

School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences

CELEBRATING
75 YEARS



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SFWS NEWS • Fall 2020

Working with Nature for Society's Well Being

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• Dr. Dana Breed, The Coca-Cola Company, [5/27](#)
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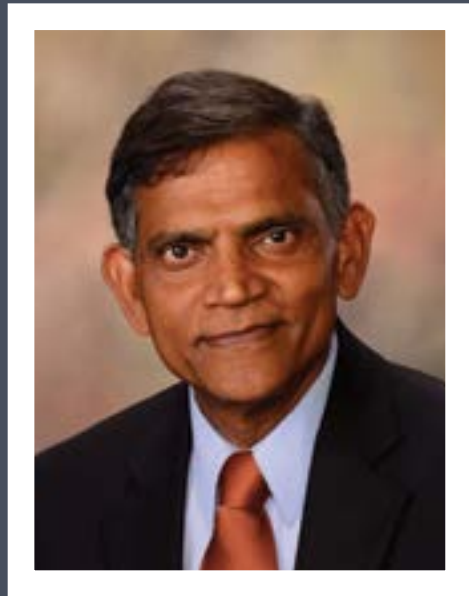
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SCHOOL OF FORESTRY
AND WILDLIFE SCIENCES

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A Message from the Dean

Greetings alumni and friends,

This year we are proud to honor the milestone anniversary of 75 years of forestry and wildlife sciences at Auburn University. As you'll discover, since 1946 when forestry first became a stand-alone program in, what was then known as, the School of Agriculture, our school has advanced its teaching, research and extension missions to become a top forestry, wildlife and natural resource institution in the state, region and beyond.

Since Auburn's forestry and wildlife programs joined to become the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences in 1999, the school has experienced significant growth in its enrollment, faculty and programs. With forestry and wildlife sciences at its core, the school's combined assets of faculty, facilities and curriculum are preparing the next generation of leaders with the knowledge and ability to conserve and manage our natural systems for a sustainable future.

In this issue, you'll learn how our faculty and students are impacting the region through land-use studies that will guide the future of coastal management policy, developing new methods for extracting and using downed timber, deploying multi-agency wildlife management strategies to help landowners control and mitigate the impacts of invasive species such as feral swine, and issuing management alerts that allow forest industry leaders to make informed decisions that will improve their bottom line.

You'll also discover how the generous support of the school's alumni and friends during this challenging time have not only allowed the school to overcome obstacles – they have been the driving force for the school to diversify and expand its programs – and exceed its annual philanthropic goals.

During the upcoming year, we invite you to join us in celebrating these achievements and our historic legacy that continues through the school's cutting-edge research, next-generation academic programs and science-based solutions to address the natural resource challenges of tomorrow.

War Eagle!



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

Administration

SFWS to celebrate 75 years of forestry and wildlife sciences

The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences will celebrate the milestone 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 virtual and in-person events to be held throughout the anniversary year.

In addition, the school has published historian Arthur L. Slotkin's, "75 Years of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University," a chronicle of Auburn's forestry and wildlife programs as they evolved to become the present-day School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

Stewarding Alabama's abundant natural resources

With vast forest resources stretching from the diverse hardwood forests in the north, to fire-driven longleaf pine savannahs in the south, Alabama has always had a rich history of forestry and forest management dating back to the 1800s.

In response to the growing demand for trained professionals to manage forests and timber operations, the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama, now Auburn University, began teaching courses in forestry as early as 1896.

However, it wasn't until 1946 that the School of Agriculture recognized forestry as a standalone program in the Department of Horticulture and Forestry, and soon thereafter as the Department of Forestry in 1947.

With a greater need for a science-based foundation in forest management, the Department of Forestry continued to evolve over the next three decades to become the School of Forestry in 1984.

In 1999, the school changed again by adding several wildlife faculty from the Department of Zoology and Wildlife Sciences and in that same year became what is now the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. With a steadily increasing number of faculty and students, groundbreaking for the state-of-the-art Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Building happened in 2002 and was completed in 2005.

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 new majors it has established to address the emerging needs of industry and government.

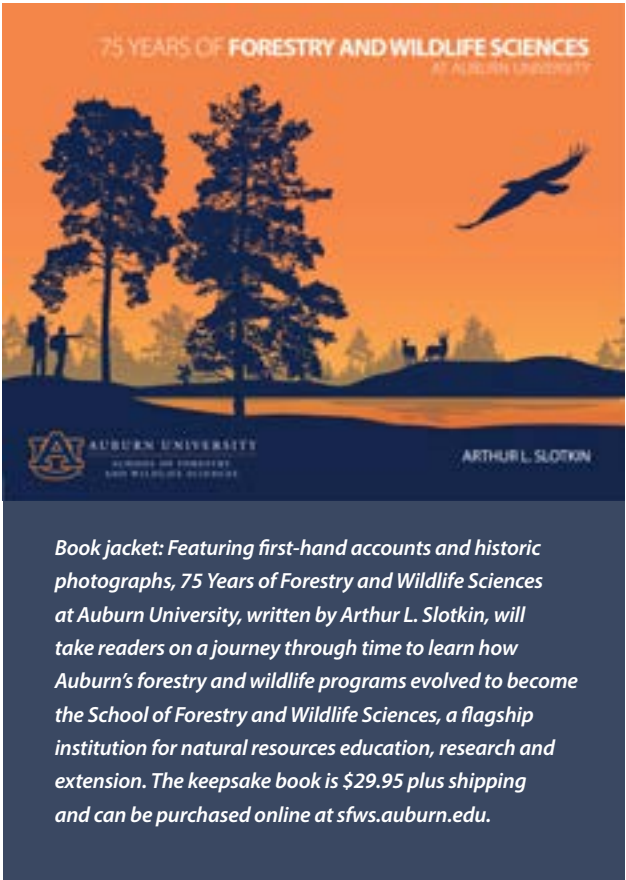
"During its 75-year history, the school has produced thousands of well qualified graduates, imparted science-based solutions to improve the quality of life of citizens and the environment and addressed our most complex natural resource challenges," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

"Our faculty and alumni have many reasons to be proud of this impactful legacy, that extends well beyond the borders of our state and region."

Celebrating innovation and achievement

Anniversary celebrations planned through Spring 2022 will include the virtual "7 for 75" speaker series and other on-campus social events as safety guidelines allow.

"Throughout the anniversary year, notable alumni and stakeholders, representing the school's diverse programs,



"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."

