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Future of Tall: Building a Wood High-Rise in the US, Oct. 4
SFWS Career Fair
Graduation Ceremony and Reception, Dec. 15

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Geospatial Technology and the Growing Job Market
60th Annual Forestry Conclave

This is Auburn.

SFWS NEWS • Volume 2, Issue 3 • Summer 2017
Working with Nature for Society’s Well Being

Woodlands & Wildlife Society
Campaign Leadership Meeting
Tiger Giving Day Portable Sawmill Dedication

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A Message from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends:

Auburn University has come a long way since the time the first women students, Katherine Broun, Margaret Teague, and Willie Little were admitted in 1892. Men and women in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences have had important and unique experiences within its programs; and supporting career conserving and managing forests, wildlife, and other natural resources across the globe. As of 2023, there are more than 600 women alumni, and is making significant contributions to the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

By contributing more than $21 billion, Auburn University is an equal opportunity educational institution that commits to serve society, the Compass Circle, for an era of celebration, students, faculty, and staff are holding thank you cards to share with donors.

War Eagle!

Janaki R.R. Alavalapati
Editor
Associate Dean of Research
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences
652 Duncan Drive • Auburn, AL 36849
Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences
Academics & Learning

Academia’s forest products industry leads the way toward a bio-based economy

The bio-based economy, which includes wood, paper, construction, chemicals, energy, and biofuels, and packaging, is anticipated to be our next economic wave. By contributing more than $21 billion, the forest production and processing industry is already a significant player in the Alabama economy. Several other wood-related industries have grown over the horizon, in the impact on the state’s economy and employment will continue to grow.

In addition, the use of engineered wood (CE), a newly engineered wood, in the mid- and high-rise residential and non-residential construction is on the rise. CE features a unique wood engineering, giving it use as strength and light weight, easy to install, sustainable, fire resistant, and cost effective.

There are a few innovations in wood that are potential for the future, such as institutional buildings, as well as benefits such as low installation time, improved thermal performance, and weight. Because of its strength, it can be used in a wide range of applications, both residential houses and buildings.

With CE’s growing popularity and diverse uses, all for the strength of the wood products industry in Alabama. International demand recently announced will be high by nearly $50 million to open the first mass timber high-rise in the country.

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Hands-on Hawaii

Field course offers transparent lens into human dimension of conservation

Written by Kristine Fedoranko  Photo by Dr. Christopher and Clara Wood

Delivered for its breathtaking scenery and rich culture, Hawaii is not just an idyllic spring break destination, but also a setting that offers the chance to conduct real-world conservation and the individuals and organizations working together to make it possible.

In March 2016, nine students attended a two-week field course on the islands of Kauai, Maui, and Oahu, an experience that allowed valuable insights into their field of study and passions. The course was led by Chris Laycock, an associate professor in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and blended new cultural experiences with instruction among a variety of institutions in conservation, management, and restoration.

Laycock planned the logistics for the trip with a goal of giving students the opportunity to understand wildfires, forestry, and natural resources in a new context. “My career is going to be in conservation, and I want to study conservation not in a textbook or article, but in the real world. I wanted to stretch myself, my perspective, and my intellect by doing something unusual,” said SFWS natural resources management student Chris Wood. “I soon learned they’re like animals or nature, and they may not realize the role our society plays in determining how natural resources are managed and what implications spring from that role.”

Students visited research facilities, offices, and national parks completing a well-rounded scope of the different institutions and people that work to successfully execute conservation efforts. One highlight of the trip included a visit to the National Tropical Botanical Garden, which showcases Hawaii’s rare and tropical plant life.

During the two-weeks, students were able to interact and network with professionals from different nonprofit organizations and government agencies. One of these individuals, Christopher Hawkins, managing partner at Costless Group, discussed how human factors affect conservationists’ agendas. “I wanted the students to understand the complexity inherent in their intended careers,” said Hawkins. “Many students go into conservation studies because they like animals or nature, and they may not realize the role society plays in determining how natural resources are managed and what implications spring from that role.”

