments and recommendations for Virginia's private forest landowner, who control 77% of the commercial forestland, is an important part of each field forester and technician's job. DOF delivers unbiased technical advice and help with state and federal cost sharing program assistance to forest landowners.

Protecting the forest resources from insects, diseases, and invasive plant species is a high priority of DOF's forest health monitoring team. Informing forest landowners about possible insect and disease threats helps landowners avoid or mitigate major destruction of forest resources. DOF has actively engaged in the detection and control of the pine bark beetle, gypsy moth, Adelgid wooly aphid, helping save millions of dollars in forest resource value.

Interest and concern over water quality in the 1970s, brought DOF solidly into the water quality silvicultural legislation, providing for enforcement duties and leading the non-regulatory approach in Virginia. DOF

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

encourages best management practices (BMP) in silvicultural operations, believing that forest industry can regulate itself best when provided with accurate information about impacts of poor practices and scientific based approach to saving water quality from silvicultural practices.

While DOF has seen significant changes since 1914, DOF has worked quietly to strengthen its forest fire fighting capability while working on cutting edge technology in applied forest research and tree improvement, developing best management practices and monitoring timber harvests to protect water quality, and delivering high quality forestry service and unbiased technical information to private forestland owners.

DOF measures its service performance through performance measures tied to its strategic goals and objectives. The Department of Forestry has achieved results in all service areas. Individual performance is good to excellent, but the overall goals and objectives can only be met with increased workforce.

Landowner satisfaction is high according to surveys completed by landowners receiving services and information from DOF. Employees are frequently recognized for outstanding service delivery in the surveys. Agency cost share and technical advice are often applauded by those who received them.

DOF measures the performance of its administrative functions through a wide variety of performance measures. These include measures such as prompt pay compliance (99 % of dollars paid within 30 days in FY 2004 against a target of 97%) and proportion of purchases made through the state mandatory eVA procurement system (98% versus the 95% target.)

DOF has demonstrated its commitment to technological innovation with the development of two significant applications: the Forest Resources Information Mapper, or ForestRIM©, which provides easy internet mapping functions and access to forest resource information, to both agency staff and the general public; and the Integrated Forest Resource Information System, or IFRIS©, currently in development, which will provide an enterprise solution to agency performance tracking along with geo-spatial functions to provide mapping services and to maintain locations in the enterprise database.

DOF has played a lead role in creating current and detailed information about Virginia's forest resources by participating in the US Forest Service cooperative Forest Inventory and Analysis Program, providing annual updates on the state of the forest. DOF has also initiated a Forest Spatial Analysis Center which uses satellite imagery and other GIS technologies to track forest cover, land use changes and forest disturbances.

DOF has implemented a training program for its employees to maintain and increase skills and knowledge for their jobs and help them to advance. The Employee Development, Growth, and Education Program (EDGE) was developed and implemented over the current fiscal year. EDGE is the Agency's continuing education program. It was implemented to ensure the development of a highly skilled, professionally respected, and motivated workforce. The program provides outlets through which employees can acquire training that will bolster their professional aptitudes and skills, assist them with their overall understanding of DOF and its responsibilities, and help them build healthy lifestyles. It also encourages employees to become actively involved in the agency, within professional organizations, and in their communities as an avenue for professional development. EDGE offers on-line training courses in technology and soft skills and off-site training from courses ranging from forest health and productivity to technology. Currently underway is planning for a Forest Resource Management Academy that will bolster over 50 courses.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Productivity

Through ingenuity, determination, vision and passion to be the best, DOF has protected and enhanced Virginia's forestland for its landowners for almost 95 years. Accomplishments have been attained through personnel creativity, conservative and ethical management, and fiscal responsibility. Dedicated DOF employees using creativity produced solutions to large complex problems that have faced Virginia's forests over time. Individually, DOF employees use their skills and knowledge to accomplish and achieve success in work areas. Without a full workforce covering all counties and needs, DOF will miss many opportunities to improve the forest resource.

Virginia's collective forests represent significant value to the Commonwealth, of which 77 % are owned by private landowners or other ownerships. Conversion, or the loss of forestland base to other non-forest uses, is an important change affecting DOF traditional productivity standards. Parcelization, or the increase in numbers of forestland ownership, is another change impacting DOF traditional productivity measures. These changes translate to forest ownership by more people, which impact the complexity and scale of DOF forest fire suppression capabilities, forest management activities, water quality enforcement, and overall management strategies.

DOF staff must respond quickly to forest fires to keep those fires small and safe to the public. DOF employees now take an average of 20 minutes from the time a call comes in to the time an employee reaches the forest fire. DOF uses technologically advanced equipment, well trained staff, and trained volunteers and paid fireman located strategically throughout Virginia to assure a rapid response and effective suppression. The property values protected are higher than ever.

DOF depends upon specialized part-time fire suppression crews to assist with emergency efforts statewide. More than 750 part-time DOF firefighters are trained and certified on an annual basis to nationally recognized standards. DOF average wild forest fire loss is only .23 acres for every one thousand acres protected versus a target of .75 acres lost per one thousand acres protected.

DOF's water quality protection program is designed to reduce and eliminate erosion and water quality degradation as a result of logging activities. A statewide audit conducted on a quarterly basis to evaluate this program has shown positive water quality improvements now for the past 5 years. DOF developed Best Management Practices in response to requirements of the Clean Water Act of 1979, with subsequent revisions in 1997 and 2002. DOF started an inspection program in 1987 on all timber harvesting operations greater than 10 acres for BMP implementation and to educate operators on the uses of BMPs to protect water quality.

In 1992, the General Assembly enacted the Silvicultural Water Quality Act authorizing DOF to act to prevent pollution of state waters from silvicultural activities. In 2002, the Act was amended to allow the issuance of a civil penalty against the operator who failed to notify DOF of a commercial timber harvesting operation. DOF inspected 92% of the harvests where notification was received within 15 days of notification, exceeding the agency standard of 85% since 1992. DOF inspections of logging operations have resulted in assessment of \$170,191 in civil penalties in 2002, \$154,826 in civil penalties in 2003, and \$256,800 in 2004.

Penalties collected are placed in the Water Quality Penalty Fund and used for education, demonstration of water quality protection techniques and research. DOF has completed nine demonstration areas across Virginia to be used in the Forestry Water Quality Education program. DOF has developed and staffed two exhibits at the East Coast Sawmill and Logging Equipment Exposition in Richmond, Virginia, which reached approximately 15,000 forestry professionals in a two day period. DOF has trained 4752 loggers and foresters on harvest planning and BMPs since 1996 under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative program. DOF is undertaking and piloting a project using mediation as a tool in dispute resolution involving enforcement actions under the Silvicultural Water Quality Law.

Assisting private forest landowners by providing scientific based information about forest soils, tree species,

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

water quality, wildlife habitat, and management techniques remains an important and core strategy for DOF. Placing well trained Foresters throughout Virginia puts the agency closest to the landowners of over 77% of Virginia's commercial forestland (approximately 12 million acres). DOF has 150 Foresters and Technicians assigned throughout the Commonwealth serving most counties. Some counties are not served at this time.

To describe the DOF productivity, it is important to understand the value of the forests to Virginia. In the 2001 report on "Virginia's Forest Our Common Wealth", the following major attributes and benefits of Virginia's forests and its industry were:

- 16 million acres of forestland with over 15.4 million acres classified as commercial forest.
- Non industrial private landowners held 77% of Virginia forestland.
- Landowners received \$345 million in stumpage for their timber in 1999.
- Timber harvesting contributed over \$863 million annually to the economy.
- Specialty and non-timber forest products contributed over \$60 million annually to Virginia's economy.
- Forest -related recreational spending contributed more than \$3 billion annually to Virginia.
- Carbon sequestering and pollution control value exceeded \$1.9 billion annually.
- Every \$1 landowners received for their timber generated \$35.39 of Value - Added to Virginia's economy.
- Harvesting, processing and marketing of forest products generated over \$25.4 billion annually to Virginia's economy and accounted for over 248,000 jobs.
- In its entirety, Virginia's forests provided over \$30 billion in benefits annually to the Commonwealth.