- Dean Janaki Alavalapati

will give talks to cover a wide range of topics from land management to current and future technology, to stakeholder engagement," said Becky Barlow, professor and co-chair of the school's anniversary planning committee.

Auburn alumna Lisa Hendy, chief ranger of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and SFWS alumnus Adam Howard '97, director of Arbor Day Farm, are just two of the distinguished alumni who will be giving talks as part of the "7 for 75" speaker series.

The school will also host several other guest speakers who will offer first-hand historical accounts about the school, such as an alumni Q & A with past and present deans. As part of the dean's online forum, the school will host virtual alumni socials where participants can gather to reconnect and reminisce about their time at Auburn.

"Regularly scheduled events will be included in the celebrations, such as the school's student awards celebration, graduate research symposium and alumni homecoming barbeque," said Mark Smith, professor and committee co-chair.

The anniversary year will conclude with a signature gala in the spring of 2022 at the Gogue Performing Arts Center in

Auburn and feature a distinguished keynote speaker. Guests will also enjoy dinner, musical entertainment, a complimentary book signing with Arthur Slotkin and a short documentary of the 75-year history of forestry and wildlife sciences at Auburn University.

Planning the year-long celebration has been a considerable effort, according to Dean Alavalapati. "We are eternally grateful to the committee members who are giving their time to help create a memorable year for the faculty, students and alumni," Alavalapati said.

In addition to co-chairs Barlow and Smith, other members of the anniversary planning committee include, Glenn Glover, faculty emeriti, William Green, director of Alabama Treasure Forest Landowners Association, and Frank Walburn, Senior Vice President, Regions Bank Natural Resources and Real Estate Division, as well as staff members, Jamie Anderson, Heather Crozier, Paula Davis and Sue Robinson.

Sharing memories of Auburn

The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences launched the 75th Anniversary Celebration website on March 1 for alumni and other visitors to enjoy learning about the evolution of Auburn's forestry and wildlife sciences programs. The website includes an interactive milestone timeline and photo gallery showcasing the school's history and achievements.

Through this platform, alumni and friends are invited to share memories of their college experience by submitting personal stories, photos and video or other memorabilia. The alumni submissions will be added to the online alumni memory gallery and shared through social media during the anniversary celebration year.

To learn more about the anniversary celebrations and events, or to purchase a copy of 75 Years of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University, visit sfws.auburn.edu.



Harry Murphy Awards recognize outstanding faculty and staff

For more than 30 years, Harry Murphy's broad and generous support of Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences has created unique opportunities for students and faculty. In particular, the Harry Murphy Dean's Enhancement Fund for Excellence created through his estate has provided valuable ongoing support for our land-grant mission of instruction, research and extension.

Mr. Murphy's gifts to SFWS also award and recognize other faculty and staff members who ensure we achieve our vision to produce knowledgeable, highly trained graduates dedicated to the management and conservation of renewable natural resources not only of our state, but also the world.

The recipients of the 2020 Harry Murphy Awards were:

Award for Excellence in Research
Daowei Zhang, Alumni and George W. Peake Professor and associate dean of research

Extension & Outreach Award
Adam Maggard, extension specialist and assistant professor

Award for Excellence in Advising
Jodie Kenney, director of student services

Outstanding Staff Member
Kelly Knowles, outreach administrator III

Other notable faculty and staff awards include:

Harold E. Christen Award for Teaching awarded to **Tom Gallagher**, Regions Professor in forest operations, utilization, management and economics

Auburn University Graduate School Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award presented to **Stephen Ditchkoff**, William R. and Fay Ireland Distinguished Professor

Academics & Learning



Lepczyk awarded the Gerald and Emily Leischuck Endowed Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching

Selected for his innovative instruction, mentorship and advising of students in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Chris Lepczyk, professor of wildlife biology and conservation, is known for inspiring his students to have a profound appreciation and understanding of wildlife biology and conservation. By cultivating learning opportunities that demand critical thinking, Lepczyk empowers students' intellectual growth and enables them to comprehend the value of their work and contributions to their professional

fields. His commitment to academic research excellence has enabled him to creatively blend lectures with thoughtful discussions and hands-on learning experiences. Students in his courses develop a profound understanding of scholarly advancements across the fields of forestry, wildlife and ecology. Through his commitment to supporting students as they pursue scholarly endeavors after leaving Auburn, many have transitioned to prestigious masters and doctoral programs.



Kalin awarded an Alumni Professorship

Latif Kalin, professor of hydrology in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, has been awarded an Alumni Professorship by the Auburn Alumni Association. The program is designed to reward faculty members who have been recognized by their peers and colleagues as making outstanding and exceptional contributions to the university's academic programs. Kalin has been an Auburn University faculty member since 2006 and teaches courses on watershed hydrology, watershed management and nonpoint source pollution modeling. Kalin's research, in general, focuses on water quality/quantity modeling at various spatial and temporal scales with special interest in nutrient cycling in natural and constructed wetlands

and urbanization and climate change/variability impacts on water quality/quantity. In addition to his research and student advisement, he has served on the editorial board of several prestigious journals and technical committees. Kalin has received the U.S. EPA Scientific and Technological Achievement Award in 2009, 2012 and 2015, and the "Journal of Hydrologic Engineering" Best Reviewer Award in 2010 and 2011, and Best Associate Editor Award in 2020. He is also the recipient of the 2015 Environmental and Water Resources Institute, or EWRI, Outstanding Achievement Award and became an EWRI Fellow in 2017. Kalin was the recipient of the school's Harry Murphy Research Award in 2018.



Tian reappointed as the Solon and Martha Dixon Endowed Professor

Alumni Professor Hanqin Tian has been reappointed as the Solon and Martha Dixon Endowed Professor. Tian was chosen for the professorship due to his strong commitment to students and the provision of high-quality instruction, research and service. As the director of the International Center for Climate and Global Change Research in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Tian's scholarly work focuses on coupled human-earth system dynamics and bridging natural science, economics and social science inquiry with researchers across the globe to identify solutions to many of the world's most pressing environmental challenges. Tian's groundbreaking

research findings have been featured in over 300 publications, including six in the journals "Science" and "Nature." Tian was also named an Andrew Carnegie Fellow in 2019 and has co-ed an international consortium of scientists from 48 research institutions in 14 countries under the umbrella of the Global Carbon Project and the International Nitrogen Initiative.

