

# College of Forestry, Wildlife & Environment



## FEATURE STORY

CFWE and the U.S Army agree to a partnership to provide services for natural resource management on military bases.....pg. 6-7

## WHAT'S INSIDE

STAR Team advising on strategic initiatives.....pg. 2

FEWL Academy takes part in AFA meeting .....pg. 3

Pan leads team to study coastal resilience along Gulf of Mexico .....pg. 5

FWNR Team Coordinator announcement .....pg. 8

Rossers reinvest in online programs ..pg. 12

CFWE NEWS • Summer 2022

## Working with Nature for Society's Well Being

Administration .....2  
Academics & Learning .....3-4  
Research & Discovery .....4-5  
Extension & Outreach .....8-9  
Alumni & Friends ..... 10-12



[cfwe.auburn.edu/giving](https://cfwe.auburn.edu/giving)  
Learn how you can support the CFWE.



[cfwe.auburn.edu/newsletter](https://cfwe.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.



slide show



video



related articles



Facilitating experiential learning at the Dixon Center



Improving resources to elevate student experience

On Campus & Beyond Visit [cfwe.auburn.edu](https://cfwe.auburn.edu) for more stories.



Engaging stakeholders to improve forest health



Connecting with alumni and friends

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUBURN, AL  
PERMIT NO. 9

AUBURN  
College of Forestry,  
Wildlife and Environment  
602 Duncan Drive  
1161 W. Sanford Ave., Bldg. 8  
Auburn, AL 36849-0001



## THE DEAN

### Expanding opportunities with IGSA agreement, new minors, deanship, and strategic initiatives



Dear Alumni and Friends,

As we move into this exciting new chapter as the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, we are excited to share how the breadth of the college's teaching, research and extension continues to diversify and expand.

Among the many new developments you'll read about in this issue, we've established five new minors in the college to align with present natural resource

issues and the current job market. Available to all Auburn University students, these natural resource-focused minors, including Coastal Management, Environmental Law, Forest Health, Forest Seedling Nursery Management and Urban Forestry, will allow students to specialize their education to address these employment gaps.

We have also engaged the U.S. Army with the signing of an historic 10-year agreement to provide natural resource management services to eight military bases across the Southeastern region of the United States. As part of the agreement, the Center for Natural Resources Management on Military Lands was established in the college. This work will expand to include opportunities for research and student learning as the center builds its administrative infrastructure and service capacities.

I am also pleased to report that the Emmett F. Thompson Deanship in our college has become fully endowed. Proudly, I will be the first recipient and am looking forward to leveraging the deanship to identify new opportunities for the college with the new Strategic and Tactical Advancement Resource, or STAR Team. Consisting of industry leaders in forestry, wildlife and natural resources within the U.S. Southeast, the STAR Team was established to help the college formulate and undertake strategic initiatives to advance its academic, research, and extension/outreach platforms and to elevate the college's profile.

Thank you all for your ongoing support. We hope you are as excited for the future as we are! War Eagle!

Janaki R. R. Alavalapati, Dean

## Administration

### With a goal to increase in size, excellence and influence, the college forms a group of leaders to serve as the Strategic and Tactical Advancement Resource, or STAR Team



STAR team members pictured from left to right - Cannon Lawley, Alexander McCall, Dan Roach, Dan Moultrie, Marc Walley, Darryl Rosser, Paul Pinyan and dean, Janaki Alavalapati.

The college has formed a team of leaders known as the Strategic and Tactical Advancement Resource, or STAR Team. Consisting of leaders from the forestry, wildlife and natural resources industries, the team serves as an advisory panel to the college.

Meeting twice yearly, the team leverages their knowledge and expertise to advance the college's academic, research and extension platforms and helps to formulate and undertake strategic initiatives to elevate the visibility and impact of the college.

The STAR team will assist the college by creating stakeholder partnerships, acting as spokespersons at high-level discussions, engaging in executive-level networking opportunities and mobilizing resources to advance strategic initiatives.

The team recently met at the college on Aug. 3 to discuss topics such as addressing freshman enrollment challenges, advancing cross-laminated timber, promoting climate smart forestry, growing the Master of Forest Business and Investment degree program and expanding placement opportunities for Wildlife Enterprise Management majors.

The competition among forestry, wildlife and natural resources institutions in the U.S. Southeast is rising and causing the college to become more strategic and tactical in growing its size, excellence and influence.

"For the college to become the 'go-to place' in the U.S. Southeast, we need additional guidance and support," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. "The STAR team has given us just that and helped us to realize our aspirations more quickly."

#### The STAR team members include:

- **Alex Hinson**, President and CEO at Resource Management Service LLC, Birmingham, Alabama
- **Brian Luoma**, President and CEO, Westervelt, Tuscaloosa, Alabama
- **Dan Moultrie**, Founder of Moultrie Products, Birmingham, Alabama
- **Paul Pinyan**, Executive Director of the Alabama Farmers Federation and General Manager of Alabama Farm Bureau Services, Inc, Alabama
- **Darryl Rosser**, Executive Chair, Global Integrated Flooring Solutions, Birmingham, Alabama
- **Marc Walley**, President and CEO, Forest Investment Associates, Atlanta, Georgia (Team Leader)
- Ex-Officio: Chair/Ex-Chair **Cannon Lawley** and **Alexander McCall** of the CFWE Advisory Council and Dean of the CFWE

## Faculty and Staff Highlights

#### Received tenure and promotion:

- Heather Alexander, Associate Professor
- Adam Maggard, Associate Professor
- New appointments:
- Mark Smith, Extension Team Coordinator
- Todd Steury, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

#### New staff members:

- Kayleigh Hornsby, Executive Support Specialist II
- Shelly Hunt, Human Resources Generalist II
- Michael Mulcahy, Accountant III
- Seamus White, Specialist II, Info Tech

## Academics & Learning

### The College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment has launched five new natural resource-focused minors to expand career opportunities for students

The College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment at has expanded curriculum options for students interested in natural resource-focused careers with the launch of five new minors, including Coastal Management, Environmental Law, Forest Health, Forest Seedling Nursery Management and Urban Forestry.

