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Upcoming Events
75th Anniversary “7 for 75” Speaker Series (April-June)
- Adam Howard ’97, Arbor Day Farm, 4/29
- Dr. Dana Breed, The Coca-Cola Company, 5/27
- Rhett Johnson, Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center, 6/24
Spring 2021 Commencements, May 1-3

SFWS NEWS - Fall 2020

Working with Nature for Society’s Well Being

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AUBURN UNIVERSITY
School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

In this issue, we celebrate 75 years of SFWS. Discover how our faculty and students are working with nature for society’s well-being.

Related Articles
- Restoration Ecology Graduate Certificate
- Forest Finance & Investment Graduate Certificate
- One Health Graduate Certificate
- Online Master of Natural Resources

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Visit our website to read past issues and access digital content related to stories you see here. When you see one of the icons below, you know more content is available online.

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A Message from the Dean

Greetings alumni and friends,

This year we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of forestry and wildlife sciences at Auburn University. As we do this, since 1946 when forestry began as a separate academic discipline, our school has experienced significant growth, not only in terms of the number of students, staff and faculty, but also in the diverse array of research initiatives that has established the school as a leader in terms of the number of students, staff and faculty and the diverse array of research initiatives that has established the school as a leader in the field of forestry and wildlife sciences.

During its 75-year history, the school has experienced substantial growth, not only in terms of the number of students, staff and faculty, but also in the diverse array of research initiatives that has established it as a leader in the field of forestry and wildlife sciences. In 1999, the school changed its name to the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. Since that time, the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences has experienced substantial growth, not only in terms of the number of students, staff and faculty, but also in the diverse array of research initiatives that has established it as a leader in the field of forestry and wildlife sciences.

To honor this important occasion, the school will recognize its anniversary celebrations and events, every year through 2022. In Spring 2022, the school will host several other guest speakers who will share their insights and experiences with our students and faculty.

For more information on how to participate in our anniversary celebrations and events, or to purchase a copy of the anniversary book, please visit the school’s website at sfws.auburn.edu.

Janaki R.R. Alavalapati, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

Auburn University, March 2021 through Spring 2022.

To learn more about the anniversary celebrations and events, every year through 2022, visit the school’s website at sfws.auburn.edu.

“During its 75-year history, the school has produced thousands of well qualified graduates, imparted science-based solutions to improve the quality of life of citizens and the environment and addressed our most complex natural resource challenges.”

Janaki R.R. Alavalapati
Dean and Professor of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

SFWS News – Fall 2020

Dean…

Janaki R.R. Alavalapati
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs… Scott Breden
Associate Dean of Research… Daowen Zhang
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Contact Us

The SFWS newsletter is distributed to alumni and friends of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. If you would like to be added to the SFWS newsletter, please contact the Office of Communications and Marketing at 334-844-2291.

Giving

Questions concerning the school’s development programs, including annual and corporate giving, planned gifts and estate planning, should be directed to Heather Cooper, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Building, 652 Campus Drive, Auburn, AL 36849, 334-844-1008, hcooper1@auburn.edu.

SFWS News

Auburn University is an equal opportunity educational institution/employer. Produced by the Auburn Office of Communications and Marketing. April 2021

Administration

SFWS to celebrate 75 years of forestry and wildlife sciences

The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences will celebrate the anniversary of 75 years of forestry and wildlife sciences at Auburn University, March 2021 through Spring 2022.

To honor this important occasion, the school will recognize its 75-year history of teaching, research and extension that has advanced the fields of forestry and wildlife sciences through a series of events to be held over the anniversary year.

In addition, the school has published a book titled “Tian’s 75 Years of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University,” a chronicle of Auburn’s forestry and wildlife programs. They are expected to be distributed to the present-day School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

Stewarding Alabama’s abundant natural resources

With this wealth of resources, Alabama is blessed to have a hardboa...
Auburn-led team studies land use, forest cover change to protect Gulf Coast water quality

Hurricane Michael in 2018 opened a trail of destruction through the Florida Panhandle and beyond, significantly altering forest cover in the region. In the wake of that catastrophic event, an Auburn University researcher has embarked on an extensive study of the effects of land use change to develop management tools that will help preserve and protect the area’s coastal water quality and aesthetics.

Chris Anderson, a professor of wetland ecology in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, is leading a team of colleagues from Auburn and 66 other researchers from the University of South Alabama and the University of Florida in a multi-year study of various wetlands along the Gulf of Mexico, ranging from Alabama to the Florida Panhandle.