School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences

SFWS NEWS • Fall 2020

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The SFWS newsletter is distributed to alumni and friends of the school. Inquiries and suggestions concerning the newsletter should be directed to the school's Office of Communications and Marketing at the address below.

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Giving

Questions concerning the school's development program, including annual and corporate giving, planned gifts and estate planning should be directed to Heather Crozier, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Building, 602 Duncan Drive, Auburn, AL 36849. Inquiries may also be made by email to vannhea@auburn.edu or by phone at 334-844-2791.

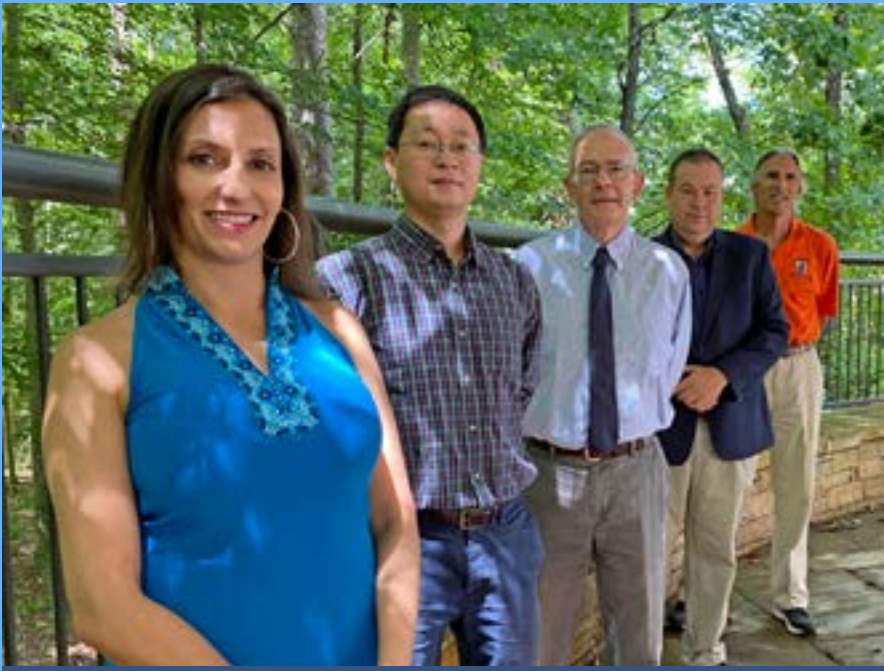


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SFWS Pioneers Gulf Coast Landscape Research



NASEM Project Team: A multi-institution research team, led by Auburn Professor Chris Anderson, is undertaking a study to understand how land decisions made by landholders and stakeholders may contribute to changes in forest land use and, eventually, to coastal water quality within the Gulf of Mexico. Shown, from left, are Auburn School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences team members Anderson, lead researcher; Richard Hall; Wayne Morse; and Latif Kalin. Not shown are Kelly Dunning and Sanjiv Kumar.



Downed Timber Research Team: A federal appropriation to the U.S. Forest Service to develop new methods of retrieving and utilizing downed timber from hurricanes will be coordinated by Graeme Lockaby, third from left, the Clinton-McClure Professor in Auburn's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and allocated to four Auburn research teams led by faculty members, from left to right: Sole Peresin, assistant professor of forest biomaterials; Yucheng Peng, assistant professor of sustainable packaging systems; Brian Via, the Regions Professor of forest products; and Tom Gallagher, the Regions Professor of forest operations.

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

Hurricane Michael in 2018 spread a trail of destruction throughout 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 as well as researchers from the University of South Alabama and the University of Georgia in a multiyear 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

(Continues on page 6)

and Perdido Bay in Alabama to St. Andrews Bay in Florida, is extensive.

"We targeted this region because it's an area that is undergoing substantial change for various reasons," Anderson said. "We are looking at drainages that include much of the coastal counties of Alabama and west Florida where large-scale land use changes are occurring, and recent events have reduced forest cover in the region further."

"All of this can eventually affect the coastal water quality in an area that is known for its clean, beautiful beaches and healthy bays," he said. "Forested lands are known to support good water quality. 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 to plan, protect and preserve these coastal gems."

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

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 downed timber that has 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 become fuel for wildfires, and then develop innovative products from the salvaged wood.

The research is funded by a \$1.05 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 Sole Peresin, assistant professor of forest biomaterials; Tom Gallagher, the Regions Professor of forest operations; Brian Via, the Regions Professor of forest products; and Yucheng Peng, assistant professor of sustainable packaging systems. Each researcher will work with a forest service representative.

Graeme Lockaby, the Clinton-McClure Professor in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, said the idea began as he spoke to landowners who were facing the

ravages of Hurricane Michael, a Category 5 tropical cyclone that made landfall Oct. 10, 2018, and obliterated hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of timber in the Southeast.

Landowners had just 30 days to extract downed timber because the region's hot, wet climate leads to rapid decomposition. Lack of access to the wood for extraction exacerbated the dilemma. In addition, the immense volume of flattened timber in hurricane-impacted areas quickly saturates the market, resulting in dropping and often disappearing wood prices as mill quotas overflow.

When landowners asked for solutions, Lockaby had to tell them: "At this point, there's not very much you can do." That led to discussions with a group of faculty who envisioned developing a harvesting machine component capable of extracting fallen timber and the potential for making commercially valuable products from partially decayed wood.

Lockaby and the faculty then met with representatives from the office of Brian Keeter, the university's then-executive director of public affairs, who responded positively. Lockaby said research often

(Continues on page 6)



Kelly Dunning, an assistant professor in Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, has received a 2020 Early Career Research Fellowship from the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. She will study how public policy impacts local ecosystems, red snapper management and the Everglades restoration program.

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

Kelly Dunning, an assistant professor in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University, is one of 20 scientists nationwide to receive a 2020 Early Career Research Fellowship from the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine.