DOF now protects approximately 16 million total acres of forest land in the Commonwealth. The average size forest fire in Virginia in 2002 - 2005 was 8.3 acres. During this same time period, a total of 1254 fires occurred on 10,532 acres of forestland in Virginia. DOF has an average response time to forest fires of approximately 20 minutes . Forest fire suppression equipment is safer and more effective on the fires. DOF has a large force of part -time fire fighters better trained and equipped to assist with large fires. DOF has placed greater emphasis on training volunteers and part - time paid fire fighters to increase the ability to respond and effectively suppress forest fires.

Better logging notification and timely inspections are resulting in better compliance by the logging industry with Best Management Practices. This results in cleaner water in streams flowing through forest activity sites. DOF uses training, enforcement, and logging inspections to meet the goals in the water quality area.

DOF's programs and services serve a stronger forest products economy in Virginia, benefiting landowners, business and the public. The marketing and utilization staff attended three forest products trade shows and provided information to approximately 40 businesses hoping to either expand their business or locate in Virginia. In addition, the Utilization and Marketing team provides specific forest resource information to approximately 20 forest products businesses annually and receive and respond to daily telephone calls from businesses.

DOF currently has 272 FTE (full time equivalent) positions of a total employment level of 323. DOF's FTE number has ranged from a high of 302 FTEs in 2001 to low of 261 FTEs in 2004. DOF has averaged 284 FTEs during the past five years. DOF's FY 2005 appropriations is approximately \$26 million dollars. Removing funds used specifically as pass - through grants reduces the actual operating funds for DOF to approximately \$18 million dollars. Adjusted for inflation, DOF has steadily lost purchasing power since 1990. Since 1999, the operating funds, adjusted for inflation, have maintained a constant rate despite inflation.

DOF provides services in every County of the Commonwealth. The agency must receive sufficient operating budgets for fixed and variable operating expenses, and competitive salaries and incentives to maintain qualified staff. Equipment rotation and personal protective equipment are also necessary to assure the employee's safety and effectiveness on wildfires and emergency events. DOF must improve technology to deliver the information requirements of the forest landowners, forest products industry, planners and other organizations.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Major Initiatives and Related Progress

DOF has initiatives underway to increase program effectiveness, provide usable timely forest information, provide greater safety for its personnel, reduce the forest fire losses, reduce stream sedimentation and increase the efficiency of its operations, provide more conserved working forests and deliver high quality technical information to the public.

DOF has initiated the Integrated Forest Resource Information System (IFRIS© 2005 Virginia Department of Forestry). IFRIS is a progressive, flexible, centralized, and geo-spatially-enabled enterprise information management tool that captures and delivers business-critical information via the Internet. Agency performance tracking and mapping is on the verge of deployment (Winter 05) and wildfire incident and water quality law enforcement portions are to be developed in FY05-FY06.

DOF created its new Forest Spatial Analysis Center to provide high quality maps, aerial photographs, and forest resource information to external clients and employees developing forest management plans. ForestRIM© is a GIS based software available to the public through DOF website and is capable of producing superior maps on a tract specific basis. DOF is also leading all state forestry agencies in the development of a comprehensive forest resource information system with the inclusion of spatial information, and in the use of satellite imagery for forest monitoring.

DOF has embarked on an aggressive communications campaign to provide more information to the public about the services and programs DOF provides. A communication plan outlines services, programs and events focusing on the forest resources. DOF hopes its efforts will inform and educate the public, decision makers, leaders and forest landowners about the importance of the forests to Virginia's economy and its environment.

DOF will place greater emphasis on the public's use of the Commonwealth's State Forest system. DOF will direct the public to specific uses that will provide passive forest recreational opportunities for individuals and families. DOF hopes this increased use of the State Forest system will help the public understand and appreciate the value of Virginia's forest.

DOF will continue to manage its State Forests on a self-funding basis by managing forests to produce forest products for sale to the market. Funds from the sale of forest products will pay for employee salaries and all operating expenses.

DOF has initiated a major emphasis on land conservation to retain forest cover and improve the water quality of water flowing through forest areas. DOF administers the Forest Legacy Program to acquire conservation easements and forest acquisitions for the State Forest system. This program will allow the DOF to actively seek and place additional forestland under permanent conservation. In addition, DOF will work with other organizations to find new incentives and better ways to help landowners keep their land in forestland. Success in this area will help Virginia maintain more of its forest landscape, aesthetic beauty, and forest products industry resource base.

DOF will continue to focus efforts to help existing forest products industries and companies to remain viable. DOF provides forest resource information to assist new forest products companies to locate in Virginia and help existing businesses make informed decisions about their future and new markets from Virginia's forest resources.

New and safer forest fire equipment is essential for DOF personnel and others who operate the equipment. DOF now purchases tractors with environment controlled operator enclosures to eliminate the risk of smoke damage to the operator and to provide a safer environment for the operator when operating the tractor near intense heat and smoke. Funding is necessary to maintain the replacement of older tractors. DOF will continually look for more advanced, effective equipment for more effective forest fire control. DOF is presently developing a brush-type forest fire equipped truck to access rugged mountain land.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

DOF's forest protection team has initiated a major campaign called Fire Wise Virginia designed to inform the public about the buildup of forest fuels due to storms from the last couple of years and other wildfire issues. As a result, DOF is helping communities take a positive step towards removing these dangerous fuels around urban forest home communities. DOF has made federal funding available to communities to reach this initiative. More than 4000 at-risk woodland home communities have been identified. More than 45 projects to mitigate potential wildfire damages have been completed to date.

DOF is instrumental in the re-establishment of the longleaf and shortleaf pine (both with natural ranges in Virginia). DOF recommends these species where appropriate and assists landowners with their establishment on private lands. Both species have been declining.

DOF was awarded a 3 year federal grant to reduce the risks from southern pine bark beetle. DOF has worked to reestablish the American Chestnut forest tree. Since its tragic mortality from an introduced fungus, DOF conducts its own research and cooperates with the American Chestnut Foundation to actively obtain a blight resistant American Chestnut. DOF will continue to research the production of an American Chestnut resistant to the fungus blight.

DOF will review all nursery operations to assure that the highest quality forest tree seedlings are available to the landowner in the appropriate species at the lowest cost. One nursery was recently closed and production was shifted to the remaining two nurseries. Costs will be reviewed and reduced where possible and new species will be offered where markets exist for them. DOF will research the best seed sources and growing techniques to produce annual crops of forest seedlings for annual plantings on reforestation, erosion control, wildlife, and riparian buffers.

DOF is rapidly expanding its tree genetics improvement program. The third generation loblolly pine seed orchard is being developed so that future reforestation in Virginia will have the best possible seed sources. DOF has a long history of research and development in improving forest tree seed sources in Virginia. This program continues to pay large dividends for forest landowners. Trees produced from this program are larger, better quality, and faster growing. The tree improvement program has resulted in significantly more wood growth per acre of land and helps to maintain a healthy forest resource base on fewer available forest acres.

