

RENEW

COLLEGE OF FOREST RESOURCES
ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

2016



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
COLLEGE OF FOREST RESOURCES

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COLLEGE OF FOREST RESOURCES ALUMNI NEWSLETTER 2016

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The College of Forest Resources is a unit in the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University.

The mission of the College of Forest Resources is to promote, support, and enable the management, conservation, and utilization of forest and other natural resources to benefit the stakeholders of Mississippi, the nation, and the world.



COLLEGE OF
FOREST RESOURCES

FROM THE DEAN

WE HAD A GREAT 2016 IN THE COLLEGE OF FOREST Resources at Mississippi State University. Our students are among the best and brightest in the nation, receiving national and international accolades for their leadership, scholarship, and service. Our alumni continue to influence conservation with positions of regional, national, and international importance. And our world-class faculty continue to provide leadership to our students through their instruction, research, and service.

Our 2016 fall student body of 575 students is an all-time high for CFR and represents 434 undergraduates and 142 graduate students. Eighty-two freshmen joined our college this fall, a 30 percent increase in just five years. We graduated 118 students in 2015/2016, and our placement has been outstanding.

Our Mississippi State University Student Chapter of the Society of American Foresters placed first in the nation in 2016. They led this national championship based on their leadership, professionalism, and service. Their achievements are too numerous to list, but the work they do will impact future generations in communities across Mississippi and the region. This is the 18th consecutive year for our student chapter to place in the top three in the U.S. I am so proud of this group of students and the numerous alumni who began this tradition of excellence.

Student success is paramount in preparing our next generation of leaders. Over the past few years, we have begun several initiatives to further help students succeed. For example, more of our students are gaining professional experience through summer internships, and then gaining employment upon graduation. The Living Learning Community clusters freshmen in the same dorm and similar classes during pre-registration which helps them build friendships and a sense of purpose. The Undergraduate Research Scholars Program allows students to work alongside a professor as a junior colleague. Students discover new knowledge, enhance their discipline-specific expertise, and gain critical thinking skills. The opportunity also lets these students contribute to vital conservation research on a local, national, and sometimes international scale.

We are also able to recruit the best students through scholarships. Thanks to our wonderful alumni and friends, in 2015-2016, we awarded more than \$300,000 in scholarships, a 69 percent increase over the previous year. This is an all-time high in scholarship dollars awarded in the College of Forest Resources. The impact these scholarships have on our future leaders is significant. So many alumni have told me they give back because they remember how important scholarships were to them when they were in college. Thank you for your support and confidence in our students.

Our alumni and friends have provided so much support to our many programs this year. The Bulldog Forest currently includes nearly 40 forests across almost 32,000 acres. In this newsletter, we



highlight the Spirit Hill Farm, a property in north Mississippi with more than 1,000 acres. We also highlight the Bryan-Burger Endowment for Bobwhite Habitat Restoration which will provide perpetual funding to build upon our work on collaborative conservation and working lands research. New scholarships established by the Haas family, founder of the Mossy Oak brand, and the Perkins Estate continue to help us recruit the best and brightest.

Our faculty members continue to be recognized as national and international experts. Four of our faculty retired this year and we welcomed three more to continue their work in conserving and sustaining our natural resources. Faculty members have received numerous accolades, as you will see in the latter part of this newsletter.

Our alumni continue to provide outstanding leadership in natural resources. I hope you enjoy the features we have prepared on prominent alumni expanding our influence in conservation and beyond.

We recently named the alumni newsletter Renew. Renew represents so many different things in our college. It speaks to the renewable natural resources that our research and teaching revolves around. It also represents a fresh start, which we celebrate each fall as we welcome new students, and in May and December, when we welcome our new alumni. Finally, it reminds us of the amazing strength and influence we have when we work together to accomplish a goal.

Thank you for helping the College of Forest Resources at Mississippi State University become one of the best in the nation. I appreciate your support. Please stop by and visit when you are in Starkville. My door is always open.

George M. Hopper
Dean

CFR BY THE NUMBERS

575

STUDENTS (FALL 2016)

434

UNDERGRADUATES (FALL 2016)

94

MASTER'S STUDENTS (FALL 2016)

47

PH.D. STUDENTS (FALL 2016)

67

FACULTY (FISCAL YEAR 2016)

118

DEGREES AWARDED (2015/2016)

82

FRESHMEN (FALL 2016)

23.9

AVERAGE FRESHMEN ACT SCORE
(FALL 2016)

\$3.83M

GIFTS (FISCAL YEAR 2016)

\$308K

SCHOLARSHIPS (2015/2016)

31,925

ACRES IN THE BULLDOG FOREST
(FISCAL YEAR 2016)

OUTSTANDING ALUMNI



2016 ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

John D. Enlow

JOHN D. ENLOW, IS A 1990 FORESTRY GRADUATE. Enlow is vice president of real estate and southern timberlands at Weyerhaeuser Company. He joined Weyerhaeuser in 2014 to lead the company's southern division and in 2015 assumed leadership of Weyerhaeuser's real estate nationally. He also holds an MBA from Brenau University and is a graduate of the Executive Education Strategy Program of The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Enlow began his 26-year industry career as a management forester with Union Camp Corporation and served in roles that included financial analyst and wood product sales representative. He spent the next 17 years with Rayonier, Inc. where he worked in sales, finance, and forestry.



2016 ALUMNI FELLOW

Steven H. Bullard

STEVEN H. BULLARD, IS A 1977 AND 1980 FORESTRY graduate. He is provost and academic affairs vice president at Stephen F. Austin State University, where he also holds the Henry M. Rockwell Chair in Forestry. Prior to his appointment as provost, he served as dean of the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture at Stephen F. Austin State University. He completed a doctorate in forest management-economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Early in his career, Bullard served in numerous positions in the MSU College of Forest Resources, where he held the title of Sharp Professor of Forest Economics. He conducted research in the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station and MSU Forest and Wildlife Research Center.

