

Environmental staff cut

Critics see ideology rather than efficiency

BY REX SPRINGSTON

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

Gov. George Allen's team marched into office preaching the gospel of business-friendly solutions to environmental problems — and promised to deliver as it streamlined state government to make it more efficient.

Three-and-a-half years later:

■ Allen has shrunk environmental agencies and cut programs.

■ Veteran workers have left and often have been replaced by people with much less knowledge, environmentalists complain.

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GOVERNMENT**



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THE SERVICES

TODAY

THE POLITICS

TOMORROW

THE LEGACY

■ The state's main environmental agency is plagued by controversy, criticism and low morale after a series of reorganizations. The latest is half-way complete. (Article, Page B5)

The Department of Environmental Quality saw some of the deepest cuts in staffing in Allen's efforts to shrink state government.

Environmentalists see disaster. They say the cuts are more about ideology than efficiency. Federal regulators have accused Virginia of coddling polluters. Business people question the way Allen has managed the state's environmental staff.

Allen said the critics were playing politics. Secretary of Natural Resources Becky Norton Dunlop, a former Reagan administration official, said critics are whining over procedure, while she is interested in outcome.

Dunlop said she wants to get away from the "command-and-control" regulation of the past by letting businesses lower pollution their way.

"On all fronts ... Virginians have seen greater improvements than in any previous administration," Dunlop said. She rated Allen's handling of



TOOK BUYOUT. Arthur H. Buehler III, a former Department of Environmental Quality engineer walking the fields near his Powhatan County home, said the Allen administration was intent on disabling DEQ.

PLEASE SEE DEQ. PAGE A6

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