AUBURN UNIVERSITY

College of Forestry, Wildlife & Environment

FEATURE STORY
Mitigating pine needle blight pg. 5-6

WHAT'S INSIDE

Meet Todd Steury, new associate dean of academic affairs pg. 2

Supporting our veterans pg. 3

Extension spotlight on Bence Carter pg. 7

Endowment established in honor of Doris Tyler pg. 8

CFWE NEWS • Fall 2022

Working with Nature for Society's Well Being

In This Issue

Administration 2
Academics & Learning 3
Research & Discovery 3-6
Extension & Outreach 7
Alumni & Friends 7

Upcoming Events

Awards Ceremony **4/19**
Spring Commencement **5/5, 6 & 8**

cfwe.auburn.edu.edu/giving
Learn how you can support the CFWE.

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.

website · photo gallery · video · related articles


Reconnecting on game day

Celebrating our graduates

On Campus & Beyond

Visit our flicker site to view our photo gallery or cfwe.auburn.edu for more stories.


Honoring our 50-year alumni

Networking for job opportunities

602 Duncan Drive
1161 W. Samford Ave., Bldg. 8
Auburn, AL 36849-0001

AUBURN
College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment

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

A message from

THE DEAN

Greetings alumni, friends, faculty and students!

We hope that 2023 is off to a healthy and prosperous beginning for you and your family. In the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, the coming of a new year causes us to reflect on your generous support that enables our faculty, staff and students to pursue excellence within the college's teaching, research and outreach.

We are eager for you to discover how Professor Chris Anderson is leading a team of students to assess the function and vulnerability of the forested wetlands of the Mobile-Tensaw-Apalachee River Delta to determine its functional role in the health of the larger Mobile Bay estuary.

You'll also learn how Assistant Professor Lana Narine is using remote sensing data from NASA's Ice, Cloud and land Elevation Satellite 2, or ICESat-2, to develop methods to measure canopy cover, a fundamental attribute of forest structure. This data can be used to assess forest degradation, estimate habitat suitability and to support a range of other applications.

Yet another research team in the college is quantifying how the lifecycle of lumber, from the initial steps of tree planting to lumber manufacturing to final house construction, may help to mitigate climate change by increasing carbon storage.

Finally, our feature story showcases how Professor Lori Eckhardt's research team is studying the impacts and biological causes of brown-spot needle blight, a disease posing a critical threat to pine forests. With this research, the team hopes to arm landowners and forest managers with information to adjust management strategies of affected stands.

Once again, we thank you for your continued support as we seek to fulfill Auburn University's land-grant mission to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of citizens in Alabama and beyond.

War Eagle!

Janaki R. R. Alavalapati, Dean

Administration

Meet Todd Steury, CFWE's new associate dean of academic affairs

Todd Steury, associate professor of wildlife biology in Auburn University's College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, was named the college's new associate dean of academic affairs.

Steury — who began the role on Sept. 1 — has served in leadership roles as chair of the college's Undergraduate Policies and Procedures Committee, chair of the University Senate Teaching Effectiveness Committee and most recently as chair of the Auburn University Senate.

"Dr. Steury will provide excellent leadership for the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the college. "We are confident he will cultivate a collaborative environment to engage faculty and staff in the forward advancement of the college."

As faculty senate chair, Steury was instrumental in establishing formal rules for senate meetings via Zoom, worked with the Faculty Research Committee to pass a research data policy for the university and provided input to the administration as it navigated the COVID-19 pandemic, among other projects that were completed or initiated while he was in the position.

"I really look forward to working with the faculty, staff and students of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment," said Steury. "My goal is to make our college the best institution for learning about natural resource management in the U.S."

"My goal is to make our college the best institution for learning about natural resource management in the U.S."

– Todd Steury

Steury, who has been an Auburn University faculty member since 2008, earned his bachelor's degree in biology at the University of Colorado, his master's degree in wildlife resources at the University of Idaho and his doctorate in ecology at Indiana State University.

In 2016, he was a Provost's Fellow in the SEC Academic Leadership Development Program. Steury also has received many teaching awards during his tenure, including the college's Harold E. Christian Award for Service to Teaching in 2015.

