



College of Forestry, Wildlife & Environment

FEATURE STORY

Advancing CLT, expanding programs

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Working with Nature for Society's Well-Being

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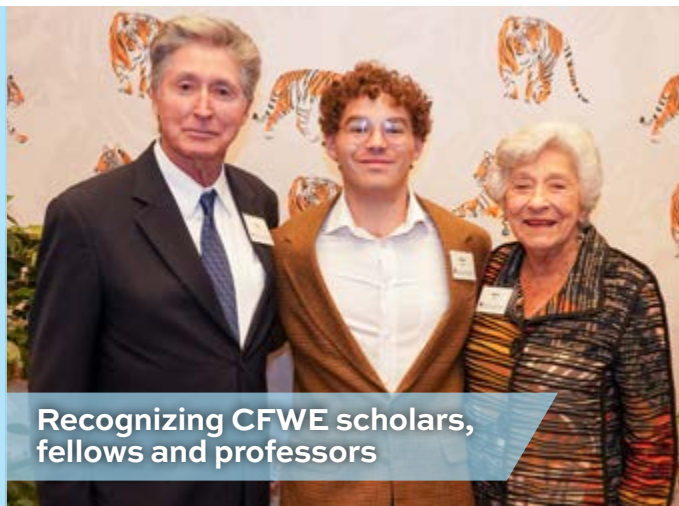
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Recognizing CFWE scholars,
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Honoring the latest FEWL
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On Campus & Beyond

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Celebrating CFWE's Woodlands &
Wildlife Society members



Sharing food, fellowship at
CFWE's Homecoming Tailgate

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/// A message from THE DEAN



Dear Alumni and Friends,

As we reflect on the fall semester, I am proud to highlight the remarkable achievements and initiatives within our college that serve its land-grant mission.

Recognized for their commitment to excellence and innovation, we celebrated Alumni Professor Christopher Lepczyk, who received the Provost Award for Faculty Excellence in Research Mentoring, and Suanne Gilbert, who was honored with the Auburn Spirit of Excellence Award for her contributions to the university. We also recognize the academic achievement of Graduation Student Marshal Evie Pearson, a third-generation student, who continues her family's legacy in sustainable biomaterials and packaging. We also welcomed Matt Ezekiel and Douglas Ziebach to our Advisory Council, who will contribute to advancing our academic quality and strategic initiatives.

In our pursuit of delivering an exceptional student experience, we launched a seven-week study abroad program in Costa Rica that will allow students to complete a 15-credit minor in Tropical Conservation and Sustainable Development. The Wildlife Enterprise Management program has partnered with the Safari Club International Foundation and Sables to expand experiential learning opportunities for students focused on the wildlife enterprise field.

Our commitment to impactful research continues to thrive. Our faculty secured a \$1.05 million federal appropriation from the U.S. Forest Service to develop sustainable recovery mechanisms and alternative products sourced from downed timber. Additionally, they received a grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture to pursue sustainable agroforestry, focusing on tree genetics and domestication for wood pulp production. A graduate student, funded by the Joint Fire Science Program's Graduate Research Innovation Award, is conducting critical research on how variations in fuel composition affect fire intensity and tree mortality within longleaf ecosystems.

We also achieved several key outreach initiatives. We dedicated the new Environmental Education Building at the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center, enhancing our environmental education programming. Our second cross-laminated timber conference, titled "The Sustainable Future of CLT in the South: Grow. Design. Build.," attracted experts from around the world to discuss the latest developments in sustainable timber construction.

Philanthropy and stakeholder engagement remain crucial to achieving these outcomes and we sincerely thank all those who have sustained the CFWE with your time, treasure and wisdom.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support.

War Eagle!

Janaki R. R. Alavalapati
Emmett F. Thompson Dean

Administration

Lepczyk wins Provost Award for Faculty Excellence in Research Mentoring

by Amy Burtch

Auburn University selected College of Wildlife, Forestry and Environment's (CFWE) Alumni Professor Christopher Lepczyk to receive the Provost Award for Faculty Excellence in Research Mentoring, which recognizes faculty members who go above and beyond in supporting their students' research.

Lepczyk considers this honor a recognition of his career of giving students opportunities. In fact, he has been helping students become interested in conducting research for almost 25 years.

"To me, it's recognition of helping students find a pathway forward and hopefully learning to love science and research," said Lepczyk.

In his nomination, CFWE Associate Dean of Research Daowei Zhang noted Lepczyk, "has a unique ability to motivate and install values beneficial to undergraduate and graduate students."

The "unique ability to motivate" Zhang identifies is right in line with Lepczyk's mentorship approach.



Christopher Lepczyk, Alumni Professor, Wildlife Biology and Conservation

"I am much less focused on disciplinary kind of work — I do that, but I am more interested in asking questions first," he said.

"I hope the exposure and experience my students have builds a more well-rounded individual."

— Christopher Lepczyk



Gilbert honored with Auburn Spirit of Excellence Award

by Jenna Parnell

Suanne Gilbert, an exemplary employee in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE), was recently honored with the Auburn Spirit of Excellence Award for November.

This award recognizes outstanding contributions to the university's mission and celebrates individuals who consistently exceed expectations, elevate the quality of service and positively impact the Auburn community.

As a vital member of the CFWE, Gilbert is responsible for a range of essential tasks, from managing purchasing and transactions to processing travel reimbursements and overseeing professional services contracts.

These critical responsibilities may not always be in the spotlight, but they are the backbone of the college's smooth operations.

Paula Davis, Gilbert's supervisor and CFWE finance director, said, "Her cheerful demeanor and eagerness to help have earned her high praise from those she supports. Suanne consistently goes above



Suanne Gilbert, Administrative Support Specialist II, Travel/Purchasing

and beyond to ensure that essential tasks are addressed for the college."

"I was shocked when I received the award," Gilbert said.

"I've always just done my job and tried to help wherever I can, so being recognized in this way was unexpected but very meaningful."

— Suanne Gilbert



Ezekiel named to CFWE Advisory Council

by Cole Sikes

The College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE) has welcomed Matt Ezekiel as a new member of its Advisory Council. A pioneer in the forest industry and Auburn alumnus, Ezekiel joins a distinguished peer group tasked with advancing the academic quality and strategies of the CFWE.

The primary goals of the CFWE Advisory Council are to provide guidance to the college regarding academic excellence, research, outreach programs and financial resources while serving as an advocate for the institution. This group is comprised of alumni, friends, stakeholders and professional colleagues who demonstrate interest in supporting the college.