NEW SUPERVISOR NAMED FOR NATIONAL FORESTS IN NC

BY EDDIE FITZGERALD

A LLEN NICHOLAS HAS BEEN NAMED THE FOREST SUPERVISOR for North Carolina's four national forests, which include the Croatan National Forest in Craven and surrounding counties.

Nicholas, whose career spans 30 years in the U.S. Forest Service, previously worked as forest supervisor for the Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois. He has worked in several other roles, including deputy manager at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, administrative officer at the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests, and acting director and acting deputy regional forester in the Eastern Regional Office in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

"North Carolina's national forests are home to some of the most pristine and picturesque tracts of public land available, and it's a great honor to join this amazing team of talented individuals that manage these treasured resources," Nicholas said in a prepared statement. "I look forward to building on the collaborative efforts already underway between the staff in North Carolina and our regional leaders as we continue to work toward new and innovative ways to engage the communities we serve."

Tony Tooke, regional forester, said Nicholas will oversee more than 1.25 million acres of public land stretched across the state's four national forests—the Croatan, the Nantahala, the Pisgah and the Uwharrie. They stretch from the Appalachians to the tidal rivers and wetlands of the North Carolina coast, including the 160,000 acres of the Croatan National Forest.

"I am very excited about Allen bringing his wealth of experience in natural resource management and public service back to the



Photo courtesy of U.S. Forest Service

Southern Region," Tooke said in a press release. "Allen's skills in collaboration, teamwork, and forging strong partnerships will be beneficial to the talented group of employees and the wide-range of partners already in North Carolina."

Lynn Hicks, engineering, recreation, and land staff officer of the National Forests in North Carolina, said district rangers from the four forests will report directly to Nicholas, who will be based in Asheville.

Nicholas is replacing Kristin Bail, who was promoted to the Washington, D.C., Bureau of Land Management. Bail held the job of Forest Supervisor from May 2012 to last September, Hicks said.

Nicholas was born in Magnolia, Mississippi, and has a bachelor's degree in forest resource management (Forestry 1981) from Mississippi State University and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Mississippi. He and his wife, Debra, have two daughters, Anna Lisa and Kelsey. 🍁

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A LOOK AT LONGLEAF PINE

MSU alum researches dwindling ecosystem

BY SARAH BUCKLEITNER

Longleaf pine forest. Photo by Steve Golladay

FOR DR. MIKE CONNER, A SCIENTIST AT THE GEORGIA-based Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center, Mississippi State University was a place to learn how to think on his feet before launching his career in wildlife biology.

Conner first was drawn to the school when he saw a posting on a job board while at an interview with another university.

"I was waiting in the hallway for an interview when I noticed a listing for a graduate assistantship working with bobcats at Mississippi State University. I knew immediately that I wanted it. Within the day I had mailed out my resume and contacted the listed professor, Dr. Bruce Leopold, to set up an interview time for a few days later. I actually ended up arriving at Dr. Leopold's office before my resume did," Conner said.

Conner's interest in predators began with his passion for fur trapping.

"I was a hobbyist fur trapper, and I had developed a keen interest in predator ecology," Conner explained.

Conner went on to earn both his master's and doctoral degrees (Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture 1991, 1995) at Mississippi State. His project, which dealt with creating models for bobcat habitat characteristics in managed southern pine forest, prepared him for his later career in wildlife ecology.

"In any good graduate program you're going to learn theory and technical skills, but problem solving can be hard to teach. My memories of the moments when I was forced to problem solve stick out to me. Because we didn't have cellphones and I was often working at a field site two hours away from my advisor, I learned how to fix things myself, how to manage my time well, and how to operate creatively under stress. Those skills have been invaluable to my current career," Conner said.

However, he also credits the excellent tutelage he received.

"I had incredible instruction. The faculty members were, without exception, excellent," Conner stated.

In particular, he notes the mentorship his advisor, Dr. Leopold, gave him.

"He was tough, but fair. To this day, I feel like I owe a great deal to him. I still seek his advice and consider him a great friend," Conner said.

Today, Conner applies the lessons he learned while at Mississippi State to his work at the Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center, where he specializes in the impacts of predators on prey populations and the role of habitat in predation processes.

The Center is situated on Ichauway, a roughly 29,000 acre tract of longleaf pine forest in southwestern Georgia, which has been managed for wildlife since the 1920s. As stated on their website, the Center's mission is to understand, demonstrate, and promote excellence in natural resource management and conservation on the landscape of the southeastern coastal plain of the United States.

One of his recent projects, funded by the Gulf Coastal Plain and



Ozarks Landscape Conservation Cooperative, will help to determine what a healthy longleaf pine ecosystem looks like.

"The project uses data collected since the Center first began in 1991. We decided to take these data and integrate them with long-term monitoring data collected by conservation programs to develop statistical models that would then allow us to evaluate the desired landscape conditions suggestive of quality open pine," Conner explained.

Open pine is a forest type with an open forest understory traditionally managed through regular burning that includes longleaf pine forest. Determining the characteristics of quality open pine allows managers to better support species of conservation interest that occupy open pine systems—such as gopher tortoises, Bachman's sparrows, fox squirrels, eastern diamondbacks, and Florida pine snakes.

"The data help provide a picture of what that system might look like. It gives us the ability to step back, take a look and say 'You know, this looks right: we have restored this site,'" Conner said.

Longleaf pine systems, which originally covered 90 million acres of the Southeastern United States, now occupy only three percent of their former range. The clearing of land for agricultural use and the clearing and planting of forest composed of faster growing pines are the biggest culprits for shrinking longleaf pine forests.

Longleaf pine systems are essential to the Southeastern U.S. because they are highly water efficient. This will become increasingly important as global climate change causes drying trends across the region.

