School of Forest Resources & Conservation

Director's Letter

The School of Forest Resources and Conservation is fortunate to have outstanding faculty members who are actively engaged in teaching, research and extension in the broad areas of: forest resources and conservation; fisheries and aquatic sciences; and geomatics, mapping, land tenure, GIS and GPS. Last year alone, these faculty: (1) Taught 150 undergraduate students enrolled in our three majors and thousands of non-majors; (2) Trained 140 SFR graduate students who will become the next generation of scientists and educators; (3) Generated $7 million in grant support to leverage state funding for cutting edge research; (4) Published more than 100 articles in journals refereed by peers at other universities (the gold standard for scientific publications); and (5) Delivered vibrant extension programs that touched literally tens of thousands of landowners, lawmakers, county agents, citizens and youth in Florida.

The past two years have been unusually active in faculty comings and goings with 9 faculty members departing the SFR for various reasons, 5 new faculty joining us and 1 faculty member changing locations from the Research and Education Center (REC) in Plant City to Gainesville. Of the departing faculty, Rick Williams and Marian Marinescu from the West Florida REC at Milton, Gamal Seedahmed from the Fl. Lauderdale

The School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC) received $236,000 from the National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Grants Program at the USDA-CSREES for two MS and two PhD fellowships. The National Needs Grant (NNF) is a competitive, peer-reviewed fellowship program that targets students in forest resources, within the discipline of conservation and natural resource needs and will emphasize the integration of ecology, silviculture and fire effects, and their quantitative evaluation within an adaptive management context. The goal is to educate graduate students with the specific objectives of: (1) training students in interdisciplinary aspects of adaptive forest management, (2) improving student proficiency in communicating effectively with resource managers, and (3) building students’ skills in facilitating, negotiating, and building and in conflict management.

To help achieve these goals, the project is closely tied to the SFR and the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. The SFR and UF-CALS Conservation Fellows program will leverage these new fellowship awards with others established at the SFR and UF-CALS to create a wide range of opportunities for students.

Directions, news and announcements...
Dr. Michael Andreu - Forest Systems

While Dr. Michael Andreu has been a member of the SFRC faculty since 2005, he recently relocated from the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center in Plant City to the Gainesville campus. Michael was born and raised in Orange Park, Florida, and is enjoying being closer to friends and family in north Florida. His educational background includes a degree in Natural Resources from The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, a Master’s degree in Forest Resource Management from Duke University and a Ph.D. in Silviculture and Forest Protection from the University of Washington. In addition, Dr. Andreu has worked for various public and private organizations including: The Nature Conservancy, Larson & McGowin and Eglin Air Force Base. Dr. Andreu continues to teach undergraduate courses (including Dendrology and Forest Plants) and work as an Extension Specialist and co-director of the TAMU Forest Watershed Research Group, but he is also assuming some new responsibilities within SFRC. These include coordinating management of the Austin Cary Memorial Forest, working with forest landowners through the Forest Stewardship Program and assuming the position of Undergraduate Coordinator in the Spring. When not working, Dr. Andreu enjoys canoeing, disc golf and is looking forward to finding folks interested in pickup games of ultimate Frisbee.

Dr. Stephanie Bohlman - Tropical Ecology and Remote Sensing

Dr. Bohlman is currently a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Princeton University. Her research interests include understanding landscape patterns of tropical forest structure and function using a combination of remote sensing, field data and modeling. For more than a decade, she has been working in Panama with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. Stephanie started her academic career in Florida with an undergraduate degree in Environmental Studies from New College in Sarasota. She has master’s and Ph.D. degrees from the College of Forest Resources and the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Florida State University. Along the way, she spent time as a research assistant at Coweeta Hydrologic Lab and Oak Ridge National Lab and as an education specialist in marine biology at the Olympic National Marine Sanctuary and Olympic National Park. She is moving to Gainesville with her 18-month old son Owen and husband Jeremy Lichstein, also a forest ecologist, who is joining the Biology Department. Among many things, she is looking forward to returning to Florida, joining a forestry department and collaborating with new colleagues at the University of Florida.