Ezekiel of Weogufka, Alabama, graduated from the CFWE in 1995 with a bachelor's degree in forest resources. Since departing Auburn,

he was employed by International Paper (formerly Champion International) for approximately a decade before joining Resource Management Service, LLC (RMS), a timberland investment management firm, in November 2006. Ezekiel and RMS also collaborate through partnerships with organizations to promote sustainable practices, wildlife ecosystems and proper forest management. A recent example of his work is the reintroduction of the federally endangered reticulated flatwoods salamander on private land in Florida.

These experiences make Ezekiel a qualified candidate to serve on the council, bringing nearly three decades of industry experience to the CFWE.

The successful lineage of producing quality graduates in the CFWE is a primary goal that Ezekiel aims to continue.



Reticulated flatwoods salamander
Photo credit: Pierson Hill



Matt Ezekiel speaks with CFWE students at the annual career fair.

He feels that all the college's students deserve to have the same preparation for their careers.

"I think most would agree that the CFWE is well-known and highly regarded for its emphasis on producing quality graduates by properly and purposefully blending applied science and real-world application in its curriculum," Ezekiel said. "Most, if not all graduates can contribute immediately to the success of whomever may employ them."

For Ezekiel, his appointment to the CFWE's Advisory Council is a full-circle moment. He recalls

his academic experiences well and is eager to begin working with his peers.

"I look forward to serving on the council and working with everyone to sustain and grow the CFWE's tradition of academic excellence and its reputation for producing top-tier, market-relevant graduates."

— Matt Ezekiel

CFWE welcomes Ziebach as new Advisory Council member

by Cole Sikes



Douglas Ziebach (left) stands with his father, Elmo Ziebach, at a forestry operation site.

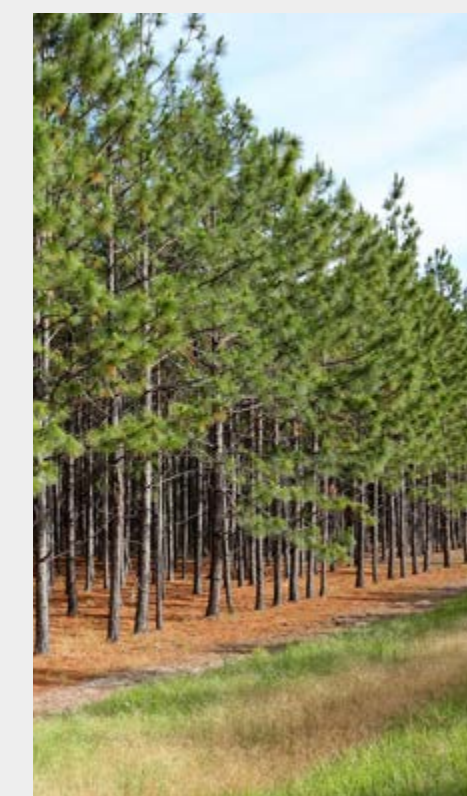
undergraduates receive the best education, experiential learning and employment opportunities.

From an early age, Ziebach had an interest in everything forestry. Growing up with his family's business, Ziebach & Webb Timber Company, he adhered to the successful practices of his father, Elmo Ziebach, and his business partner, Mike Webb. His passions led him to further his education at Auburn, pursuing a bachelor's degree in forestry.

After earning his degree from what was then the Auburn School of Forestry in 1995, Ziebach continued working in the industry, obtaining decades of experience. Some of his day-to-day responsibilities include managing 17 foresters and timber buyers across Alabama and northwest Florida.

Because Ziebach understands the importance of an Auburn education, he is eager to give back to the institution that prepared him for his successful career.

"I am very honored to be appointed to serve on the Advisory Council of my alma mater, a place that has had a profound impact on my personal and professional life," Ziebach said. "I look forward to contributing to the ongoing success of the CFWE."



Ziebach will begin serving in this role immediately, contributing to the council's advancement of the CFWE.

"I am committed to supporting initiatives that foster academic excellence, innovation and student development—ensuring that current and future students receive the same transformative education that prepared me for my career."

— Douglas Ziebach



College of Forestry, Wildlife & Environment

CFWE NEWS • Fall 2024

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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.

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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.



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CFWE launches new study abroad minor in Costa Rica

by Jamie Anderson

The College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE) has launched a new seven-week study abroad experience in Costa Rica that will enable students to complete a 15-credit minor in Tropical Conservation and Sustainable Development in one summer. The minor is available to all students across the university and there are no course prerequisites.

Intended to be interdisciplinary and collaborative, the minor will be taught by Auburn faculty from four colleges, including the CFWE, College of Agriculture, College of Science and Mathematics and the University College of Academic Sustainability. Further, faculty and researchers from the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) will enhance the experience with local knowledge and expertise and support for field classes.

The program is hosted by CATIE, a gated campus near Turrialba, in the striking mountains of Costa Rica. CATIE is an academic center for innovation and sustainable development in topics related to agriculture, management, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The campus has numerous dormitories and

apartments, classrooms, research and computer labs, a cafeteria and a club with a restaurant and swimming pool. CATIE also boasts extensive working lands dedicated to agriculture and conservation for near-campus field classes.

The five-course minor is taught at the 3000 level, and a minimum sophomore-level standing is required by the time of travel. Course topics include protected area management, ecosystem service, climate change and soil and watershed management.

Designed to provide a balance between traditional classroom theory and experiential learning, the faculty have developed the curricula to be fast paced and immersive.

“The program will feature two three-week sessions with students enrolled in two classes per session,” said Wayne Morse, CFWE professor and program lead.

“As they progress, students will gain an in-depth understanding of these topics through a mixture of classroom lectures and field experiences.”

– Wayne Morse



“Additionally, they will participate in a nine-day travel course in between sessions, where they will visit a variety of Costa Rica’s famous national parks and protected areas.”

Costa Rica is a small, vibrant country in Central America known for its stunning biodiversity, ecotourism and adventure activities. It boasts major life zones, including lush cloud forests, tropical dry forests, mangroves, pristine beaches along both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts and active volcanoes.

The country is also famous for its national parks and conservation efforts protecting a wide variety of ecosystems, plant species and wildlife, including sloths, howler monkeys, jaguars, poison dart frogs and flamboyant birds like the resplendent quetzal, scarlet and green macaw and several species of toucan.



To learn more about the minor, scan the QR code.



CFWE’s Wildlife Enterprise Management program partners with industry to advance student experiential learning

by Cole Sikes



The College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE) will now offer more experiential learning opportunities to its Wildlife Enterprise Management students thanks to a new industry partnership. As part of the Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF) University Program and Sables, a female-led organization that raises funds to support wildlife and conservation educational programs, the partnership will focus on enlightening Auburn students about careers in the wildlife enterprise field.