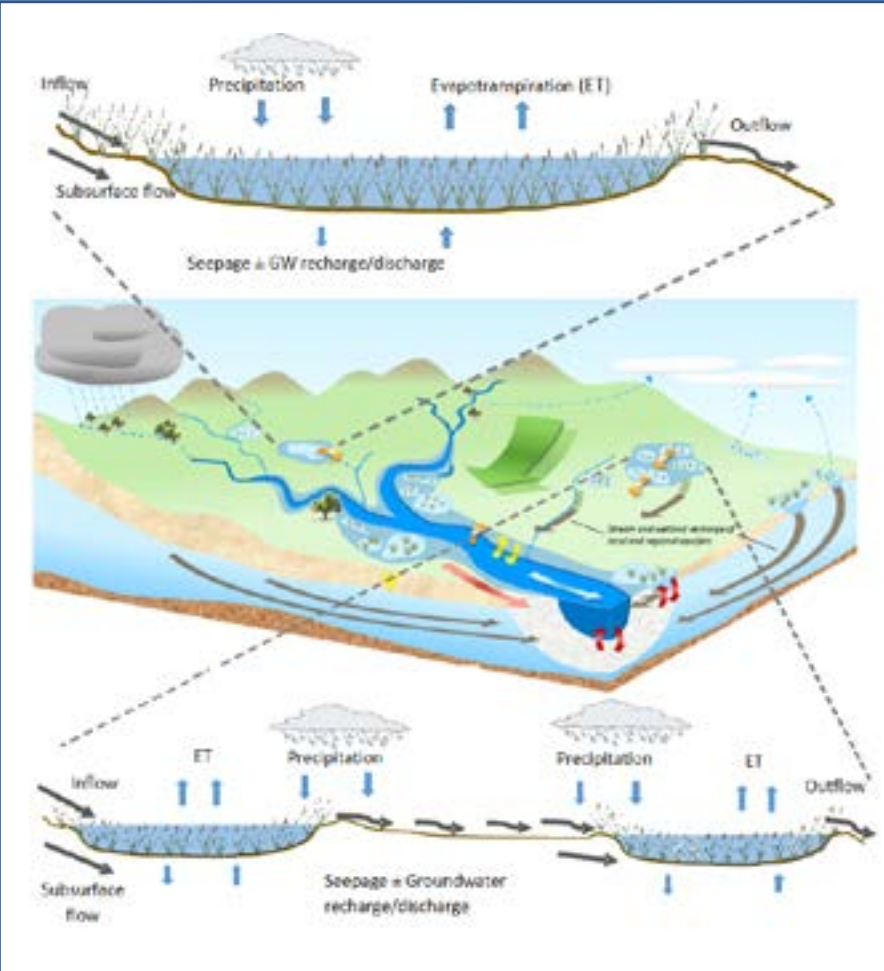
Each fellow has received a financial award of \$76,000 in addition to mentoring support and a built-in community of colleagues who share an interest in the well-being of Gulf Coast communities and ecosystems, the National Academies stated.

"The early years of a researcher's career are a critical time," said Gulf Research Program Executive Director Lauren Alexander Augustine. "This program gives fellows the independence and flexibility to explore untested ideas and develop lasting collaborations. The 2020 class of fellows is a distinguished group of individuals who have demonstrated superior scholarship, exceptional scientific and technical skills and the ability to work across disciplines."

(Continues on page 6)

Fellowship awardees, all tenure-track faculty members at colleges, universities and research institutions, were selected for their preparation to work at the intersections of environmental health, community healing and resilience and offshore energy system safety in the Gulf of Mexico and other U.S. coastal regions.

This fellowship offers Dunning a unique opportunity: It is not attached to a specific project, so she and other recipients are free to use the financial support to pursue non-traditional research that they otherwise might not be able to conduct. Dunning is clear on the research she will pursue. "I am recruiting a master's student to help me study the ongoing Everglades restoration work that is near and dear to my heart, as I grew up watching alligators swim around the Glades," she said. "I will also study the policy of allowing states to manage red snapper populations in Gulf states. I am interested in how public policy impacts local ecosystems, and red snapper and the Everglades are two fantastic cases of this topic."



Auburn University researchers will fully couple a widely used watershed model, the Soil and Water Assessment Tool, or SWAT+, with the wetland nutrient cycling model, or WetQual, to improve understanding of the nitrogen, phosphorous and carbon cycles in agricultural watersheds that have a significant wetland presence. The project illustration depicts the hydrologic flow paths that connect watershed components spatially.

Kalin and team receive grant for innovative study on impact of wetlands at watershed scale

Latif Kalin, a professor and hydrologist in Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, is the program director of an innovative environmental study that has received a \$499,968 grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, or NIFA.

The research, "Coupling SWAT and Wetqual for Improved N, P, and C Processing in Wetland Dominated Agricultural Watersheds," aims to provide a major perspective shift on the ecological services that wetlands provide at the watershed scale, including their substantial impact on the processing of nitrogen, phosphorous and carbon.

This project will change the ways crucial research is done in areas such as climate change and variability, land use and cover change and water quality and quantity.

Kalin and his fellow researchers emphasize that while an abundance of studies have demonstrated the ways that wetlands provide numerous ecological services at the local scale, there has been a dearth of research on the benefit of wetlands at the watershed scale, until now.

(Continues on page 6)

"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 wetland-rich watersheds.

"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-lying, regularly inundated ecosystems recognized for their significant ecologic and economic value. Among other services, they provide water quality purification, material transformation, carbon sequestration, flood control, wildlife habitats and biodiversity at the ecosystem and watershed levels, Kalin noted.

Humans 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

Wolf Bay and Gulf Coast at Gulf Shores, Alabama
Photo Credit: Gulf Coast Aerials

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

(Continued from page 4)

others involved and interested in preserving the coastal water quality of the region.

“Though there are some coastal towns and cities within the designated study area, much of the watershed draining to the coast is rural and forested,” Anderson said. “This team aims to find out how climate and various socioeconomic factors may alter decisions made by landowners, which may ultimately reduce forest cover along the Gulf of Mexico.”

“Using regional watersheds along the northern Gulf of Mexico, we hope to understand the extent of future forest loss and how it may alter drainage patterns and water quality to important ecosystems along the coast,” Anderson said.

The project, funded by the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, will develop a framework that includes 30-year land use and land cover scenarios to predict future coastal ecosystem conditions.

“In order to make informed decisions that ensure the U.S. Gulf Coast region remains resilient — and habitable — for future

generations, we need to understand much better the connections between natural processes and human activities in the region,” said Laura Windecker, program officer for the Gulf Research Program. “This grant opportunity encourages research that is actionable to help conserve our valuable ecosystems, while also protecting people’s health and livelihood.”

Anderson is joined in this project by fellow Auburn researchers Kelly Dunning, Latif Kalin, Wayde Morse, Richard Hall and Sanjiv Kumar, University of South Alabama researcher John Lehrter and University of Georgia researcher Puneet Dwivedi.

Auburn School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Dean Janaki Alavalapati said this forward-looking research is vital to the preservation of coastal regions.