"Last night it rained for the first time in about seventy days. This rain came in the form of severe storms. These weather patterns are predicted to increase. Longleaf systems are incredibly water efficient, making them a good choice for reforestation," Conner explained.

Conner's love for studying the natural world continues on in his son, who is a sophomore majoring in biology education at Mississippi State University. ♣

OUT OF THE WOODS AND BACK AGAIN

Mississippi State alum returns to forest products

BY SARAH BUCKLEITNER

IN A BUSTLING WEYERHAEUSER LUMBER MILL IN Philadelphia, Mississippi, Mississippi State University alumnus Ray Beeson oversees product value and quality with cool-headed clarity. After a period serving in the Air Force and working in real estate, his return to forest products is distinguished by a variety of experience.

Beeson was born in Crystal Springs, Mississippi, where he grew up a diehard fan of the Mississippi State University football and baseball teams.

“I always knew I was going to attend Mississippi State University. I grew up coming to the football and baseball games, and couldn’t help but grow to love the school while spending time on campus,” Beeson said.

Beeson earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees (Forest Products 2000) at Mississippi State. While he started out with a bachelor’s degree in business administration, he realized after several years working in the banking industry that he wanted to return to school to specialize in an industry that he was more passionate about.

Beeson saw a future in forest products, as a field focused on a renewable, sustainable resource.

“While I was researching master’s programs at several universities, I spoke with Dr. Dan Seale, a professor in the Department of Sustainable Bioproducts in the College of Forest Resources. He informed me of the many opportunities this field had to offer, and I knew it was a fit,” Beeson explained.

Throughout Beeson’s time at Mississippi State University, Seale continued to be a source of support and advice.

“I can’t give enough thanks to Dr. Seale for his guidance. His background in economics and statistics and his guidance helped me to understand and succeed in the industry,” Beeson said.

His other classes also prepared him for success.



“While I attended MSU we didn’t just sit in class. We spent a lot of time visiting manufacturing facilities and listening to the advice of those who worked in the industry. We had great professors that didn’t just see us in class but wanted to see us enter the industry and thrive,” Beeson remembered.

While Beeson worked for several years in production and quality control after earning his degree, fate had other plans.

“I was working as a regional quality manager in lumber manufacturing when 9/11 happened. I was called to active duty by the Air Force and consequently served for three years in Jacksonville, Florida,” Beeson said.

Beeson served in logistics, and later was transitioned to aircraft maintenance. While in Florida, he also worked evenings in real estate, focusing his efforts in the historic Springfield neighborhood, located in Jacksonville’s urban core. Beeson dedicated time and energy to improving the neighborhood, restoring a 100-year-old house and founding a nonprofit called Sustainable Springfield, an organization that transforms vacant lots into flourishing community gardens. The nonprofit also offers children’s programming, teaches sustainable, healthy living practices, and offers gardening and cooking classes. Additionally, he served on the board of Metro



North Community Development Corporation, another nonprofit focused on improving quality of life for local residents through residential and commercial rehabilitation and development. He also obtained an MBA from Jacksonville University.

When a dinner with a graduate school friend, Dr. Rubin Shmulsky—now head of the Department of Sustainable Bioproducts—led to a job offer as quality manager at Weyerhaeuser’s Philadelphia lumber manufacturing facility, the stars aligned for Beeson to return to his home state of Mississippi.

However, he returned with his past experiences in hand.

“My varying experiences taught me leadership skills, to take pride in what I do, to handle stressful situations, and to think several steps ahead,” Beeson said. “These are crucial in the busy, sometimes chaotic, environment of the mill.”

The evidence of Beeson’s leadership abilities is tangible. As he navigates the narrow catwalks of the mill, he pauses often to exchange a kind word or lend a hand.

“Working in management and supervision, you get a lot of respect and cooperation if you give it. It doesn’t matter if the worker is brand new or if they’ve been there for 30 years—everyone

deserves respect and consideration. When people respect you and like working for you, most of the time they’re going to do a good job,” Beeson explained.

Beeson’s addition to the company came just a year before Weyerhaeuser merged with Plum Creek Timber Company, making it the largest private landowner in the United States. The company is also expanding and updating several of their locations, including the mill in Philadelphia.

“We’ve been doing planned reinvestment at several of our locations to make our mills as efficient as possible while providing high quality products for our customers,” Beeson said.

The over \$50 million expansion includes a new planer, sorting and stacking system, and dry kilns.

As the expansion continues, Beeson’s diverse background will be invaluable to the company.

“I really enjoy it. I like the constant challenges, working with down-to-earth people, and using modern technology to optimize use of a renewable resource,” Beeson reflected.

One thing is certain: after a winding journey back home, Beeson has found his perfect fit. ♣



CFR students on Scott Field. Photo by David Ammon



ON THE FIELD AND IN THE FIELD

Dual responsibilities for CFR majors

BY **VANESSA BEESON** | PHOTOS BY **DAVID AMMON**

TIME AND AGAIN, STUDENTS AND ALUMNI ALIKE say one of their favorite things about Mississippi State is that the campus feels like home and the people here feel like family. When asked about their favorite collegiate memory, many will tell you, “My first Mississippi State football game.” Win or lose, there is nothing quite like cheering on our beloved bulldogs. The Famous Maroon Band, an institution that spans more than a century, along with the MSU Spirit Groups, rally players and crowd alike to make every game day an unforgettable event. As the band plays the first chord of “Maroon and White” and the cheerleaders pivot, jump, and flip from the sidelines, thousands of fans clang cowbells in unison. Whether it’s the first game of the season or the famed Egg Bowl, the Game Day experience really comes down to the entire stadium working together to support the team.