Steury succeeds Scott Enebak, the Dwain G. Luce Professor of plant pathology and director of the Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative, who stepped down from the position on Aug. 31 and retired in January 2023.

Faculty Highlights

Daowei Zhang, George Peak Professor and associate dean of research, received the 2022 Outstanding Achievement Award from the Renewable Natural Resource Foundation for his book, "From Backwoods to Boardrooms: The Rise of Institutional Investment in Timberland," published by Oregon State University Press in September 2021.

Adam Maggard was appointed as Harry Murphy Professor in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. Maggard was recognized on Oct. 13 with the university's newly appointed or reappointed endowed chairs, professors and eminent scholars in a ceremony at the Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center. To learn about other reappointments visit cfwe.auburn.edu.

College of Forestry, Wildlife & Environment

CFWE NEWS • Fall 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 Editor.....Jessica Nelson
Contributing Writer.....Gracen Carter
Contributing Writer.....Avanelle Elmore
Designer.....Kelly Knowles

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 • cfwecom@auburn.edu

Giving

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

AUBURN
College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment

cfwe.auburn.edu

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

Academics & Learning

On-field Recognition

Prior to each home football game during the 2022 season, Auburn recognized on the field some of the university's extraordinary offerings in experiential learning as part of its annual Academic Recognition spotlight program. On Sept. 10, a group with the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment's Summer Practicum program were recognized on the field at Jordan-Hare Stadium for their work equipping students with the knowledge and ability to excel in their careers. Pictured above (from left) are College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment Dean Janaki Alavalapati and summer practicum program faculty and staff John Gilbert, Susan Cannon, Scott Enebak, Steve Ditchkoff, Tom Gallagher and Todd Steury.

Veteran's Day Breakfast

The CFWE hosted its first annual Veteran's Day Breakfast for the faculty, staff and students in honor of its veterans. During the gathering, attendees learned how student veterans can be more competitive at securing employment with state and federal conservation agencies. CFWE assistant professor Kelly Dunning, and staff members Michelle Cole and Michelle Straw, coordinated the event. The speakers who shared their knowledge and hiring tips with our veterans included: Amy Silvano, assistant chief, Wildlife Section Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, a military spouse and expert on state hiring programs; Sgt. Bill Freeman, U.S. Army, retired, conservation law enforcement officer with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; Scott Lamont, U.S. Air Force, retired, biologist with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Ecological Services; Katelynn Bowen, military spouse and district silviculturist with the U.S. Forest Service in Umatilla National Forest; and Carter Bonnell, second lieutenant in the U.S. Army serving in the Alabama Army National Guard as a platoon leader and weed science technician in the National Soil Dynamics Laboratory in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Research & Discovery

Anderson leads research team to study Mobile-Tensaw-Apalachee River Delta

An Auburn University research team in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, or CFWE, has been awarded a $459,482 grant 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 Christopher Anderson, lead principal investigator, the grant will fund a study to assess the function and vulnerability of forested wetlands in the Mobile-Tensaw-Apalachee River Delta, or MTA River Delta.

Often referred to as "America's Amazon," the MTA River Delta is approximately 260,000 acres and is dominated by a complex network of tidal and non-tidal wetlands. The watershed draining to the MTA River Delta is approximately 46,000 square miles extending over most of Alabama, including drainage from the Alabama, Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers.

Anderson, a professor of coastal wetland ecology, will lead the study with a team of researchers that includes Auburn Professor Latif Kalin of the CFWE and University of South Alabama Professor Ruth Carmichael from the Dauphin Island Sea Lab.

"The delta is a tremendous wetland complex of international significance; however, it remains greatly understudied," said Anderson. "The MTA has significant river flows that are highly connected to tidal forested floodplain wetlands before draining to Mobile Bay. These wetlands likely provide important contributions to the bay and its productivity."

The team will collect field data for approximately two years. Salinity and tidal connectivity data will be used with other existing long-term data to develop predictive models for each gaging station. River salinity and tidal connectivity models will be developed using artificial neural networks, or ANNs.

"ANN modeling is a data-driven approach that can help learn and map complex relationships between inputs and outputs," said Anderson. "These models will be used to forecast MTA River Delta salinity and tidal connectivity based on expected shifts in important input variables such as tide levels and river flow."