The SCIF is a non-profit organization whose mission is

to ensure the sustainable future of wildlife through education, conservation and hunting efforts. The foundation conducts research, hosts engaging educational programs and donates to other organizations and institutions that align with similar goals.

“While we expose students to many aspects of the wildlife enterprise industry in the classroom, learning from industry experts is crucial to students’ success.”

– Todd Franks

SCIF’s University Program brings the wildlife industry to the student body by sponsoring an all-day field experience at a working Alabama quail plantation, providing 12 students with Safari Club International (SCI) conference registrations and overnight lodging and facilitating guest lecturers. These activities provide opportunities for students and professionals to discuss regional challenges, differences and management methods.

Funding for the program was generously provided by SCIF members Holland and Carolyn Powell. The Powells are currently serving or have served as leadership in the SCIF.

“The opportunity for students to have direct contact with experts in the classroom and at the SCI Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, exposes them to more than 800 vendors who represent

lodge owners and managers, booking agencies, guides, outfitters as well as manufacturers of clothing, firearms, archery, ammunition and just about every hunting and fishing accessory known to man,” said Franks.

With the assistance of SCIF Assistant Director of Education Todd Roggenkamp, Franks will develop curricula, programming and leadership. Some teaching subjects of note within the program are the North America Model of Wildlife Conservation, best land management practices, hospitality regimens, food service and client attraction and retention.

Franks says that the generosity and willingness of industry partners to collaborate opens new doors of possibility for CFWE students.

“If not for the gracious financial support of SCIF members Holland and Carolyn Powell as well as the support of the SCIF and Sables, these students would most likely never get to experience the SCI Conference nor a field day hosted at the Five Star Preserve in Coosa County, Alabama,” said Franks. “We look forward to continuing this relationship long into the future.”



Student Marshal Evie Pearson reflects on her time in the CFWE, degree

by Blair Milford



Evie Pearson, Sustainable Biomaterials and Packaging

Recent Graduation Student Marshal Evie Pearson was not merely studying forest products; she is a product of forestry. A third-generation student in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE), she initially set her sights on a different career. However, after witnessing the profound impact the CFWE had on her family and the environment, she was prompted to change her path, and she hasn’t looked back since.

Pearson was raised in a family built upon forestry. Her mother, father and grandfather studied forestry at the CFWE.

“I had sworn up and down that I wasn’t going to go into forestry, but I made my way here in a different way,” Pearson recalled. “I completely changed my life plan for this major.”

Her parents originally introduced her to the idea of studying forestry, but Pearson was

adamant about choosing her own path. Her perspective shifted when she recognized the CFWE’s environmental impact, particularly within the Sustainable Biomaterials and Packaging program.

Due to growing environmental concerns surrounding the use of petroleum-based materials, companies are developing new technologies to allow the use of sustainable forest biomaterial for packaging, cosmetics, automobiles, appliances, pharmaceuticals and commercial construction.

Recognizing the demand for professionals within this emerging industry, Auburn created a major incorporating science, engineering and business courses to equip students for careers developing and producing sustainable packaging and products.

“I was planning to come to Auburn to study nutrition or exercise

science, but I was at an event and forestry had a table,” Pearson said. “I was with my mom and Ms. Wendy [Franklin, former CFWE Student Recruiter] was at the table and started telling me about the new Sustainable Biomaterials and Packaging major and I thought it was super fascinating that research was being done and innovation was happening to replace petroleum products with forest products.”

Thanks to the program’s relatively low student-teacher ratio, Pearson has built meaningful connections in the CFWE. The unique focus on sustainable biomaterials and packaging attracts passionate, like-minded students. “It was like having built-in friends, and they are people that I am really grateful to have in my life,” she said.

Pearson encourages future CFWE students to talk to people in their classes. “Odds are if you are in the same class here, you have very similar interests,” Pearson said. “Get involved and make connections.” Her active participation and leadership roles within various organizations such as the secretary of the Sustainable Biomaterials and Packaging Society, vice president of the CFWE Schools Council and a four-year student ambassador for the college kept her engaged and connected throughout her journey.

As she progressed within her degree, her passion for sustainable biomaterials and packaging fostered deeper connections and opportunities in the college. “I would call my mom after class regularly about what I had learned, and I was just so

passionate about the material. I was getting integrated and was about to start working at the lab and doing research. I think freshman year was when I first felt like ‘Okay, this is cool.’”

Another distinctive aspect of the program is the interactivity of the faculty. Pearson attributes much of her success to Maria Soledad Peresin, an associate professor of forest biomaterials in the CFWE, who has been an invaluable mentor. “Dr. Peresin is an excellent mentor and professor to me. Many of the opportunities that I have had as a student can be attributed to her, and she continues to help me even as I work through the career search,” Pearson continued. “She makes a genuine effort to get to know her students, and she is willing to go above and beyond to help us reach our fullest potential.”

“I love learning about the possibilities for a more sustainable future, and the technology and processes that currently exist that could heavily contribute to building a more sustainable society.”

– Evie Pearson

Thanks to the community and passion she found in the CFWE, Pearson’s sense of belonging was solidified early.

From her freshman year to her future career, Pearson has truly found her place in the CFWE, continuing her family’s legacy while paving her own unique path forward.

To learn more, visit the CFWE YouTube channel.



Research & Discovery

CFWE faculty awarded USDA NIFA grant to research sustainable agroforestry

by Cole Sikes

A team of faculty in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE) are pursuing more sustainable forms of agroforestry thanks to a new grant awarded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Their research will focus on the genetics of trees and their domestication for wood pulp production — ultimately maximizing economic gains and reducing environmental impacts.

Assistant Professor of Forest Genomics Hao Chen and Assistant Professor of Forest Ecophysiology Chen Ding are focusing their research on greenhouse-grown varieties of poplar trees, a species that has the potential to revolutionize pulp mills by increasing their yield of sustainable fibers up to 40% while reducing carbon emissions.

Fueled by NIFA as part of the Critical Agriculture Research and Extension (CARE) program,

the team’s poplar field trials will use the cutting-edge genome-editing technology system, CRISPR, to create and study trees containing lower amounts of lignin. Every tree contains this material which serves as the adhesive between tree fibers, providing rigidity and making wood pulping more of a challenge.

Improving the delignification process will allow increased short-rotation harvests, creating more consistent revenue streams and reducing costs for stakeholders, while also keeping the United States pulp and paper industry competitive.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the costs of necessary wood pulping chemicals and energy increased for pulp and paper production mills. This financial stress makes Chen and Ding’s research increasingly important to the industry. Chen, who serves

as principal investigator (PI) of this project, says that their work has the potential to revolutionize pulpmill production.