The multidisciplinary team of ecologists, hydrologists and climate scientists is working with social scientists to understand how land decisions made by landholders and state and local government planners, developers and other stakeholders may contribute to working with social scientists to understand how land decisions made by landholders and state and local government planners, developers and other stakeholders may contribute to protecting Gulf Coast water quality and aesthetics.

The body of research, coined “The Downed Timber Initiative,” aims to develop new methods of retrieving these fallen trees and branches that would otherwise go to waste or burn in forest fires, and then develop innovative products from the salvaged wood.

The research is funded by a $16.5 million federal appropriation to the U.S. Forest Service, an agency of the USDA. These funds will be allocated to four Auburn research teams led by faculty members Jake Penrose, assistant professor of forest biometrics; Tom Gallagher, the Regents Professor of forest operations; Brian Via, the Regions Professor of forest products; and Tae Hyoung Feng, assistant professor of sustainable packaging systems. Each researcher will focus on packaging systems. Each researcher will focus on developing and testing new methods of extracting fallen timber and the potential for making commercially viable products from partially decayed wood.

The early years of a researcher’s career are a critical time, said Auburn Research Program Executive Director Laura Alexander-Augustine. “This program gives future excellence in the ecological sciences at the Ecological Sciences at the local scale, there has been a dearth of research on the benefits of wetlands at the national level, until now.”

Despite the importance of wetlands in watersheds, only a handful of watershed models consider wetlands in their computations,” Kalin said. “The overarching goal of this research is to create a model for improved representations of water quality processes in watershed-rich landscapes.”

If watershed models do not capture the wetland processes adequately, any ensuing modeling exercise to assess the effects and effectiveness of wetland conservation practices at the watershed scale will be limiting. Wetlands are low-hanging, regularly inundated ecosystems recognized for their significant ecological and economic value. Among other services, they provide water-quality purification, nutrient transformation, carbon sequestration, flood control, wildlife habitats and biodiversity at the ecosystem and watershed levels, Kalin noted.

Researchers significantly influence the quality and quantity of these water resources in numerous ways. Along with natural pollutants, anthropogenic pollutants — those originating in human activity — cause nonpoint source pollution, a

SFWS Pioneers
Gulf Coast Landscape Research

Auburn researchers aim to fuel new markets from hurricane-ravaged timber

A team of researchers from Auburn University’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences is exploring ways to give new life to damaged forests that have been decimated by hurricanes. The body of research, coined “The Downed Timber Initiative,” aims to develop new methods of retrieving these fallen trees and branches that would otherwise go to waste or burn in forest fires, and then develop innovative products from the salvaged wood.

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### Auburn researchers aim to fuel new markets from hurricane-ravaged timber

Auburn researchers aim to fuel new markets from hurricane-ravaged timber (Continued from page 4)

Auburn researchers’ innovative work on renewable resources — whether industrial or recreational — has the potential to create new markets and economic opportunities, said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

“Unleashing the full potential of our natural resources is critical to our economy’s sustainability and to getting the maximum return for the landowners,” said Alavalapati. “We are working to develop markets that will allow us to utilize the full value of hurricane-ravaged timber and create new markets that will enhance our economy.”

The researchers are developing new markets for products such as carbon capture, biofuels, and other value-added products.

### Dunning receives National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine fellowship to study effect of public policy on Gulf Coast ecosystems

Dunning receives National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine fellowship to study effect of public policy on Gulf Coast ecosystems (Continued from page 5)

In order to make informed decisions that affect the coastal ecosystem, we need to understand more about the connections between natural processes and human activities in the region,” said Dunning, project officer for the Gulf Research Program. “This grant opportunity encourages research that is actionable to help us conserve our valuable ecosystems, while also supporting people’s health and livelihood.”

The project is funded by the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, will develop a framework that includes all land use and land cover scenarios to predict future coastal ecosystem conditions.

### Auburn extends research on invasive wild pigs

### Auburn-led studies land use, forest cover change to protect Gulf Coast watersheds

Auburn-led studies land use, forest cover change to protect Gulf Coast watersheds (Continued from page 4)

other involved and interested in preserving the coastal water-quality region. “Through there are some coastal towns and cities within the designated coastal area, much of the watershed draining to the coast is rural and forested,” Anderson said. “This team aims to feed back related findings and socioeconomic factors may alter decisions made by landowners, which may ultimately reduce forest cover along the Gulf of Mexico.”

“Auburn researchers have identified a significant change in forest cover over the last century, which may ultimately reduce forest cover along the Gulf of Mexico.”

The project is being conducted as part of the Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, which includes researchers from Auburn, the USDA Forest Service, and other universities. The study aims to identify the factors that affect forest cover and to assess the impact of land use on forest cover.