DOF will switch its communications system from a DOF owned and operated two-way radio communications network to the Statewide Agency Radio System (STARS). DOF currently maintains a system of towers (old lookout towers), base station radios, repeaters, mobile units, and hand-held radios. DOF will join the new Statewide Radio Agency System administered by the Department of State Police. DOF will transition to STARS over a multiple year period and will continue to operate its network until the STARS system is complete.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Virginia Ranking and Trends

DOF strives for excellence in the delivery of all services and programs. DOF is a member of the National Association of State Foresters, North Carolina Tree Improvement Cooperative and the Virginia Tech Growth and Yield Cooperative. DOF employees hold leadership positions in these associations and participate fully in the advancement of sound forestry practices and the wise management of forest resources. The agency and many of its employees have been recognized for excellence in their work or programs. DOF employees participate in the Society of American Foresters, whose mission is to advance the science of forestry and forest management. Employees serve in leadership positions at the local, state and national levels. Listed below are a few accomplishments and awards received by DOF and its employees:

- The Pulaski fire recognition award for interagency cooperation in 2002.
- The Silver Smokey Bear for wildfire prevention activities in 2003.
- The National Fire Plan award for Division training efforts in 2004. This national award is given only to state agencies who have accomplished significant success for the implementation of national fire plan recognized for fire fighter training, safety, and preparedness. DOF was the only agency in the US to receive this award in the last three years.
- The Governor's award for Teamwork in 2005.
- Virginia's forest fire occurrence places the State in the top 10% of the nation. DOF's forest suppression record has shown an average size of fire of 8.3 acres, .23 acres burned per thousand acres protected and a response time of approximately 20 minutes per call during the last five years.
- DOF's ForestRim web-based interactive GIS mapping program was published in ArcNews, which is one of the most widely read publications in the GIS Community. DOF was also featured on their ArcNews online version. ForestRim is a widely used and successful GIS software tool available to the public and DOF employees for map making.
- DOF is now recognized nationally as having a Type I qualified "short" incident Command Team for all -risk management. This is the result of years of practical experience as well as extensive formal training which culminated in the DOF team passing the Complex Incident Management Course.
- Employees of DOF have been recognized as the Tree Farm Inspector of the Year by the Virginia Forestry Association.
- DOF's Shenandoah Valley Interagency Wildfire Prevention Education Team was presented with the Bronze Smokey Bear award at the Southern Group of State Foresters in 2004. Only three national bronze awards were given out in 2004.
- DOF was recognized by the Governor's office in 2003 and received numerous compliments from citizens for responding with dozers, chainsaw crews, Emergency Operation's Center staff, and initial damage assessment crews after Hurricane Isabel struck Virginia.
- In 2003, Roanoke was selected as the best urban forestry program in the nation at the 2003 National Urban Forestry conference in San Antonio, Texas. DOF has worked closely with Roanoke and played a major role in the accomplishment.
- In 2002, DOF central office received the Energy Star award from the Department Mines, Minerals, and Energy for exceeding all criteria of the EPA Energy Star energy efficiency program.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

DOF has performed well with the delivery of its other services and programs. DOF is normally compared to the southeastern states within the US Forest Service since Virginia is within this federal regional boundary. DOF has long been considered a leader in many programs designed to help landowners with forest management. DOF is currently viewed by its southern state peers as a cutting - edge leader in the development of a system to integrate forest resource and GIS spatial geographical information and data. Below are a few accomplishments reported recently:

DOF has been instrumental in the accomplishment of 42,446 acres of pine hardwood planting in 2004/2005 planting season. Total estimated number of annual acres harvested 218,165 acres.

DOF was important in the completion of 309 Stewardship Plans covering almost 34,000 acres of land in 2004/2005. DOF provided 1974 forest management plans covering 83,052 acres to assist forest landowners with specific forest objectives in 2004/2005.

DOF has received over \$ 7 million Forest legacy funding for acquisitions and conservation easements since 2001. Three forest conservation easements have been recorded which allowed the land to remain with the landowner while assuring its forest state into perpetuity. DOF has also acquired approximately 2100 acres of land into its State Forest system as a result of the Forest Legacy program. Virginia has maintained an average funding almost equal to the national average of all states. Virginia Land Conservation Fund (VLCF) will continue to publicize the Forest Legacy program and aggressively seek additional funding.

Forest fire suppression record is .23 acres burned per thousand acres protected. DOF has maintained an average size forest fire at 8.3 acres over the past five years. Completed more than 45 projects to mitigate potential wildfire damages. Protected an average of 1240 homes or other structures annually from forest fires, saving almost 152 million dollars in property losses.

Water quality program has been touted as the leading water quality program in the South. DOF has been a supporter of voluntary best management practices and non -regulatory environment. DOF is the leader in the statewide logging inspection audit program in the South. The agency has inspected 92 % of the harvests where notification was received within 15 days of notification exceeding the agency standard of 85%.

DOF has sought innovation with the southern pine bark beetle detection and control through intense efforts to precommercial thinning in loblolly pine stands. The southern pine bark beetle is on a decline as a result and landowners have less risk to their pine stands due to this insect. DOF will maintain high interest in Virginia's pine resource and continue to monitor and seek ways to eradicate/control pine beetles and other harmful pine pests.

DOF has been one of the top participants in the Forest inventory program. DOF now provides continuous forest data inventory by assessing 20 % of the forest cover annually. Data is updated and used by forest landowners, industry, and planners for marketing and utilization and land - use planning . DOF staff serve in leadership positions on the Regional Management Team under the Southern Forest Research Program. DOF's goal is to provide accurate forest resource on a timely basis to help forest landowners, planners, legislators, forest products businesses, local governments, and decision makers to make thoughtful land planning and business decisions regarding forest resources. DOF decided to stop its reliance on the US Forest Service forest survey information, before published each ten years, and to aggressively deliver its own forest inventory every five years. The agency established its own forest inventory assessment.

DOF provided nearly 20,000 hours of wildfire and incident command training annually to almost 1200 agency personnel and cooperators. DOF has received the National Wildfire Plan for its effectiveness in planning, safety and training. This was the only time this award was given to any state in the last three years.

DOF was instrumental in the suppression of more than 1300 wildfires annually which burn more than 14,000

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

acres - placing Virginia in the nation's top 10% in terms of wildfires.

DOF succeeded at acquiring nearly 1.5 million dollars in grant funds annually to better equip agency personnel for statewide wildfire and other natural disaster emergency response. DOF places a high importance on the safety of personnel, who are placed at severe risk serving the Commonwealth in the suppression of forest wild fires.

DOF trained 233 volunteer fire departments in forest fire control as of June 30, 2003. Trained fire department personnel are an important part of DOF strategy to create an effective forest fire organization. Efforts like this accomplishment helped DOF to earn the only National Wildfire Plan award given to any state in the last years. This is a national achievement as a result of the agency's wildfire safety, organization and training.

DOF was a leader in the Reforestation of Timberlands program in which the forest industry agreed to a self-imposed tax to reverse the trend towards depletion of Virginia's pine resource. This innovative legislative program was widely viewed by other states as significant leadership to address a future forest resource shortfall.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Customer Trends and Coverage

Forest conversion, the change in forestland base to non-forest uses, and parcelization, the increase in the number of forestland owners, are challenging management paradigms and business practices in all aspects of forestry. These two significant trends are the leading causes of customer base changes. The result is smaller forestland base and more individual ownerships. These important trends challenge DOF, industry, and local governments to find new ways of protecting and managing forests.

The number of forest landowners is growing in size. Larger forest parcels are offered for sale and sold into smaller size tracts of land. These parcels are often purchased by people who are interested in obtaining multiple benefits from their smaller forest holdings. The landowner objectives include recreational uses, wildlife, environment, and economic benefits from forests.

The average size of forestland ownership is decreasing. DOF is actively pursuing new management methods to apply to smaller size tracts. This trend will require DOF and industry to seek new practices applicable to smaller size tracts.

Local government needs for timely forest resource information is expected to increase to help local governments manage active county growth and balance its business, development, natural resources, historical, and aesthetic values. DOF will address these demands through accurate timely forest resource information, GIS tools and an integrated system of forest resource information and GIS spatial and geographical information. DOF must continue to provide forest resource information to help County planners and decision makers understand the value of their forests and plan wisely for their future growth. To date, DOF has provided forest resource information to the following counties and cities for incorporation into their comprehensive land use plans: Albemarle, Nelson, Greene, Madison, Orange, Franklin, Patrick, Henry, Pittsylvania, Amelia, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway, Prince Edward, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, Lynchburg, Danville, Martinsville, and Chesterfield.

The forest products industry in Virginia will face competition in the markets for resources, challenging environmental laws, and labor pool. DOF provides forest resource information which can help the forest products industry. Some companies are merging while many forest products companies are selling their timberland holdings for development or to management companies. Much of the industry timberland once available for forest products are now in development. Favorable laws and an environment to conduct business will be a critical factor in companies' decisions to locate into Virginia or remain.

