In This Issue
Administration ................................................................. 2-3
Academics & Learning .................................................... 3
Research & Discovery .......................................................... 4-6
Extension & Outreach .......................................................... 7-8
Alumni & Friends ............................................................... 9-12

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.auburn.edu/giving
Learn how you can support the SFWS.

sfws.auburn.edu/newsletter
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.

FEATURE SERIES
SFWS Pioneers Gulf Coast Landscape Research pg. 4

WHAT’S INSIDE
SFWS to celebrate 75 years pg. 2
Auburn researchers aim to fuel new markets pg. 6
Ditchkoff wins major award for book on invasive wild pig research pg. 7
Charles Barkley Foundation contributes major gifts pg. 9

Related Articles
Restoration Ecology Graduate Certificate
One Health Graduate Certificate
Online Master of Natural Resources
Online Graduate Programs. Advance your career from the convenience of home. Visit auburn.edu/sfws.

Working with Nature for Society’s Well Being

SFWS NEWS - Fall 2020
Greetings alumni and friends,

In this issue, you’ll learn how our faculty and students are preparing our forests and wildlife for the future, working with forest industry leaders to make informed decisions about natural resources management. There are also additional resources and opportunities available to you, such as an alumni Q & A with past and present deans. As always, we are grateful for your support of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. With a steadily increasing interest in natural resources and the environment, I am confident that the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences will continue to thrive and make a difference in the world.

During its 75-year history, the school has produced thousands of well qualified graduates, imparted science-based solutions to address the natural resources challenges of the time, and addressed our most complex natural resource challenges.

War Eagle!

Dean

Janaki R.R. Alavalapati, Ph.D.

Dean, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences
Auburn-led studies land use, forest cover change to protect Gulf Coast water quality

Hurricane Michael in 2018 spawned 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 determine management tools that will help preserve and protect the area’s coastal water quality and aesthetics.

Chis Anderson, a professor of wetland ecology in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, is leading a team of colleagues from Auburn as well as researchers from the University of South Alabama and the University of West Florida in a multidisciplinary study of several watersheds 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 stakeholders may contribute to changes in forest cover, water quality and, eventually, coastal environments.

The scale of the project, which focuses on watershed drainages to Wolf Bay along the Gulf of Mexico, ranging from Alabama to the Florida Panhandle, is leading a team members Anderson, lead researcher; Richard Hall; Wayde Graeme Lockaby, the Clinton-McClure Professor in Auburn’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and allocated to four Auburn research teams led by faculty members Lake Parsons, assistant professor of forest biomaterials; Tom Gallagher, the Regions Professor of forest operations; Brian Via, the Regions Professor of forest biomaterials; and Yucheng Lu, assistant professor of sustainable forest product and land use.

The body of research, coined “The Downed Timber Initiative,” aims to develop new methods of retrieving these fallen trees and bruishes that would otherwise go to waste or become fuel for wildfires, and then develop innovative products from the salvaged wood.

The research is funded by a $1.5 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 Lake Parsons, assistant professor of forest biomaterials; Tom Gallagher, the Regions Professor of forest operations; Brian Via, the Regions Professor of forest products; and Yucheng Lu, assistant professor of sustainable forest product and land use.

The primary goal of our project is to determine future land use trends and, by applying existing models, identify potential threats to future coastal water quality. The project will ultimately generate information that can be used by policy makers to protect and preserve these coastal areas.

The intent of the study, which began in September, is to produce an economic planning and analysis tool that will be developed in partnership with various state and local government planners, the forest and agriculture industry and stakeholders.

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 timber that has been devastated by hurricanes.

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

The research is funded by a $1.5 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 Lake Parsons, assistant professor of forest biomaterials; Tom Gallagher, the Regions Professor of forest operations; Brian Via, the Regions Professor of forest products; and Yucheng Lu, assistant professor of sustainable forest product and land use.

The primary goal of our project is to determine future land use trends and, by applying existing models, identify potential threats to future coastal water quality. The project will ultimately generate information that can be used by policy makers to protect and preserve these coastal areas.

The intent of the study, which began in September, is to produce an economic planning and analysis tool that will be developed in partnership with various state and local government planners, the forest and agriculture industry and stakeholders.