“Dr. Anderson and his team are doing work that will yield information that is critical to securing and sustaining these vulnerable areas and the water quality they provide,” Alavalapati said.

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

(Continued from page 5)

Growing up, she played in the man-made drainage canals that are part of the Everglades’ system restoration, “literally catching turtles and small fish by hand for hours every day,” Dunning said.

“What’s happening in the Glades restoration occurs at the intersection of human intervention, decision-making and environmental health and is representative of problems and solutions that matter to the entire Gulf,” she said.

That deep devotion to the Everglades dovetailed with her passion for saltwater angling — redfish nearshore and red snapper offshore — and hunting waterfowl in the Gulf’s marshes. “These activities bring people together and unite really diverse groups of people to support state-level management and conservation,” Dunning said. “My research on fishing and Everglades restoration bears a direct relationship to who I have always been, and it is an honor to receive this award.”

Dunning thanked her mentors on this project: Graeme Lockaby, former associate dean of research and the Clinton-McClure Professor in the in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and Jace Tunnell, director of the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve. “Without their help, I would not have received this award,” Dunning said. “They will

help me ensure my fellowship will improve social and ecosystem well-being in the Gulf.”

Lockaby said he and the rest of the school are pleased that Dunning received the fellowship and encouraged that her work will bring about important change. “Dr. Dunning’s research centers on very critical issues: The socio-economy of coastal communities faced with rising unemployment, threatened resource bases and increasing frequency of occurrence of natural disasters,” Lockaby said. “Specifically, she will clarify the underlying factors driving this socioeconomic tangle and work with local citizenry to develop approaches for resolving some of the key problems inherent to those communities. Dr. Dunning’s use of the Gulf Coast as an outdoor laboratory is highly innovative and enables her to assemble very creative teams who understand every facet of coastal socioeconomics,” he said.

School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Dean Janaki Alavalapati said this recognition shines a light on the noteworthy contributions of faculty members, such as Dunning, who are quickly gaining momentum in their research efforts. “This well-deserved fellowship presents a unique opportunity for Dr. Dunning to research a previously unexplored combination of scientific areas, which could lead to truly meaningful change,” Alavalapati said.

Kalin and team receive grant for innovative study on impact of wetlands at watershed scale

(Continued from page 5)

type of pollution that comes from many diffuse sources, including agricultural land, urban areas, construction sites and forested and pasture lands.

When wetlands flourish in watersheds, they have a strong cumulative effect on the spatial scale, magnitude, frequency and duration of biogeochemical fluxes, or transfer of water and materials to downstream aquatic systems.

“Constructed and restored wetlands — also known as green infrastructure — are among the most effective best management practices for trapping nutrients generated from agricultural fields,” Kalin said.

This pioneering project will fully couple one of the most widely used watershed models, the Soil and Water Assessment Tool, or SWAT+, with the wetland nutrient cycling model, or WetQual, to improve understanding of the nitrogen, phosphorous and carbon cycles in agricultural watersheds that have a significant wetland presence.

“The fully coupled SWAT+WetQual will provide an improved watershed scale hydrology and water quality model that can tackle any number of wetlands and more efficiently and accurately simulate the fate and transport of nutrients at the watershed level,” Kalin said.

The testing grounds for this coupled model will be the Tuckahoe Creek and Upper Choptank River watersheds in the Chesapeake Bay area of Maryland and the Fish River and Magnolia River watersheds in coastal Alabama. The study area in Maryland is rich in depressional wetlands, while the Alabama watersheds are dominated by headwater wetlands.

Ditchkoff wins major award for book on invasive wild pig research

A faculty member is among a group of experts recognized by a major scientific organization for their work on a groundbreaking book in the field of invasive wild pigs.

Steve Ditchkoff, the William R. and Fay Ireland Distinguished Professor in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, along with his co-editors, won The Wildlife Society’s 2020 Wildlife Publication Award in the category of edited book for Invasive Wild Pigs in North America: Ecology, Impacts, and Management, which was published by CRC Press in January 2020.

Rick Spaulding, chair of The Wildlife Society, or TWS, Wildlife Publication Awards Committee, praised the volume.

“It is a fantastic book, both in terms of content and presentation,” Spaulding said.

Founded in 1937, TWS is an international organization that addresses national and international issues affecting the current and future status of wildlife in North America and throughout the world.

In addition to co-editing the book, Ditchkoff authored or co-authored four of its chapters.

“The chapters were authored by the leading authorities on wild pigs in North America,” Ditchkoff said. “The book is considered the seminal reference on information relating to wild pig biology and management.”

Ditchkoff’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; John Mayer, manager of the Savannah River National Laboratory in Aiken, South Carolina; Gary Roloff, a Michigan State University professor; and Bronson Strickland, an extension professor of wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture at Mississippi State University.

The book addresses a gamut of issues and data surrounding wild pigs — citing the animals as “the most destructive introduced vertebrate species in the United States” — including their biology, ecology, damage and management. Wild pigs are responsible for an extraordinary amount of damage in both natural and anthropogenic systems throughout North America and represent one of the greatest wildlife management challenges North America faces in the 21st century.

The book’s aim is to establish a foundation for managers, researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders to build on their future. It provides comprehensive coverage of wild pig biology and ecology, techniques for management and research and regional chapters. It is an asset to readers interested in wild pigs, the resources they impact, and how to mitigate those impacts and establishes a vision of the future of wild pigs in North America.

“This book certainly deserves the acclaim it has received,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. “Dr. Ditchkoff and his team have contributed an unprecedented resource for those who are affected by invasive wild pigs and the dangers, threats and widescale destruction they present.”

Ditchkoff’s research focuses on the ecology and management of large mammals, primarily white-tailed deer and wild pigs. He has authored or coauthored more than 90 peer-reviewed scientific articles and has published more than 40 popular articles in outlets such as “Deer & Deer Hunting” and “Wildlife Trends.”



Steve Ditchkoff, the William R. and Fay Ireland Distinguished Professor in Auburn University’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, along with his co-editors, won The Wildlife Society’s 2020 Wildlife Publication Award in the “edited book” category for the book, “Invasive Wild Pigs in North America: Ecology, Impacts, and Management,” published by CRC Press in January 2020.

In addition to his research, he teaches undergraduate and graduate wildlife courses at Auburn.

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

(Continued from page 4)

doesn’t translate well to the people it will benefit the most. This case was an exception.