Created to address present challenges identified by industry and employment gaps existing in the work force, the programs will allow students to specialize their education when paired with other degrees on campus, or to build upon the curriculum of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment's Natural Resource Management Bachelor of Science degree.

"We are excited to provide these new offerings that were requested by employers and students who were seeking opportunities more closely aligned with present natural resource issues and the current job market," says the college's dean, Janaki Alavalapati.

#### Coastal Management Minor

Coastal lands and resources are impacted by a variety of environmental and societal issues. Sea level rise, urbanization, energy production, tropical storms and habitat loss are just some of the pressing issues facing coastal areas.

As such, there is an increasing need for professionals trained to manage natural resources in coastal areas. Through the Coastal Management minor, students will learn how management and policy are applied to natural resources within a coastal environment.

"Graduates in this program learn the

necessary skills to assess and manage the important coastal habitats and resources that sustain local communities," said Chris Anderson, who is lead professor of the minor in the college. "Graduates will be well suited for professional positions that contribute to a more resilient coastal zone for the environment and society."

As part of the curriculum, students will be required to attend classes at the Dauphin Island Sea Laboratory, or DISL, for one summer.

"The experiential learning opportunity provided at the DISL is critical for preparing these students with the necessary knowledge and tools to work in coastal environments upon graduation," Anderson said.

#### Environmental Law Minor

Supporting the pursuit of a law degree, the Environmental Law minor will prepare students to address concerns about regulations and laws governing environmental protection, natural resource management, sustainable development and land use planning.

Environmental attorneys typically represent government entities, community groups and nonprofit organizations on behalf of the public's interest on issues related to environmental policy.

"Environmental conditions are changing faster than policy can keep pace," said Richard Hall, adjunct professor and faculty lead for the minor in the college.

"It's essential that we have professionals well-versed in natural resource issues who can advise legislators, advocate for sustainable land-use planning

and strengthen community resilience despite the effects of climate change and other environmental hardships."

#### Forest Health Minor

Healthy forests are a critical part of our nation's landscape. Our forests provide recreation opportunity, shelter, water and food as well as lumber for construction, furnishings and basic necessities.

Through coursework in the Forest Health minor, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of insect and disease management to work with landowners as well as conservation and government agencies to protect forests from insects, disease and invasive species.

"Given the immense pressure on forests, it is important to industry, landowners and the general public, that we have professionals who can accurately assess forest health and take proactive measures to address issues before they become endemic," said, Lori Eckhardt, professor of integrated forest pathology and entomology and the director of the Auburn University Forest Health Cooperative.

#### Forest Seedling Nursery Management Minor

With the demand for reforestation and carbon sequestration credits growing, current seedling production is one billion annually.

Thus, demand for professionals in the forest nursery seedling production industry is rising in tandem, particularly in areas where timber is a dominant commodity, such as the Southeast and Northwest regions of the U.S.

"This minor will prepare students with the skill sets to successfully operate a forest-

tree seedling nursery, as well as to work in state, private and federal forest seedling nurseries," said Scott Enebak, professor and director of Auburn's Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative.

#### Urban Forestry Minor

Beyond the many benefits trees and forests provide people, communities and industries, they are a valuable part of the urban landscape which contribute to the abatement of air pollution, mitigate summer temperatures and provide necessary habitat for wildlife.

Managing trees in an urban setting requires a specific skill set that is currently in demand. Further, as pressure on urban forests from development increases and urbanization continues to move outward into forested areas, the proper planning and management of urban forests becomes even more essential.

"Traditional forestry students may not fully understand the unique management challenges presented in urban and urbanizing forested environments," said Enebak.

"However, given that nearly 80 percent of the U.S. population resides in or close to these areas, it is important that the university expands its curriculum to train and develop urban forestry professionals to meet this need within our municipalities."

Students interested in learning more or enrolling in the new minors, may visit [cfwe.auburn.edu](http://cfwe.auburn.edu) or contact the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment student advisors via email at [workingwithnature@auburn.edu](mailto:workingwithnature@auburn.edu).

### FEWL Academy students grow professional network at annual Alabama Forestry Association meeting

The College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, or CFWE, has fostered leadership opportunities for outstanding students through the Forest, Environment and Wildlife Leadership, or FEWL, Academy since its establishment in 2019.

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 FEWL academy course, students attend classroom lectures and interface with a range of private industry executives as well as local and nation-wide policymakers. The personal development program is co-instructed by Associate Professor and Extension Specialist Adam Maggard and Dean Janaki Alavalapati.

For 2022, the program continues with 12 students, including the academy's first doctoral student, Greg Johnson of the college's Conservation Governance Lab.

Current members of the FEWL Academy include Payton Brewer, Angel Cagle, Avanelle Elmore, Ariana Hansen, Greg Johnson, Nathan Kurtz, Josh Mullins, Caroline Silva, Jessica Staggs, Megan Starling, Sydney Spurlock and Casey Whitt.