The research is funded by a $1.5 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 Lake Parsons, assistant professor of forest biomaterials; Tom Gallagher, the Regions Professor of forest operations; Brian Via, the Regions Professor of forest products; and Yucheng Lu, assistant professor of sustainable forest product and land use.

The primary goal of our project is to determine future land use trends and, by applying existing models, identify potential threats to future coastal water quality. The project will ultimately generate information that can be used by policy makers to protect and preserve these coastal areas.

The intent of the study, which began in September, is to produce an economic planning and analysis tool that will be developed in partnership with various state and local government planners, the forest and agriculture industry and stakeholders.
Auburn researchers aim to fuel new markets from hurricane-ravaged timber

Kalin and team receive grant for innovative research on impact of wild pig at watershed scale.

The testing grounds for this coupled research project, Upper Choptank River watersheds in the Chesapeake Bay area of Maryland, the Patuxent River and Magnolia River watersheds in coastal Alabama. The study area contains a mix of degraded and pristine wetlands, while the Alabama wetlands are dominated by freshwater wetlands.

Auburn-led team studies land use, forest cover change to protect Gulf Coast waters

The testing grounds for this coupled research project, Upper Choptank River watersheds in the Chesapeake Bay area of Maryland, the Patuxent River and Magnolia River watersheds in coastal Alabama. The study area contains a mix of degraded and pristine wetlands, while the Alabama wetlands are dominated by freshwater wetlands.

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

Growing up, she played in the inner- make decisions that ensure the U.S. Gulf Coast region remains resilient — and habitable — for future

Ditchkow's co-editors were Kurt VerCauteren, who leads research on invasive wild pigs at the National Wildlife Research Center; James Beasley, an associate professor at the University of Georgia researcher Puneet Dwivedi. A recent planting alert from Auburn University's Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, a regional multisector member organization, recently issued a management

Auburn University's Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, a regional multisector member organization, recently issued a management

A recent planting alert from Auburn University's Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, a regional multisector member organization, recently issued a management

A recent planting alert from Auburn University's Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, a regional multisector member organization, recently issued a management

Ditchkow's co-editors were Kurt VerCauteren, who leads research on invasive wild pigs at the National Wildlife Research Center; James Beasley, an associate professor at the University of Georgia researcher Puneet Dwivedi. A recent planting alert from Auburn University's Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, a regional multisector member organization, recently issued a management

A recent planting alert from Auburn University's Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, a regional multisector member organization, recently issued a management

A recent planting alert from Auburn University's Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, a regional multisector member organization, recently issued a management
Charles Barkley Foundation contributes major gifts to further diversity in graduate schools

The Charles Barkley Foundation recently made several generous gifts to Auburn University, including the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, to strengthen the university’s relationships with historically black colleges and universities, or HBCUs.

Barkley, the legendary NBA Hall of Fame who began his professional career as a star player on Auburn’s basketball team in the 1980s, created his namesake foundation to support causes close to his heart. A longtime supporter of alma mater, Barkley established the Auburn University gifts in the wake of series of generous donations to five southern HBCUs over the past five years.

Charles Barkley: "I just think what it’s costing these kids to go to college today is a travesty in this country, and I know historically black colleges are struggling." Barkley told CNN in 2020. "I want to do something to help them, and I’m going to continue to do that.

The Charles Barkley Foundation aims to build bridges between HBCUs and the major programs of large universities to attract students from HBCUs to pursue their graduate degrees at Auburn. With three funds, the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, or SFWS, has established the Charles Barkley Foundation Fellowship.

Dean Jermaine Alavalepati of the SFWS and the Barkley Foundation gift’s value goes beyond its dollar amount and represents a step toward sustaining diversity within the school, which is an ongoing effort. Last summer, Alavalepati established a diversity and inclusion coordination team of faculty, staff and students to promote a more inclusive culture within the school.

“Through the Charles Barkley Foundation-inspired Legend Charles Barkley recently made several generous gifts to Auburn University, including the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, to strengthen the university’s relationships with historically black colleges and universities, or HBCUs.” - Charles Barkley

Academics & Learning

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

The Drummond Company’s recent gift to Auburn University included generous support of graduate education in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

Since the early 1990s, Drummond has become one of the graduate program’s top corporate partners, investing funds specifically toward graduate education. A vital part of the school, said Jermaine Alavalepati, dean of the school.