“Our work is technical, we’re passionate about it, but it’s difficult to understand if you’re not trained in a specific discipline. Oftentimes people wonder, how relevant is that? Is it going to touch my life?” he said. “This will clearly touch people who live in those areas, especially forest landowners who depend on timber sales.”

Hurricanes break off, tangle and lay down timber horizontally, Gallagher said, making harvesting difficult when using the equipment currently available. He is developing a new attachment that loggers could borrow — rather than buy — to make collecting the scattered timber easier.

Via is developing methods to use acoustics to measure timber strength and degradation of downed timber as a resource for making cross-laminated timber, or CLT, which is lumber glued together at 90 degrees into three or more layers.

“Stronger timber can be sent for use in structural applications like lumber and CLT, while partially degraded timber might be salvaged into other product areas,” Via said.

Timber rated as “weak” or “degraded” by acoustics will be sent to develop other

product streams such as wood composites, nanocellulose and wood plastic composites.

Peng will use good-quality wood fibers from downed timber to develop bio-based composites for value-added applications in automobiles, construction and packaging.

“The goals are to maximize the utilization of our renewable natural resources for sustainability and to get the maximum return for the landowners, lowering their loss during natural disasters,” Peng said.

Peresin will work with the USDA Forest Products Lab to process partially decayed timber into micro/nanomaterials, or CNMs, which will form the basis of an array of products that will allow harvested downed timber to penetrate large markets. Her team will also upscale CNM production and design bio-based carriers for pesticides and controlled-release nutrients for soil remediation.

“The innovative research of our faculty has the potential to offer significant business and economic opportunities to the forest industry,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.



Auburn University’s Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, a regional multisector member organization, recently issued a management alert that has guided seedling planting decisions of regional nurseries within the southern U.S.

the alert. Soon after, the North Carolina Forestry Association placed a recording of that discussion on its website.

Those are just two examples of numerous responses.

Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, said the nursery cooperative’s unique capabilities and expert management are not only serving other organizations but are also putting Auburn research on the map, again.

“This is great news for Auburn University, SFWS and the Nursery Cooperative as it means that our research and recommendations are being adopted in addition to elevating our profile,” Alavalapati said.

The Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative currently has 17 members: Eight forest industries, eight state forestry organizations and the U.S. Forest Service. Together, the cooperative membership produces approximately 70% of all the forest-tree seedlings grown in the United States annually.

“Forty-eight years of forest-seedling nursery research has enabled us to provide scientifically based and tested recommendations that are rapidly adopted by the industry to improve seedling quality and survival once they are out planted in field.”

- Ryan Nadel



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

A new project co-led by Auburn University researchers addresses previously unexplored questions about the increasing number and distribution of feral swine in Alabama—animals that cause more than \$50 million a year in damage to agriculture in the state. The research focuses on measuring the reduction in damage caused by feral swine during the implementation of the Alabama Feral Swine Control Pilot Program, or FSCP.

Professors Mark Smith, Graeme Lockaby and Stephen Ditchkoff of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences were awarded a \$450,000 grant to spearhead the monitoring and evaluation component of the FSCP, a cooperative effort led and funded by the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee through a grant from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Project partners in this coordinated effort include the USDA Wildlife Services, Alabama Association of Conservation Districts, Alabama Agriculture and Conservation Development Commission, Alabama Farmers Federation, Alabama Wildlife Federation, Alabama Cattlemen's Association, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University and the University of West Alabama.

The program emanated from the National Feral Swine Control Pilot Program that was established by the 2018 Farm Bill. Smith said the research and extension objectives of the grant from the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee are twofold.

“First, the principle investigators and several graduate students will focus on measuring the reduction in damage caused by wild pigs on agricultural land during removal operations on select watersheds in the Alabama counties of Baldwin, Escambia, Henry, Houston and Sumter,” Smith said.

The Alabama state office of the USDA Wildlife Services will lead on-the-ground support to conduct wild pig removal. In addition, qualifying landowners will have access to substantial cost-shares on high-tech trapping equipment through the Conservation Incentives Program administered by the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee to further reduce local feral swine numbers.

To meet this objective, Elizabeth Bradley, a doctoral student under the direction of Lockaby in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, will draw comparisons in water quality in several watersheds within the project area before and after the wild pigs have been removed.

Working with Smith, graduate student Arielle Fay will use an unmanned aerial vehicle to measure the changes in damage throughout the growing season to determine how wild pigs ravage crops.

Another Auburn grad student, William Green, will interview numerous landowners within the project areas to develop whole-farm estimates of damage caused by wild pigs and estimate reductions in crop damage throughout the project area, relative to removal efforts.

Smith said the second objective is to support the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee by providing science-based technical training to landowners and producers who are participants in the Conservation Incentives Program portion of the project.

In addition, online technical training courses, equipment expos, seminars and a full slate of how-to videos distributed through online and social media platforms are being developed to address the project’s educational and awareness needs.

Janaki Alavalapati, 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 challenge these animals have long posed.

“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,” Alavalapati said.

Interested landowners can visit alconservationsdistricts.gov and follow the link to the Feral Swine Program, where they can enter their contact information to request further details about the program, or contact their county’s Soil and Water Conservation District office for more information.

Auburn University graduate student Elizabeth Bradley collects a water sample that will be analyzed and sequenced to determine the host animal that contributed E. coli present in the stream. This is one of the methods that allows a research team to link the water quality of this system to the presence of 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.”

- Dean Janaki Alavalapati



Through the Charles Barkley Foundation, basketball 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 HCBUs.

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 HCBUs.

Barkley, the legendary NBA Hall of Famer who began his path to glory 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 his alma mater, Barkley established the Auburn University gifts in the wake of a series of generous donations to five southern HCBUs over the past few years.

From 2016 to 2020, he contributed significant gifts to Alabama A&M University, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Miles College and Tuskegee University.

“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 wanted to do something to help them, and I’m going to continue to help them.”

The Charles Barkley Foundation’s aim is to build bonds between

HCBUs and the major programs of large universities to attract students from HCBUs to pursue their graduate degrees at Auburn. With these funds, the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, or SFWS, has established the Charles Barkley Foundation Fellowship.

Dean Janaki Alavalapati of the SFWS said the Barkley Foundation gift’s value goes beyond its dollar amount and represents a step toward attaining diversity within the school, which is an ongoing effort. Last summer, Alavalapati established a diversity and inclusion coordination team of faculty, staff and students to

promote a more inclusive culture of diversity within the school. “This group’s mission is to consolidate our thoughts and develop and identify activities to promote diversity and inclusion within the school,” Alavalapati said. “Charles

Barkley’s recent gift, which promotes the inclusion of students who have graduated from HCBUs, goes hand in hand with our ongoing efforts and will be a tremendous asset to this endeavor.”