As part of the experiential learning provided by the academy, FEWL members recently attended the

2022 Alabama Forestry Association Annual Meeting in Orange Beach, Alabama, where they met with forestry professionals, including Auburn alumni.

"Attendance at this annual meeting was a unique opportunity for FEWL students to network with industry leaders and policy makers and reflect on leadership tenets they have learned in the class," said Maggard.

The highlight of the trip for the students was meeting with Auburn University President Christopher Roberts, who spoke on the excellence of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment and its capacity to grow as a college.

"Dr. Roberts took the time to personally ask about our areas of study and how we became interested in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment," said Avanelle Elmore.

"We were all excited to meet him and were grateful to be included in the talk with Auburn faculty and alumni about the university's future," said Starling.

As dean of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, President Roberts co-managed the Forest Engineering major with the CFWE and assisted faculty with the launch of the Geospatial and Environmental Informatics and Sustainable Biomaterials and Packaging degree programs in the CFWE.



The FEWL Academy recently attended the 2022 Alabama Forestry Association Annual Meeting in Orange Beach, Alabama, where they met with forestry professionals, including Auburn alumni, and Auburn President Christopher B. Roberts. From left to right, front row: Dean Janaki Alavalapati, Megan Starling, Ariana Hansen, Angel Cagle, Avanelle Elmore, Caroline Silva, and Greg Johnson. From left to right, back row: Josh Mullins, Sydney Spurlock, Jessica Staggs, Payton Brewer, President Roberts, Nathan Kurtz, Casey Whitt, and Associate Professor Adam Maggard.

The students also had the opportunity to attend an alumni coffee reception hosted by Dean Alavalapati followed by breakfast with keynote speaker Katie Britt, Alabama's U.S. Senatorial Candidate. Congressman Jerry Carl, who represents Alabama's first district, also spoke at the breakfast.

After breakfast, President Roberts served as mediator on the panel "The Forest Driven Economy of Alabama," which featured Brian Luoma, president and chief executive officer of The Westervelt

Company, Robert Dixon, president of M.C. Dixon Lumber Company, and Gary Smith, president and chief executive officer of PowerSouth Energy Cooperative.

Members of the FEWL Academy were grateful for the opportunity to network with stakeholders and learn more about the forestry industry.

"We are especially grateful to Ed Sweeten for sponsoring the academy's activities, including a team building retreat to the Alabama 4-H Center in Columbiana taken last spring," said Elmore.

## College of Forestry, Wildlife & Environment

### CFWE NEWS • Summer 2022

Dean .....Janaki R.R. Alavalapati  
Assoc. Dean of Academic Affairs..... Todd Steury  
Assoc. Dean of Research..... Daowei Zhang  
Extension Coordinator ..... Mark Smith  
Managing Editor .....Jamie Anderson  
Contributing Writer.....Gracen Carter  
Project Manager .....Brooke Bailey  
Editor ..... Megan Burmester  
Designer ..... Jennie C. Hill

### Contact Us

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

Auburn University  
College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment  
Office of Communications and Marketing  
602 Duncan Drive • Auburn, AL 36849  
334-844-9248 • [sfwscom@auburn.edu](mailto:sfwscom@auburn.edu)

### Giving

Questions concerning the college's development program, including annual and corporate giving, planned gifts and estate planning should be directed to Heather Crozier, 602 Duncan Drive, Auburn, AL 36849. Inquiries may also be made by email to [vannhea@auburn.edu](mailto:vannhea@auburn.edu) or by phone at 334-844-2791.



AUBURN  
College of Forestry,  
Wildlife and Environment



[cfwe.auburn.edu](http://cfwe.auburn.edu)

Auburn University is an equal opportunity educational institution/employer. Produced by the Auburn Office of Communications and Marketing. October 2022



CFWE students attend national MANNRS training conference and career expo

Several students in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, or CFWE, attended the Annual Training Conference and Career Expo of the National Society of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences, or MANRRS, this spring in Jacksonville, Florida.

MANRRS is a nonprofit that seeks to change the face of agriculture, natural resources and related sciences. With over 1,100 attendees from academia, industry and government, MANRRS is the largest conference for minorities in the industry.

“Many of the students gave up spring break and other opportunities to come see what I have been talking about for the last couple of months and I am so thankful that they did,” said Michelle Cole, Auburn University MANRRS advisor. “MANRRS served the students with motivation, education, a career fair and plenty of sessions and workshops.”

During the conference, students were given the opportunity to connect with industry leaders and network for potential career opportunities. Many of the members interviewed with prospective employers, presented their research and participated in contests.

To qualify to attend the conference, members must have participated in contests, fundraising events and community service.

“This was the first conference I have attended where there were collaborations with multiple employers that were not only looking to hire but there to teach as well,” said Orum Snow. “I came to Auburn as a hopeful student to find a community that would help nurture my ideas and inspire me to become successful. With MANRRS I have accomplished just that.”

“I joined the organization in tenth grade, and it changed my life for the better,” said Devin Guice. “This past conference was possibly the most monumental moment in my life, as I found an internship for the U.S. Forest Service.”

“MANRRS offered many scholarships to offset the costs of attending the the conference, and I was honored to receive the MANRRS Gold Scholarship sponsored by AGCO,” said Sabine Bailey. “I presented my research on policy narratives over controversial port projects next to coral reefs as a poster and oral presentation in two competitions. It was an excellent opportunity to learn from others, as well as practice my presentation skills, and I was deeply honored to receive 2nd place for my oral presentation.”

“This national conference was one of the most inspiring, heartening and fun professional experiences I was able to have in my entire academic career,” said Amanda Alva.