“The Drummond Company’s continuous investment in our graduate program has significantly assisted us in recruiting top-notch graduate students into our program.” - Jermaine Alavalepati

The majority of Drummond’s reforested property is used for timber production; its gift to the SFWS allowed the school to build and expand those programs.

“This group’s mission is to support the SFWS enroute from studies toward the vision of environmental responsibility. This latest gift to Auburn is both a company commitment and a commitment to our students’ future.” - Jermaine Alavalepati

In addition, online technical training courses, equipment rentals, seminars and a full slate of three-day educational programs conducted through the university’s Extension & Outreach Division are being developed to address the program’s educational and awareness needs.

Deidre Alavalepati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, said the project will have a significant impact on the state’s ability to confront the challenges these animals have long posed.

“This project will have a significant impact on the state’s ability to confront the challenges these animals have long posed.” - Deidre Alavalepati

Drummond is known for its community development efforts in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

Diagnosing and addressing the impact of feral swine in Alabama to create strategies for population control, decrease in devastation

Kinds project — led by Auburn University researchers — addresses previously unexplored questions about the ever-increasing number and distribution of feral swine — both native and domestic — that 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 feral swine and the impact of habitat management and food deprivation techniques on preventing damage.

Auburn University graduate student Elizabeth Boyle studies a water sample that will be analyzed and used to measure the reduction in damage caused by feral swine.

“This research will yield previously unknown data regarding the state’s feral pig population, which will lead to crucial new strategies to control their numbers and reduce the substantial damage they have created for landowners.” - Deidre Alavalepati
Rosser continues to champion school through his philanthropy and leadership

The Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences recently hosted a dedication ceremony of the lot of the remaining Auburn Oaks at Samford Park. Darryl and Diane Rosser honored their daughter, Christina, non-in- law, Blake, and granddaughter, Betsie, with the dedication of the Oak.

In 1991, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Professor Scott Enklow began a program to acquire the Auburn Oak legacy. Under his leadership, Forestry Club and Wildlife Society members cultivated access from the original Auburn Oaks.

Today, 10 of these descendant oaks sit at the walkway at Samford Park. Now standing between 15 and 20 ft tall, all 10 of the trees planted have been named with an enthusiastic plaque in recognition of friends and alumni who have made a philanthropic gift to Auburn.

“Auburn Oak 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’s had previously named a tree for their family and dedicated two others in honor of their parents, the DeLoe and Great Rose family and the Lewis and Margaret Fowle family.

Darryl Rosser first became engaged with the school upon meeting Dean Janaki Alavalapati. The two then inspired the first Auburn Oak dedications.

“Upon hearing the fresh and exciting vision of Dr. Alavalapati for the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, our family wanted to honor the legacy of our parents, while giving it forward in a small way to assist Auburn to advance the vision through the students and staff,” said Darryl Rosser.

Since that time, Rosser has become directly involved with the school through his role as a member of the School’s Strategic and Tactical Advancement ReSource or STA Team.

Comprised of a small group of key industry leaders, the STA team helps drive strategic initiatives to advance the school’s academic, research and outreach outreach platforms and raise its profile in the Southeast and beyond. The team also helps formulate and undertake necessary tactical steps to make those strategic initiatives.

Rosser, who is currently executive-chair of Global Integrated Housing Solutions in Birmingham, Alabama, was drawn to support and advise the school in its efforts to realize the viability of its programs through strategic marketing and communications initiatives.

“I am happy to be working with Janaki on the STA committee, and specifically on the goal of elevating the school’s ranking to be a Top 5 institution in the field,” Rosser said. Recognizing the importance of social media and the negative impact of the pandemic to international student enrollment, the Rosser most recently provided financial support for the school to launch a nationwide social media campaign to promote its online programs and increase enrollment.

“As a business leader, Darryl was very opportunity for the school to overcome the challenges face due to the pandemic by leveraging the power of social media,” Alavalapati said. “We are grateful for his leadership and generous support of this campaign which will enable the school to better compete in the virtual market place.”

Alumni & Friends

Heatherly nominated for Auburn Alumni Association Young Achievement Award

Michael Heatherly ’88 has been nominated for the 2021 Young Alumni Achievement Award to be presented by the Auburn Alumni Association. Heatherly serves as chairman of the Tallahassee, Florida-based land management firm, Sunshine & Savior, an Alabama-based land management firm. Compass Circle members have been nominated for his Compass Circle performance.