“The research aims to address the challenges of developing and evaluating genetically modified poplar varieties with modified lignin properties that can thrive in the South’s environmental conditions while enhancing pulping efficiency,” Chen said.

“The project seeks to determine whether these CRISPR-edited poplar varieties can withstand the stresses encountered outside of controlled greenhouse environments, maintain improved pulp yield performance through cycles of growth and dormancy and offer increased productivity, profitability and sustainability within agroforestry systems.”

Additionally, Chen says the results can be swiftly adopted by agroforestry stakeholders in the southern U.S.

By sharing the study results through specialized workshops and online forums, the team’s outreach will empower forest landowners, pulp mill managers and other stakeholders with practical guidance on agroforestry practices. The delignification process using the new poplar tree varieties is also expected to reduce greenhouse gases, chemical usage and energy consumption.

“The goal of the study is to empower landowners and mills to embrace a climate-smart agroforestry approach — increasing economic gains while advancing environmental sustainability.”

– Hao Chen



Auburn celebrates new environmental education building, expanding programs

by Jamie Anderson



The KPNC Environmental Education Building was officially dedicated with a ribbon cutting held on Dec. 6, 2024. Shown from left to right are KPNC Manager Michael Buckman, Auburn University Board of Trustee Bob Dumas, City of Auburn Mayor Ron Anders, Auburn President Christopher B. Roberts, Auburn Provost Vini Nathan and the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment's Emmett F. Thompson Dean Janaki Alavalapati.

Auburn University unveiled its newest venue for environmental education at the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center (KPNC) during the official dedication and ribbon cutting of its Environmental Education Building held Friday, Dec. 6, 2024.

Situated at the entrance of the 120-acre tract of the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center located on North College Street in Auburn, Alabama, the structure will be a dynamic focal point of the KPNC that will welcome tens of thousands of visitors and program participants annually.

The new state-of-the-art building houses the KPNC's Woodlands Wonders Classroom and the multi-purpose City of Auburn Community Classroom, providing much-needed climate-controlled space that will enable the KPNC to expand its educational offerings and provide a unique venue for special events and other gatherings.

"Here, future generations will not only learn about the world around them but become active participants in its preservation."

— Bob Dumas

"Through hands-on experiences, engaging lessons and exploration of the outdoors, our young learners will discover the beauty and importance of nature that will stay with them for a lifetime," said Bob Dumas, Auburn University Board of Trustee.

The initial concept and design of the structure was completed

by Boston's Leers Weinzapfel Associates, led by Tom S. Chung, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C as principal architect and Su Poon, AIA, LEED AP. With funding from the Alabama Legislature, the building was constructed using cross-laminated timber (CLT), a mass timber product engineered using southern yellow pine produced in Dothan, Alabama. The prominence of this novel material showcases Alabama's forest industry and the innovation of CLT as a sustainable alternative to traditional building materials for residential and commercial construction.

Further enhancing the CLT-constructed design, the team incorporated exposed natural wood ceilings, walls, floors and abundant windows to blur the boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces, promoting a sense of wonder and exploration of the natural world.

The thoughtful placement of the structure within the landscape is also intended to demonstrate sustainable construction methods. The building sits above the land on footings, and the landscape design incorporates natural features like the "Johnny Lawrence Memorial Rain Garden," which minimizes environmental impacts and maintains natural water and runoff systems.

At the entrance of the building, visitors will encounter the building's open-air "Emily Kling Discovery Corridor" which includes interpretive signage and displays that allow visitors to

freely enjoy the KPNC's beloved live animal collection, that often complements its education programs. As an outreach facility of Auburn's College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE), the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center's mission is to promote a sense of stewardship towards nature through quality environmental education, recreation and outreach programs in partnership with Auburn and its stakeholders.

"This Environmental Education Building is a testimony to that mission," said Auburn President Christopher B. Roberts. "It embodies the united partnership between the state, university, city and community members who have joined forces to create this dynamic space for our youth and community to gather, learn and appreciate the bounty of the natural world."

"Aesthetically, this building is a showpiece of the beauty of CLT construction, but within its walls, it will accomplish something much more powerful."

— Christopher B. Roberts



Maggie Lawrence and Justin Carlson building the Johnny Lawrence Memorial Rain Garden.

Among its primary uses, the building will be the home to Kreher's Woodland Wonders Nature Preschool, an emergent, nature-based curriculum that invites children to learn through the experience of nature.



Woodland Wonders Nature Preschool Classroom

Enabled by the addition of this dedicated classroom space, this novel program has recently become the first nature preschool in the state designated as an Alabama First Class Pre-K designation. This will expand the KPNC's preschool program to provide tuition-free access to high-quality preschool education for four-year-old students in the area.

The KPNC also provides educational resources and field experiences for school-age children.

"We are very excited about the immense educational and recreational value represented by this facility for our community."

— Ron Anders

"As a First Class Pre-K, the KPNC will enable even more of our community members to benefit and enjoy its programs, who otherwise may not have had the opportunity," said City of Auburn Mayor Ron Anders.

The CFWE Emmett F. Thompson Dean Janaki Alavalapati's remarks echoed those of Auburn's leadership, which applauded the university's partnership with the state of Alabama and the City of Auburn, as well as philanthropists such as Emily Kling, Maggie Lawrence



and Kaitlin McWane who helped to support the multi-million-dollar project.

"We are eternally grateful to Louise Kreher Turner and her husband Frank for this generous gift of land, in addition to the many loyal friends of the KPNC who have also contributed," said Alavalapati.

"In keeping with their vision, the KPNC has become a cherished part of our community and an important vehicle of Auburn's land-grant mission."

— Dean Alavalapati



City of Auburn Community Classroom

Since the property was gifted to the university in 1993, many individuals have invested their time and effort to evolve the once passive-use forest preserve to the fully realized nature center that exists today, including Dean Emeriti Emmett F. Thompson and Dick Brinker, Margaret Holler, Jennifer Lolley, Sarah Crim, Glenn Glover and Arthur Herndon.

"It is their shared passion and vision that inspired our leadership and the building's architects, designers and builders to create this engaging space that will inspire a sense of stewardship toward our community and environment for years to come," said KPNC Manager Michael Buckman.

Those wishing to support the construction with a naming opportunity or other tax-deductible donation may contact Heather Crozier, CFWE's director of development, at vannhea@auburn.edu or by visiting <https://kpnc.auburn.edu/eeb/>.