The Charles Barkley Foundation Fellowship will give preference to qualifying students who have graduated with an undergraduate degree from an HCBU. Other factors for selection include applicants’ socioeconomic background and whether they grew up in a highly rural or underserved area.

As Barkley said in the 2017 docuseries *American Race*, “I truly believe that building bridges, not building walls and not giving in to fear, will make our communities better.”

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

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

Since the early 2000s, 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 Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the school.

“The Drummond Company’s continuous investment to our graduate program has significantly assisted us in recruiting top-notch graduate students into our program,” Alavalapati said. “The funds that this company has allocated to our graduate programs have allowed the school to build and expand those programs significantly.”

The relationship between the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences and the Birmingham-based, family-owned Drummond Company dates to the 1980s, when philanthropist Barbara Thorne, the daughter of company founders Heman and Elza Drummond and an Auburn University graduate, began supporting the school. Though Barbara was a human sciences graduate, she understood the importance of forestry and natural resources.

After Barbara’s death, her daughter Beth Stukes continued the tradition of generous and consistent giving, sharing her commitment to enriching education in those areas.

From its modest beginnings in 1935 as a coal supplier in northwest Alabama, the Drummond Company is now a multi-billion-dollar private corporation, a global leader in the production of coal and coal-based derivatives as well as oil and real estate.

Drummond is known for its community development both in the U.S. and Colombia, South America, where operations are located.

The company also defies some widespread misconceptions about the coal mining industry, which is often viewed as destructive. Drummond is recognized statewide and nationally for its responsible environmental management and practices. Drummond carefully maintains its resources, reclaiming land that has been previously mined by reforesting it or turning it into pastureland.

Drummond’s strong commitment to the environment and environmental sustainability makes its investments in the graduate program of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, or SFWS, even more significant.

“The SFWS is a perfect fit for our company,” Stukes said. “Historically, we have either reforested or repastured approximately 150,000 acres, all of which flourish as wildlife habitat. Drummond Company is honored to partner with the SFWS and tomorrow’s leaders in this program.”

The majority of Drummond’s reclaimed property is used for timber production; its gift to the SFWS fits perfectly with Drummond’s vision of environmental responsibility.

This latest gift to Auburn is both a company statement and a family statement — most of the Drummond families own their own properties to recreate.

And there are even closer familial connections to Auburn: Becky Carroll, another daughter of Barbara Thorne, is married to David Carroll, who earned his forestry degree in 1986, and a master’s degree in wildlife in 1995, from SFWS.

He is just one of more than 30 members of the extended Drummond family who have had memorable Auburn experiences. That long list includes Stukes as well as Auburn graduate Hila Jo Drummond Davidson, Barbara Thorne’s oldest sibling.

This close, multi-generational relationship with Auburn is a vital component in the company’s support.

Each year, Drummond makes a major gift to grow its endowment in the SFWS as well as an outright gift, both to support graduate fellowships in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.



Shown are left to right, Beth Thorne Stukes, Larry Thorne, Babs Thorne Anderson and Becky Thorne Carroll.

Recipients of the Drummond Company Fellowships for Outstanding Graduate Students are top graduate students: Those pursuing doctoral, Master of Sciences and

Master of Natural Resources degrees, as well as international students. The top graduate students in these categories are selected based on letters of recommendation, awards, GPA and the ability to communicate effectively.

“The SFWS is a perfect fit for our company. Historically, we have either reforested or repastured approximately 150,000 acres, all of which flourish as wildlife habitat. Drummond Company is honored to partner with the SFWS and tomorrow’s leaders in this program.”

- Beth Stukes

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 last of the remaining Auburn Oaks at Samford Park. Darryl and Diane Rosser honored their daughter, Christina, son-in-law, Blake, and grandchild, Betsie, with the dedication of the Oak.

In 2001, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Professor Scott Enebak began a program to ensure the Auburn Oak's legacy. Under his leadership, Forestry Club and Wildlife Society members cultivated acorns from the original Auburn Oaks.

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

"Auburn Oaks contributions support the school's endowed fund 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 Rossers had previously named a tree for their family and dedicated two others in honor of their parents, The Debs and Grace Rosser Family and The Lewis and Nancie Robinson Family.

Darryl Rosser first became engaged with the school upon meeting Dean Janaki Alavalapati. This encounter inspired the couple's former Auburn Oaks 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 paying it forward in a small way to assist Dr. Alavalapati to advance this vision through the students and staff at SFWS," 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 STAR, Team.

Comprised of a small group of key industry leaders, the STAR team helps develop strategic



Shown at the dedication ceremony of the last of the remaining Auburn Oaks at Samford Park in honor of the Banks Family are from left to right: Dean Janaki Alavalapati, Development Director Heather Crozier, Darryl Rosser, Blake Banks, Aubie, Christina Banks with child Betsie, Diane Rosser, Associate Dean Scott Enebak, Deborah Enebak and Development Coordinator Alex Doss.

initiatives to advance the school's academic, research and extension/outreach platforms and raise its profile in the Southeast and beyond. The team also helps formulate and undertake necessary tactical steps to realize those strategic initiatives.

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

"I am happy to be working with Janaki on the STAR committee, and specifically on the goal of elevating the school's ranking to be a Top 5 institution in its field," Rosser said. Recognizing the importance of social media and the negative impact of the pandemic to international graduate student enrollment, the Rossers 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 sees opportunity for the school to overcome the challenges we 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."

"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 paying it forward in a small way to assist Dr. Alavalapati to advance this vision through the students and staff at SFWS."

- Darryl Rosser

Sweeten offers knowledge and support to school's Forests, Environment, and Wildlife Leadership Academy

Written by Avy Elmore

Auburn University alum Ed Sweeten has led a notable career in the forestry industry with over 39 years of diversified forestry and real estate experience and is considered a leading authority on timberland acquisitions and land sales in the southern United States. Sweeten is also a generous donor to the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, sponsoring the Forest, Environment, Wildlife, and Leadership, or FEWL, Academy since 2019.

Sweeten saw an opportunity to equip 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 imperative to develop leadership 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 SFWS graduates for successful careers," Sweeten said.