Michael Heatherly’s work professionally involves his work ethic, honesty and passion for his trade. Along with an outstanding professional career, Michael and his wife continually give back to the Auburn community and beyond with their charitable work,” said Compass Circle President Ben Sweeten.

“Heatherly was very pleased to learn about the Compass Circle membership and the flexible ways to join, please visit auburn.edu/compass-circle.”

Sweeter offers knowledge and support to school’s forests, environment, and wildlife leadership Academy

Written by Al Stevenson

Auburn University alumnus Ed Sweeten recently gave a talk to students and faculty on assorted topics including the importance of leadership in forestry, wildlife and natural resource professions.

Auburn University-advancing Ed Sweeten recently gave a talk to students and faculty on assorted topics including the importance of leadership in forestry, wildlife and natural resource professions.

“Auburn University’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences’ extraordinaire, Ed Sweeten has led a notable career in the forestry industry with over 30 years of diversified forestry and real estate experience and is a considerable leading authority on timberland acquisitions and real estate sales in the southeast United States.

Sweeten is also a generous donor to the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, sponsoring the Forestry, Environment, WILDLIFE, and LEADERSHIP, or FEWL, Academy since 2019.

Sweeten takes an opportunity to mentor students at the school with leadership skills that will help to advance their careers after graduation. “Recent Auburn forestry graduates have an excellent reputation as top-quality field foresters. With our rapidly changing industry, it’s important that the future leaders of forestry have the skills that allow graduates to adapt and thrive. When Dean Alavalapati presented the opportunity to support the new FEWL academy, I agreed, knowing the academy would further prepare SWS graduates for successful careers,” Sweeten said.

The purpose of the academy is to prepare students with leadership abilities and problem-solving skills for extramural professions related to the management, utilization and stewardship of natural resources.

During the two-semester course, students attend classroom lectures and interact with a range of industry executives as well as local and state policy makers. The personal development program is co-conducted by Auburn’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Janaki Alavalapati, associate professor and Alabama Extension Specialist Adam Waggard, and is both of them about what the future of the FEWL Academy is as an established and competitive education program continues.

“The future of the FEWL Academy is bright as an established and competitive education program continues to create opportunities through experiential learning for its students,” Sweeten said.

“SFS exceeds annual philanthropic goal amid COVID-19 disruptions

The Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences (SFS) has surpassed its philanthropic goal for fiscal year 2021-2022, with more than $1.1 million in unrestricted gifts. Compass Circle members named the recent $1 million donation to the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences’ FFEWL Academy recently given to Michael Heatherly, who is currently the executive chairman of his Compass Circle performance.

Michael Heatherly’s work professionally involves his work ethic, honesty and passion for his trade. Along with an outstanding professional career, Michael and his wife continually give back to the Auburn community and beyond with their charitable work,” said Compass Circle President Ben Sweeten.

“Upon hearing the fresh and exciting vision of Dr. Alavalapati for the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, our family wanted to honor the legacy of our parents, while giving it forward in a small way to assist Dr. Alavalapati to advance this vision through the students and staff,” said Darryl Rosser.

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 334-844-2761 or email alavalapati@auburn.edu.

“Notes from Alumni

Thank you, SWS faculty and staff!

On behalf of our alumni, we would like to cordially thank our dedicated faculty and staff who continuously go above and beyond to create a unique environment that allows for students to grow and to contribute to our student’s educational experience.

Thank you very much!

Frank L. Walburn ’79

Frank L. Walburn ’79

Nominations can be sent to SFWSdev@auburn.edu or submitted through the SWS Alumni Association.

The selection criteria are

1. A graduate of Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

2. Demonstrate outstanding contributions within his/her degree field, college, Auburn, state or world

3. Demonstrate exemplary character, integrity and community contributions

4. Any SWS graduates, regardless of career, creed, religion, gender or geographic location may be considered.

The 2021 Young Alumni Achievement Award nomination period ends January 2, 2022.
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.

Alumnus 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.

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

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 have found that if you ask yourself, ‘Would I spend my own money on doing this?’ you usually make good decisions.

What is your favorite thing about being an SFWS alum? The Auburn Family! I am so proud of our school and the character that 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.