The team also plans to characterize the relationship between river flows from the MTA and the extent of delta-derived organic matter to Mobile Bay.

Some of the team members on the MTA River Delta project include from left to right: Sam Bickley of the Auburn University CFWE; Ruth Carmichael of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, or DISL; Akela Yuhl also of the DISL; and Chris Anderson, lead principal investigator in Auburn University's CFWE.

Uncertainty remains about the role that the MTA River Delta plays in terms of export of organic matter and nutrients to the greater estuary, says Anderson. These materials may be very important for the aquatic productivity of Mobile Bay.

The collaboration with Carmichael and others at Dauphin Island Sea Lab, or DISL, will bring technical expertise to the project that will enable the team to evaluate the delta's influence for the first time.

"Working with the DISL, we will trace organic matter from the delta by measuring carbon and nitrogen stable isotope ratios that can help us distinguish sources," Anderson said.

"This approach will help us determine the role of the MTA River Delta in exporting organic matter of different sources due to tidal connectivity and river flow."

"There is tremendous urgency to better uderstand the expected fate of the MTA River Delta because there are important questions about its functional role in the larger Mobile Bay esturary."

– Dean Janaki Alavalapati

"Anderson's research will help to identify potential risks to this important coastal resource," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of CFWE.

Team Working to Mitigate Growing Threat to Southern Pine Forests

Funded by a $2.1 million U.S. Forest Service grant, the researchers will study the brown-spot needle blight

It appears first as small brown spots surrounded by a yellow halo, splattered across loblolly pine needles like a chemical spill. And then it spreads.

Brown-spot needle blight is an increasing threat to pine forests, but a research team in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and the Environment is working to find solutions.

Through a $2.1 million U.S. Forest Service grant, Lori Eckhardt, a professor of forest health, and her team members in the college—Joseph Fan, associate professor of forest ecology and statistics; Lana Narine, assistant professor of remote sensing and modeling; and Janna Willoughby, assistant professor of population and conservation genetics—are aiming to determine the impacts on productivity and biological causes of needle blight.

Insect pests and fungal diseases are an urgent concern to the forest industry. Costs associated with damage caused by non-native pests and pathogens within U.S. forests in 2000 were estimated at approximately $4.2 billion annually.

$2.1 million
grant from the
U.S. Forest Service

The Alabama Forestry Commission, or AFC, has been receiving phone calls since spring 2022 from landowners and the public reporting brown pine needles on previously healthy trees. Many of these calls came first from counties in the northwest and northeast regions of Alabama. The disease has since been confirmed in 36 of 67 Alabama counties.

Historically, the needle blight has only infected longleaf pines, or Pinus palustris, but in the last few years, the disease also has begun to infect loblolly pines, or Pinus taeda, in young and mature stands.

Discolored needles are the first sign of infection. Over time, the infected area turns brown with a dark red or dark green border. The discoloration begins in the lower portion of the crown and moves up as the disease spreads by rain and wind events. An easy way to identify the disease is if the pine needles look as if they have been scorched by fire, even though there has been no burn.

The cause for this change in behavior of the disease has yet to be determined, but researchers speculate that a new sub-species has evolved from the original fungal pest, according to the AFC.

Shown from left to right are team members Joseph Fan, associate professor of forest ecology and statistics; Lana Narine, assistant professor of remote sensing and modeling; Lori Eckhardt, team leader and professor of forest health; J. Ryan Mitchell, forestry regional extension agent with the Alabama Extension System; and Janna Willoughby, assistant professor of population and conservation genetics.

The first sign of brown-spot needle blight infection is discoloration of the needles. Infected needles will contain circular lesions with a brown spot surrounded by a yellow halo. Over time, the infected area will turn brown with a dark red or dark green border.

Their research may help landowners and forest managers predict future timber revenues from affected stands more precisely and adjust management activities accordingly.