Landowners are expected to experience intense pressure to convert forestland into development as the value of land skyrockets. DOF will work with many cooperators to reverse the trend through land use solutions at the local level. DOF will offer to hold conservation easements to private landowners. DOF expects more interest in the Forest Legacy grant program for both conservation easements and potential State Forest acquisitions. DOF will work with more Land Trusts and conservation organizations to find solutions and incentives for forest land conservation.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Future Direction, Expectations, and Priorities

The forest land base size is likely to decrease in the future due to expanding development and changing land use. Forestland may be owned by more people and smaller average size holding per ownership. Traditional family farms and forests may succumb to development pressures with the lure of significant real estate values. DOF must find solutions which address the need for continued forest land base, landowner's objectives, and societal needs.

DOF will face new increased difficulties with forest fire suppression as more homes are built in forests and the average tract size is decreasing. New and more effective public relations campaigns will be required to address the dangers with the landowners and the public. Increased efforts on training fire departments will be necessary to assure cooperation on fires. Assessment of the hazards associated with increased forest fuels and quick mitigation solutions will be necessary. Increased funding will be necessary to assure comprehensive programs.

International competition for forest products will place more demand for Virginia's forest products. Businesses will want to expand and capture a market share of the new demands. With decreasing average forest holding size, more homes, and more people without the traditional rural background, DOF will be challenged in public relations, new solutions and effective programs to help Virginia continue a strong forest-based economy while meeting the overall needs of new landowners.

Efforts will be expanded to conserve more forestland through incentives programs. The Forest Legacy program will be reviewed and aggressively marketed to Virginia landowners who wish to maintain their forests into perpetuity. DOF will continue to partner with Land Trusts, other state agencies, local governments to help private individuals maintain their working forests.

The water quality program will continue to work towards achievement of full compliance with best management practices to reduce active and potential zero sedimentation from silvicultural practices. The use of voluntary BMPs and regulations will be reviewed and challenged to achieve results. DOF will work with the forest products industry and other organizations to find better ways to improve compliance with the water quality laws.

The State Forest system will see increased pressure for more public uses. DOF will be challenged to meet its budget needs within the allowable forest levels from the sale of forest products, while undergoing heavier usage by the public. DOF is committed to assure the public's continued use while managing the State Forests for forest products and income.

The nursery program will be reviewed and managed like a business to produce the forest seedling products at the lowest price to landowners. Locating the best seed sources and growing new species to meet new riparian and other reforestation demands will challenge the DOF nursery system. DOF will grow forest species for the first time as it works to assure that the right species of trees are available for each type of planting in Virginia. The trees must be capable of growing well in Virginia climate and soil and producing the desired end result.

DOF must address technology needs to assure the technology is available for the anticipated increased delivery of information through the internet. Information needs are growing at a rapid pace. Employees and external customers are using email, websites, DOF's ForestRIM to communicate and deliver information. High speed internet office connections will be essential for successful delivery of these information services. Employees will use mapping tools available in IFRIS to create better maps for their customers and to track management activities. More importantly, IFRIS will serve as an enterprise information system, managing all business-critical information needs in a geo-spatially aware manner. DOF will work closely with VITA to address its technology needs to meet its business model and challenges unique to forestry information.

Certification of forests and forest products will affect private forest landowners and the DOF's state forest

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

system. A group lead by Utilization and Marketing will assess the certification programs, requirements and costs. Certification is occurring and the only question is when it will occur in Virginia. The forest products market will hold benefits to those whose forests are certified for sustainable yield and best management practices. DOF must determine whether the State Forests will be certified and, if so, which certification program to join.

DOF will work cooperatively with Virginia Tech on Tree Growth and Product Yield studies to benefit all forest landowners to achieve healthy actively growing forests. The agency will also provide information and some federal grant funding to Va Tech to research markets for waste wood products, alternative wood products from waste wood, and alternative management methods of small woodlots (under 20 acres in size) and urban interface forests.

Impediments

DOF will face the need to replace a significant proportion of its workforce in the next five years. Of our current 270 employees, 63, or 24.23% have over 25 years of service to DOF and the Commonwealth of Virginia. These personnel could retire within the next five years. DOF must recruit employees who are proficient in forestry and bring excellent computer skills. Retention of good employees is also a high priority of DOF. Training must be delivered on a continual basis to keep employee's skills strong and capable in emerging forestry issues, technical information, and computer technology.

DOF must maintain safe and effective forest fire equipment. Tractors should be rotated on a twenty year basis. Funding is necessary to have consistent tractor rotation. Newer tractors provide environmental cabs which filter smoke and particulate from the operator's cab and provide greater safety to the operator. The fleet of trucks and specialized vehicles must be rotated on a ten year basis or sooner to ensure effective response to forest fires and emergencies. DOF personnel carry many tools with them in their vehicles and are equipped with emergency response equipment and radio communications equipment.

DOF must adopt and adapt to the centralized functions of government. These include technology, purchasing, leasing and capital outlay. DOF will clearly identify its business needs and work to make the new centralized functions work at the lowest impact on its employees.

DOF must adapt to the challenge of creating and maintaining a technology infrastructure meeting today's standards as well as the business needs of the agency. In the past, technology funding has often been ad hoc and funding insufficient for support and maintenance. The expectations raised by VITA of well-planned technology investments, shared services, and enterprise solutions will serve DOF well. However, the agency will have to adapt its budgeting and management capabilities to get the most out of the VITA partnership.

State Forests will be challenged to create more public uses of all State Forests while continuing to produce forest products from the lands which the public uses for recreation. The agency will prepare for more people using the State Forest and possibly new uses compatible forestry operations and within budgets.

DOF must coordinate the transition to the new Statewide Agency Radio System administered by DSP. The plan covers potential problems for the State Police. DOF expects that radio frequency interference will occur with its system in some parts of the state. Plans are underway to reduce the possible conflict of frequency interference. DOF will work closely with DSP and Motorola to reduce interference and other issues as they surface.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Agency Background Information

Statutory Authority

Code of Virginia, Chapter 11, Article 1, Section 10.1-1100 to 10.1-1103 authorizes the State Forester position, general powers of the DOF, the Board of Forestry and the powers of the Board.

Article 2, Section 10.1-1104 to 10.1-1119 authorizes the duties of the State Forester and General Provisions, including the general and additional powers of the State Forester; the care, management and preservation of the forest reserves of the Commonwealth, purchase of lands for State Forests and acceptance of gifts for the same; waste and unappropriated land; State Forest regulations; trespass; establishment of nurseries; sale of trees from State Forests; specialized services or rentals to landowners; accounting of receipts; and evidence related to conserving the forests.

Article 3, Section 10.1-1120 to 10.1-1123 authorized the establishment of the State -Owned Lands Fund and the State Forester in cooperation with Division of Engineering and Buildings to develop a forest management plan for state-owned lands, and the sale of timber from state-owened lands.

Article 4, Section 10.1-1124 to 10.1-1130, authorizes the State Forester to provide forest proteccion to cities and counties, provides that counties and certain cities pay annual sums for protection; authorization for State Forester to enter into agreements with counties, cities and federal agencies; the practice of forestry; authorization for any county or city to adopt a tree consevation ordinance; authorization for county and cities to acquire land for forests; and authorizes the State Forester to furnish seedlings and technical assistance.

Article 5, Section 10.1-1131 to 10.1-1134, authorizes the State Forester to designate, upon request of a landowner, forest trees of private landowners for sale or removal and the administration of fees for this service.

Article 6, Section 10.1-1135 to 10.1-1150.6, authorizes the State Forester to commission individuals to act as forest wardens of the Commonwealth, to enforce forest laws, and to carry out the purposes of Chapter 11, under the State Forester's direction.

Article 7, Section 10.1-1151 to 10.1-1157, requires any person who hunts or traps on State Forest lands to secure appropriate permit(s) and pay appropriate fees for such use.

Article 8, Section 10.1-1158 to 10.1-1161, authorizes the State Forester to assess the dryness of forest conditions and requires the State Forester to make appropriate recommendations to the Governor so that the Governor may proclaim acts unlawful such as the prohibition of all open burning and closing of hunting and fishing seasons during the period of extraordinary fire hazards.