Dr. Kai Lorenzen - Aquatic Resource Ecology

Dr. Lorenzen joins the School as Professor of Integrative Fisheries Science, a position jointly funded with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Kai received his Master's degree in Biology with a focus in Ichthyology from the University of British Columbia (1993), and his Ph.D. in Applied Population Biology from the University of London, UK (1997). He worked as a fisheries development consultant, mostly in Asia, from 1992 to 1996 and has held a faculty position at Imperial College London since 1997. Kai has broad research and professional interests in integrative-interdisciplinary fisheries science. He combines quantitative ecology with human dimensions research and often engages closely with management and policy initiatives. Particular foci of Kai’s work are new approaches to the assessment of fisheries enhancement and restoration measurements, adaptive co-management of small-scale fisheries and design of aquaculture systems.

A search is currently underway for a new faculty member in Quantitative Genetics and Biometrics with a strong background in statistics and computational science as well as experience with genetics and breeding. This new faculty member will teach undergraduate and graduate level courses while engaging in unique research and will bring strong quantitative skills in genetics to the SFRC. This new faculty member will have the opportunity to greatly enhance current research areas like tropical forestry, production forestry and conservation and/or bring new dimensions of research to the SFRC.

New Faculty in the SFRC

Dr. Damian C. Adams - Natural Resource Economics & Policy

Dr. Adams is an Assistant Professor of Natural Resource Economics & Policy. His research covers bioeconomic modeling, willingness to pay estimation, and policy and law analysis. His work mostly focuses on invasive species, water resources, and carbon offsets. He holds a Ph.D. in food and resource economics from UF, a law degree from UF, and a master's degree in environmental policy from the University of Cambridge in England. Between 2007 and 2010, he was Assistant Professor of Natural Resource & Environmental Economics in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Oklahoma State University. He has also worked in the US Congress, the British House of Commons, and as a lecturer in the Food and Resource Economics Department at UF. Dr. Adams is married to Alison, has an infant son, Griffin, and enjoys playing rugby. He is enjoying his new position and looks forward to continuing collaboration within the SFRC and UF.

Dr. Robert Ahrens - Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences Modeling

Dr. Ahrens received his masters and doctorate degrees from the University of British Columbia under the supervision of Dr. Carl Walters and Dr. Willy Christensen. The main thrust of his research is in the development of quantitative assessment models aimed at improving the management of natural populations. His research has ranged from developing simple single species assessments through to global ecosystem models. In addition to his modelling work, Dr. Ahrens maintains a keen interest in exploring exploitation by humans as a selective force and the population level consequences of such selection. He has taught undergraduate and graduate level courses at the University of British Columbia since 2001 pertaining to quantitative stock assessment, applied ecology, as well as theoretical population dynamics and modeling. Dr. Ahrens is excited to be joining the SFRC faculty at UF and is looking forward to working at such a diverse and dynamic school.

Dr. Robert Ahrens - Forest Systems

Dr. Ahrens received his masters and doctorate degrees from the University of British Columbia under the supervision of Dr. Carl Walters and Dr. Willy Christensen. The main thrust of his research is in the development of quantitative assessment models aimed at improving the management of natural populations. His research has ranged from developing simple single species assessments through to global ecosystem models. In addition to his modelling work, Dr. Ahrens maintains a keen interest in exploring exploitation by humans as a selective force and the population level consequences of such selection. He has taught undergraduate and graduate level courses at the University of British Columbia since 2001 pertaining to quantitative stock assessment, applied ecology, as well as theoretical population dynamics and modeling. Dr. Ahrens is excited to be joining the SFRC faculty at UF and is looking forward to working at such a diverse and dynamic school.

John Perry was awarded a Graduate Research Fellowship by the National Science Foundation that will fund his work on his Ph.D. Kitty Biedenweg was one of 40 women in the United States to be awarded the AAUW Dissertation Fellowship.

Carlos Gonzales (top right) was awarded the Forest Resources and Conservation Outstanding Dissertation award. Matthew Catalano received the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences Outstanding Dissertation award.

Leland Taylor (bottom right) was awarded the Outstanding Forest Resources and Conservation Student award. Chelsea Heatherington was awarded the Outstanding Natural Resource Conservation Student award. David Lechner was awarded the Outstanding Geomatics Student award.

Mary McKenzie Hudson (bottom left) received the Society of American Foresters, Florida Division – Graduating Senior Award.

Dr. Matthew Doenegan (‘90) below was appointed to the Oregon State Board of Higher Education by the Governor.