"We hope to determine the distribution and movement of the needle pathogens, determine if their appearance is due to more aggressive strains and understand the disease cycle and the environmental factors that drive their emergence and distribution," said Lori Eckhardt, team leader, CFWE professor of integrated forest pathology and entomology and director of the Forest Health Cooperative. "Non-native pests and pathogens may not only occur on a large regional scale, but also on isolated acreages. This is vital, as the majority of the seven million acres of pines in Alabama are privately owned."

"An investment in mitigating forest pests, such as those associated with needle blight, requires adaptive management geared to prevention and remediation that provide economically sound solutions."

– Lori Eckhardt

The Alabama forest industry contributes more than $25 billion to the state's economy, according to the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The sustainability and profitability of these pine forests and industrial wood plantations rely on optimal tree growth. However, the continued introduction of non-native insect pests and fungal pathogens, as well as the movement of native forest pests into forest ecosystems, can result in significant economic impacts.

Another team member, J. Ryan Mitchell, a regional extension agent with the Alabama Extension System, will assist with the outreach component of the project.

"One of the roles for extension during this project is to create publications on the research that is being conducted and get that information out to the landowners and citizens of Alabama."

– J. Ryan Mitchell

"We will be providing workshops to train the trainers and teach others about the brown-spot needle blight, how to identify it, the ecology and different management techniques," said Mitchell.

CFWE held a workshop June 26-27 at Auburn University to share current assessments of brown-spot needle blight. Professionals from the Southeast spoke on ways to possibly manage the disease and how it may vary from state to state. Expert presentations included identification, mitigation, genetic diversity and environmental factors, among others.

"The knowledge produced by Eckhardt and her team will be used to develop best management practices for areas affected by needle blight."

– Dean Janaki Alavalapati

"The project will also help direct future research actions, especially when little is known regarding the impact of the pests and pathogens associated with loblolly pine in the southeastern United States." said Janaki Alavlapati, dean of the college.

Landowners are encouraged to contact their local AFC office if their pines are infected with brown-spot needle blight. Symptomatic needles can be collected and brought to the Forest Health Dynamics Laboratory at Auburn University for confirmation.

Research & Discovery

Narine leads study to develop methods for computing canopy cover from NASA's ICESat-2 instrument

A research team co-led by an Auburn University scientist is the first to investigate and report methods for computing canopy cover from NASA's Ice, Cloud and land Elevation Satellite 2, or ICESat-2.

Part of NASA's Earth Observing System, ICESat-2 is a satellite mission for measuring ice sheet elevation and sea ice thickness, as well as land topography, vegetation characteristics and clouds.

In a recent study published in the journal Remote Sensing of Environment, the team, co-led by Lana Narine, assistant professor of geospatial analytics in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, investigated methods to derive canopy cover and characterize the predictive capability with ICESat-2.

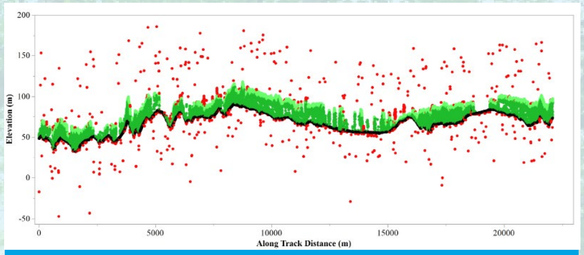
Although a critical forest biophysical attribute, canopy cover is not yet reported from ICESat-2, and the last canopy cover study for the contiguous United States is from the year 2016. Thus, there is a need to better understand the application of ICESat-2 for providing canopy cover information and for potentially contributing to an updated canopy cover product.

"Canopy cover is a fundamental attribute of forest vegetation structure that is used to define a forest and support a range of applications, including assessing forest degradation, estimating habitat suitability and characterizing aboveground biomass."

– Lana Narine

Funded by a Studies with ICESat-2 grant from NASA ICESat-2 Science Team, the project highlighted the potential of applying freely and openly available earth observation data provided by the ICESat-2 mission for deriving canopy cover.

Using ICESat-2's photon-counting light detection and ranging data and the mission's vegetation product data, the study focused on two forested areas within the southern U.S.: the Sam Houston National Forest, or SHNF, in southeast Texas; and the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center, or SDFEC, in southern Alabama.