Many high school members of MANRRS also attended the conference with Auburn’s chapter. Wendell Padgett Jr. was selected in 2021 to have his theme, ‘Broadening Horizons and Changing the Narrative’ showcased for the 2022 conference.

“It was an awesome feeling to see my theme everywhere at the conference,” said Padgett Jr. “I also enjoyed the career fair and helping Mrs. Cole prepare for the events.”

Jonathon Wright won the 2022 national theme contest and will have his theme, “Collaborate, Cultivate, Motivate” featured on all correspondence, websites and brochures for the next the next year.

A high school member, Hannah Padgett won the Jr. MANRRS essay contest for the second year in a row.

“My experience at the conference was thrilling,” said Padgett. “It was so exciting to stand on the stage and represent my chapter.”

“The MANRRS family is growing, and our pipeline of students are getting stronger,” said Cole. “We are so thankful to the national MANRRS office cohort for everything they do for us on the local level but mostly thankful to our sponsors. Without their support, we could not have gone to the conference.”

Pan leads team to study coastal resilience along Gulf of Mexico

An Auburn University research team in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment has been awarded a grant of \$450,000 from the U.S. Department of the Treasury in cooperation with the State of Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Alabama Center of Excellence at the MESC/Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

Led by Shufen “Susan” Pan, lead principal investigator, the grant will fund a study to develop a holistic platform that integrates multiscale observations, machine learning and systems modeling for coastal monitoring, assessment and prediction, or Coast-MAP, of ecosystem health, water resources and social resilience.

The Gulf of Mexico has been experiencing increased impacts of persistent climate stressors, including frequent floods, intense hurricanes, increasing sea level rise and is likely to undergo further rapid climate change in the coming years.

As part of its assessment, the research team will consider multiple stressors, including climate change, floods and droughts, hurricanes, land use, urbanization, nutrient uses, sewage and nutrient loads.

“To address the combined effects of multiple stresses and to improve predictability, there is a critical need for methodological advancements that integrate multiple layers of geographic information and pursue a science-based approach to monitoring, understanding, predicting and responding to changes in coupled social-ecological systems along the Gulf of Mexico,” said Pan.

As director of the college’s GIS and Remote Sensing Laboratory, Pan has used emerging technologies in geospatial modeling, computer simulation, satellite observation and AI/machine learning to monitor,

assess and predict, or MAP, multiscale dynamics of coupled social-ecological systems in the context of climate and global environmental change.

To achieve their goal, the team, comprised of Pan and co-principal investigators Christopher Anderson, Hanqin Tian and the University of Alabama’s Wanyun Shao, has proposed four objectives.

“First, we will evaluate the contemporary states of ecosystem health, water resource and social resilience through ground and satellite observations, machine learning and geospatial mapping observing,” said Pan. “We then will assess and attribute impacts over the past 30 years of multiple stresses on ecosystem health and water resource.”

*“This science-based approach will help predict potential impacts of climate and land use changes on ecosystem health and water resources.”*

– Dean Janaki Alavalapati

The team will predict potential impacts of climate and land use changes on ecosystem health and water resources in the next 30 years, as well as work to improve the understanding of the effectiveness of specific resilience-based assessments and decision-making tools with stakeholders.

“The methods and metrics will be used to measure coastal resilience that are context specific, validated with observed data and ground-truthed via stakeholder participation,” said Pan.



In addition to numerous other methods, the team hopes to achieve their goals by holding stakeholder workshops to learn about stakeholders’ risk perceptions of future climate conditions; assess multiple stresses impacts on the ecosystem and water resources in the Alabama gulf; and collect remote sensing observations from multiple sources to monitor the functions of different terrestrial ecosystems in Alabama’s gulf.

Dunning receives fellowship to explore how policy responses to chronic wasting disease varies among states

Kelly Dunning, an assistant professor in Auburn University’s College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, is exploring the varied policy responses to chronic wasting disease, or CWD, among states through the Lone Mountain Fellowship at the Property and Environment Research Center in Bozeman, Montana.

CWD is spreading across the U.S. in free-ranging white-tailed deer, moose and elk herds. Dunning believes its arrival in a herd could cause a backlash among hunters, causing negative impacts on hunting license sales, funding for conservation, outdoor heritage and traditions and rural community livelihoods and well-being.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant attention on zoonotic diseases that can transmit from wildlife to humans,” said Dunning. “It is uncertain whether CWD can be transmitted in this way, but the consequences for the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation would be dire.”

– Kelly Dunning

Dunning’s goal is to fill this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of CWD governance in all states with free-ranging deer herds by working with a collaborative team that includes Stephen Ditchkoff, the William R. and Fay Ireland Distinguished Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Management; Will Gulsby, associate professor of wildlife management; doctoral student Catherine

public knowledge and perception of CWD, including the actions hunters may take that could endanger conservation.

“There has been no research on the governance of CWD,” said Dunning. “There are currently around 30 states managing for CWD in their herds, and there has been no analysis on governance responses.”

*“The COVID-19 pandemic has placed significant attention on zoonotic diseases that can transmit from wildlife to humans. It is uncertain whether CWD can be transmitted in this way, but the consequences for the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation would be dire.”*



Chronic wasting disease is spreading across the U.S. in free-ranging white-tailed deer, as well as moose and elk herds. (Photo courtesy of USFWS Midwest.)

Cummings; Master of Natural Resources student Vincent Rivers; Undergraduate Research Fellow Caroline Ward; and undergraduate researcher Reese Stogner.