FIVE UNDERGRADUATES IN THE College of Forest Resources spend Saturdays as members of the Famous Maroon Band or as part of the MSU Spirit Groups. The 375-member Famous Maroon Band features students in the College of Forest Resources: junior, Makayla Brister and freshmen, Erik Johnson, and Sam Patrick. The Mississippi State University Spirit Groups includes co-ed cheerleading, all-girl cheerleaders, pom squad and mascots. College of Forest Resources freshman, Mark Stigger, is a member of the 28-member group of co-ed couples that cheer at all of the university's football games and men's home basketball games. College of Forest Resources freshman, Elise Benson, is part of the all-girl squad that consists of 20 cheerleaders who cheer at home football games, women's home basketball games, and home volleyball games. It takes hard work, commitment, and time management to balance academics and extramural obligations, but each student possesses the spirit and tenacity to perform both on the field as band members and cheerleaders and in the field as majors in the College of Forest Resources.



MAKAYLA BRISTER keeps busy. She is a trumpet player in the Famous Maroon Band. The Raymond, Mississippi native is pursuing two majors at Mississippi State University. She is a wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture major with a pre-vet concentration in the College of Forest Resources. She is also majoring in environmental economics and management in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. A trumpet player since age 11, Makayla chose Mississippi State for her other passion—a love of the environment, outdoors, and wildlife. Makayla hopes to graduate in 2018 and has her sights on possibly attending law school. While game day is always a thrill, Makayla says her freshman year was perhaps the most invigorating experience on the field.

"The entire 2014 season was incredible, especially since we were able to go to Miami. Even though we lost the bowl game, it was still an unbelievable game day experience, she said."

Makayla said time management helps her balance all of her obligations.

"I have a planner I write in constantly. I just work hard and remain dedicated. I remind myself that if I don't show up to band practice, I am not just letting myself down, I am letting everyone down. If I don't show up to class, I am letting my grade down and that affects everything," Makayla added.



ERIK JOHNSON traveled all the way from his hometown of Chicago, Illinois to attend Mississippi State University. The forestry major with a concentration in wildlife management in the College of Forest Resources drew him to the Magnolia State.

"I knew I wanted to do something that involved nature and being outdoors. I researched what programs were strongest in forestry and wildlife management and Mississippi State's program really stood out from the rest," he said.

Erik plays sousaphone in the Marching Band and trombone in the Jazz Band at MSU. The freshman plans to graduate in May 2020. His most memorable game day experience thus far was the Texas A&M game.

"That was the most exciting game I have seen. When the team does so well, the band gets excited and the adrenaline pushes us through and makes the whole experience better for everyone," he said.

Erik relayed that being in the band is an important aspect of character development.

"Being a member of the band is an important part of developing your character because it's really working in a professional environment. You really have to do your best because if you mess up, it's as if the whole band messes up. That discipline and motivation really helps me on the academic side, too. I know I have to do my best," he said.



SAM PATRICK is a forestry major in the College of Forest Resources. His concentration is wildlife management. Sam hopes to graduate in May 2020. The Tupelo, Mississippi native has always loved the outdoors.

"I've always been a big outdoors person. I enjoy being outside and wanted to find a career that would let me spend time outdoors," he said.

Sam plays trumpet for the Famous Maroon Band. He started playing the trumpet at age 11 and began playing the piano a few years prior to that. He also plays guitar. He said music informs academics in a big way.

"Being in the band has taught me responsibility: to show up on time and perform. I played in high school and the entire experience was a big lesson in responsibility. You have to set aside time before and after to complete your studies. You have to make the commitment and stick to it," he said.

Sam hopes one day to be a forester or wildlife biologist.



MARK STIGGER receives a scholarship to cheer at Mississippi State and is a member of the co-ed squad. Mark began gymnastics at the age of nine and began cheering with All Star Cheerleading when he was 11. He cheered for six years before joining the team at MSU. The Memphis, Tennessee native chose MSU because of the strong undergraduate program in wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture.

"My childhood dream has always been to one day become a veterinarian," Mark said.

Mark is in the pre-vet concentration. He hopes to finish his undergraduate degree by May 2020. He said his cheerleading responsibilities enhance his academic endeavors.

"Cheerleading has helped me become more outgoing and personable. I am very comfortable speaking in front of crowds. With competition cheer you are always on the stage and under lights in front of tons of people. I think it has helped me develop both professionally and academically," he said.

Mark said after graduation he hopes to continue on at MSU and apply to the university's vet school.

"I love MSU, I love the College of Forest Resources, and I love the cheer squad. The entire community is very welcoming and the campus feels like home."



ELISE BENSON cheers on the MSU all-girl squad and also receives a scholarship. Elise is a wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture major with a pre-vet concentration. She hopes to graduate in May 2020 and continue on in vet school at Mississippi State. The Saltillo, Mississippi native has always dreamed of becoming a veterinarian.

"I have wanted to be a vet for as long as I can remember. I have always loved animals," she said.

She prefers working with wildlife and would like to work at a zoo or in wildlife rehabilitation one day. She has been a cheerleader since middle school. She said that while cheer requires extra time and more commitments, she is happy to do what it takes to make everything work.

"Cheering keeps me on my toes. It motivates me to get up and get going every day and complete all the tasks I need to complete," she said.

Elise came to Mississippi State when a member of her high school cheerleading team made the squad and she's happy she did.

"To see all the fans and have a front row view of all of the action on the field is quite a thrill."