Article 9, Section 10.1-1162 to 10.1-1169, requires the State Forester to administer and enforce the law requiring landowners leave seed trees of certain tree species on land undergoing a harvest or cutting or alternately adhere to the requirements of this article.

Article 10, Section 10.1-1170 to 10.1-1176, authorizes the State Forester to administer the provisions of the Reforestation of Timberlands Act, including the protection, preservation and perpetuation of forest resources by means of reforestation to allow continous growth of timber on suitable lands.

Article 11, Section 10.1-1177 to 10.1-1181, authorizes the Department of Forestry and makes it responsible for investigating insect infestations and disease infections which affect stands of fores trees and devising and demonstrating control measures to interested persons.

Article 12, Section 10.1181.1 to 10.1-1181.7, authorizes the State Forester to inspect logging operations for the purpose of determining whether an operator or owner is conducting or has conducted a silvicultural activity which

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

caused or is likely to cause pollution. The State Forester is authorized to notify the owner or operator that measures are necessary to prevent or cease the pollution and may issue special orders to the operator or owner the cessation of the silvicultural activity until the corrective measures are implemented.

§ 44-146.24. Cooperation of public agencies: Authorizes the use of state agencies to assist, cooperate and extend services to the Governor and to the State Department of Emergency Management upon request. DOF is a member of the Virginia Emergency Response Team and assists VDEM with staff at the Emergency Operations Center and deployment across the Commonwealth during emergencies.

§ 15.2-4309. Hearing; creation of district; conditions; notice: Provides for local governing body to establish forestry and agricultural land use districts subject to development restrictions. Provides authority for local governing body to receive applications from landowners who wish to place their land into the agricultural or forestry district.

Upon the adoption of an ordinance creating a district or adding land to an existing district, the local governing body shall submit a copy of the ordinance with maps to the local commissioner of the revenue, and the State Forester, and the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services for information purposes.

§ 58.1-3239. State Land Evaluation Advisory Committee: The Advisory Council shall be composed of the Tax Commissioner, the dean of the College of Agriculture of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the State Forester, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The Advisory Council shall determine and publish a range of suggested values for each of the several soil conservation service land capability classifications for agricultural, horticultural, forest and open space uses in the various areas of the Commonwealth as needed to carry out the provisions of this article.

On or before October 1 of each year the Advisory Council shall submit recommended ranges of suggested values to be effective the following January 1 or July 1 in the case of localities with fiscal year assessment under the authority of Chapter 30 of this subtitle, within each locality which has adopted an ordinance pursuant to the provisions of this article based on the productive earning power of real estate devoted to agricultural, horticultural, forest and open space uses and make such recommended ranges available to the commissioner of the revenue or duly appointed assessor in each such locality.

Customer Base:

Customer Description	Served	Potential
Fire Departments	712	765
Forest Industry	6,500	15,000
General Public	300,000	7,000,000
Local governments	100	100
Local Planning Districts	10	20
National Non-Governmental Organizations	6	12
Other Federal Agencies	4	4
Other State Agencies	20	20
Private forest landowners	1,400	300,000
State Supported Educational Organizations	19	25
US Forest Service	1	1

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Anticipated Changes In Agency Customer Base:

The agency customer is expected to remain steady for the next two years. DOF expects an increase in the number of private landowners requesting forest assessments and assistance on private forestlands. DOF also expects an increase in the requests for forest inventory and resource information.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Agency Partners:

Agricultural Organizations

Allegheny Energy

American Forests

Appalachian Power

Community Colleges

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

Dominion Virginia Power

Fire Services Board

Forest Products Association

International Society of Arboriculture

Local Governments

Local Land Trust Organizations

Local Non-Governmental Organizations

National Arbor Day Foundation

National Association of State Foresters

National Resources Conservation Agency

National Tree Trust

RC & D Councils

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Regional Planning District Commissions

Society of Municipal Arborists

US Forest Service

US National Park Service

Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Virginia Department of Transportation

Virginia Forestry Association

Virginia Tech

Voluntary and Paid Fire Departments

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Agency Products and Services:

Current Products and Services

Provide forest management planning and scientific recommendations for reforestation to ensure appropriate tree species on the different sites and the proper silvicultural management of each.

Provide technical information and assistance to landowners to help landowners initiate reforestation establishment and improvement projects.

Assess forest resources of private landowners and provide specific recommendations to achieve desired reforestation and forest management results.

Coordinate the work of tree planting and tree improvement contractors who perform work for private landowners to ensure the work is completed in accordance within acceptable forestry guidelines.

Develop, administer and implement regional and statewide contracts for forestry services (planting and aerial spraying) to competitively bided and awarded contractors for the establishment and improvement of private forestland.

Provide source for tree seedlings and plant materials to accommodate the specific forestry goal on private forestland.

Administer cost share assistance and guidance through state programs to private forestland owners.

Conduct assessments and checks to assure quality assurance on silvicultural projects of private forest landowners.

Provide follow-up inspections with recommendations to improve silvicultural projects on private forestland.

Provide forestry information and education products and services regarding silvicultural operations to private forestland owners to increase their awareness of available help and resources available to assist them.

Train internal staff and partners on appropriate silvicultural practices for private forestlands.

Track all planting and improvement accomplishments annually on Virginia's private forestlands and complete and share report to show annual accomplishments.

Provide specialized forest establishment equipment for rental and use for reforestation work on private forestlands.

Provide specialized forest fire fighting equipment such as bulldozers equipped for forest conditions and the trucks capable of transporting the bulldozers and other equipment.

Provide Forest landowners, upon request, inspections, information and recommendations on forestry management for their property. DOF foresters and technicians are available to provide landowner specific service to the 300,000 potential forest landowners.

Assist forest landowners who request federal and state cost share assistance for forestry practices on their property. DOF foresters and technicians provide the required inspections and approval of the landowner practices before the final cost share award is made to the landowner. DOF is often involved in the oversight and coordination of the project to insure the practice is implemented according to the approved

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

plan. DOF staff makes the final inspection of the completed practice and approves the cost share payment or assist landowners to correct deficiencies.

DOF coordinates regional tree planting contract and makes available forest seedlings for sale to forest landowners. This service insures the forest landowner receives tree planting service from reputable vendors at the lowest price. DOF supplies the tree seedlings from its nurseries insuring the highest quality, genetically superior seedling available for Virginia sites.

DOF foresters and technicians inspect all harvest operations to ensure consistent enforcement of the Virginia Seed Tree Law. This law applies to certain species of pine and hardwood trees and was created to insure these valuable Virginia species are maintained in Virginia forests into the future.

DOF's Forest Spatial Analysis Center can produce high quality GIS products showing current land conditions and species composition. Local government planners and administrators use these products to make informed decisions about the county forest land base and its contribution.

The Forest Inventory Assessment team collects forest resource information from 20% of the forest inventory plots across Virginia each year. This rate of information collection allows DOF to complete an assessment every five years. The information includes estimated tree volume, species composition, age distribution, and size of Virginia's forest land base. The improved technology in satellite imagery allows DOF to document land pattern trends and changes in "real time" for policy and decision makers.

Using the latest GIS tools, FORESTRIM© and GPS units, DOF employees make sophisticated maps for their reports and add the latest layers of information available on the tract. The public can access ForestRIM© from Dove's website and use the tool to create maps of their property and secure forest information. With the implementation of IFRIS© the mapping capabilities will be enhanced and management history will be maintained in the agency's enterprise database.

DOF provides comprehensive insect and disease investigation and monitoring across Virginia. DOF is mandated to report infestations and recommend prevention or control measures to protect valuable species of forest trees. In the past, DOF has monitored species such as gypsy moth, pine bark beetle, oak wilt, chestnut blight and many other insects and diseases. DOF conducts applied forest research to provide the best recommendations for forest practices in Virginia. The results are used by DOF staff in their recommendations to landowners, forest industry, and the general public to improve their forestland.

Offer specialized training to fire fighters across the Commonwealth to maintain firefighter's knowledge and skills at the highest level and to ensure that firefighters operate safely to protect themselves and other people.

Provide experienced all-risk incident management teams for the Commonwealth to provide assistance to Virginia Department of Emergency Management when disasters or emergencies occur.