Her findings could be used by fish and wildlife decision-makers to understand who is enacting what responses to CWD and to learn the regional patterns in CWD responses.

Dunning plans to co-author a scientific study examining governance of CWD and how governance varies according to states and regions. Her research is an innovative cross between biology and political science.

“Dunning’s exploration of the governance of wildlife diseases will help inform conservation decision-making,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. “This can be impactful to governance on CWD as well as other wildlife diseases.”

Lepczyk selected as an elective member for the American Ornithological Society



Christopher Lepczyk, an Alumni Professor in Auburn University’s College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, was selected to be an elective member, a class of special membership for the American Ornithological Society, or AOS.

Formed in 2016 with the merger of the American Ornithologists’ Union and the Cooper Ornithological Society, AOS is the world’s largest international ornithological society. The AOS describes itself as a diverse, global network of empowered professionals, working together to advance the scientific study and conservation of birds.

AOS elective member nominees are expected to have met qualifications such as professional experience, society membership, engagement with the society and contributions to ornithology as a discipline and community.

Lepczyk has made numerous contributions through his time in the society. His interests center on the conservation and management of

birds, with research on such topics as endangered species, urban avian ecology, landscape ecology of birds and how people affect bird diversity.

“It is an honor to be chosen as an AOS elective member,” Lepczyk said. “It is my hope that my background will help contribute to the society in impactful ways.”

With a goal to collect data that contributes to science-based policy and management decisions, Lepczyk regularly partners with nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies and collaborators around the world. His focus is on the Hawaiian Islands, the Midwest and the Southeast U.S.

Lepczyk has been recognized as an outstanding mentor and teacher at both the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa and Auburn University. He has co-edited two books and co-authored more than 110 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters and advised more than

40 undergraduate researchers and over 30 master’s and doctoral students.

Lepczyk has been a lead or co-organizer of symposiums at three separate North American Ornithological Conference meetings and an AOS meeting and currently serves on the AOS Conservation Committee.

“The college is proud that Dr. Lepczyk has been selected as an elective member for the AOS,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. “His work with the AOS will continue to advance the study of ornithology through his research contributions, engagement and advisement of future students.”

Lepczyk was nominated and supported by AOS ornithologists David C. Duffy, Sheila Conant and Stanley Temple.





# An Impactful PARTNERSHIP

Auburn University, U.S. Army agree to 10-year natural resource management partnership to service military bases across the Southeastern U.S.

Auburn University and the U.S. Army have solidified a partnership by signing an historic 10-year agreement to provide natural resource management services to eight military bases across the Southeastern region of the United States, including Redstone Arsenal and Fort Rucker in Alabama; Forts Benning, Gordon, and Stewart in Georgia; Fort Polk in Louisiana; Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Fort Jackson in South Carolina.

The renewable Intergovernmental Support Agreement, or IGSA, is the first of its kind in the nation to include eight military bases.

“To implement the agreement, a Center for Natural Resource Management on Military Lands will be established upon approval by Auburn’s Board of Trustees,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the college.

Through this collaboration, the center will provide expertise and technical resources to perform services ranging from forest management and threatened and endangered species surveys, to surface water delineations and climate change vulnerability assessments. The center will also provide technical GIS and database support tools to manage the Army bases’ vast natural resources.

*“I am confident this newly established partnership will elevate the Auburn experience for our students, expand transformative research, provide impactful service and engage faculty from multiple colleges and beyond.”*

– President Christopher B. Roberts

For the U.S. Army, the IGSA will be a regional acquisition strategy that provides natural resources services throughout the southeastern states that will improve efficiencies and deliverables while achieving compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

“The agreement will ensure the government’s management and diverse uses of the Army’s 1-plus million acres of military lands within these bases are sustained in order to accomplish the Army mission into the future,” said William G. Kidd, Director of G4 Facilities and Logistics, Installation Management Command of the U.S. Army.

“The partnership was designed to expand to include opportunities for research and student learning as the university builds its administrative infrastructure and service capacities,” said Daowei Zhang, Alumni and George Peake Jr. Professor and associate dean of research in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, who will coordinate the services with the military.

This collaboration, though unique for its breadth, represents yet another mutually beneficial alliance between Auburn University and the Department of Defense to address the military’s critical needs and issues.

“The ROTC program and the Military Reach Project to provide quality housing for military families, as well as the McCrary Institute to develop innovative strategies to defend today’s cybersecurity and infrastructure threats,