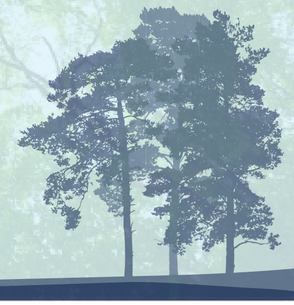


A profile of raw ICESat-2 data, or geolocated photons, over temperate forests.

The objectives of the study were to develop and evaluate equations estimating canopy cover with ICESat-2 and evaluate a modeling-based approach for improving estimates.

"The integration of data from a spaceborne light detection and ranging instrument like ICESat-2 presents a unique opportunity to integrate vegetation structural information over broad spatial scales," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment.

Ongoing collaborative efforts of Narine and co-authors Sorin Popescu and Lonesome Malambo of Texas A&M University will include the development of a gridded canopy cover product using ICESat-2.



Auburn research team examines role of climate-smart forestry in the Southeast

An Auburn University research team has published the first study to define, outline and apply novel climate-smart forestry, or CSF, principles to North America, specifically the Southern United States.

Climate-smart forestry is defined in the study as the relationship between economic goals and ecosystem services recognized by experts from the private timber industry, non-governmental organizations and private forest landowners.

The study, recently published in the journal Forests, sought to define CSF within the Southeast and exhibit how loblolly pine management, forest products and data integrity can all work harmoniously to battle climate change by supporting increased forest carbon storage, a major CSF objective.

Trees draw carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, which supports tree function and growth. The entire tree stores carbon, including the trunks, branches, leaves and roots. When harvested, a tree continues to store carbon in the form of wood products.

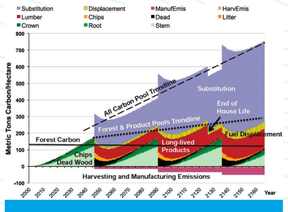
"In short, the takeaway is how the lifecycle of lumber, a typical forest product, from the initial steps of tree planting to lumber manufacturing to final house construction, all help mitigate climate change by increasing carbon storage. All of this is initiated by operational silvicultural activities that support timber stand production and health," said Noah Shephard, research associate in Auburn's College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment and lead author of the study.

Shephard worked with co-authors in the college, including Lana Narine, assistant professor of geospatial analytics; Yucheng Peng, assistant professor of sustainable packaging and bioproducts; and Adam Maggard, associate professor of forest systems management.

The study shows that to mitigate climate change, forest products are key to increasing carbon sequestration beyond the current baseline. Fortunately, traditional forest plantation practices are already working toward this goal.

"Significantly, southern private forests account for almost 60 percent of nationwide net aboveground biomass flux, a flux approximately 2.5 times greater than Northern private forests and 10 times greater than Western private forests."

– Noah Shepard



Carbon pools in forest stand, forest products, and under forest product substitution. From Maggard et al. Originally developed for sustainable forest management in the Pacific Northwest by Perez-Garcia et al. and Lippke et al.

website

The study shows that to mitigate climate change, forest products are key to increasing carbon sequestration beyond the current baseline. Fortunately, traditional forest plantation practices are already working toward this goal.

"Everyday forestry practices like genetic improvement, planting, weed control, stand density management, nutrient improvement and harvest can all lead to climate change mitigation. All of this must be supported by timber products, a strong timber product market, and incentives for active land management with timber harvesting," said Shephard.

As the popularity of CSF implementation grows in the United States, it is increasingly important for landowners to be aware of these practices and how they can contribute to climate change mitigation. Using nature-based solutions like CSF, foresters, landowners and land managers can leverage naturally occurring ecosystem services, such as the carbon cycle, to increase climate change mitigation.

"This research serves as the first major building block to CSF in North America. From a comprehension perspective, our hope is that our review will jump-start the climate-smart forestry movement for forest landowners, forest researchers and the forest industry. With our review, we hope others will advance realistic CSF applications for southern landowners, especially within Alabama. This will not only help Alabama landowners in terms of changing conditions but set the state as the leading example in the U.S. for pragmatic land management," said Shephard.

This study was made possible by the funding and expertise provided by Resource Management Services, or RMS, Forest Investment Associates, or FIA, and The Westervelt Company.

