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Student Awards Celebration and Dinner, 4/19
Spring Graduation Ceremony and Reception, 5/3

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2019 Homecoming Barbeque
2019 Graduate Student Research Symposium

2019 Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative Short Course
A Message from the Dean

Dear alumni and friends:

With the completion of the fall semester, the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences opens a new chapter in its history. Building upon its core competencies and research platforms, the school has sustained its momentum that has advanced in a period of growth and expansion that is unparalleled in its history.

With the retirement of several faculty, including Brenda Allen, James Armstrong, Art Chaparek, and Lyu Treuter, we have filled these vacancies and expanded our roles with the hiring of new faculty members, Richard Franks, Kelly Dunning, Narine Dikaeian, Rachel Willoughby, Peng Yucheng, and Yucheng Peng.

We think our faculty, staff, and students for their participation in the advancement process and welcome our new faculty members who bring new knowledge, skills, and expertise to expand and elevate the school.

Finally, our 2019-2024 Strategic Plan will guide the school forward to develop innovative degree options, graduate instruction, research, partnerships, and engage and energize our diverse students and stakeholders to become the “go-to place” for forestry, wildlife sciences and natural resource programs in the Southeast, U.S., and beyond. We believe that this expansion will support our efforts to achieve the school’s mission to elevate the “go-to place” for forestry, wildlife sciences and natural resource programs in the Southeast, U.S., and beyond.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and for the wonderful experiences you bring to our Auburn experience. We appreciate your ongoing support and look forward to working with you in the future.

Wishing you and yours a healthy and prosperous 2020.

War Eagle! Best regards,

Dean Janaki R. Alavalapati

Robert E. and Virginia R. Fugate School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

New Faces Going Places

The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences has hired six new faculty members to expand and diversify expertise in each of its respective areas of education. These new hires will greatly expand research capabilities in natural resources, while also providing new opportunities for applied education.

New faculty members will enhance the size and quality of our programs and advance our land-grant mission further.

As our new faculty members who are experts in forestry, geospatial and environmental informatics, natural resources management, and sustainability, will bring new skill sets that complement our existing programs and help the school to better address natural resource issues and problems that are crucial to society’s well-being. 

Robert R. Criswell

Associate Dean of Research

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School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences

SFWS NEWS - Fall 2019

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Giving

Questions concerning the school’s development programs including annual and corporate giving, planned gift and estate planning should be directed to Heather Jackson, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Building, 635 Daniel Drive, Auburn, AL 36849. Inquiries may also be made via email to sjackson@auburn.edu or by phone at 334-844-2791.

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One Health, one goal
Among the newest graduate certificates offered, the One Health program prepares professionals to take on growing environmental health threats

One Health concept is grounded in the premise that "in recent decades, the approach to eradicate diseases has reactive, treating symptoms of disease rather than addressing the cause," said the integrating a One Health approach we can proactively address human, animal and environmental health issues. "Javick Alamprew, dean of Auburn’s School of Forestry, SFWS, said the program certification is essential to provide professionals with the tools they need to take on environmental health.

"The Auburn University One Health online graduate program clearly represents an area of crucial need and importance within our state as well as nationally and globally," Alamprew said. An estimated 20% of the world’s population is infected with vector-borne diseases and 70% of emerging human diseases have their source in domestic or wild animals. These zoonotic diseases include zebu, West Nile virus, Rift Valley fever, dengue fever, and others.

"One Health is a must. Other professionals can serve as a warning for human disease transmission," Lockaby said. For example, agents that determine risk of West Nile virus include environmental factors that favor reproduction of the Culex mosquitoes species, and fruit bats that serve as reservoirs of the disease.

"It is crucial that people engaged in many- turbines—structures that moderate temperature, and urban planners—are understanding the complexity and degree to which urban factors may be interrelated and are interconnected," Lockaby said. Kelly M. Stevens, director of Infectious Disease and Outbreaks in the Bureau of Communicable Diseases at the Alabama Department of Public Health, said the issue One Health is taking on in the United States is because of the number of zoonotic diseases in humans that are spread by animals.

"The ADPH recognizes that the health of our citizens is connected to the health of the animals and our environment," Stevens said. "ADPH cities to improve the health of the problems human and environmental interactions are heavily linked to environmental conditions and ecosystem health."