Provide prevention advertisement campaigns through radio, television, newspaper and multi-lingual media sources to make the public aware of forest fire open air fire law, dangerous forest conditions and safe use of the forest.

DOF provides cost share assistance to private forest landowners for management practices to reduce the risks of southern pine beetle infestation including pre-commercial thinning and restoration of longleaf on acceptable sites.

Provide woodland home community wildfire hazard assessment and mitigation recommendations.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Provide oversight of Virginia Dry Hydrant program, which currently installs 65 dry hydrants annually for local/community fire suppression needs.

Acquire and provide federal excess personal property for loan to fire departments across the Commonwealth to increase suppression capabilities.

Provide trained forest engineers with specialized knowledge of forest hydrology, watersheds, civil engineering, and best management practices

Offer prescribed burning training and certification to burning managers.

Produce and sell forest tree seedlings from DOF nurseries to forest landowners, forest industry and the general public. Seedlings are used in reforestation, conservation, soil erosion, wildlife habitat, and riparian buffer plantings. All seedlings are sold for the price of production. Many seedlings are the result of genetic improvement work. All seedlings are from Virginia or appropriate seed sources to Virginia soils and growing conditions.

Manage the State Forest system which generates all revenues for its operations through the sale of timber and forest products. The largest component of the State Forest budget is made up from timber sales conducted on the State Forest. Timber is offered by competitive sealed bidding to the highest bidder and sold periodically from stands of trees mature or ready for thinning. These products help the local economy and provide some revenue to the local governments too.

DOF provides forest management plans and technical assistance to other state agencies to help them manage their forest land in accordance with the Code of Virginia. DOF must work in cooperation with the Division of Engineering & Buildings to accomplish plans and conduct timber sales.

DOF allows many forest recreation uses of the State Forests, such as hiking, hunting, fishing, bird watching, horseback riding, and camping. These uses are available on an annual basis. Permits are available to hunters for a fee during hunting seasons. DOF does not charge for the user, except the hunter, for these services and benefits. As a group, these non-revenue producing benefits represent approximately 20 % of the State Forest budget.

Provide research opportunities from the State Forest and nurseries. DOF allows research by higher education and participates in research studies with many groups. The information is shared with other researchers, academic institutions, industry, and the public.

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.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

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 Christiansburg 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

Factors Impacting Agency Products and Services

Funding is the principal factor impacting products and services to the forestry incentives service area (50101). Funding is provided from two sources. First, the forest products industry agreed with the General Assembly of Virginia to the Reforestation of Timberlands Act requiring a self imposed timber products tax on the forest products operator. The amount collected from the industry is by law to be matched by General Fund in a like amount and the total must be used to provide the establishment and improvement of the pine resource. This helps assure a pine resource will be available in the future. The collection of the forest products tax and the subsequent matching from the General Fund can impact this service area.

Many factors could impact all service areas of DOF. This service area has the greatest number of DOF employees engaged in its success. Employees properly trained and motivated to the delivery of the products and services are essential to its success. Resignations and retirements can impact products and services.

Funding for cost share programs is an important factor which impacts the outcomes of our service areas. Private landowners count on cost share reimbursement for forestry practices. Funding for the cost share programs should be consistent with the level of need and inflation adjusted to advance products and services in this service area.

Training employees to communicate forest resource assessment and recommendations in an effective and efficient manner which conveys the importance of forest resources and their value to Virginia can impact products and services.

Partners and cooperating organizations' interest and capabilities to assist DOF with the message of the value and benefits of the forest resources can impact products and services.

Demand for nursery forest seedlings impact the nursery program. Demand is usually correlated with timber harvests and special tree planting incentive programs, such as the riparian buffer planting efforts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed area.

People and contractors to carry out the work in the nursery is an important factor impacting products. One nursery operation was closed and two remaining nurseries now carry the entire seedling production for Virginia.

The State Forests are impacted by weather, severe storms, insects, diseases, markets, and recreational demands by the public. Another factor impacting the State Forest is the amount of allowable acreage or tree volume the State Forest is allowed to remove annually to meet the State Forest Plan and its budget.

Funding is the primary factor impacting the service area entitled "Financial Assistance for Forest Land

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Management". 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 in Agency Products and Services

When the RT funds are decreased, the program will serve less private forestland owners with reforestation and forest improvement. Landowners may delay forestry projects or cancel the projects until funding is available.

Increases in the Reforestation of Timberlands Act fund have a positive affect on forestry and private forest landowner willingness to invest money into forestry long term practices. The incentive from cost share reimbursement helps reduce the initial costs and increase the yield to the landowner who must wait approximately 20 years before the first thinning and consequently the first revenue from the investment.

DOF expects to see increases for its services in all aspects of this service area. More forestland is being sold by forest products companies to private individuals. This means more forestland owners and smaller parcels of land. DOF anticipates more requests for forestry plans.

DOF expects more demand for forest information from its increasingly technologically savvy customer base. These customers will want resource information needed for tract level management, water quality protection and forest land conservation. Innovations in the management of geo-spatially enabled information will result in an increase in the amount and quality of information products and services delivered, which is anticipated to increase the demand for other technical services.

As logging continues, DOF anticipates more logging harvest inspections and greater number of inspections on logging sites..

DOF expects increasing interest in riparian buffer plantings and applications for riparian buffer tax credit as interest in water quality grows.

The agency expects more conservation easements for working forests through the Forest Legacy program and from interested landowners who select DOF as the responsible holder for conservation easements.

DOF anticipates increased requests for tree species better adapted to riparian planting and special need sites. The agency must locate appropriate seed sources and develop seeding and growing techniques suitable for each type of tree seedling. In some cases, the harvest and shipping procedures must also be adjusted to accommodate these new trees.

The agency expects the public to use the State Forest more often and in larger numbers. DOF will have to create plans which allow the continuation of forestry operations and greater use of the State Forests. Large size State Forests will serve as the primary source of timber harvests and income production. Hiking trails and similar recreational access will be maintained in the larger forests.

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.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Agency Financial Resources Summary:

The Department of Forestry receives funding from General Fund Appropriations (62%), special revenue funds (30%), and federal grants (8%). Special revenue funds consist of revenue generated through nursery and timber sales, aerial release services, fire suppression services, and forest products taxes. Forestry expenses consist primarily of personal, contractual services, and financial assistance and incentives.

All references to percentages in the financial overview sections refer only to the base budget and not to the changes to the base.

	<u>Fiscal Year 2007</u>		<u>Fiscal Year 2008</u>	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Base Budget	\$15,828,704	\$9,814,092	\$15,828,704	\$9,814,092
Changes To Base	\$8,175,093	\$420,728	\$5,803,921	\$420,728
AGENCY TOTAL	\$24,003,797	\$10,234,820	\$21,632,625	\$10,234,820

Agency Human Resources Summary:

Human Resources Overview

The agency has a tradition of long-serving, loyal employees. Of our current 260 employees (as of 7/1/05), 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%.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

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.

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.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Position Summary

Effective Date:	6/24/2005
Total Authorized Position level	323.38
Vacant Positions	50.38
Non-Classified (Filled).....	1
Full-Time Classified (Filled)	272
Part-Time Classified (Filled)	0
Faculty (Filled)	0
Wage	
Contract Employees	
Total Human Resource Level	

Factors Impacting 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. The agency must prepare for the aging workforce.

As stated above, 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 emergency response time. 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 behind 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 behind the market. This has contributed to both turnover and recruiting challenges. In particular, the agency has a difficult time attracting qualified,

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

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 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. 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, 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 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 leading to large gaps in needs.

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 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 field 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

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

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>).

