

# FOREST HEALTH COOPERATIVE

School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University

*By Dr. Lori Eckhardt, Director*



Organized in 2008 by Drs. Lori Eckhardt and Scott Enebak at the Auburn University School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences, the goal of the Forest Health Cooperative is to bring together interested parties from forest industry, consulting companies, timber management companies, as well as state and federal forest agencies throughout the southern United States that were interested in maintaining forest health, productivity, and sustainability. In our ninth year of operation, the Forest Health Cooperative (FHC) includes members from forest industry, federal and state agencies, and private entities. The Cooperative's mission is to address important, current, and relevant forest health issues that include disease, insect, and invasive species, in a way that addresses real world management problems in the southern United States.

Bringing their expertise in pathology, entomology, silviculture, genetics, plant physiology, and invasive plants, several School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences faculty members work with the FHC in the establishment of research projects, technology transfer, continuing education, and timely publications. The amount of time each person allocates to FHC activities is related to his or her own discipline and interest in forest health work. These activities fall into three general areas: research, technology transfer, and cooperative development.

The Forest Health Cooperative already has an active research program that involves eight **research** projects falling into several general areas: disease development, pathogen ecology, insect ecology, insect and disease management, and invasive species management (both insects and plants). Examples of current and past research projects include potential invasive insect pests that

may impact the southeast forest industry, quantification of the impact of root disease on tree growth/survival, and invasive plants that impact the health of a stand.

Membership is offered at four levels: Full, Associate, Maintaining, and Sustaining. To ensure that members are kept up to date on any new research or developments in forest health that may affect them, the Forest Health Cooperative has an active **technology transfer** program and offers short courses on forest health as well as insect and disease identification. A newsletter that includes research updates, articles, and technical reports is sent to members every spring and fall. An advisory meeting is held each June at which time accomplishments, research reports, and new research project proposals are presented.

Differing levels of membership allow organizations and persons to join at the level of their interest. Benefits vary among membership levels, but include access to the Forest Health Cooperative webpage, annual newsletter, research and technical reports, email and telephone consulting, and participation in workshops. Full members serve on the advisory council, vote, and direct research direction and budgetary decisions. In addition to funding travel, installation, and analysis of cooperative-sponsored research, membership dues go toward the salaries of one full-time research associate, an office administrative assistant, as well as M.S., Ph.D., and undergraduate students.

To learn more about the Forest Health Cooperative, visit our website at [http://www.auburn.edu/academic/forestry\\_wildlife/foresthealthcooperative/](http://www.auburn.edu/academic/forestry_wildlife/foresthealthcooperative/) or contact Dr. Lori Eckhardt at (334) 844.2720 or [eckhlg@auburn.edu](mailto:eckhlg@auburn.edu). ☎