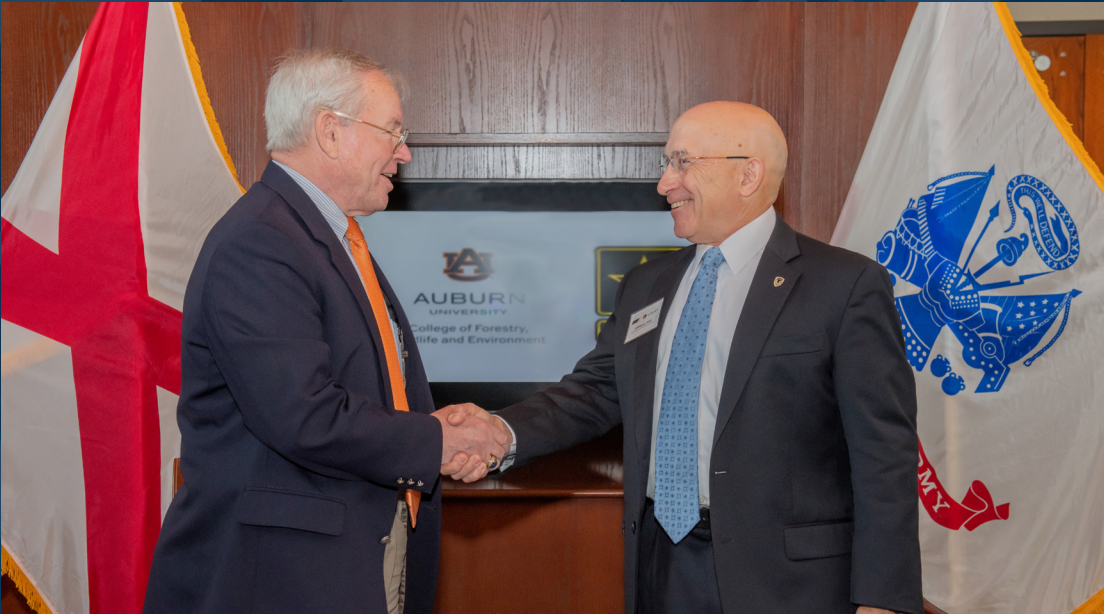
are just a few examples of the profound impact such a partnership can have for both institutions,” said Lt. Gen. (ret.) Ron Burgess, Auburn’s executive vice president and a 38-year U.S. Army veteran.

As part of its land-grant mission, Auburn University’s College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment has a long history of leveraging such government partnerships to advance its teaching, research and outreach programs for the benefit of faculty, students and citizens.

“I am confident this newly established partnership will elevate the Auburn experience for our students, expand transformative research, provide impactful service and engage faculty from multiple colleges and beyond,” said Auburn University President Christopher B. Roberts.

A signing ceremony attended by Auburn University and U.S. Army leadership was held on Sept. 7 at the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment on the university’s campus.

The Auburn University Board of Trustees approved the creation of the Center for Natural Resources Management on Military Lands in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment at its September meeting.





Smith named Alabama Extension’s Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources team coordinator

Mark Smith, wildlife extension specialist and the W. Kelly Mosley Environmental Professor in Auburn University’s College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, has been appointed coordinator of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System’s Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources team.

As part of Alabama Extension, the Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources, or FWNR, team helps address specific questions and concerns that citizens of Alabama may have about managing and enjoying the state’s abundant natural resources.



The FWNR team consists of regional extension agents, or REAs, county extension coordinators, or CECs, administrative staff and extension specialists who may have an additional appointment or affiliation with either Alabama A&M University or Auburn University.

As the team coordinator, Smith will work with the REAs who operate from seven geographic areas across Alabama to organize local workshops and field days, as well as to assist the public and land management professionals with questions about forestry, wildlife, ponds, invasive species and other natural resource management topics.

Smith will also coordinate extension specialists’ efforts to communicate research results to natural resource professionals and the public through extension publications, workshops, social media posts and other outlets.

*“We are grateful to have Dr. Smith in this leadership role for the team and the college. Smith fulfills a critical function to ensure the college’s impactful research is effectively communicated and shared for the benefit of all Alabama’s citizens.”*

– Dean Janaki Alavalapati

“I’m honored to be chosen as the extension coordinator and I look forward to working with our Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources team to ensure we are providing relevant and impactful programming to address the natural resource needs of all Alabamians,” said Smith.

Smith joined the Alabama Cooperative Extension System in 2007. He has a bachelor’s degree in fisheries and wildlife from Michigan State University and a master’s degree in wildlife sciences and doctorate in forest resources from Mississippi State University. His extension and applied research efforts focus primarily on wild pig damage management.

During his career, Smith has been an active member of The Wildlife Society, or TWS, and was recognized as a TWS Fellow in 2018.



ACES FWNR team in-service training expands collaboration, natural resource knowledge and skills



The ACES - Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resources, or FWNR, team participated in its annual In-Service Training in southern Alabama this August 1 - 4. The in-service gave the team opportunity to learn more about the university’s research, the state’s diverse species and ecosystems and to engage in field-training and planning exercises.

During the three-day trip, the FWNR Team, comprised of specialists, regional extension agents, county extension coordinators and staff toured the Auburn University Shellfish Lab, located on Dauphin Island with facility staff, Glen Chaplin and Rusty Grice, who provided an in-depth look at their oyster research. The team also took an excursion through the Mobile-Tensaw Delta – known as the “American Amazon” and visited with the City of Mobile’s urban forester, Peter Toler, who discussed the challenges of urban forest management.

The team also learned about emerging practices and technologies for tree

risk assessments with Extension specialist, Beau Brodbeck, and commercial arborist, Chris Francis, who demonstrated sonic tomography and resistance drilling techniques.

Wrapping up their training in Mobile, the team migrated north to the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center, where they toured prescribed fire demonstration areas, pitcher plant bogs, sinkholes and freshwater springs. The team also learned more about the wildlife of the Conecuh National Forest during a field outing to search for the elusive Pine Barrens Frog and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker with the Center’s director, Joel Martin, and herpetologist Jimmy Stiles.

The final day was spent receiving training on forest measurement techniques and discussing needed programming and future in-service training with Becky Barlow, associate dean and assistant director of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Extension, and Mark Smith, FWNR team coordinator.



Last Row, from left to right, Kerry Steedley, Wes Anderson, Richard Cristan, Adam Maggard, Beau Brodbeck, Mark Smith, Bence Carter, J. Ryan Mitchell, Dylan Taylor  
First Row, from left to right, Norm Haley, Willie Lampley, Drew Metzler, Nancy Loewenstein, Doug Fulghum, Lynn Dickinson, Kelly Knowles, Meredith Schrader



Alabama Extension agent works to make outdoor Extension programs more accessible

Thanks to the ingenuity of one individual and the financial support of many, people with disabilities or those who experience mobility issues can now more easily participate in Alabama Extension’s outdoor programs held around the state.