Agency Information Technology Summary:

Current State / Issues

Enterprise Information Initiatives

- Many of DOF's enterprise functions still rely on a database application (IMS) that was built in 1993, whose source-code has been lost and whose record limits are being exceeded, such that it is now on the verge of catastrophic failure.
- DOF made initial attempts to begin transitioning to a more flexible system (New IMS or NIMS), but lack of funding, turnover in personnel and other factors has resulted in a need for NIMS to be updated.
- Although significant investment and progress has been made to transition from IMS and NIMS to DOF's Integrated Forest Resource Information System (IFRIS© 2005 Department of Forestry), numerous business-critical functions still remain in the older IMS system, and full assimilation of NIMS into IFRIS still needs to occur. Therefore, DOF currently supports three database applications as it strives to move to a single system.
- Inefficient workflows plague agency-wide data capture, with thousands of paper forms being mailed from non-networked field offices to regional offices for data entry into IMS. Duplicate data entry, data entry errors, and decentralized systems means thousands of labor hours are wasted each year.
- DOF's Intranet site is hosted from DOF's Central Office server facility and is therefore limited by the security measures available at this location. Security limitations have made it difficult to provide efficient access to non-networked field office computers of critical agency information (policies, procedures, forms and personnel information).
- Funding of enterprise information initiatives, especially during major system overhaul and integration with geo-spatial functionalities needed in IFRIS, has been and will continue to stress DOF's budget.

Decision Support Services

- DOF staff needs access to more and better quality information and analysis tools that help them mitigate wildfire risk, protect watershed health and ensure the sustainability of the forest resources.
- Although DOF developed an innovative tool with its Virginia Forest Resource Information Mapper (ForestRIM© 2002 Virginia Department of Forestry; www.forestrim.org), the data in this system are static, are not complemented by non-spatial data, and not integrated with IFRIS or other dynamic sources of information. ForestRIM is also limited in its decision-support and reporting capabilities.

IT & Telecommunications Support Infrastructure

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Hardware, Software

- DOF's productivity is weakened by recurring failure of aging printers at all DOF office locations: small internal plastic parts are breaking and replacement items are either unavailable or the one-time repair cost is prohibitive.
- New computers purchased in 2004 for DOF's Central and regional offices are already experiencing problems related to limited hard drive space and slow processing times.
- DOF is exceeding its file storage capacity on its GIS server and will need to increase it to support the space requirements of the geo-spatial data production efforts currently underway.
- DOF employee confidence in information technologies has been deteriorating for years, affecting morale and productivity; getting user "buy-in" will rely on DOF's ability to perform regular, preventative maintenance to its IT infrastructure and to provide adequate user support, two efforts have been difficult for the agency to maintain over the years due to cost.
- DOF suffers productivity loss and increasing repair costs because it adds and replaces IT equipment on an ad hoc basis as funding becomes available.

Telecommunications

- Aging hardware, turnover of personnel and lack of funding has resulted in an old and unstable network in DOF's Central and regional offices.
- In county field offices with more than one computer, staff cannot readily communicate between computers or to printers because they are not networked.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Factor Impacting Information Technology

Enterprise Information Initiatives

- The federal government is placing demands and pressure on state forestry agencies to produce spatial (map-based) reporting of forest management activity accomplishments. This means a full commitment to enabling business-critical information systems with geo-spatial technologies, such as is being done by DOF with IFRIS.
- As long ago as 1998, external auditors had significant criticisms of the agency's IMS application, citing it as "difficult for users", and recommending it be overhauled.
- The Commonwealth of Virginia has identified a priority to develop a statewide enterprise application to manage fiscal functions for agencies, and has warned against making major investments in fiscal accounting systems. DOF's fiscal functions are supported by its IMS, which is on the brink of failure, putting DOF's management of this information at significant risk.
- The unfunded mandate to enforce the Water Quality Law has elevated DOF's inefficient workflows from unfortunate to unbearable. DOF must implement time-savings technologies in order to be effective at utilizing the limited labor pool to meet all agency objectives.
- External demands for more timely and accurate data are increasing, as are the demands to receive the information electronically and on-demand.

Decision Support Services

- As average property (parcel) size decreases across Virginia, the number of forest landowners increases, making outreach more difficult and more important than ever. To compete with "higher profile" interests, DOF needs to use innovative technology solutions that deliver information that impresses upon customers the importance of protecting and preserving Virginia's forests and watersheds.
- DOF must respond to customers that are hungrier for accurate and timely forest resource information that can be used in land use planning, harvest planning, forest protection, forest conservation and forest management.

IT & Telecommunications Support Infrastructure

- Over time, expectations for the use of technology in state agencies have increased tremendously (i.e. e-government), as have the cost burdens from evolving security and best practices standards; however, corresponding increases to the agency's budget have not been made to cover these rising costs of information technology.
- The infrastructure that supports DOF's enterprise IFRIS system is hosted by VITA, and an annual maintenance cost is incurred by DOF. Although VITA currently provides a cost-effective solution with its hosting services, VITA cannot at this time forecast out year hosting fees, making it difficult for DOF to perform budget planning.
- The upheaval and changes that have resulted from the transition of VITA have been a considerable challenge for DOF, especially as regards planning and budgeting. DOF does not have the funding needed to purchase the level of service it requires from VITA, and so some DOF employees have taken on more duties and responsibilities outside their area of expertise. This has compromised their ability to perform at their highest level on their non-IT duties.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Anticipated Changes / Desired State

- DOF will continue with efforts to transition away from IMS and NIMS and toward a single enterprise information system (IFRIS) for all agency-specific enterprise information functions.

- At great risk, DOF will abstain from migration of Fiscal system functionalities in light of COVA priorities to develop this functionality statewide.

- DOF will seek funding to introduce ruggedized PDA computers with integrated mapping-grade GPS for field data collection and integration with IFRIS, thus streamlining the inefficient paper-based data collection mechanisms currently in place.

- DOF will seek funding to build a forest spatial decision support tool to assist staff and customers with wildfire hazard mitigation, forest management planning, harvest planning, county and regional landuse planning and conservation priority analysis.

- DOF will leverage a storage disk array and server to support the increasing storage needs of the agency's FSAC. This hardware will become available when ForestRIM is migrated to the new infrastructure hosted by VITA.

- DOF wishes to make an informed decision of how to improve the effectiveness of its Intranet site by formally investigating how to improve access, tools and information for agency support functions. This will include an examination of how it will interface with IFRIS and what the costs and benefits are expected to be of each potential solution.

- DOF will strive to refresh all computer equipment on a recurring basis, thus reducing repair costs and downtime, maintain productivity, and ensure that standard business-related technologies are a readily available resource.

Agency Information Technology Investments:

	<u>Cost-Fiscal Year 2007</u>		<u>Cost-Fiscal Year 2008</u>	
	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund
Major IT Projects	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Non-Major IT Projects	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Major IT Procurements	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Non-Major IT Procurements	\$1,331,000	\$0	\$550,000	\$0
Totals	\$1,331,000	\$0	\$550,000	\$0

Agency Capital Investments Summary:

Current State / Issues

DOF owns 60 office buildings, 200 total buildings, and approximately 50,000 acres of land. DOF is responsible for maintenance, repairs and improvements on these buildings.

DOF depends upon adequate maintenance reserve funding to maintain its buildings. Some buildings are considered general funded facilities and receive maintenance reserve funding. Facilities located on the nurseries and state forests are considered special revenue operations and receive no general funds and no maintenance reserve funding. More maintenance reserve funding is necessary to maintain all buildings in good condition.

The costs of maintaining older facilities have escalated at a rapid pace and those increases are expected to continue the next two years. DOF buildings range in age from late 1800s to 1994. Most office buildings

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

were constructed 1950 through 1960. It is critical that DOF continue to receive maintenance reserve funding to keep buildings from serious deterioration. Maintenance reserve funding has never completely covered the amount requested to cover anticipated expenses.

DOF has several modular office buildings approved by Division of Engineering & Buildings for a temporary building permit and issued to DOF for two years. DOF recognizes its obligations to replace the temporary office structures with permanent structures once capital funding is made available.

The modular office units identified in the DOF six capital outlay plan for 2006 -2008 biennium are as follows:

Amelia County Office located in Amelia Courthouse consists of approximately 480 square feet of office space situated on a lot owned by the DOF. This temporary office now serves the forester and technician. Space is limited for work and storage. DOF recommends replacing this facility with 5064 office and equipment building. The office would provide necessary personnel space, storage, security space for forest bulldozer and fire fighting equipment and materials.