In Memoriam

**DALE
HOWARD
ARNER**
(1920-2016)

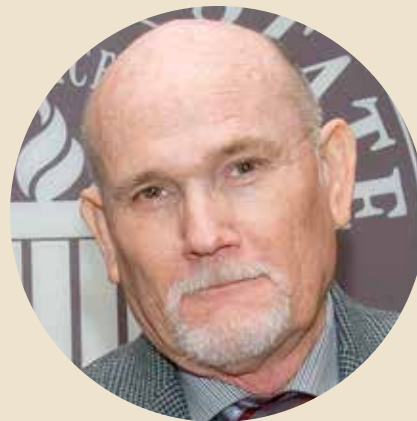


DR. DALE HOWARD ARNER, 96, PASSED AWAY ON JUNE 10, 2016 at his residence in Starkville, MS. Arner founded the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture in 1968. He remained professor and head of the department until his retirement in 1987. During his tutelage at Mississippi State, Dr. Arner served as major professor to more than 50 graduate students. While department head and professor, he participated in all graduate committees and attended all oral defenses in the department, an astonishing number totaling nearly 180.

"Dr. Arner was beloved by all of his faculty."

DEAN GEORGE HOPPER

**JOHN D.
HODGES**
(1937-2016)



DR. JOHN D. HODGES, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, 79, PASSED away December 23, 2016 at Regional One Medical Center in Memphis. Hodges was regarded as the preeminent hardwood silviculturist in the nation. In 1975, he came to Mississippi State University to establish what became the leading university program on hardwood research in the South. He received his B.S. degree in forestry from MSU in 1959, and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Washington. He was one of the first students at Mississippi State University to earn a B.S. degree from the then-young school of forestry.

"He knew more about trees than anyone I have ever known."

DEAN GEORGE HOPPER

**TERRY
SELLERS, JR.**
(1934-2016)



DR. TERRY SELLERS, JR., PASSED AWAY SUDDENLY AND peacefully at his home on June 9, 2016. Sellers received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Auburn University and his Ph.D. from the University of Tokyo. Sellers was a professor in the Department of Sustainable Bioproducts until his retirement in 2004. His books include *Plywood and Adhesive Technology*, and two genealogy books *Iron Butterfly* and *The Stars Are Friendly*.

"He was kind and gentle and a man that understood forest products."

DEAN GEORGE HOPPER

BECKY REID SPRINGER
(1958-2016)

BECKY SPRINGER, AGE 58, PASSED AWAY AT HER RESIDENCE in Mantee, Mississippi on October 27, 2016. Springer worked as an accounting assistant in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

**JAMES
MOAK**
(1916-2016)



DR. JAMES EMANUEL MOAK OF STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI passed away on April 28, 2016, at the age of 99 ½. He was born on October 26, 1916, in Norfield, MS. Moak taught Forest Economics at Mississippi State University for 31 years. His calm countenance, determined spirit, and joyful heart blessed so many. Dr. Moak received his B.S. degree from the University of Florida, M.S. degree from Auburn University, and his Ph.D. from Syracuse University.

"He was a brilliant economist, educator, and friend to so many."

DEAN GEORGE HOPPER

SANDRA "SANDI" PALMERTREE FASON
(1961-2015)

SANDRA "SANDI" PALMERTREE FASON, AGE 54, PASSED away at North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo, Mississippi on December 3, 2015. Fason worked as an administrative assistant in the Department of Sustainable Bioproducts.

DEVELOPMENT

MISSISSIPPI COUPLE ENTRUSTS FAMILY LAND TO MSU

BY ADDIE MAYFIELD

JUST OFF THE BEATEN PATH BETWEEN SENATOBIA AND Holly Springs, nestled among rolling hills and towering hardwoods, lies a tract of land that offers diverse terrain and picturesque views at every turn. Spirit Hill Farm bears witness to a long history of hard work and integrity. Through a generous bequest from Bob and Sheryl Bowen, the farm will continue to live up to its name for years to come.

Bob, a 1963 MSU graduate with a degree in history and political science, and his wife, Sheryl, have chosen to establish Spirit Hill Farm as a Legacy Forest within MSU's Bulldog Forest. Spanning more than 1,000 acres, the farm has been in Bob's family since the early 1800s. It is one of Mississippi's Centennial Farms, a designation for farms owned by the same family and in continuous agricultural production for more than 100 years. Sustaining and rewarding its stewards for generations, the farm is more than a home to the Bowens—it's a heritage.

"So many family farms are split up as they are passed from generation to generation," Bob said. "My father asked me to keep the land as long as I could and to keep it intact as long as I could, and this gift accomplishes that wish."

The property, which will be managed by the College of Forest Resources, will be used for a variety of purposes, including wildlife and forestry research, field day demonstrations, extension and outreach projects, and other educational and training activities. A primary focus will involve the creation and management of wildlife habitats suitable for northern bobwhite quail in honor of the many quail hunts Bob and his brother shared with their father on the farm.

In addition to the farm, the couple has also established the Bowen Spirit Hill Farm Conservation Endowment to support and maintain the property. Proceeds from the endowment will support the upkeep of structures, machinery, and equipment, as well as the procurement of new facilities, materials, labor, utilities, and other improvements associated with the farm.

Beyond serving as an educational and research area, the farm has many agricultural opportunities, including row crops, timber, livestock production, and related pasturelands.

"Spirit Hill Farm will allow us to provide students, faculty, and landowners with valuable, hands-on learning opportunities,"

said Jeff Little, director of development for the College of Forest Resources and The Bulldog Forest. "The benefit of the Bowens' gifts is twofold—we are going to maximize and restore the function of the land, which will, in turn, help to grow MSU's educational experience and service."

The name Spirit Hill Farm comes from native folklore. According to locals, "good spirits" from the farm's 1840s family cemetery, as well as an ancient Native American campground, have inhabited the property for decades.

"The stories about the spirits inspired the name because it has taken the hard work of everyone who has ever lived here to make this place what it is today," Sheryl said. "Also, it's not always about a physical ability to do something; it's about your spirit and willingness to want to make something better than before."

Since moving to the farm, the couple said the land has inspired them to feel differently about many things in life, including conservation and advocacy.