Though traditional handicap-accessible golf carts are available, they are not as effective for maneuvering unpaved areas where extension programs are sometimes offered.

(AHERO), Alabama Landowner’s Conference, National Peanut Festival and Landmark Park’s Fall Farm Day.

“Educational events that take place outside of the classroom can be a great way to learn about the outdoors,” said Mark Smith, Forestry Wildlife and Natural Resources Extension Coordinator in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. “We appreciate Bence’s efforts and the support of our partners to make these programs more accessible for Alabamians.”

Smith hopes that ACES can one day expand the fleet to other parts of the state.

“If the demand exists and we can secure additional funding, we will work to acquire UTVs for each of the seven geographic areas served by the Extension REAs,” said Smith.

Until then, other regional agents and Auburn University employees certified through the Auburn University Golf Cart and Non-conventional Vehicle Safety Training program can request this unit for their program by contacting Carter at jbc0057@auburn.edu.

Individuals or companies interested in funding additional UTVs for the state may contact Smith for more information at (334) 844-8099 or by email at mds0007@auburn.edu.



*“Making outdoor programs more accessible brings nature and the outdoors to those who otherwise might not get to experience it. Now, with this modified UTV, more people have the opportunity to learn from these enriching programs.”*

– Regional Extension Agent Bence Carter

Regional Extension Agent Bence Carter spearheaded an Extension initiative to raise funds to contract Mobility Quad to modify a Polaris Ranger, an off-road capable utility terrain vehicle or UTV, to allow an individual in a wheelchair to ramp into the UTV, be secured for transport and safely maneuver to a program site.

“Making outdoor programs more accessible brings nature and the outdoors to those who otherwise might not get to experience it,” said Carter. “Now, with this modified UTV, more people have the opportunity to learn from these enriching programs.”

Off-road landowner tours and forest classrooms are the settings for many extension programs that allow attendees to learn and experience natural resources management topics in outdoor environments.

To fund this project, Alabama Extension sought external funding from its program partners which included Alabama TREASURE Forest Association, Wiregrass RC&D, Coffee County Extension Office, Houston County Spurs Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation and First South Farm Credit to combine their funding in the amount of \$26,730.

To ensure the safety of both the driver and passenger, Alabama Extension staff using the UTV undergo training in the Auburn University Golf Cart and Non-conventional Vehicle Safety Training program.

In only months, this equipment has been used in events like America’s Heroes Enjoying Recreation Outdoors



Auburn University’s deanship in honor of Emmett F. Thompson becomes fully endowed and awarded to the college’s dean

The Emmett F. Thompson Deanship in Auburn University’s College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, or CFWE, has become fully endowed and awarded to the college’s current dean, Janaki Alavalapati.

The deanship, established to honor the college’s founding dean, Emmett F. Thompson, pays homage to his significant legacy.

Thompson, who retired in 1998, began his Auburn career in 1977 as head of the Department of Forestry, which was then part of the School of Agriculture. He went on to establish the School of Forestry as a stand-alone entity, separate from the College of Agriculture, and in 1984, became the school’s first dean.

Among many other accomplishments, Thompson also led the effort to create the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center, a one-of-a-kind facility in Andalusia, Alabama, and he provided the foundational work for the creation of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment’s state-of-the-art facility, which was completed in 2005.

The deanship is a designated endowed fund used at the discretion of the current dean to direct funds needed to achieve a college’s major goals without undercutting budgetary priorities.

Funds from the deanship will support initiatives to promote excellence in teaching, research, extension and outreach and programs that will promote personal and professional development of students, faculty and staff.

The Thompson Deanship holds a special meaning to the Thompson family. It was established by Thompson’s children, Chuck, Meri and Juli, and received a leadership gift from the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation in addition to gifts from a host of other friends of the college.

“It is an honor to be awarded the Thompson Deanship,” said Alavalapati. “Dr. Thompson was a true pioneer who left and continues to leave an outstanding impact on what we know as the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment today.”

The endowment will take effect on Oct. 1.



The Safari Club International Foundation establishes the William L. Hamberlin II annual scholarship



The Safari Club International Foundation established an annual scholarship for students in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, or CFWE, with a declared major in wildlife ecology and management or wildlife enterprise management in memory of Will Hamberlin II.

Headquartered in Tucson, Arizona, Safari Club International Foundation, or SCIF, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure the future of wildlife through conservation, education and hunting.

SCI Foundation is the leader in directing and funding wildlife conservation work globally, with an added focus to educate the public on why conservation matters, what is being done and specifically the role hunting plays as the most effective tool for sustainable-use wildlife conservation.

Hamberlin was born on April 1, 1991, in San Antonio, Texas. He began his education in Cumming, Georgia, and then attended the Singapore American School where he graduated in 2009. In 2014, Hamberlin graduated from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada with a bachelor’s degree in sustainable design.

Will loved the outdoors and was always looking for an adventure, said Katie Hamberlin, Will’s mother. “He wanted to be more insightful on how to conserve the land and to make the environment better for all. Will wanted us all to be a more socially responsible and implementing this scholarship is a great way to promote his sustainable stewardship values through CFWE at Auburn.”

The scholarship is awarded each year by the college’s selection committee. Ideally, the recipient selected must be interested in and supportive of hunting as a critical component of conservation.

