Greetings from the SFRC

The biggest news in the SFRC is associated with two State Legislative Budget Requests aimed at expanding the School’s faculty, staff, programs and impacts: (1) The Healthy Forest Initiative (HFI), appropriated during the 2005 legislative session; and (2) The Geomatics Critical Needs Proposal which comes before the State legislature during the 2006 session (see story below).

The HFI appropriation will enable the hiring of 5 new faculty members who will build programs in the following areas: (1) Forest utilization, markets and economic sustainability; (2) Forest wildlife management and ecology; (3) Forest pathology; (4) Forest geomatics, GIS and GPS; and (5) Fire science and forest conservation. The first two faculty positions will be located at the IFAS Research and Education Centers in Milton and Quincy, respectively, while the remaining three will be in Gainesville.

To our knowledge, the HFI legislative appropriation is the first one for the SFRC since the 1970s, and it never would have been possible without the support and active engagement of our alumni, stakeholders and friends. In fact, one of the most rewarding aspects of the process involved working with the broad coalition of supporters of HFI. It started with unanimous support from the SFRC external Advisory Board chaired by Jack Vogel and evolved from there to include active support from the Florida Forestry Association (Bob Cook, Kelley Smith, Jeff Doran and Alan Shelby), Florida Farm Bureau (Carl Loep and Kevin Morgan), Florida Surveying and Mapping Society (Marilyn Ever, Steve Gordon, John Clyatt and Ron Villalta), The Nature Conservancy (Vicky Tischkansel and Marianne Gengenbach), Florida Wildlife Federation (Manley Fuller), Audubon of Florida (Eric Draper) and SFRC Alumni Association (Harold Mikkel).

We sincerely appreciate the support from all of these people and their organizations and also that of the IFAS administration. Special thanks to Cindy Littlejohn for leading the efforts in Tallahassee. Our promise to all of those involved is to work with you and all of our stakeholders to optimize the benefits from these new funds and to continue to strengthen our collaborations. It is clear that working together we can have a major impact on the future economic, environmental and social benefits that our forests provide.

Without the support of alumni and friends we could not maintain our level of academic excellence.

Consider supporting your School.

There are many ways to contribute: Time, Cash OR A Charitable Gift Annuity that may increase your retirement income and earn an income tax deduction (Must be 55 or older).

Send gifts directly to:
School of Forest Resources and Conservation
PO Box 110410
Gainesville, FL 32611-0410

Makes checks payable to the University of Florida Foundation, Inc.-SHARE and designate the SFRC.

Critical Needs in Geomatics

The Geomatics undergraduate program in the SFRC educates students who go on to work in all aspects of surveying, mapping, remote sensing and other geospatial sciences (like GIS and GPS). Geomatics is facing a critical shortage of licensed professionals due to: (1) Rapid growth of Florida; (2) Rapid growth of geospatial technologies; and (3) An ageing workforce (half of all the licensed surveyors in Florida will retire in the next 10 years). The SFRC Geomatics program is the only one of its kind in Florida and as currently staffed, it simply cannot produce enough graduates to meet the demand in the State as evidenced by the fact that each graduating senior has an average of seven job offers.

For these reasons, UF/IFAS is supporting a Legislative Budget Request for 2006 that would support increases the number of B.S. graduates each year from 15 currently to 80 by 2011. The funds from this appropriation would be used for a variety of efforts including expanding the program so that students could graduate from three other UF/IFAS locations in the State in addition to Gainesville: Ft. Lauderdale, Plant City and Milton. This would mean that place-bound students could attend community colleges for two years, and then receive their upper division Geomatics courses at these four locations distributed across the State.

As with the Healthy Forest Initiative (see story above), we hope to build a broad coalition of supporters for this Geomatics Critical Needs Legislative Proposal. We also hope that this coalition will help us guide the program as it expands. Please contact Cindy Littlejohn (IFAS, clittlejohn@mail.ifas.ufl.edu) or Marilyn Ever (Florida Surveying and Mapping Society, director@fsm.org) if you or someone you know might be able to help. Thank you all for your support of SFRC, IFAS and UF programs.
The SFRC currently has 142 undergraduates most of whom are enrolled in one of three majors: Forest Resources and Conservation, Geomatics, or Natural Resource Conservation. SFRC faculty serve as major advisors for approximately 80 graduate students pursuing masters and doctoral degrees. The faculty is currently engaging staff, students, alumni and stakeholders in discussions to revise the undergraduates' curricula.

**Instruction Highlight:**
First SFRC Web-based distance education course

SFRC's first undergraduate web-based distance education course, for SF 3855, Agroforestry for the Southeastern United States, enrolled seven students and the faculty advisor. Delegates from 82 the 1st World Congress of Agroforestry and other worldwide agroforestry research, selected with data for 12 Florida counties. These contributions to the Southeastern Agroforestry Decision Support System. This is a web-based information system, and take quizzes and exams. Large Scale, participate in chats and discussions, use the email system, and take quizzes and exams. Large files containing narrated PowerPoint lectures and video interviews with farmers and researchers are mailed to the students on CDs. The students ranging from a French woman in her 60s residing in Key Largo to a young mother just out of the Army and now residing in the panhandle. Course activities began slowly as students got used to the system, but by the end of the course they were all very enthusiastic and participated actively. Another key point for the students was the required field exercise, involving a farmer interview followed by interaction with an extension agent. The course will be offered again in spring 2006. The SFRC plans to develop more distance education courses.

**Extension Highlight:**
Project Learning Tree Extension Highlight:
Project Learning Tree (PLT) is the Pre-K-12 grade environmental education program of the American Forest Foundation. PLT uses the forest as a “window on the world” to increase students’ understanding of our complex environment and to help students learn the skills they need to make sound choices about the environment. PLT is pleased to share a new SFRC staff person with the growing the urban forest program. Ms. Allisa Blaza will be the half-time PLT Coordinator.

**Fulfilling Our Mission**
Without the support of friends, we could not maintain our level of academic excellence. Thanks to all our supporters.

**Appreciation For Our Supporters**
Many thanks to the following who made donations to the Forest Stewardship Endowment Fund: Farm Credit of North Florida, Environmental Services, Inc., Meck Forest & Nursery, Inc., DePoy Farm Credit of Northwest Florida; Dr. Michael Parker DMD, Blanton’s Longleaf Container Nursery, and BASF Corporation.

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**Benefits of integrated land-use systems**
Agriculture and forestry in the southeastern United States face significant natural resource problems, yet are essential to the southeastern economy. It is increasingly important for these systems to be economically and ecologically sustainable. Integrated systems like agroforestry may provide economic incentives and ecological benefits. The Center for Subtropical Agroforestry (CSAFT) was established in 2001 and is a multidisciplinary, multi-institutional entity for undertaking research, extension and education in agroforestry. Silvopasture, the integration of trees and livestock, was found to be the most prevalent form of agroforestry in the region. Research suggests that silvopasture may mitigate potential problems of nutrient pollution associated with beef cattle pasture. CSAFT also developed the Southeast Agroforestry Decision Support System. This is a web-based tool that assists in the planning and tree/shrub selection with data for 12 Florida counties. These and other worldwide agroforestry research, development and education were highlighted at the 1st World Congress of Agroforestry organized by UF/IFAS. Delegates from 82 countries participated in the Congress. CSAFT collaborates with research, extension and education institutions such as Florida A&M University, Auburn University, University of Georgia and the University of the Virgin Islands.

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