View additional photos and video of the KPNC Environmental Education Building Dedication and Ribbon Cutting [online](#).

(Photo and video credit to Cole Sikes, Kelly Knowles, Blair Milford and the Auburn Chamber of Commerce.)



CFWE faculty innovate with downed timber harvest

by Amy Burtch



CFWE faculty Richard Cristan, Brian Via, Tom Gallagher, Maria Soledad Peresin and Yucheng Peng (left to right) conduct collaborative research on the harvest and reuse of downed timber..

Forest landowners in the Southeast were reeling from the devastation of Hurricane Michael when faculty in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE) sought methods to recover and utilize downed timber.

With the recent devastation of Hurricanes Helene and Milton and the increased frequency and severity of such weather events, the importance of this work is more paramount than ever.

In Georgia alone, Helene impacted 8.9 million acres, with the timber resource impact estimated at \$1.28 billion, per the Georgia Forestry Commission. And damage to western North Carolina’s abundant hardwood forests will impact that state in other significant ways.

These numbers make the downed timber research of five CFWE professors even more invaluable to sustainable recovery efforts and support for landowners and the environment. Their ongoing research is funded by a \$1.05 million federal appropriation to the U.S. Forest Service, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.

The need for downed timber innovation

From the perspective of a landowner, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist Richard Cristan considered the need for innovation in harvesting and utilizing downed timber.

“Financial losses from timber damage are high for landowners,” said Cristan. “Recovering downed timber from events like hurricanes is challenging. Landowners must harvest within two to three months due to pine bark beetles, other woodborers and fungi impacting timber quality.”

He adds that financial return for salvaging downed timber is lower than harvesting undamaged timber, and following a weather event, timber markets are flooded, limiting how much timber mills can accept.

“This ultimately impacts how much timber can be recovered, leaving landowners looking for other options,” said Cristan.

Assessing impact of catastrophic events

Cristan’s research focuses on the use of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology to understand the pattern, nature and severity of damage following windstorms.

“This research showed the feasibility and advantages of using UAV LiDAR with UAV-derived RGB imagery in evaluating the impact on storm-damaged forests,” said Cristan.

Cristan believes the research will enable foresters and other forestry professionals to quickly make informed decisions on salvaging timber and reforestation efforts, providing societal, environmental and economic benefits for landowners and hopes they adopt the UAV technologies for this purpose.

“The need to develop a faster, safer, more efficient and accurate approach to assessing and mapping storm-damaged timberland is the driving force behind my research.”

– Richard Cristan

Efficient, affordable harvesting

Tom Gallagher, professor emeritus and former Regions Professor of forest operations, focused his research on harvesting downed timber more efficiently and thus utilizing more of the downed timber in a functional way.

“Current feller-bunchers used in the Southeast are very efficient for harvesting standing trees,” said Gallagher. “But if the trees are already on the ground, they are challenging to harvest. Our idea was to develop a felling head with a small boom able to reach and gather the downed trees.”

Gallagher also strived for this new felling head to be able to attach to existing machinery,

which is cheaper than purchasing new machinery.

“Our goal is to create a safer and more efficient way to recover timber that is easier for the logger and more cost-effective for the landowner.”

– Tom Gallagher

Classifying downed timber uses

While Gallagher focuses on harvesting downed timber, Brian Via, the Regions Professor of forest products, researches the characterization of the downed timber quality before going to the lumber mill.

Via’s research seeks to provide efficient methods of classifying which timber can be used for high-value applications, like cross-laminated timber, and which can be used for lower value products, like wood composites.

“We hope that rapid assessment tools like acoustics and near-infrared spectroscopy can be used in the field to determine the ‘health’ of the tree for different product streams.”

– Brian Via

This research will benefit landowners by allowing them to affordably assess the most feasible use of downed timber before beginning recovery efforts after major weather events.

Considering value-added products

Following the assessment of downed timber health, researchers must next consider how downed timber can be used in the manufacture of value-added products. Yucheng Peng, assistant professor of sustainable packaging and bioproducts, focuses his research on exploring this issue.

Peng’s research seeks “to understand the behaviors of wood polymer composites using wood materials generated from downed timber with

different tree maturities and environmental exposure periods.”

By studying this, Peng hopes to determine the downed timber collection time window for its utilization in manufacturing wood polymer composites.

“One of our goals is to learn how quickly the downed timber needs to be harvested for optimal performance in later product uses.”

– Yucheng Peng

Impacts of this research clearly benefit forest landowners by finding new markets for the use of downed timber and minimizing the economic losses caused by hurricanes and tornadoes.

“The environmental benefit is to promote the use of downed timber in products with longer life spans to sequester the carbon stored in forests for applications in construction, automobile and packaging industries,” said Peng.

Developing new downed timber markets

Soledad Peresin, associate professor of forest biomaterials, addresses two major environmental challenges with her research: developing new markets for hurricane-downed timber and reducing the growing frequency of annual wildfires, often fueled by downed trees.

Like Peng, Peresin contributes research that seeks innovative approaches to repurpose downed timber, converting it to valuable products.

“This research could create a more sustainable and economically viable approach to forest resource utilization and food packaging.”

– Soledad Peresin

Most specifically, Peresin seeks to create efficient, scalable and cost-effective methods to convert downed timber into micro/nano materials (CNMs) and to consider if integrating CNMs can improve performance characteristics of food packaging materials.

“It addresses critical environmental concerns while potentially opening new economic opportunities and improving food safety standards.”



Gabler receives grant to advance fire management research in longleaf pine ecosystems

by Blair Milford



A student conducts an observational study with a small-scale experimental burn to assess the effects of fuel accumulation around trees.

Decades of fire exclusion have left montane longleaf pine ecosystems with accumulated fuel loads, creating challenges for land managers looking to restore these fire-dependent landscapes. Kathleen Gabler, a forestry doctoral candidate in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE), is investigating how different tree species influence fuel accumulation and fire behavior.

Funded by the Joint Fire Science Program’s (JFSP) Graduate Research Innovation (GRIN) Award, Gabler’s research aims to offer critical insights regarding how variations in fuel composition affect fire intensity and tree mortality, helping land managers develop more effective strategies for using prescribed fire.

The GRIN Award supports graduate students conducting innovative fire-related research to address fire management challenges and advance fire science. By understanding these dynamics, Gabler’s work offers practical guidance for restoring ecosystem function while minimizing damage to mature trees.