Students also visited research facilities, offices, and national parks completing a well-rounded scope of the different institutions and people that work to successfully execute conservation efforts. One highlight of the trip included a visit to the National Tropical Botanical Garden, which showcases Hawaii’s rare and tropical plant life.

While touring a private estate on Kauai, a Polynesian canoe to carry out water sampling. “It was deeply rewarding to paddle in a Polynesian canoe to carry out water sampling,” said Wood. Students paddled a traditional Polynesian canoe in Hilo Bay to carry out water sampling. “It was deeply rewarding to paddle in a Polynesian canoe to carry out water sampling,” said Wood.

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In just two weeks, students returned home with a collection of experiences that enriched their perspectives and shaped their futures. “They gained great insight into real-world issues with stakeholders, managers, policy makers, and planners,” said Wood. “For many of the students, it changed or sharpened what they want to do after they graduate.”

It was inspiring to meet a variety of men and women doing a variety of things, and seeing that they still love their work. It made the term conservation very real and tangible, and I’m excited to get my degree and get to work,” said Wood.

Laycock hopes to develop this course and continue to provide students with more opportunities for hands-on experiences.

“Deep exposure to real-world management and conservation issues caught many students unaware of just how important our natural resources are and the tools needed to manage them. The course demonstrated the importance of these agencies use formal decision-making processes, how long management takes, and what collaboration means toward success.”

“I wanted them to experience the ocean and remember what it is like to observe with all your senses when you do science.” - Noelani Puniwai

Later, students had the chance to paddle in a Polynesian canoe to experience "I wanted them to experience the ocean and remember what it is like to observe with all your senses when you do science.” - Noelani Puniwai

While observing marine life in Kauai, students found themselves learning about koa and Hawaiian beach sand dunes. "It was amazing to watch them learn about the native plants and the animals they respect the knowledge that was shared," said Wood.

After spending time with coconut crabs on Kauai, students found themselves learning about koa and Hawaiian beach sand dunes. "It was amazing to watch them learn about the native plants and the animals they respect the knowledge that was shared," said Wood.

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Dixon Center celebrates 37 years of summer practice

Over the spring and summer, many groups host their continuing education classes, field exercises, workshops, and other natural resources-related instruction in the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center. Since last spring, the Dixon Center has been base camp for Auburn University, Mississippi State University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, The Long Leaf Alliance, Southern Regional Extension, Association of Consulting Foresters, Alabama Forestry Commission, and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

SFWS students recently completed their 2017 procurement practice course at the Dixon Center. Working with practicing foresters from across the industry, students completed a 3-day course designed to simulate the business of buying and selling timber on the open market. The Dixon Center gives special thanks to those who donated their time, including independent timber sales consultant, and current registered forester, former Alabama Forestry associate, and current executive director of the Alabama Rivers Alliance.

SFWS faculty and students participate in bioblitz events held around the state

A double-bill was held this spring on Alexes Acres, an ERCDO Industries property in Moundville, Alabama. SFWS representatives joined forces with more than 30 scientists from Auburn and other universities around the state in an effort to document as many species of insects, 32 types of trees, 36 understory plants in forestry (and in some cases, urban) settings.

In the Spotlight

Assistant Professor Sanjiv Kumar was hired within Auburn’s multi-disciplinary Climate, Human-Earth System, and Societal Resilience (CHESS) cluster. In addition to his research, Kumar will teach courses related to the new geographical and environmental informatics degree program (GEO).

Kumar holds an undergraduate degree in climate and environmental engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology and a master’s and PhD in civil engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology.

Kumar’s background is in climate and hydrological modeling. His expertise involves using super computers to develop simulations that support the research of land and climate interactions and their impacts on the availability of natural resources. As part of the CHESS cluster, Kumar and his colleagues will develop methods to assess vulnerabilities and help in improving society’s resiliency against climate extremes and variability, as well as the resulting impacts on weather events such as floods, droughts, and hurricanes.