"The most prevalent health problems humans face in modern times are heavily tied to environmental conditions and ecosystem health."

— Sarah Zoboly

New degree goes green
Students focus on improved sustainability in new sustainable biomaterials and packaging

Auburn University students pursuing the new sustainable biomaterials and packaging degree have become a driving force for change, increasing awareness about the importance of sustainability across a wide range of industries. "Younger generations have an increased environmental concern as well as awareness of the necessity of decreasing our impact on the planet," said Soledad Peresin, assistant professor of Sustainable Biomaterials and Packaging, or BIOP, degree.

"Autumn Reynolds, student and co-founder of the new BIOP organization, said the program's interdisciplinary nature is one of its most valuable aspects. "We can bridge the gap between current and future technologies, let people think about the importance of sustainability, and expose them to the sustainability of the future."

"SFWS News"
FEWL Academy members meet leaders, policymakers in Washington, D.C.

"Engaging with professionals at this level in their fields offered them a wider view of the responsibilities that leaders in their fields regularly face." - Dean Alavalapati

Earlier this year, the FEWL students traveled to Montgomery to meet with Alabama Governor Kay Ivey, as well as leaders of the Alabama Forestry Association and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Current FEWL Academy members are Joseph Contreras, Mauve Dickens, Will Dunnam, Allison Gary, Sarah Hannon, Maria Ionas, Col Logan, Phillip Woodhouse, Gabrielle Ripa, Noah Ruppers, Dean Snow, and Lexi Wiltfong.

These represent a wide range of majors, including forestry, pre-vet medicine, natural resource management, sustainable biomaterials and packaging, and wildlife ecology and management. Each year, 12 to 15 applicants will be selected to participate. Qualified students in Auburn School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences who are in good academic standing and interested in developing leadership skills are invited to apply.

The 2019 FEWL Academy program is sponsored by a private donation from Ed Sweeten, a 1979 Auburn graduate. However, the school’s long-term goal is to establish an endowment to fund FEWL. Those interested in this opportunity can contact the Development Office at 334-844-2791, or email development@auburn.edu.

"Feeling the importance of being a leader, and the complexity of leadership." - Terry Baker, CEO of the Society of American Foresters.

Members of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences’ FEWL Academy, or FEWL, Academy visited Washington, D.C. in August, meeting with leaders from the U.S. Department of Energy, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the CEO of the Society of American Foresters.

The visit also included tours of the U.S. Capitol Building and White House, and a visit with staff from Sen. Doug Jones’ office. Faculty advisors Dean Jacobs-Alvarez and Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Adam Moggridge accompanied students and facilitated their discussions with the representatives.

These 12 students represent the first cohort to participate in the two-semester FEWL Academy, which prepares them with the leadership abilities necessary for critical problem-solving issues related to the management, utilization and stewardship of natural resources.

Moggridge said the visit to the nation’s Capitol enriched the group’s understanding of what it takes to succeed on a high level in their field. “Experiential learning opportunities like this significantly enhance students’ personal development and leadership abilities,” Moggridge said. “This unique experience enlightened these students as they observed diverse perspectives and leadership qualities among leaders and the complexity of issues faced every day by government officials, CEOs and policy makers.

The group was excised to meet senior analyst and Defense Production Act Coordinator Zia Haq of the Department of Energy’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

“Engaging with professionals at this level in their fields offered them a wider view of the responsibilities that leaders in their fields regularly face.” - Dean Alavalapati

During the trip, the students also met with Associate Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, Lenise Largo.

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Auburn University doctoral student Katie Izenour has been named a Fulbright recipient to bring public health research to human-animal interaction research in Egypt.

“I believe the Middle East is particularly underrepresented in international conversations about public health preparedness and response, and I hope that my research on zoonotic infectious diseases will fill valuable knowledge gaps and provide a platform for other organizations to collaborate with Egypt.”

Katie Izenour

Using Assistant Professor Sanjay Kumar’s soil management research as a foundation, the Center for Sports Turf at Auburn University has developed a new drought-resistant bermudagrass cultivar, which was recently featured in the 2018 National Turfgrass4 conference. October and November 2019.
Teaming up for trees
Touchdowns for Trees, an off-field and on-campus success for Alabama students and businesses
by Annette Silvio
Touchdowns for Trees enjoyed successful inaugural season in Alabama this year. The Extension tree planting program launched by Michelle Cole, an outreach program administrator within the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, was created to foster a meaningful connection among sponsoring organizations and participating high schools and universities through community service.