Tree species influence on fire behavior and fuel accumulation in ecosystems

Gabler’s research specifically examines how various tree species create “zones of influence” that can alter the composition and characteristics of the duff and litter layers surrounding them. These organic layers are found on the bottom of the forest floor and play important roles in the forest ecosystem. Alterations in these layers can potentially lead to differences in fire intensity and smoldering behavior, which are crucial factors in managing prescribed fires.

Taking an innovative approach to this type of research, Gabler combines observational studies with small-scale experimental burns to assess the effects of fuel accumulation around trees of varied species. Her detailed measurements of duff and litter accumulation at varying distances from tree bases, alongside analyses of fire behavior, provide a comprehensive assessment of how fire severity varies with fuel accumulation and tree types.

“This research aims to achieve a better understanding of how different tree species influence fuel accumulation and fire behavior in long-unburned montane longleaf pine ecosystems.”

– Kathleen Gabler

Her goal is to fill a critical gap in the understanding of fire reintroduction in fire-excluded montane longleaf pine systems. By providing a deeper understanding of how fuel composition and tree species interact with fire behavior, her work helps ensure that fire reintroduction efforts are both safe and collaborative. Gabler’s findings are poised to improve knowledge-sharing and collaboration among

land managers, promoting the development of more informed fire management practices.

Improving fire management for montane longleaf pine ecosystem restoration

Prescribed fire research is pivotal to the restoration of longleaf pine ecosystems, supporting the reduction risks associated with uncontrolled wildfires. By improving fire management strategies, Gabler’s work also contributes to carbon conservation by preserving mature trees which store carbon and enhance ecosystem resilience and function. Additionally, the insights gained from this study will help optimize the cost-effectiveness of fire management practices, providing land managers with data that can inform more sustainable and efficient restoration efforts.

“Gabler’s research not only advances scientific understanding of fire dynamics in longleaf pine ecosystems but also offers actionable solutions for land managers facing the complex

challenges of fire reintroduction,” said Heather Alexander, Gabler’s academic advisor, and the Dwain G. Luce Endowed Associate Professor of forest ecology.

“Her work is integral to the long-term health and productivity of these ecosystems, supporting both environmental conservation and the economic vitality of local communities.”

– Heather Alexander

By improving fire management practices, Gabler says her research will contribute to the broader goal of ecosystem restoration and the protection of vital timber resources.

“This understanding is crucial for developing more effective fire management practices, particularly in fire-dependent ecosystems,” Gabler said. “By informing prescribed burn practices, this research helps maintain ecosystem resilience and function, reducing the likelihood of catastrophic fire events.”



CFWE students receive Larry Ford Prescribed Fire Scholarship to support prescribed burning research

The Alabama Prescribed Fire Council (APFC) awarded the Larry Ford Prescribed Fire Scholarship to three College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE) graduate students. With this scholarship, each student will be given the opportunity to learn from industry professionals about prescribed burning, its benefits and the importance of prescribed fire certification. Advised by Heather D. Alexander, the Dwain G. Luce Associate Professor of forest ecology, student recipients are Joseph Kitts, an undergraduate; Josue Chevez-Sahona, a graduate student; and Kathleen Gabler, a doctoral candidate.



Extension & Outreach



Extension Spotlight
Newell joins CFWE FWNR team

Annakay Newell was recently hired as the assistant professor and extension specialist of forest health in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. Her research focuses on host-pathogen interactions and pathogen population dynamics. Her extension program will help Alabamians to properly identify forest pests and diseases, and management techniques to reduce spread and economic impacts.

Prior to taking this role, Newell served as an assistant research professor in the college, where she was responsible for research and outreach activities of the Southern Forest Nursery Management Cooperative. During her tenure, she conducted research aimed at delivering transformational and innovative solutions to issues that impact the production and regeneration of southern tree species such as pests and

diseases, drought tolerance, and climate risk management.

Newell has worked in forest nursery production and plant pathology for more than 15 years. She has master’s and doctoral degrees in plant pathology from the University of Arkansas and University of Georgia, respectively. A native of Jamaica, Newell formerly worked for the island’s Forestry Department as a plant health research officer and nursery operations coordinator. This role involved managing native and invasive forest pests, phytosanitary security and nursery inspection and certification.



Extension & Outreach

CFWE hosts conference advancing mass timber within state and region

by Jamie Anderson



Conference organizer and CFWE Harry E. Murphy Associate Professor and Extension Specialist Adam Maggard, Auburn University President Christopher B. Roberts, The Honorable Jeff Sessions, and the CFWE Emmett F. Thompson Dean Janaki Alavalapati.

The Auburn University College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment, in partnership with several other academic colleges, recently hosted a second cross-laminated timber (CLT) conference at The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center.

The three-day event titled “The Sustainable Future of CLT in the South: Grow. Design. Build.” was held Oct. 7-9, drawing participants and experts from across the country and as far away as Finland who converged to share the latest CLT and mass timber construction research, trends and developments.

“With nearly 200 forest landowners, business leaders, architects, engineers, builders and students attending, this conference provided great synergy and opportunities for learning and discussion as participants discovered pathways to grow this emerging industry,” said Adam Maggard, lead conference planner and Alabama Extension specialist and the Harry E. Murphy Associate Profession in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment.

CLT is a prefabricated wood panel made from wood stacked and glued crosswise in alternating directions to create pressed layers. This unique engineering gives the panel exceptional strength and strong fire protection while remaining lighter and creating less waste during installation than conventional alternatives, such as concrete and steel.

With an abundance of southern pine found in the region, CLT is positioned to be a growth industry in the southern U.S., benefiting the forest industry and the region’s economy.

Auburn University President Christopher B. Roberts and U.S. Attorney General and Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions provided the conference’s opening remarks, highlighting the importance of the timber industry and the university’s land-grant mission to advance mass timber as a new market for the region’s diverse industry stakeholders.

Expanding on the role of academia to lead innovation in mass timber production, design, engineering and construction, expert panelists

highlighted advancements led by the Carnegie-rated R1 institutions: Auburn University, Clemson University, University of Arkansas and University of Oregon. Richard Vlosky, director of the Louisiana Forest Products Development Center at Louisiana State University, served as moderator for the discussion that explored the role of academia in building partnerships and alliances, securing funding opportunities and delivering applied research to industry. Additionally, a panel discussion featuring representatives of WoodWorks, SmartLam North America, and state and local economic development agencies from Auburn, Dothan and Montgomery, Alabama, provided insights about the economic development initiatives undertaken to create new markets and opportunities for forest landowners and mass timber-related businesses within Alabama and the region.

Following the panel discussions, plenary and concurrent sessions explored a range of topics, including wood quality needs, silviculture, wood products, risk management and insurability of mass timber projects. Speakers included experts from Jamestown, L.P., AXA XL, Auburn University, ResourceWise, KPFF and the TallWood Design Institute.