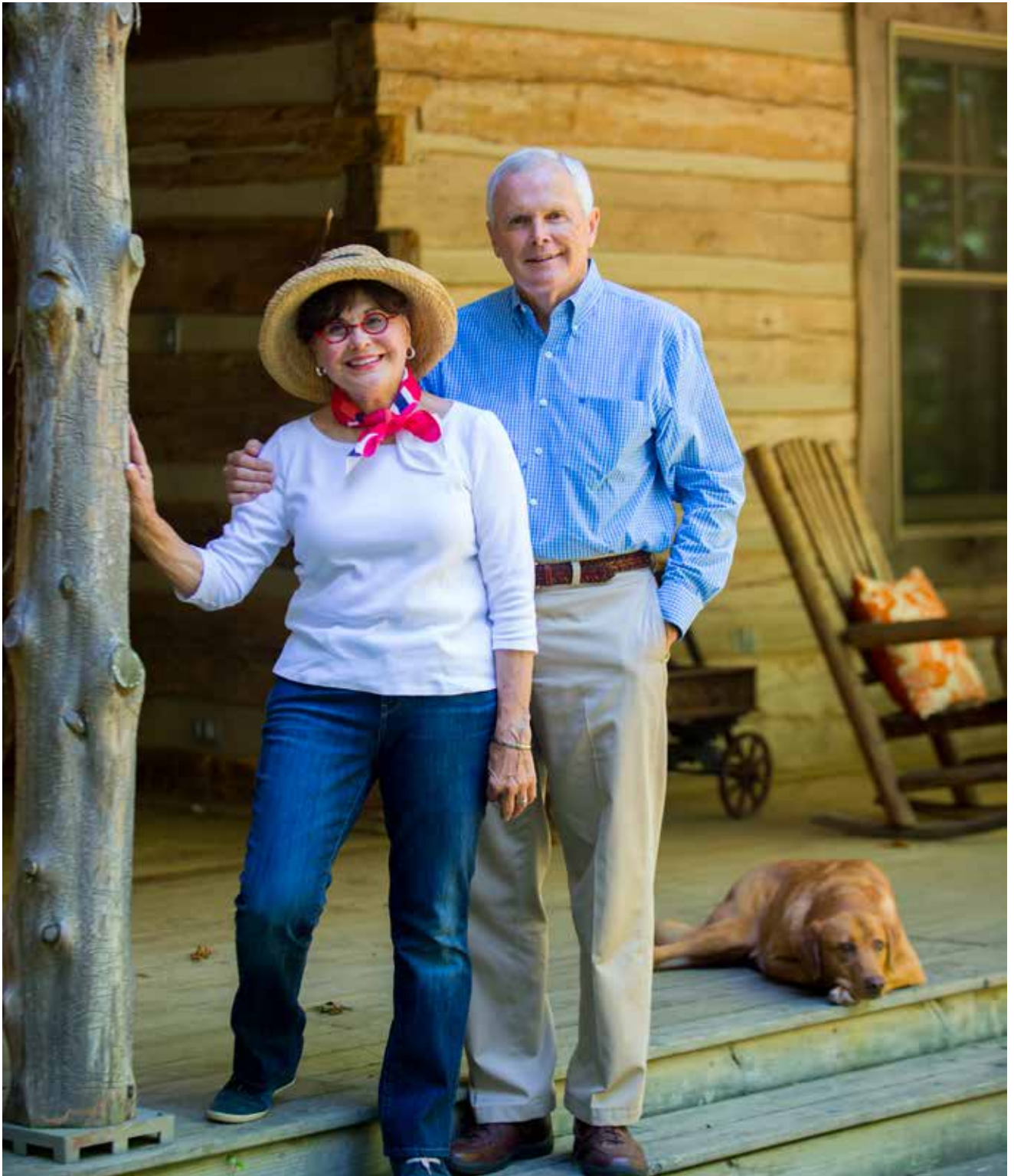
"Living here has made us more sensitive to things we never had to think about before," Sheryl said. "Some people think we should be leaving the farm to our children, but we think that giving this property to Mississippi State University is its best use. We don't own anything in life; we are just caretakers for the next generation, and we all have something to give that will help make the world a better place."

The Bowens' dream to foster research and education while encouraging quality land and wildlife management will be accomplished through their generous gifts. With the help of MSU, Spirit Hill Farm will become a working landscape and premier wildlife habitat.

"We have built a great relationship with MSU, and we hope that our gifts will not only promote good conservation, but also inspire others to consider giving to Mississippi State," Bob said. "There are multiple uses for this land, from food plots and research to propagation and development, all of which Mississippi State University does very well."

More than just acreage, Spirit Hill Farm is a legacy that will live on in the students it serves. The land that has such a deep connection to the Bowen family's past will create a bright future for MSU. Careful gift planning enables the land to stay together, and a family promise is fulfilled. ♦

Bob and Sheryl Bowen (Photo by Russ Houston)



MOSSY OAK SCHOLARSHIP DRIVES SUCCESS THROUGH PASSION

BY **ADDIE MAYFIELD**

IN 1986, JUST THREE YEARS AFTER GRADUATING FROM the Mississippi State University College of Business, Toxey Haas returned to his home in West Point and founded Haas Outdoors Inc., parent company of Mossy Oak brands. Utilizing his education to fuel his passion for the outdoors, Haas revolutionized the modern hunting industry. Today, Haas is helping more students pursue their ambitions through a newly endowed scholarship in the MSU College of Forest Resources.

The Fox Haas Mossy Oak Endowed Scholarship was established by Haas to honor his father and fellow MSU alumnus, Carl Fox Haas. Often referred to by many as simply, “Mr. Fox,” the avid sportsman inspired his son’s lifelong love for hunting from an early age.

“My dad has always been my hero and my biggest influence,” said Haas. “He not only taught me to hunt and be a woodsman, but more importantly he taught me the value system for life. Nothing means more to him than his faith, his family, and the earth we are responsible to care for.”

