

Branching Out:

Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

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The last year of the 20th century was an eventful one for Auburn University's forestry program. In 1999, the School of Forestry and the wildlife program merged to form the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. You can learn more about the new School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and three new programs associated with the School, by visiting the School's web site at www.forestry.auburn.edu/.

School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

The merger of the School of Forestry and the wildlife program occurred on October 1, 1999. We are now a School that has 33 tenure-track faculty and 18 non-tenured faculty, resulting from the addition of five tenure-track faculty and three non-tenure-track wildlife faculty. The School's student population also increased. We have 220 undergraduates and 43 graduate students enrolled in forestry, and 158 undergraduates and 10 graduate students enrolled in wildlife.

The new School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences provides an opportunity for our students to develop an integrated natural resource education. There is increased interaction among student organizations. Working collaboratively, the Forestry Club and the Wildlife Society benefits our students' professional perspectives and increases networking opportunities. In addition, the merger has resulted in a more efficient use of educational facilities.

There are major research benefits from the merger, such as integrated natural resource research that will better serve the needs of the state. Most forest owners in the state have multiple management

objectives including timber, wildlife, recreation, and aesthetics. Integrated forestry and wildlife research projects will more efficiently meet the needs of Alabama's citizens.

The merger of the two programs is providing Extension program efficiencies. A collaborative forestry-wildlife program facilitates the development of relevant and cost-effective Extension programs. Extension program delivery is enhanced by the development of technology transfer packages that present wildlife and timber management as interconnected disciplines, thus increasing the opportunity for specialists to present joint programs and eliminate redundancy in program content.

Leaders from the Alabama Forestry Association, the Alabama Forest Resources Council and the Alabama Wildlife Federation enthusiastically supported the forestry and wildlife merger. Additionally, our students desired the interaction with other students who will be managing closely related resources. Also, there was strong support by the faculty of both programs who developed the logic and benefits of a unified program.

More information on the SFWS may be obtained by contacting Dr. Richard Brinker, Dean, SFWS at (334)-844-1007 or brinker@forestry.auburn.edu or by visiting the School's web site at www.forestry.auburn.edu/.

Center for Forest Sustainability

Human populations are clearly rising in Alabama and the South at a faster rate than in many parts of the nation. Increased populations and shifting demands for timber have created a soft-

wood sawtimber deficit in Alabama whereby timber extraction rates exceed growth. In addition, population pressures on forests in Alabama jeopardize the availability of other forest-derived attributes upon which society depends (e.g. wildlife habitat, water quality maintenance). Consequently, the rising demands made on Alabama forests and streams represent a profound threat to the long-term quality of human life in Alabama and the Southeast.

The economic importance of Alabama forests is well documented. In short, forest products and forest-derived values represent the leading contributor to the state's economy. There is great value associated with other forest-derived attributes such as water quality maintenance, but these values are more difficult to quantify. In summary, the risk to Alabama's welfare by possible depletion of forest and aquatic resources is immeasurable.

In response to these concerns, many efforts are underway in the state, region, and nation to intensify forest production. However, intensification raises questions in regard to soil sustainability as well as other non-timber values. A concerted effort is required to ensure that wood/fiber production, wildlife habitat, and environmental quality are all maintained in conjunction with active forest management so that the flow of goods and services from Alabama forests and streams can be sustained for future generations.

Recently, Auburn University underwent a program review that resulted in reallocation of resources into six key programs on campus. One of these is the Center for Forest Sustainability (CFS), a multidisciplinary program currently initi-

ating research on the following issues: productivity and carbon sequestration in plantation forests, seedling pathology and quality, wildlife habitat in plantations, natural forests, and associated streams, water quality, and socioeconomic considerations associated with sustainability. Students (both undergraduate and graduate) and faculty from the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, College of Science and Math, College of Agriculture, and College of Business are involved. Research will emphasize integration between biological and socioeconomic focuses in order to develop comprehensive input toward resolution of the complex issues surrounding forest sustainability. More information on CFS activities may be obtained by contacting Dr. Graeme Lockaby, Director, CFS at (334)-844-1054 or lockaby@forestry.auburn.edu.