“Having established an annual scholarship with Auburn University means so much to us at the SCI Foundation,” said President Brook Minx. “Being able to help students in the field of wildlife management and wildlife enterprise allows our organization to give back and invest in our future leaders of sustainable-use wildlife management. This is exactly what we were looking for to honor the late Will Hamberlin, who was an artist, a nature lover, a world traveler and a hunter.”

Scholarship recipients may use the funds to pay for tuition, fees and books.

“Support through annual scholarships such as this are critical for students who require assistance managing the expenses of their education,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the college. “We deeply appreciate SCIF’s investment in our students.”



The Solon Dixon Foundation continues to support the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center

The Solon Dixon Foundation made a gift to the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center, or SDFEC. Their gift supports the SDFEC’s purchase of new equipment, the maintenance of older equipment and the replacement of cafeteria and classroom furnishings.

The gift includes: a Bush Hog rotary cutter, a Diamond stump grinder, a Ford F150 crew cab vehicle, a John Deere cab tractor, tables for the center’s classroom and cafeteria, 110 chairs for the center’s cafeteria, 6-way blade and tracks for the Caterpillar and miscellaneous tools.

The SDFEC is home to over 5,300 acres offering freshwater springs, longleaf pine forests, cypress swamps and river frontage along the Conecuh River and borders the National Forest. The center functions as a living laboratory for hands-on, experiential learning for students, practitioners, and landowners who come to the facility to explore its diverse ecosystems and learn best practices from leaders in their field.

*“The recent gift once again has allowed us to purchase a variety of equipment, update various buildings and refurbish the cafeteria. Their support has and continues to maintain the standard that was established, and expected, by Solon Dixon and all that have come after him.”*

Joel Martin, SDFEC director

“The gift for new equipment, replacements and maintenance at the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center was considered by the Foundation directors to be the continuation of Mr. Solon’s vision for a place where young people could experience nature through applied teaching while learning about forestry, wildlife and other natural resources,” said Phillip Jones, president of the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation.

The SDFEC provides traditional classroom and immersive outdoor field experiences for people learning about forestry, wildlife and natural resources management. The center is also an excellent venue for special events, meetings and other functions as it offers gathering spaces, living quarters, cafeteria-style dining, technological resources



and abundant recreation opportunities.

Since the original gift was established by Solon Dixon to establish the SDFEC, the support by Mr. Dixon and subsequently the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation has never wavered says Joel Martin, SDFEC director.

“Since my arrival in 2006, the foundation has regularly contributed to various projects to improve the center. From acquisition of adjoining lands to equipment, facility repairs, or upgraded furnishings, the foundation has been a primary funding source that has allowed the center to provide a high-quality experience for our visitors,” said Martin. “The recent gift once again has allowed us to purchase a variety of equipment, update various buildings and refurbish the cafeteria. Their support has and continues to maintain the standard that was established, and expected, by Solon Dixon and all that have come after him.”

“The investments of the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation have contributed immensely to the maintenance and enhancement of the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center; allowing it to retain its status as one of the finest field stations in the country,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. “The college is grateful for the continued support.”





## Auburn philanthropists make a gift to support online graduate programs

Auburn alumni and philanthropists Darryl Rosser and his wife Diane Rosser have renewed their support of the online graduate programs within the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment.

Online graduate programs offer an exciting opportunity for individuals to continue their career objectives while pursuing their education. The tailored curricula allow professionals to secure broader knowledge in finance, investment, business, ecology and other relevant subjects that will provide essential knowledge to fast-track their careers and make an impact on society.

The Rossers previously had been involved with the college by dedicating trees through the Auburn Oaks program and in the process met Dean Alavalapati who discussed his vision for the college.

*“We gained more and more enthusiasm in supporting the college through Tiger Giving Day, and other events.”*

– Darryl Rosser

Over the years, the Rossers have remained involved with the university and college, securing naming rights for additional Toomer’s Oak descendent trees in Samford Park.

“Each time we engaged with members of the Auburn forestry team and saw Dean Alavalapati’s vision come to life,” said Rosser. “We gained more and more enthusiasm in supporting the college through Tiger Giving Day, and other events.”

Rosser was later asked by Dean Alavalapati to join a group of CEOs on the Strategic and Tactical Advancement Resource, or STAR, team that would help advance the college on numerous fronts.

“I have been pleased to work alongside the dean and the STAR committee in advancing the recognition of the college, and in particular the online graduate programs as one of the top programs in the nation,” said Rosser.

Rosser, being a graduate of Auburn’s School of Business, had an ability to make an impact for the CFWE by mirroring the success that the Harbert



College of Business had achieved under former Dean Hardgrave in utilizing the graduate program - particularly the online graduate program to elevate the status and recognition of the college.

“One of the things that has impressed me with Dean Alavalapati’s vision is the cross-engagement with the other colleges on campus in developing meaningful curricula for today’s changing marketplace,” said Rosser. “Historically, colleges within the university stayed totally ‘in their lane,’ missing the opportunity to develop important bridges that broaden the thinking and skillsets needed in today’s world.”

During the many conversations with the college regarding its needs, Rossers were made aware of a need to increase exposure through online advertising.

“I could appreciate that as I had often used that tool in advancing my company’s exposure in the market,” said Rosser. “I was happy to provide some seed money to assist in that initiative.”

“The college is grateful for Darryl’s leadership and the Rosser’s generous support of our online graduate programs,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. “The efforts made to elevate the visibility of the programs through strategic marketing and communications initiatives have been impactful to the college.”