### Auburn researchers study climate change's impact on tree seedlings

Auburn researchers study climate change’s impact on tree seedlings (Continued from page 5)

Auburn researchers are studying the impact of climate change on tree seedlings. The research is being conducted as part of the Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, which includes researchers from Auburn, the USDA Forest Service, and other universities.

The study aims to identify the factors that affect the growth and survival of tree seedlings and to assess the impact of climate change on tree seedlings.

### Auburn researchers study the role of weather in forest health

Auburn researchers study the role of weather in forest health (Continued from page 4)

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Auburn researchers study the impact of climate change on forest health (Continued from page 4)

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The study aims to identify the factors that affect forest health and to assess the impact of climate change on forest health.
Kinds project, by Auburn researchers, addresses previously unexplored questions about the impact of feral swine in Alabama. Feral swine, or wild pigs, cause more than $10 million a year in damage to agriculture in the state. The research focuses on measuring the reduction in damage caused by wild pigs on agricultural land. After Barbara’s death, her daughter Beth took over the business and continues to support Auburn University. After Barbara Stukes, Alavalapati said, “Charles Barkley is both a company and a person who has a great passion for education and giving back to the community.”}

“Drummond Company continues its historic support of graduate education in the SFWS”

The Drummond Company is the next big gift to Auburn University. View the full story here.

“Academics & Learning”

The Drummond Company is recognized for its recognition of graduate education and making significant contributions to the school.

“Extension & Outreach”

The Charles Barkley Foundation recently made several generous gifts to Auburn University, which will have a lasting impact on the University’s Extension and Outreach programs.

“Auburn researchers examine the impact of feral swine in Alabama to create strategies for population control, decrease in devastation”

Auburn researchers have examined the impact of feral swine in Alabama to create strategies for population control, decrease in devastation.
Comprised of a small group of key industry leaders, our family wanted to make a philanthropic gift to Auburn University. “Auburn Oaks contributions support the school’s endowment for excellence, which provides critical support for scholarships, faculty and student development and academic programs,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. This is the fourth Auburn Oak dedicated by Darryl and Diane Rosser. The Rosser family has repeatedly named a tree for their family and dedicated thousands of dollars toward the Auburn Oaks in honor of their parents, The Lewis and Nancie Robinson Family. Darryl Rosser first became engaged with the school upon meeting Dean Janaki Alavalapati. The family was inspired by the Auburn Oak dedication program.

“Auburn University is committed to making a difference in the lives of future leaders of the forestry and wildlife professions,” Rosser said. “The opportunity to give back to a qualified, select and diverse group of students creates a new leadership force for the natural resource profession,” he added.

Siewen’s role in the academy is to prepare students with leadership abilities and problem-solving skills for critical issues related to the management, utilization and stewardship of natural resources. During her time in the academy, students attend class lectures and interact with a variety of industry executives as well as local and national policy makers. The personal development program is complemented by a dual major in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

“Michael sets himself apart professionally by his work ethic, honesty and passion for his trade. Along with an outstanding professional career, Michael and his wife continuously give back to the Auburn community and beyond with their charitable work,” said Campus President Bee Siewen. “It was with great pleasure and no hesitation that we nominate Michael.”

“Their willingness to come through to provide funds is the model of an, the other alumni and faculty who have contributed to the school is very satisfying, especially through the FEWL Academy. The opportunity to give back to the school is very satisfying, especially through the FEWL Academy and its work to provide students with valuable leadership experience,” Siewen said.

The school’s long-term goal is to create an endowment to support this program. Individuals or corporations interested in contributing to the endowment may contact the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Office of Development at 256-348-1419 or email medrake@auburn.edu.

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JOCELYN WILSON, ’00

Jocelyn Wilson, a 2000 forestry graduate, is the North Carolina area manager of the North Carolina and Virginia Railroad, or NCVR Region of Weyerhaeuser Company, one of the largest sustainable forest products companies in the world. In this role, Wilson leads a team of foresters who manage 560,000 acres of timberland in eastern North Carolina. Over the course of her career, Wilson has practiced forest management in six southern states as well as worked in a seedling nursery and seed orchard. Wilson has been an active member of the Society of American Foresters since college. In addition to past board positions within parish forestry associations, Wilson is currently serving on the North Carolina Forestry Association’s Board of Directors. Wilson and her husband Clay have been married for 20 years. The couple and their three children, Jack, Stella and Harper currently live on the coast of North Carolina where the family enjoys kayaking, hiking and camping.

Alumna Spotlight with Jocelyn

Why did you choose to attend Auburn?