Fox, a native of Mobile, Alabama, graduated from then Mississippi State College in 1956. During his time as a student, he met his wife, Evelyn Nash, a fellow 1956 classmate. After a 30-year progressive career, Fox retired from West Point-based Bryan Foods in 1990 to join his son in the family business. He currently serves as secretary and treasurer of Mossy Oak.

“My dad is, in my opinion and also countless others, the model ‘conservationist,’ which by definition requires giving back more than you take,” Haas said. “This scholarship is not just a way for our family and the Mossy Oak brand to honor my dad, but also to hold him as the example in this field. Mississippi State has always been a huge priority in his life and although he has received many accolades and honors, I believe he considers this one his greatest.”

The Fox Haas Mossy Oak Endowed Scholarship will be awarded to students enrolled in the College of Forest Resources. Candidates for the award must submit a resume and brief essay, and be recommended by at least one faculty member. Preference may also be based on financial need.

In addition to his parents, Haas also shares his alma mater with his wife, Diane, who graduated from the MSU College of Education



Toxey Haas (Photo Submitted by Mossy Oak)

in 1983, as well as the couple’s three children, Sara Frances, Daniel and Neill. Through the Fox Haas Mossy Oak Endowed Scholarship, the family’s maroon legacy will ring true for future generations.

“Mr. Haas is a conservationist and understands the importance of training leaders in managing our natural resources,” said Dean George Hopper. “We are grateful for the Haas family, who have created awareness of conserving natural resources through the Mossy Oak brand and their generosity to help future leaders contribute to this mission.”

Haas’ support also extends to MSU athletics, including co-developing the Mossy Oak Golf Club with fellow MSU alumnus George Bryan, opened in Fall 2016.

In pursuing his passion, Haas has transformed the sport of hunting, making the Mossy Oak name synonymous with the outdoor lifestyle it serves. Now, the Fox Haas Mossy Oak Endowed Scholarship will also synonomize the brand with educational opportunities at MSU, and will provide perpetual support for future success as ambitious students pursue their own passions.

SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED IN MEMORY OF LATE MSU PROFESSOR, SPOUSE

BY **ADDIE MAYFIELD**

A NEW SCHOLARSHIP IN THE MISSISSIPPI STATE University College of Forest Resources has been established by the family of MSU alumni Carroll and Gwen Perkins in memory of the lives and careers of the late couple.

A native of Leesville, Louisiana, Carroll Perkins earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Louisiana State University and led a successful career that included periods with International Paper Company as a wildlife biologist and the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission as assistant director.

Carroll later attended Mississippi State, graduating with his Ph.D. in 1973. He served as professor in the College of Forest Resources until his retirement from MSU.

A member of numerous professional wildlife organizations, Carroll's research was widely published. He also was honored as the 1975 Conservation Educator of the Year by the Mississippi and National Wildlife Federation, and was the 1976 recipient of the Clarence W. Watson Award, the Southeast's most prestigious award to honor top contributors in wildlife and fishery conservation.

Gwen Perkins, an Oklahoma native, also was a Bulldog alumna earning her bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. from Mississippi State



Gwen and Carroll Perkins (Photo submitted)

in 1975, 1977 and 1982, respectively. During the couple's time in Starkville, Gwen was known for hosting soirees to extend hospitality to international graduate students at MSU, and was named the Outstanding Community Woman by the MSU President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1999.

An avid writer and photographer, Gwen was published in several magazines, including National Geographic, Time-Life series, and Reader's Digest. Additionally, one of her lithographs became the first duck stamp for the state of Mississippi in 1976.

The Drs. Carroll and Gwen Perkins Scholarship will provide a \$1,000 scholarship to the recipient each year. Candidates for the award will be full-time students of sophomore standing or higher in the College of Forest Resources. They also will have a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0 and must have an interest in pursuing careers in forestry, wildlife, fisheries, aquaculture, or sustainable bioproducts.

For more information on contributing to the College of Forest Resources, contact Jeff Little, the college's director of development, at (662) 325-8151 or jlittle@foundation.msstate.edu.

BRYAN ENDOWS LEGACY OF CONSERVATION

BY ADDIE MAYFIELD

NEARLY 20 YEARS AGO, JIMMY BRYAN BEGAN SEARCHING for ways to restore bobwhite quail populations on his family farm. Despite being rooted in richly productive soils of the Blackland Prairie region of Clay County, years of cropping practices designed to enhance agricultural efficiency had eliminated essential habitat and the farm's ability to sustain wildlife. When Bryan turned to the experts at Mississippi State University, he never imagined the opportunities that would unfold.

"Many people don't realize that this area has a rich tradition of quail hunting," said Bryan, a former MSU Foundation Board member. "The first National Field Trial Championship was actually held here in Clay County in 1896. I wanted to try to bring that birdhunting tradition back."

Under the guidance of Dr. Wes Burger, an MSU professor of wildlife ecology, Bryan implemented comprehensive conservation practices that proved successful in bringing more than quail back to the family farm. This renewal process was further augmented through assistance from Wildlife Mississippi.

Over the years, the progressive efforts transformed the land—once solely limited to agricultural production—into a thriving, multifunctional wildlife enterprise known as Prairie Wildlife, LLC. Today, Bryan and his wife, Kay, are returning the support to MSU through an endowment that will ensure continued success of Mississippi's wildlife conservation.

The Bryan-Burger Endowment for Bobwhite Habitat Restoration, established in the College of Forest Resources, will provide perpetual funding to build upon this model of collaborative conservation and working lands research. Although primarily directed toward bobwhite conservation, the endowment also emphasizes habitat restoration of the historical elements of the Blackland Prairie ecosystems in Mississippi and Alabama.