The purpose of 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 the two-semester course, students attend classroom lectures and interface with a range of private industry executives as well as local and nationwide policymakers. The personal development program is co-instructed by the dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Janaki Alavalapati and Assistant Professor and Alabama Extension Specialist Adam Maggard, and both are optimistic about what lies ahead for the program.

"The future of the FEWL Academy is bright. As an established and competitive education program centered on forestry, the environment and wildlife, we are positioned to provide skill-building and collaboration opportunities through experiential learning



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

to a qualified, select and diverse group of students creating a new a leadership force of natural resource professionals," Maggard said.

With Sweeten's help, the FEWL Academy has been able to visit both Montgomery and Washington, D.C. During their trip to the state capitol, students met with Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey and leaders of the Alabama Forestry Association and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

In Washington, D.C., students visited organizations and offices where they gained insight into the development of natural resource policy issues.

"Ed has supported the FEWL Academy since the beginning. His support has been instrumental in allowing for our students to experience leadership opportunities and we are grateful for his investment," said Dean Alavalapati.

Sweeten has also been involved with

the school beyond his sponsorship of the academy, recently giving a talk to students and faculty on assorted topics, including the importance of leadership in forestry, wildlife and natural resource professions, the excellent opportunity the FEWL Academy provides for students and his path and experiences as they relate to leadership.

"It is exciting to see the school grow in quality and continue to foster the future leaders of the forestry industry. 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," Sweeten 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 334-844-2791 or email sfwsdev@auburn.edu.

"It is exciting to see the school grow in quality and continue to foster the future leaders of the forestry industry. 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."

-Ed Sweeten

Compass Circle becomes more accessible for new alumni with new giving level

The Compass Circle is the young alumni annual giving society of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. It offers young alumni the opportunity to give back by supporting scholarships within the school. Upon making an annual gift, Compass Circle members receive a variety of benefits including an invitation to join a Dean's Roundtable Discussion and preferred game day parking.

Because the Compass Circle is such a great way to stay connected to the SFWS and fellow young alumni, we're pleased to introduce a new gift level tailored to alumni who have graduated within the last three years – the Pathfinder level.



To learn more about the benefits of Compass Circle membership and the flexible ways to join, please visit sfws.auburn.edu/compass-circle/.

Heatherly nominated for Auburn Alumni Association Young Alumni Achievement Award

Michael Heatherly '08 has been nominated for the 2021 Young Alumni Achievement Award to be presented by the Auburn Alumni Association. Heatherly currently serves as chairman of the Tallassee, Alabama-based land management firm, Sizemore & Sizemore, and was unanimously nominated by his Compass Circle peers.

"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 continually give back to the Auburn community and beyond with their charitable work," said Compass Circle President Ben



Simms. "It was with great pleasure and no hesitation that we nominate Michael."

SFWS exceeds annual philanthropic goal amid COVID-19 disruptions

The Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences surpassed its philanthropic goal for fiscal year 2019-20, with more than half the donations coming in after March 2020, as COVID-19 brought sudden, massive shifts within the school and the university.

As awareness of the threat of the COVID-19 virus rose, Auburn acted on the need for immediate change. In March, the university transitioned to alternate operations, ceased non-essential travel and for the most part, shut down on-campus activities.

Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, said he and the faculty and staff were extremely pleased by the boosted support from donors during this time of dire need.

"Our alumni have established a tradition of significant generosity," Alavalapati said.

"Their willingness to come through to provide funds in the midst of such an unforeseen, challenging time — pushing to not only meet, but exceed the annual philanthropic goal — underscores their devotion to the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences."

He emphasized that 53% of the entire goal was reached after March, when COVID-19 began to take its toll on normal operations.

Because the pandemic's threat brought about costly shut-downs and priority shifts — among them, the need for widescale remote work accommodations for faculty and staff, as well as additional technology — that period ushered in a rush of unexpected financial burdens, he said.

"The donations that continued to flow into the school, despite difficult circumstances, really helped fill that gap," he said.

Gifts given during the past year also went to support the Kreher Preserve Nature Center, or KPNC, the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences' extension efforts, the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center, or SDFEC, facilities, student scholarship support and program support, in addition to unrestricted gifts.

Notes from Alumni

Thank you, SFWS faculty and staff!

On behalf of our alumni, we would like to sincerely thank our dedicated faculty and staff. The pandemic situation has created many challenges for all of us. We want to recognize the effort and creativity that you are displaying even now. It is obvious how dedicated you are to our student's educational experience.

Request for nominations: Outstanding Alumni
The Outstanding Alumni Selection committee is requesting nominations for this award, due by January 2022.

The selection criteria are:
1. Be a graduate of Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

2. Demonstrate outstanding contributions within their degree field within Alabama, nation or world.

3. Demonstrate exemplary character, integrity and community contributions.

Any SFWS graduate, regardless of race, creed, religion, gender or geographic location may be considered.

Nominations can be sent to SFWSdev@auburn.edu or submitted at sfws.auburn.edu/outstanding-alumni/.

Thank you very much!
David Helm '84
Frank L. Walburn '79
Marc Walley '85

SPOTLIGHT on alumni

Written by Avy Elmore



JOCELYN WILSON, '00

Jocelyn Wilson, a 2000 forestry graduate, is the North Carolina area manager of the North Carolina and Virginia Railroad, or NCVA 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 nursey 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 am extremely proud to be an Auburn graduate, especially from SFWS. 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; was there a professor or faculty member who had a great influence/impact on you during your time in the school?

There are so many great memories to choose from. Of course, summer practicum stands out to me. It was hard work, and I made lifelong friends over that summer. Dr. Richard Brinker, who was the dean and harvesting professor, was so supportive while I was a student and continues to be a great advisor to this day. Mr. Charles Raper, a forest economics professor, and Dr. Greg Sommers, a forest biometrics professor, were both great mentors during my last two years at the school.

What is your favorite thing about being an SFWS alum?

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 work force 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!



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 an 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 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; was there a professor or faculty member who had a great influence/impact on you during your time in the school?

He may not know this, but Dr. Richard Brinker, the dean and harvesting professor at the time, had a considerable influence on me. Dr. Brinker would always

come to class in a well pressed dress shirt, even at summer camp. He did not present himself as a ‘forester,’ he came across as a businessman. His classes would focus a lot on how much money a landowner was spending and ask us to justify the cost. Flannel shirts and jeans have their place in forestry, but I always tried to wear a collared shirt and pants because you never know who you may run into in the woods. Forestry is a business, and 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 work force 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.