Speakers from leading architectural and engineering firms, including Modly, EQUILIBRIUM, Anecdote/ Turner and HDR discussed the structural design, construction, performance and operation of CLT buildings and the economics and carbon accounting of mass timber projects.

The conference also included a poster and display session where current research and mass timber projects from around the region and country were presented and discussed.

On the final day of the conference, participants toured the Auburn University Kreher Preserve and Nature’s newly constructed CLT building in addition to stops at the Auburn Advanced Structural Engineering Lab (ASEL), the Forest Products Development Center and the

College of Architecture, Design and Construction Robins and Morton Construction Field Lab.

“As a land-grant institution, this conference exemplifies the university’s mission to grow employment opportunities, design new pathways for economic development and build networks across the supply chain armed with the expertise and knowledge to advance industry for the benefit of citizens within Alabama and beyond.”

– Dean Alavalapati

The CLT conference is the second hosted by Auburn University and was presented in collaboration with the College of Architecture, Design and Construction and the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering as part of Auburn’s Mass Timber Collaborative, a multidisciplinary initiative created to advance research, education and outreach in mass timber design and construction.

To view photos and video from the conference, visit [Flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/auburnclt/).

(Photo and video credit to Cole Sikes and Kelly Knowles.)



Auburn University President Christopher B. Roberts addresses attendees at the 2024 Auburn University CLT Conference, “The Sustainable Future of CLT in the South: Grow. Design. Build.”

Conference sponsors included:

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Alumni & Friends

Opening Doors to the Natural World: Philanthropy fuels new Environmental Education Building

by Chris Anthony

At 6 years old, Emily Kling caught the nature bug. Her hikes with her grandfather were her gateway to the natural world when she was growing up in Huntsville in the 1950s.

“There’s a picture that my grandmother took on the hottest day of the year,” Kling said. “My grandfather is shirtless with a bandana around his head. Well, there’s little Emily right next to him, shirtless with a bandana around her head. I have the most wonderful memories of those hikes with my grandfather.”

Those experiences helped shape her lifelong love of nature and eventually her career. Kling spent more than 30 years working with 4-H and Cooperative Extension as a county agent and state specialist in Kansas and Alabama, as well as a national project leader in Washington, D.C., before retiring from Auburn University with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System in 2010.

Now, she is a trusted volunteer with Auburn’s 120-acre Kreher Preserve and Nature Center (KPNC) and a major philanthropic partner helping to make the outdoors more accessible to a new generation of nature lovers.

“I think the KPNC can help create memories like I have hiking with my grandfather,” Kling said. “We want people and families to come out here and go hiking and participate in educational programs. We’re trying to develop a population in the Auburn area that appreciates the natural environment and wants to preserve what we have.”

A career in the natural world

After studying field biology at Principia College, a private liberal arts college in Illinois, Kling decided to further her education at the University of Michigan with a master’s degree in environmental education instruction, graduating in 1979.

It was then that she got her first big job — and broke a glass ceiling in the process.

When Kling joined the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service, she became the first female 4-H Natural Resources Specialist in the United States.

After 12 years as an environmental educator in Kansas, Kling was offered a two-year assignment to help develop the national 4-H Environmental Stewardship program. After that, she decided to head home to Alabama and jumped at the opportunity to become an environmental agent in Baldwin County, where she worked primarily in water quality education.

In 1997, she transferred to Auburn University to work with the Alabama Extension 4-H program and took charge of programming statewide, including forestry, wildlife management and environmental issues. Working at Auburn also allowed her to go back to school, where she earned a doctorate in higher education administration and became the only Auburn graduate in a family full of Alabama alums.

After retiring from Auburn, Kling spent the next 10 years working as a Camp Mom and staff leadership trainer at a summer camp in North Georgia, until the COVID-19 pandemic ended that in 2020.

Finding a niche at the KPNC

After moving back to Auburn, Kling found herself facing a predicament that many felt during the early stages of the pandemic: how does one find purpose during this strange time and not go stir crazy?

It was then that she got plugged back in with volunteer work at the KPNC, where she previously volunteered and has been a longtime board member. Kling does a little bit of everything, from maintaining bird feeders to keeping storage rooms organized and helping with events.

“Emily is like this anchor that keeps the whole place coordinated and running smoothly,” said Michael Buckman, the KPNC’s manager.

Kling recently took her support of the KPNC to a new level with a substantial gift in support of the new Environmental Education Building, which hosted grand opening festivities Dec. 6-8, 2024.

Using a revolutionary cross-laminated timber product, the new building is seamlessly



Emily Kling, a longtime volunteer with the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center, helps with all sorts of projects at the KPNC, including special events.

integrated with the natural world around it and serves as a central hub for KPNC’s everyday programming, its nature preschool and other special events.

Kling’s gift is being honored with the naming of the Emily Kling Discovery Corridor, a walkway where visitors will be able to see the KPNC’s amphibians and reptiles, in addition to a variety of interpretive and engaging environmental education displays. The animal ambassadors are currently locked away in a private office and not easily accessible for visitors.

“With the new building, the public can see them [animals] whenever they want, and that, I thought, would be a good way to expand the knowledge that we have here at the KPNC.”

– Emily Kling

Buckman appreciates Kling’s investment in the new Environmental Education Building and thinks the space is a fitting tribute to her career and background.

“It’s so appropriate for her name to be on the Discovery Corridor because it’s the space that links people most directly with nature,” he said.

For Kling, it made sense to support a cause so near to her heart by using a tax-advantaged Qualified

Charitable Distribution (QCD) from her IRA. Because she was required to pull funds out of her IRA, her QCD allowed her to make a gift to the KPNC while avoiding an unnecessary tax bill.

“The QCD method made it very easy to transfer some stock to the Auburn University Foundation,” Kling said.

Through her philanthropy and loyal service to the KPNC, she hopes today’s generation of children will make memories with their parents and grandparents, much like she did when she was young. And most of all, she wants people to experience the calm and sense of joy that the natural world can provide.

“I just like coming out here, and I want other people to enjoy what I get to enjoy,” Kling said.



Remaining Naming Opportunities:

- Environmental Education Building (4,000 square feet) \$1,000,000
- Preschool Classroom (933 sq. ft.) \$125,000
- Teacher’s Lounge/Workroom (215 square feet) \$50,000
- Nature Trail (0.15 miles) \$50,000

To inquire, contact Heather Crozier at vannhea@auburn.edu.