New Faculty & Staff

Shawn Thomas, an Assistant Professor of Plant Pathology, joined the SFWS faculty this spring. Thomas holds a PhD in plant pathology from the University of Wisconsin.

Among his many achievements, Kohl has published four book chapters, produced more than 30 refereed journal articles, and provided countless abstracts, presentations, and posters.

Happy Retirement

please join us in celebrating the retirement of our long time and dedicated staff member, the Soil and Water Lab’s Mathew Stribling.

Golden Eagles Reunion

SFWS recently held its annual Golden Eagles Reunion to honor alumni of 30 years or more. The event was hosted by David Pugh, director of SFWS, and attended by SFWS alumni, former SFWS faculty, and invited guests.

The event provided a venue for alumni to reconnect with the school and share news about their lives and careers with fellow graduates.

Alumni Earl Kennamer named 2017 Outstanding Alumnus

James Earl Kennamer was named 2017 Outstanding Alumnus by the Southern Forest Nursery Sales and Marketing Association (SFNSMA). Kennamer later served as the Southern Regional Extension Forestry and Environment specialist.

Kennamer is currently planning and working on the transfer of wild turkeys, a method he used while working in the Department of Natural Resources, the College of Agriculture, the College of Forestry and Environmental Sciences, and the College of Engineering.

He has served as the Department of Natural Resources, the College of Agriculture, the College of Forestry and Environmental Sciences, and the College of Engineering.

To read the alumni biographies and their full responses, visit sfws.auburn.edu/125-years-of-auburn-alumni.
Clemson University and Auburn University have teamed up to throw the weight of multiple academic disciplines behind efforts to save the world’s wild tiger populations. The two universities, together with Louisiana State University and the University of Missouri, are leading the efforts of the newly formed Tiger University Consortium, so named for the mascots that both institutions share. According to Brett Wright, dean of the Clemson University College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences, the dwindling tiger populations are an issue demanding the attention of land-grant institutions such as those belonging to the consortium. For Wright, the issue should also be central to the many who share on their preferred team on game days. “Students, faculty, and alumni chant ‘Go Tigers’ on a daily basis, but not many know the truth about the animal we hold so dear,” Wright said. “These universities share the tiger mascot and benefit from that majestic symbol of strength, dignity, and beauty, so they share a moral responsibility to apply all of our resources to save the animal that inspires that symbol.” The consortium was initiated by Clemson University President宪宗在梅和Clements, who also serves on the Global Tiger Initiative Council. The consortium made up of business and conservation leaders was formed to address the Global Tiger Forum in saving remaining populations of wild tigers, with a goal of doubling tiger numbers in the wild by 2022. Thanks to the council’s efforts, tiger numbers in 2016 were on the rise for the first time in 100 years, but the work to restore their numbers fully is just getting started. Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, said that with more than one university approaching the problem, the odds of success in saving tiger populations only increases. “Each of our institutions possui various academic disciplines important to the future of tiger conservation and protection,” Alavalapati said. “This is an obvious example of the need for multidisciplinary contribution not just across colleges and departments but across universities.” The consortium will focus on several avenues to achieve its goal, including research that supports evidence-based decision making by conservation professionals. As far as concrete action that can take place in countries where tiger populations are most affected, Wright and Alavalapati hope to create the next generation of environmental leaders through university-supported academic scholarships and assistantships. Participating universities will equip these leaders with the means to make direct change where it is needed across the globe. The Global Tiger Forum estimates there are only about 3,900 tigers remaining in the wild. According to Keshav Varma, chief operating officer of the Global Tiger Initiative Council, the reasons for dwindling populations are varied. Major issues include deterioration of the tiger natural habitats and poaching, which affects the 13 countries in which tiger populations remain. “Each of the 13 tiger range countries now has a recovery plan in place, which is a better situation than we were in even five years ago,” Wright said. “The consortium is committed to supporting these national programs through training and research, and the work is already well underway.”