The Touchdowns for Trees program donates trees for every touchdown scored by the participating school’s football team during the regular season. Through their involvement in the program, Alabama students may gain deeper insight into the importance of community service and understand the significance of their on-campus and off-campus involvement.

“I began the outreach initiative of Touchdowns for Trees to engage students of my own university through service learning opportunities that are relevant to their course work and interests,” said Cole.

From there, the project expanded to schools and universities throughout the state. University athletes and campus planners select the locations of the plantings to ensure healthy tree growth. As an alternative, the trees may also be planted in newly created community parks as well as on campgrounds and green spaces to provide erosion mitigation, shade and wildlife habitat.

University football teams assisted with plantings and connected with many volunteers from the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and the U.S. Forestry Service. Local city foresters and tree commission members also supported this year’s Touchdowns for Trees planting efforts.

Sponsors included Toyota, the Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, the Alabama Forestry Association, Alabama Power and others.

“The tree planting efforts a company’s carbon footprint by increasing the urban forest canopy and improving water quality on campus campuses around Alabama,” said Cole.

Cole is excited to have the opportunity to foster community service while increasing the urban forest canopy on local campuses.

More than 200 students from the Tiger Pride Forestry and Wildlife Sciences and Extension organizations volunteered this year.

“The students have been excited to participate and support this program,” said Cole.

Through the Touchdowns for Trees program, the WKM Awards recognizes the students who have demonstrated leadership and interest in forest resources and the environment. Students are awarded grants to pursue their own projects or to help innovative learning opportunities, such as those at the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. In 2018, students received $3,000 to spend on materials and equipment to support their initiatives.

The project was presented to the Auburn chapter of MANNRS for its core mission of increasing diversity opportunities for students in the forestry discipline and is aimed at advancing diversity opportunities that exist on campus.

“We are fortunate to have so many generous donors who are interested in supporting students on campus and helping them achieve their goals,” Cole said.

Innovative programs for students
The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences hosted its 2019 Scholarship and Fellowship Recognition Luncheon to honor benefactors and student awardees. More than 100 attendees, including donors, student recipients and administrators, were present at the event, which took place on the school’s conference hall.

Dearie Talgate, director of development, said, “It was an honor to share the news and meet with our scholarship donors, as we recognize their generosity and commitment to our students.”

The school honored student awardees from various programs, including the Five Star Preserve Annual Scholarship, George W. Jordan Endowed Scholarship, University Arborist and Campus Planner Scholarship, the Imogene Hodge Scholarship, and the Bodine Family Scholarship.

The annual Dean’s Tailgate Woodlands and Wildlife Conservation Leaders and Friends Scholarship and the Imogene Hodge Scholarship, both endowed by the late Imogene Hodge, were presented to recipients.

To support or learn more about the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, interested parties can contact Heather Crozier, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences director of development, at 334-844-2791 or via email at sfwsdev@auburn.edu.

To learn more about the Boone and Crockett Club professorship, interested parties can contact Dr. Janaki Alavalapati, Dean of the College of Agriculture, at 334-844-5608 or via email at vannhea@auburn.edu.

Alumni & Friends
More than $200k in scholarships and fellowships awarded for the academic year

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“By investing in education, we support tomorrow’s leaders,” said Alavalapati.

Investing in the future
Bodine makes first investment in Boone and Crockett Club professorship

An initial gift toward establishing a Boone and Crockett Club professorship in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences paves the way for new scholarship opportunities for students and future faculty.

Dean Janaki Alavalapati feels that Bodine’s investment will help Auburn remain in a leadership role in forestry education and research.

“Professorship, I didn’t think twice about providing my support. I believe in this school, in the faculty and in the students,” said Bodine.

Schoonen and other club leaders encouraged the school to pursue the prestigious professorship.

“Being a part of the Boone and Crockett Club for so many years now, I understand the importance of this organization to the forestry profession,” said Schoonen.