Forest Policy Center

For the last several decades, forest policy debate has centered on the management of public forests. In the early 1990s Mr. Vaughn Stough and Dr. Emmett Thompson envisioned a program of forest policy research that would focus on the unique circumstances facing private timberland owners. Through the generous contributions of alumni and others to the Endowment for Excellence in Forest Policy, the Forest Policy Center (FPC) was established in 1999. Resources from the endowment are used to support graduate student research and sponsor a variety of education/outreach activities of the Center.

Economic globalization and global environmental quality concerns present constraints and opportunities to local, regional, and national forest economies. The Forest Policy Center's mission is to assist policy makers, business people, non-governmental organizations, the media and the public in evaluating policy options by providing objective analysis of forestry issues. The Center will examine, document, and debate forest policy issues, especially those related to the linkages between private forest management and society.

Any faculty member in the SFWS interested in forest policy research is encouraged to participate in the FPC. Currently, there are eight faculty mem-

bers participating within the School and one adjunct member from the U.S. Forest Service. Research activities include projects on forest certification, forest products trade, timber supply, economic development, tax policy and environmental issues/legislation among others. By using the Center's resources as "seed money" to get research project ideas rolling quickly, members are in a better position to be competitive with researchers across the country for extramural support of their research programs.

The Forest Policy Center is also involved in outreach activities and recently co-sponsored a Congressional Staffers' Tax Seminar on non-industrial, private forest taxation. Other sponsors included the Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc. and the Forest Landowners Tax Council. Presenters included Roger A. Sedjo (Resources for the Future), William C. Siegel (USFS retired, timber tax analyst), and Charles C. Raper (Forest Policy Center). On April 20, 2000, David Laband (FPC) was involved in a different type of outreach activity when he delivered the keynote address at the 13th Maastricht University (Netherlands) Workshop on Law and Economics. The address was titled "The Impact of Unfunded Environmental Mandates When Environmental Quality and Timber are Produced Jointly" and will soon be published in the European Journal of Law and Economics. Finally, FPC members routinely make presentations of their work at national and regional professional meetings. Copies of many of the papers and presentations produced by Forest Policy Center members are available on the FPC web site.

Upcoming activities of the Center include an international conference planned for spring 2001 in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference title is "Global Initiatives and Public Policies: First International Conference on Private Forestry in the 21st Century." The conference will bring forestry professionals together from around the world and give them an opportunity to address key issues currently shaping the future of forest management on private lands.

If you would like more information on the Forest Policy Center contact Dr. Larry Teeter, Director, at (334) 844-

1045, fpc@auburn.edu or visit the Forest Policy Center web site at www.forestry.auburn.edu/forestpolicycenter.

The Sustainable Forestry Partnership

The Sustainable Forestry Partnership began in 1995 as a partnership among a group of Oregon State University faculty. The Sustainable Forestry Partnership's mission is to document and promote innovation in sustainable forestry and integrate this innovation broadly into both policy and practice. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation provided start-up monies for Partnership activities. Since 1995 the Sustainable Forestry Partnership has grown into a networking organization of partners involving faculty of Oregon State University, Pennsylvania State University (1997), Auburn University (1999), and personnel from the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (1999).

The Partnership's operations are largely funded from private foundations and government agencies. The Partnership, having a diverse set of participants, is able to address the breadth of sustainable forestry issues and activities including:

- Identifying key sustainable forestry issues and trends.
- Designing and conducting sustainable forestry research.
- Developing education and training materials and events.
- Providing assistance services to organizations and individuals interested in sustainable forestry issues.

Because of its diverse geographic and subject matter membership, the Partnership is effective in addressing sustainable forestry issues. The long-term goal of the Partnership is to have staff housed at several academic institutions, reflecting regional and disciplinary diversity. If you would like more information on the Sustainable Forestry Partnership contact Dr. Mark Dubois, Associate Director, SFP, at (334) 844-1037, dubois@forestry.auburn.edu or visit the Sustainable Forestry Partnership web site at sfp.cas.psu.edu/. 