Lancaster County Office located in Kilmarnock, Virginia consists of approximately 480 square feet of office space situated on a lot owned by DOF. This modular office has been in place longer than two years. DOF recommends replacing this facility with 5064 office and equipment building. The office would provide necessary personnel space, storage, security space for forest bulldozer and fire fighting equipment and materials.

DOF has completed preliminary drawings for the Conway Robinson State Forest Stewardship Educational Center. DOF will request additional funds to complete the design and construction of this important project located in Prince William County, Virginia. The project will be located on approximately 400 acres of land owned by DOF near I 66 interstate and Route 29. The completed facility will provide DOF and the Commonwealth with the best natural resources center in Virginia emphasizing forest resources and wildlife habitat. Department of Game & Inland Fisheries were partners in the early design and planning phase. Students from Prince William County and surround populated counties, as well as, other counties in the Commonwealth will use the Conway Robinson for intense natural resource training and unique educational experiences.

Factors Impacting Capital Investments

DOF owns the land where capital outlay investments have been identified in this report and in the six year (2006-2012) capital outlay plan. The only factor which could have an impact on these capital projects is sufficient funding to complete the design and construction of each project. Capital Outlay funding is required to move forward with any one of the projects.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Capital Investment Alignment

The proposed capital projects are directly aligned with the DOF mission to protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. DOF provides forest protection and forestry services in every county of the Commonwealth. The Code of Virginia authorizes DOF to provide forest fire protection, silvicultural water quality protection, and forestry management services to private landowners. DOF mission and goals direct align with the long - term initiatives of Virginia, specifically: 1) to protect, conserve, and wisely develop our natural, historical, and cultural resources, 2) to protect the public's safety and security, ensuring a fair and effective system of justice and providing a prepared response to emergencies and disasters of all kinds, 3) be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy, and 4) engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests. DOF can only meet its mission, mandates and Virginia's long - term objectives by placing personnel in most counties where commercial forestland is available. The projects identified in the six capital outlay plan for 2006-2008 are located in important pine and hardwood forest resource areas. Forestry is a significant part of the economy and private land holdings. The Conway Robinson capital project fits the mission, mandates and Virginia goals by providing a unique property of 400 acres of forestland near a large urban population, which can serve as an educational tool and demonstration area for all aspects of forestry, wildlife and conservation.

Agency Goals

Goal #1:

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

Goal Summary and Alignment:

By ensuring the DOF has adequate radio communications, sufficient trained personnel, appropriate fire prevention program, trained staff in arson and law enforcement prepared for the changing needs in wildfire protection and wild land/urban interface, the Commonwealth's forest lands will be protected from damages resulting from wild fires and Virginia will be a national leader in the effort. This goal aligns directly with the Agency's mission to protect the forest resources.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #1

- Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.
- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.
- Protect the public's safety and security, ensuring a fair and effective system of justice and providing prepared response to emergencies and disasters of all kinds.

Objectives For Goal #1

Objective 1.01

50103.01 Reduce the forest land acres lost annually due to forest fires. (also supports goals 2-6)

Goal #2:

Protect, promote, and enhance forested watersheds, non-tidal wetlands, and riparian areas.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

Provide technical services, best management practices information, and silvicultural activity enforcement on the Commonwealth's forested watersheds, non-tidal wetlands, and riparian areas to ensure the quality of drinking and recreational waters from these areas for future generations.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #2

- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Objectives For Goal #2

Objective 2.01

50103.03 *Decrease the amount of potential and active sediment pollution going into waterways from silvicultural activities, such as tree harvests.*

Objective 2.02

50103.02 *Increase complete compliance with best management practices on forest harvest sites.*

Objective 2.03

50103.13 *Increase forest landowner awareness of and participation in the forest riparian tax credits.*

Objective 2.04

50103.04 *Increase the establishment of riparian forest buffer plantings in the Commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay and Southern River watersheds.*

Goal #3:

Conserve the forest land base.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

Provide technical services, information, and conservation easements designed to inform private landowners and organizations representing private forest landowners about the shrinking forestland base in the Commonwealth to assure a higher likelihood of reversing the trend towards the smaller forestland base while maintaining more land in working forests.

Objectives For Goal #3

Objective 3.01

50103.12 *Increase DOF participation in the Commonwealth's local planning process for forestry resources by providing pertinent conservation information to county planners.*

Objective 3.02

50103.14 *Create conservation model funding mechanism to identify strategic forests, agricultural land and open spaces, provide conservation annuity funding sources and match funding sources with landowners.*

Goal #4:

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

Goal Summary and Alignment:

Provide information, advice, and scientific - based recommendations to help landowners make informed decisions about their forest resources which result in healthy, vigorous trees and forests on private land.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #4

- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Objectives For Goal #4

Objective 4.01

50103.10 *Restore shortleaf and longleaf pine species into the Commonwealth's forest landscape.*

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Objective 4.10

50103.09 Advance the depth and breadth of forest resource information available to the general public, public decision makers, forestry professionals and private forestry landowners.

Objective 4.11

50104.05 Effect scientifically based forest management on state owned forestry lands that sustains forest health, productivity and state agency goals.

Objective 4.02

50103.11 Provide more forest stewardship plans to forest landowners in the Commonwealth.

Objective 4.03

50102.01 Approve and complete pine reforestation and improvement practices on sufficient areas to maintain the pine forest resource for Virginia.

Objective 4.04

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.

Objective 4.05

50105.03 Increase participation in the Tree City USA program while maintaining participation of existing communities already in the program.

Objective 4.06

50105.02 Increase the number of Greenways and Blueways in Virginia.

Objective 4.07

50103.05 Complete artificial forest regeneration with desirable tree species to provide future forest crops.

Objective 4.08

50103.06 Decrease the susceptibility of pine stands in the Commonwealth to southern pine beetle infestations.

Objective 4.09

50103.07 Advance the knowledge base of best silvicultural practices applicable to private, non-industrial forest lands in the Commonwealth.

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Goal #5:

Facilitate the development and implementation of a statewide forest policy.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

Lead efforts to establish a statewide forest policy clearly demonstrating the value and importance of forest resources in Virginia. The agency will initiate the development of a forest policy appropriate for the forest resources in Virginia, with the ultimate goal of reaching a broad constituent base statement on forest policy value, importance and practices in Virginia. The ultimate goal of the effort will be a policy which rests at the highest level of Virginia's government and serves as a guidance policy for law makers and all Virginians.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #5

- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Goal #6:

Collect, maintain, and disseminate forest resource information.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

DOF will deliver spatial and statistical forest resource data, coordinated with accurate, timely field-based forest resource information, dedicated to remote sensing, and web-based information and marketing outreach to assure the public's awareness of the value and importance of Virginia's forests and to improve the health and quality of life for Virginia citizens. This goal aligns directly with the agency mission to protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #6

- Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.
- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Objectives For Goal #6

Objective 6.01

50103.08 Establish an information system that integrates spatial and statistical data, streamlines workflows within the agency, and provides informed access to this information to both internal and external customers. (also supports goals 1-5 & 7)

Goal #7:

Manage agency resources to effectively and efficiently accomplish the strategic initiatives.

Goal Summary and Alignment:

Ensure DOF has sufficient employees with the right skills and knowledge to be a world class forestry organization capable of meeting the challenges and needs in Virginia, who are equipped with technology and tools, possess excellent communication skills, to provide the highest quality forest management assessments and recommendations and ensure a better informed private landowner. Provide for the most effective and efficient management of DOF State Forest and nursery production resources.

Statewide Goals Supported by Goal #7

- Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.
- Engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests.
- Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Objectives For Goal #7

Agency Strategic Plan

Department of Forestry

Objective 7.01

50104.01 Improve the efficiency of DOF seedling nursery production.

Objective 7.02

50104.02 Update all State Forest Management plans.

Objective 7.03

50104.03 Manage the State Forest on a sustained basis for research, demonstration, education, and multiple use benefits while staying within the allowable forest harvest levels.

Objective 7.04

50104.04 Manage the nurseries to provide the best quality seedlings types demanded by the customers at the lowest cost.