"Given the economic and societal importance of forests within the Southeast, the research and efforts being made by Shephard and his team to examine the potential influences of climate-smart forestry initiatives are significant," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. "We anticipate many positive results for Alabama's landowners from this impactful work."

Extension & Outreach

Alabama Forestry Commission awards CFWE tree as champion

The College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, or CFWE, recently began enhancing Weagle Woods, an 11-acre tract of forestland located behind the college. This newly developed outdoor learning laboratory has attracted further attention due to the presence of an American beech tree located in the southeast corner of the property.

Standing at 113 feet tall with a circumference of 140 inches, the beech was named the largest in the state by the Alabama Forestry Commission, or AFC.

The AFC Champion Tree Program honors the largest tree of each species in Alabama, regardless of its age or history. The program, which began in 1970, has designated 136 champion trees found in 46 counties.

"Beech is a slow grower, which is a testament to the size of this tree," said Alex Hedgepath, the Auburn University arborist who nominated the tree, in a YouTube video created by Auburn University Facilities Management.

"I'm assuming this tree is more than 150 years old given the size and is likely responsible for the rest of the American beech found in the immediate area," said Hedgepath.

more than 150 years old

Thanks to Hedgepath and Facilities Management, Weagle Woods is now recognized for the champion tree. As part of this recognition, the CFWE and Hedgepath will receive certificates, and a permanent marker will be placed at the base of the tree by the commission.

Weagle Woods Project Coordinator and Professor of Practice Amy Counterman used this opportunity to challenge the students of her Environmental Interpretation class to create informative signage for the champion beech tree.

The sign created by wildlife ecology and management student Ariana Hansen was chosen to stand at the base of the tree with the commission's permanent marker.

"I'm excited to see my work on display with this champion tree, and honored that my signage was chosen," said Hansen.

The award has brought attention to the value of preserving Weagle Woods as a campus resource for passive recreation and environmental education.

"We are delighted that Alex recognized the American beech as a champion and grateful that Auburn's Facilities Management has enabled the college to conserve this property for the benefit of the Auburn community," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment.

Extension Spotlight

Meet Bence Carter, regional extension agent for the Wiregrass region

Bence Carter is an Alabama Forestry, Wildlife and Natural Resources Team regional extension agent. He serves the 10-county Wiregrass region, and his primary office is the Wiregrass Research and Extension Center in Headland, AL.

A native of Enterprise, he holds B.S. degrees in biology from Birmingham-Southern College and fisheries and wildlife sciences from Oregon State University, and a Masters of Natural Resources Management from Auburn University. Bence is also a Certified Wildlife Biologist through The Wildlife Society.

Bence is responsible for providing technical assistance to the citizens of the Wiregrass region in the areas of natural resources management, as well as developing research-based educational programming to help better the lives of the people in the Wiregrass.

"The favorite part of my job is working with people. Everyone has different goals for their property but helping them identify and work to meet them shows the value of Alabama Extension," said Carter.

To particiapte in the Alabama Landowner Survey, go to
www.aces.edu/go/LandownerSurvey

Alumni & Friends

Auburn University graduates establish Hispanic Alumni Endowed Scholarship

Auburn University graduates have sponsored the first Hispanic Alumni Endowed Scholarship in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, or CFWE.

Erica Santana, a 2010 wildlife science alumna, and Sebastian D. Rodriguez, a 2015 natural resources management alumnus, sponsored the endowed scholarship to support the advancement of diversity and inclusion in the college.

"Our experiences and academic journeys at Auburn have compelled us to provide this opportunity for other Hispanic and Latino students," said Rodriguez.

Historically, Black and Latino students have been underrepresented in natural resources management. The idea behind the scholarship is to increase academic opportunity for these populations pursuing forestry and wildlife career paths, said Santana. Increasing demographic diversity also increases diversity in experience, opinion, perspective and culture, which is a vital part of managing public trust resources.

"Endowing and providing this annual scholarship is one small step toward evolving resource management into a more inclusive discipline," said Santana.

Kenneth Day, a 1981 Auburn forestry management graduate, approached Santana, Rodriguez and other alumni to propose the creation of the endowment for Hispanic students, similar to one he helped to create for African American students in 2015.