Alumni

Tamaras Calder Cushing (‘96) was recently hired as an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist at Clemson University.

Kimberly Ward Beebe (‘04) was awarded the Young Forester of the Year at the SAF National Convention in Orlando in October 2009.

John T. “Jack” Vogel (‘69) will be awarded the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Alumni and Friends Award of Distinction at the IFAS/CALS TailGATOR in September 2010.

Plum Creek Team Inspires Next Generation of Foresters

By: Lisa Hall

Year after year, Dr. Eric Jokela introduces a new crop of University of Florida (UF) undergraduate students to the world of forestry. It’s a field that has changed dramatically since Dr. Jokela first joined the UF School of Forest Resources & Conservation in 1984 – yet amidst a constantly evolving curriculum of lectures and labs, one thing remains the same. Every spring, he packs his students off to the woods to see how classroom lessons play out in the real world of production forestry.

The field trip immerses students in every step of the growth cycle – from research plots, site preparation and planting to fertilization, thinning and harvest. Dr. Jokela’s guest faculty for this year’s trip included six members of Plum Creek’s forest resources team – giving students the opportunity to draw from a combined 208 years of forestry experience in academics, research, corporate management and operations. They provided an invaluable introduction to an increasingly complex industry. Students who want to make a career in forestry will have to bring new skills to the table, but they can also benefit from the industry’s increasing demand for specialized expertise in everything from marketing and finance to forest biology, environmental science and wildlife management.

Ph.D. researchers at Plum Creek, perhaps most notably David Ahrens, provided students with a glimpse into how their role fits into the larger puzzle of the forest industry.

Ph.D. students at Plum Creek, perhaps most notably David Ahrens, provided students with a glimpse into how their role fits into the larger puzzle of the forest industry.

Students

Mike Allen (left) was awarded the Award of Excellence from the American Fisheries Society Fisheries Management Section in recognition of his leadership and achievements in fisheries management.

Alan Long (bottom left) was awarded the Teacher Fellow Award from the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture organization. Alan received the Junior and Senior Outstanding Teacher of the Year and a Distinguished Service Award at the Annual SFRC Awards Banquet.

Don Rockwood (bottom right) received a Distinguished Service Award at the Annual SFRC Awards Banquet.

P.K. Nair was awarded the Stephen Spur Award for his technical contributions for the field of forestry in Florida at the SAF National Convention in Orlando in October 2009.

Mattas Krist was the only awardee in Florida to receive a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Justin McKeithen and Michelle Quire received the Outstanding Staff Members of the Year award.

Alumni

Tamaras Calder Cushing (‘96) was recently hired as an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist at Clemson University.

Kimberly Ward Beebe (‘04) was awarded the Young Forester of the Year at the SAF National Convention in Orlando in October 2009.

John T. “Jack” Vogel (‘69) will be awarded the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Alumni and Friends Award of Distinction at the IFAS/CALS TailGATOR in September 2010.

Plum Creek Team Inspires Next Generation of Foresters

By: Lisa Hall

Year after year, Dr. Eric Jokela introduces a new crop of University of Florida (UF) undergraduate students to the world of forestry. It’s a field that has changed dramatically since Dr. Jokela first joined the UF School of Forest Resources & Conservation in 1984 – yet amidst a constantly evolving curriculum of lectures and labs, one thing remains the same. Every spring, he packs his students off to the woods to see how classroom lessons play out in the real world of production forestry.

The field trip immerses students in every step of the growth cycle – from research plots, site preparation and planting to fertilization, thinning and harvest. Dr. Jokela’s guest faculty for this year’s trip included six members of Plum Creek’s forest resources team – giving students the opportunity to draw from a combined 208 years of forestry experience in academics, research, corporate management and operations. They provided an invaluable introduction to an increasingly complex industry. Students who want to make a career in forestry will have to bring new skills to the table, but they can also benefit from the industry’s increasing demand for specialized expertise in everything from marketing and finance to forest biology, environmental science and wildlife management.

Among the mentors for the day – students found a product of their professor’s careful nurturing. Plum Creek Harvesting Manager Greg Driskill first visited these woods with his silviculture class in 1986 – proof that the seeds of knowledge planted each spring by Dr. Jokela are bearing fruit.