I had been living in Alabama for a few years when it was time to decide on a college and career path. I was open to almost any and every school. As I narrowed my selections and really started to choose forestry as my career path, I quickly realized what an amazing program Auburn offered in the field. When I visited the university, the small-town feel and beautiful campus sealed the deal for me.

What led you to choose your major?

I have always spent time outdoors and loved all science classes I was exposed to. After digging in and exploring potential disciplines and the career options, forestry was top of the list.

How did the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, or SFWS, prepare you for your career?

SFWS prepared me well to begin my career as a forester. The technical skills along with the fundamentals of forestry I learned during my time at Auburn set the foundation for a career with a great company.

Why is staying involved and in touch with SFWS valuable to you?

I really enjoy giving back to the university in any way I can and always enjoy interacting with students. Over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to speak to the Forestry Club and speak to a class a couple of times. Those were really rewarding moments for me.

What is your favorite memory from your time at SFWS?

As a ‘92 graduate I would have to say it was different back then. The school really was turning out the best “dirt foresters” in the country. The focus was growing and buying trees. I got an amazing job opportunity to work for Union Camp, one of the best paper companies in the Southeast. It was a young forester’s dream job, and I am really grateful to have started out there.

Why is staying involved and in touch with SFWS valuable to you?

I really value being able to share my experiences with the school, and helping faculty and students understand what TIMOs are looking for in a forestry graduate. You can do so much with a forestry degree from Auburn, and it’s rewarding to help students focus on what they might want to do when they graduate.

What is your favorite memory from your time at SFWS?

I am so proud to be an Auburn SFWS graduate. My favorite thing about being an Auburn forester is the extended family I have with my graduating class and every other Auburn forester I met along the way!

Do you have any advice for students entering the workforce right now?

I know the world looks different right now and that brings many challenges your way. Keep working hard, don’t be afraid to try something new and always continue to learn. The Auburn SFWS instills in its students. I have the Auburn Creed hanging next to my desk to remind me of the things I believe: That simple ‘War Eagle’ you get walking through the airport says it all.

Do you have any advice for students entering the workforce right now?

Network! Start talking to people in the industry today about all the possibilities out there for graduates. People in this industry are very open to sharing with you. Go ahead and connect via email, but don’t be afraid to pick up the phone or ask to grab a cup of coffee.

TROY HARRIS, ’92

Troy Harris, a 1992 forestry graduate, is the managing director for Timberland Funds at Jamestown L.P., a Timberland Investment Management Organization, or TIMO, that focuses on buying high quality timberland properties across the United States. Harris currently serves on the boards of many parish forestry associations, including the National Alliance of Forest Owners and the Operating Committee of the National Alliance of Forest Owners. Harris has over 25 years of experience in public and institutional timberland portfolio management and a proven record of accomplishment for timber acquisitions, operations, management and dispositions.

Alumna Spotlight with Troy

Why did you choose to attend Auburn?

I graduated from high school in Nashville, Tennessee. I did not want to go to the University of Tennessee, where everyone else was going. My neighbors both graduated from Auburn and took me to my first football game played against Florida on the weekend of Halloween. I really loved the campus and the Plains, and it felt like the right fit for me.

What led you to choose your major?

I went to Auburn thinking I wanted to be a doctor, but at class registration I thought about what would make me happy. I flipped through the degree program book and stumbled upon forestry. I was drawn to the degree, especially because it seemed to not rely heavily on math classes, but the joke was on me as everything in forestry is math disguised with non-math names. Also, growing up in Oregon and being an Eagle Scout, I was always outside, so an outdoor career appealed to me.

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I really value being able to share my experiences with the school, and helping faculty and students understand what TIMOs are looking for in a forestry graduate. You can do so much with a forestry degree from Auburn, and it’s rewarding to help students focus on what they might want to do when they graduate.

What is your favorite memory from your time at SFWS?

I am so proud to be an Auburn SFWS graduate. My favorite thing about being an Auburn forester is the extended family I have with my graduating class and every other Auburn forester I met along the way!

Do you have any advice for students entering the workforce right now?

I know the world looks different right now and that brings many challenges your way. Keep working hard, don’t be afraid to try something new and always continue to learn. The Auburn SFWS instills in its students. I have the Auburn Creed hanging next to my desk to remind me of the things I believe: That simple ‘War Eagle’ you get walking through the airport says it all.

Do you have any advice for students entering the workforce right now?

Network! Start talking to people in the industry today about all the possibilities out there for graduates. People in this industry are very open to sharing with you. Go ahead and connect via email, but don’t be afraid to pick up the phone or ask to grab a cup of coffee.