The two alumni are grateful for the support of Kenneth Day; Dana Little, a 1979 forestry management graduate; and Heather Crozier, the CFWE director of development.

"Ken recently had success with launching the African American Alumni Endowed Scholarship and wanted to expand on similar initiatives," said Rodriguez. "This scholarship really wouldn't exist without him."

As sponsors, Santana and Rodriguez have established the funding and will serve as ambassadors to build the endowment in partnership with other alumni and the college.

"This endowed scholarship will create a more inclusive environment in our college and ultimately serve to diversify the fields of forestry, wildlife and natural resources," said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment.

"We sincerely appreciate the contributions of our alumni to benefit our students and the future of our industries."

– Dean Janaki Alavalapati

Endowment established at Auburn University to honor Doris Bass Tyler, celebrated citizen of Covington County

The Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation has established the Doris Bass Tyler Endowed Scholarship at Auburn University for the purpose of providing scholarships in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, or CFWE.

As a dedicated employee of the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation, Tyler has worked tirelessly during her life in support of Solon Dixon's vision of educating future generations about the conservation of natural resources. With this gift, her career is recognized and celebrated through the financial support granted to CFWE students.

Tyler's namesake scholarship will be eligible to forestry or wildlife ecology and management majors of good academic standing. The student recipient must also be a resident of one of the following counties: Covington, Butler, Conecuh, Escambia, Crenshaw, Coffee or Geneva. However, preference is given to a student from Covington County, in which Doris Bass Tyler is a celebrated member of the community.

"It is exciting to know that a scholarship bearing my name will continue to promote Mr. Solon Dixon's vision for forestry education and the Foundation's primary focus to fund forestry, forestry education and conservation programs."

– Doris Tyler

Doris Bass Tyler was born in Andalusia, Alabama, February 18, 1932, to Florence Perdue Bass and Andrew Bennett Bass. She graduated from Andalusia High School in 1950 and immediately began her career in the business world, progressing from an office assistant to office manager and executive secretary.

It was through Solon and Charles Dixon that Tyler came to understand the significance of committing to the conservation of timber and natural resources.

In 1967, Tyler was employed by Charles Dixon and Company and remained with the Dixon family in their timber and farming businesses until her retirement with the Dixon Family Partnership L.P. in 2001.

She was invited to serve as a director of the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation and Gunter Dixon Foundation boards in 1998. As a director, she was elected to the office of secretary, and in September 2001, she was nominated and elected to represent the Foundation as its president.

During her years of service, the fair market value of the Foundation's managed assets has grown 53 percent, and the Foundation has contributed over 22 million dollars to national, state and local charitable entities.

"I am humbled, honored, appreciative and grateful to my fellow board members for their decision for this outstanding recognition in my honor. Most of all, I treasure their friendship, love and support that was given me during my tenure as president of the Foundation," said Tyler.

Steadfast, Tyler sought to achieve Solon Dixon's purposes and objectives as detailed in the Foundation's articles of incorporation. Her service as president of the Foundation extended from September 2001 to June 2022, and today she continues her service as a director.

"Her attention to detail, conviction to manage the financial assets given by Mr. Solon Dixon to the Foundation and the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center, and consideration of charitable entities' purposes are characteristics which she has contributed to the successful operation of the Foundation," said Phillip Jones, current president of the Foundation.

"The directors of the Foundation are proud of and applaud her representation and success during her years of service as president."

"Our college is honored to receive this endowment from the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation in honor of Doris Bass Tyler. She has exhibited an incredible work ethic and dedication to her community throughout her life and career," said Heather Crozier, the college's director of development. "Her legacy has had an impact at this and many other institutions, and our students will greatly benefit from this gift."

Graduate Student Association Photo Contest

The CFWE Graduate Student Association's 2022 Photo Contest winners were awarded to faculty, staff and students in the following categories: Extension, Dr. Nancy J. Loewenstein; Field Research, Arjun Rijal; Game Camera, Matthew McDonough; Landscape, Tristan Swartout; Teaching, Luiza Lazzaro; and Wildlife, Monet Gomes. The winning photos will be framed and displayed within the halls of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment building.