Gift for rain garden cultivates hope for the future

by Sheryl Caldwell



Johnny Lawrence loved Auburn. He loved his community. And more than anything, he loved his wife, Maggie, and daughter, Julia.

He graduated from Auburn in 1990 with a degree in public administration and was well known throughout the area for his service to others and his roles as a firefighter, photographer, volunteer and county commissioner. Lawrence died in 2020 after a battle with COVID-19. His Auburn story details a life well lived with far-reaching influence throughout the region. “Johnny believed in living every moment and not putting things off,” Maggie Lawrence said. “I’m more of a planner so some of his ideas would catch me off guard. But for him, it was natural. He was just very much about living life large and pursuing dreams.” Through photos, news clippings and memories she holds dear, Maggie Lawrence shares her favorites — like the story of him manning the grill at the Kreher

Preserve and Nature Center (KPNC) during the long-running S’more Fun with Mom event. Lawrence was a regular fixture at the KPNC, serving in a variety of roles from advisory board member and advocate to grill master and problem-solver. Although no one experienced his impact — or his loss — more profoundly than his family, the community also mourned his passing. The absence of his big heart and huge personality left a tremendous void that prompted his family and the community to grapple with the question: How do we honor such a life? The answer came easily for Maggie Lawrence when she discovered an opportunity to give to the new KPNC Environmental Education Building, creating the Johnny Lawrence Memorial Rain Garden. “Johnny would want people to know they can have an impact in their community,” she said. “He would want them to see all the ways — big and small — you can make a difference. And I hope this space bearing his name and telling his story will encourage others to give to this wonderful project.” The Johnny Lawrence Memorial Rain Garden is a key feature of the

KPNC Environmental Education Building. Creating an enhanced connection with natural resources at the KPNC, the facility will also support and expand the center’s research and outreach programs. “There’s nothing like this building in the community or at any other Auburn University facility statewide,” said Michael Buckman, the KPNC’s manager. “It’s really an incredible resource at Auburn — for students, faculty and staff — and the community.” Maggie Lawrence considered supporting some of the other unique spaces in the new building. But the rain garden — designed with natural elements, reflection space and sustainability in mind — had special meaning. “The rain garden directs water into the garden instead of flowing down the street. It guides it to help the garden grow and flourish,” she said. “It does beautiful things. It recharges. It grows.” Buckman was thrilled she chose the rain garden to honor her husband and his guiding principles of devotion to family, service to others and joy in all things. “Johnny was always this dedicated, wonderful and friendly person,” he said. “And the rain

garden will be designed as a beautiful, welcoming place for people to socialize and relax in nature. So, it has a tangible link to who Johnny was.” Maggie and Julia Lawrence continue building the life they began before tragedy struck in 2020. Julia graduated from Auburn in 2022 with a degree in poultry science and now works for international poultry producer, Pilgrim’s. Maggie retired from Auburn University’s Cooperative Extension System and accepted a position with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture. They travel and attend Auburn football games together. They share new experiences and sweet memories. They look to the future. But they never forget. The Johnny Lawrence Memorial Rain Garden is about the future as much as it is the past. That’s what philanthropy does. It honors legacy but builds futures. And that’s what was important to Maggie Lawrence. “Johnny loved it there and he would love that we’re part of creating better classrooms and better spaces for future generations,” said Lawrence.

Crooked Oaks launches several improvement projects, funding initiatives

by Blair Milford



In 2023, the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment (CFWE) received a generous gift: Crooked Oaks, the former homestead of Auburn University’s legendary football coach, Pat Dye. This 415-acre property in Notasulga, Alabama, is dedicated to honoring Dye’s legacy to provide hands-on learning experiences for CFWE and Auburn students. To further enhance the property, Crooked Oaks will launch a new development campaign in support of several improvement projects. One of these new projects is the restoration of the beloved Japanese maple nursery planted by Dye himself. Student experiential learning opportunities will be woven into the project. The Crooked Oaks staff will engage graduate and undergraduate students to

work in the nursery and student clubs will be invited to assist Crooked Oaks in grafting new seedlings for the nursery. The students will also work alongside the Crooked Oaks manager to improve the infrastructure and layout of the nursery to optimize both functionality and accessibility. This includes installing and repairing irrigation systems and drainage areas, ensuring efficient water flow and preventing potential infrastructure issues. To accomplish this, Crooked Oaks will require high-quality supplies and materials, such as grafting tools, soil amendments, multi-purpose gardening tools and shade material to enhance the overall gardening process. Additionally, a key component of the project is the revitalization of the greenhouse, restoring it to a more effective and productive state. The anticipated cost for this project is estimated to be approximately \$100,000. With these improvements, the CFWE is poised to expand Crooked Oaks’ nursery operations to support the college’s teaching, research and outreach platforms. “This incredible gift is having a tremendous impact on the college, our students and our academic programs,” said Janaki

Alavalapati, the Emmett F. Thompson Dean of the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment. *“These improvement projects will ensure the farm maintains the horticultural integrity envisioned by Pat Dye and Nancy McDonald as an educational and recreational resource.”* – Dean Alavalapati

An anonymous foundation has committed to matching gifts 1:1 for up to \$50,000 for the nursery renovation project if the funds are raised by April 14, 2025. Major gifts will qualify for up to 16 naming opportunities at Crooked Oaks, which include the event

pavilion, ceremonial lawn and garden, lodge front porch, primary pond, nursery pond and oak trees lining the nursery driveway, among others. All namings are subject to the approval of the Auburn University Board of Trustees. Individuals who wish to participate in this campaign or to learn about additional giving opportunities may contact Heather Crozier, director of development at (334) 740-9522 or vannhea@auburn.edu. For more information about Crooked Oaks, visit the Crooked Oaks website, crookedoaks.auburn.edu.

CROOKED  AKS

Various naming opportunities are available. A sampling of these include:

Event Pavilion	\$500,000	Main Drive	\$250,000
Ceremony Lawn	\$100,000	Admin. Bldg. (Nursery)	\$100,000
Cabin	\$50,000	Nursery Drive	\$50,000
Barn Suite	\$25,000	Nursery Greenhouse	\$15,000
Lodge Patio/Firepit	\$25,000	Lodge Br. (4 avbl.)	\$10,000
Gazebo area	\$25,000	Lodge Front Porch	\$10,000
Lodge Balcony	\$15,000	Primary Pond	\$500,000
Nursery Pond	\$250,000		

Oak Tree Lining Nursery driveway (multiple) \$2,500
Japanese Maple Trees (along driveway and gardens) \$1,000

All namings are subject to Auburn University Board of Trustees approval. Inquiries may be addressed to Heather Crozier at vannhea@auburn.edu.