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Cullen Anderson, a recent graduate in wildlife ecology and management in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, has always enjoyed a special connection with the outdoors and hiking. It’s what led him to the field. Now a graduate student at Washington State University’s School of the Environment, Anderson said his primary interest is predator ecology. But a summer stint as a biology intern for Alaska’s Kenai National Wildlife Refuge opened his eyes to the potential impact he could have on his field, far beyond his chosen course of study. “My graduate project looks at congeneric carnivore competition using brown bears and black bears as model species,” Anderson said. “The base study is examining how brown bears influence the spatial distribution of black bears on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska, using an occupancy framework, but there’s potential to expand into estimating abundance and detection rates of hair snares.”

Since the data he used was collected in 2010, he spent his two months at the refuge, which covers two million acres of the Kenai Peninsula, getting to know the landscape to provide context for the data he already had. Here’s a personal account of how the experience affected him.

“I coved trees, sampled both above- and below-ground arthropods, assessed land cover classification, sprayed weeds and surveyed invasive species. The work itself was a great experience since it gave me a great overview of everything USFWS does on the refuge, and I built some solid skills. However, what benefited me the most were the people I worked for and witnessing climate change first-hand. My supervisor was brilliant, and he really helped me expand the scale of my thinking. Rather than focus just on refuge scale issues, he considered all of Alaska, North America and the world in his management philosophy. He looked decades and centuries into the future and made decisions that met current management objectives while taking into account what the refuge and world will likely look like in the future. A Ph.D. student I worked for on the refuge also taught me to look long term and think big picture. What solidified those lessons was being able to see climate change, a relatively long-term process compared to seasonal or annual cycles, in action. For example, the Kenai Peninsula had its first recorded lightning-caused grassland wildfire in recorded history. This is because there weren’t grasslands on the Kenai 40 years ago. Climate change is causing ecosystems to shift from forests to grasslands without direct human involvement now, which is an incredible process to see in person. The southeast U.S. has a lot of issues that affect land and wildlife management, from numerous invasive species to habitat fragmentation to the various land use practices — forestry, farming and urbanization to name a few — all of which can mask connections to processes like climate change. My Alaskan experience taught me to look back at all these issues on continental scales, seeing how one region is connected to others. It also taught me to think creatively, since the world in 50 years will look very different from what it looks like today, and I am now asking how management today can incorporate both the certainty of change and the uncertainty of what exactly that change will look like. I’d like my future research projects to decrease that uncertainty and inform management now and into the future on how best to conserve as many species and ecosystems as possible. My experience has benefited my education and future career by solidifying my interests and opening me up to issues for which I was previously unaware. A switch flipped in my head, and I know exactly what I want to contribute to the world, though I’m still unsure of how and where I’m going. I think my Master of Science will help answer those questions and give me the skills I need to pursue a meaningful career. I’m confident I’ll continue to find the right people to steer me in the direction I need to go.”

“A broadened perspective: recent graduate’s work in Alaska transforms his view of climate change

In the Spotlight

Cullen Anderson

Cullen Anderson spent the summer with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska as part of his graduate project research at Washington State University. Here he is shown taking a moment to explore the park with his camera.

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Cullen Anderson

Welcome new members!

Woodlands and Wildlife Society

Mrs. Louise Mann Baker
Mr. Chris Bodine
Mr. Daniel Crawford
Dr. Lenore Thomas Ealy
Firefighter Skills Institute
Dr. John Ireland
Mr. George Chandler Graham
Mrs. Nicole Holler
DNR & Deer Hunting
Jasper Lumber Company
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Moultrie
Norbord Alabama, Inc.
Osmose Utility Services, Inc.
Stallworth Leid Company
Mrs. Beth Termas Strakas
Team Ag Marketing
Ms. John T. Thomas
Toyota Motor Manufacturing
Well's Fargo Foundation

Compass Circle Young Alumni Giving Society

Ms. Marissa "Jo" Daniel
Ms. Leslie Grill
Mr. Will Liner
Mr. Brad Murfee
Ms. Joshua Thomas Smith
Mr. Daniel Brian Tekulve

Learn more about the Woodlands and Wildlife Society online at sfws.auburn.edu/woodlands-and-wildlife-society.

Learn more about Compass Circle online at sfws.auburn.edu/compass-circle.

“SHARE YOUR NEWS!”

SHARE YOUR NEWS!”

Submit your news for the Alumni Corner!

New job? Got married? Received an award? The SFWS News wants to know what you’ve been up to since graduation. Submit your personal and professional updates, photos and announcements to sfwsnews@auburn.edu to be included in an upcoming issue of the SFWS News.

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