"Previous efforts for this type of research have depended on funding from state and federal grants," said Burger, who also serves as associate director of the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station and the Forest and Wildlife Research Center. "The Bryans' generous endowment will ensure the university's long-term commitment to bobwhite and prairie-conservation research."

Results of the collaborative research and conservation efforts spanning the last 19 years have contributed to more than 60 scientific

publications, as well as the development and evaluation of the CP33 conservation practice. CP33, which involves establishing strips of vegetation around the edges of crop fields to serve as habitat buffers, was nationally implemented by the USDA Farm Service Agency under the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program in 2004. Additionally, 14 MSU students have performed graduate research on Bryan's farm.

"Mississippi State is known for its 'boots-on-the-ground approach,' especially in the applied-science programs," Bryan said. "I had seen public-private partnerships supporting bobwhite research in other regions of the country and thought that, with the valuable resources available in the university's Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture, we could do something similar that directly applies to the people here in the Southeast."

Historically, bobwhites were an accidental byproduct of land-use practices in agricultural landscapes. Today's highly mechanized farming practices require intentional creation of wildlife habitat. Prairie Wildlife embodies this concept, implementing a suite of conservation practices that minimally impact crop and livestock production systems and provide substantial returns to the larger ecosystem context through well-planned resource management.

"The goal was to increase bobwhite populations, but once we started establishing habitat and restoring native communities, we began to see many other valuable and sometimes unexpected returns," Burger said. "Water quality in Town Creek improved dramatically, a diverse community of butterflies and other native pollinators colonized in restored grasslands, and grassland birds increased in abundance. The more restoration we did, the more benefits Jimmy saw and the more he wanted to do. Now, his farm serves as a model for how wildlife conservation and production agriculture can coexist."

In addition to conservation and agriculture, Prairie Wildlife also has significant recreational aspects included in its well-balanced portfolio. Beyond quail, the enterprise delivers exceptional





dove, deer, and rabbit hunting, as well. It also is one of five Orvis Wingshooting School locations and home to the Bluff City Land Rover Driving Experience.

The lodge, which contains corporate meeting rooms, a pro shop, and guest rooms, enables visitors to experience the benefits of the renaissance of Bryan's farm. Alternatively, a more private retreat can be found nestled among the hardwoods in a restored cabin, originally built in 1844.

"The initial idea was to have a small sporting operation in with the cattle and row-crop production," Bryan said. "But it kind of outgrew itself."

As a working lands laboratory for MSU's continued research, evaluation, and demonstration of innovative conservation practices—now supplemented through support from the Bryan-Burger Endowment—Prairie Wildlife helps shape the standards of modern land management. The mutually beneficial partnership helps to improve MSU's academic and research practices while further enhancing the overall productivity of Bryan's farm.

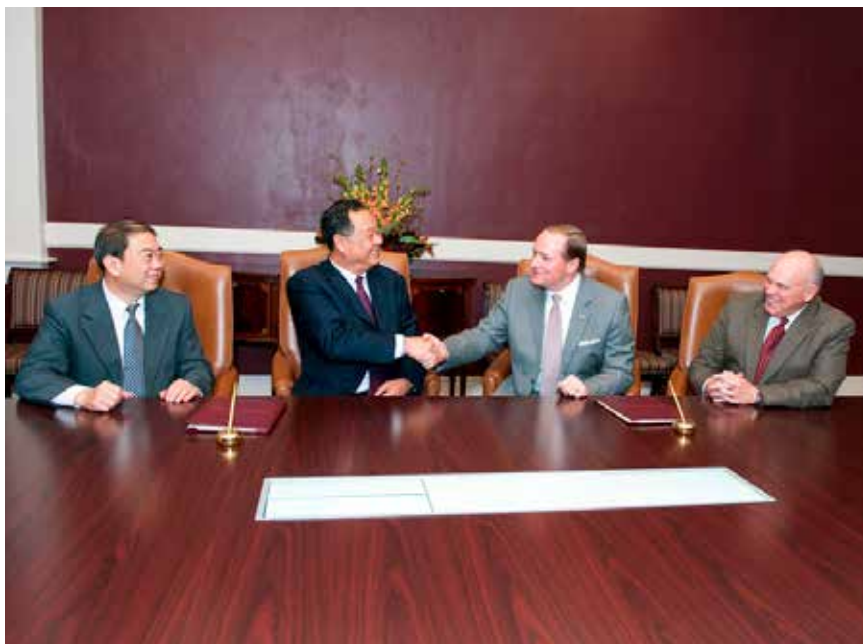
"The Bryans' gift truly makes an infinite impact, not just for future generations of students who will study on his farm, but also for the wildlife that are now finding habitat in this prairie ecosystem,"

said Dr. George Hopper, dean of the College of Forest Resources. "This type of ecosystem restoration is a great demonstration for other landowners to see the benefits of managing natural resources in agricultural production systems."

The Bryans' recent endowment augments their longtime support of the university, which extends to many areas, including scholarships and athletics. The West Point natives also contributed land in their hometown for the MSU Extension Service 4-H Youth Complex, which opened in 2014. A presidential endowed scholarship (one of the university's most competitive student awards) and an endowed animal externship in the College of Veterinary Medicine also bear the couple's name.

In fulfilling the fundamental charge to serve, Mississippi State helped rewrite the future of Bryan's farm. In turn, his endowment is enabling MSU to extend the legacy of comprehensive conservation. As family traditions of farming and sportsmanship are often passed down, so too are the investments in education and research, which lay the foundations for success and carry the torch of the MSU impact on to future generations. ♣

COLLEGE NEWS



MSU, SHANDONG AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY IN CHINA SIGN MOA

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY AND Shandong Agricultural University signed a Memorandum of Agreement December 1, 2015 to offer a dual degree program in forestry. The agreement allows both institutions to enhance the educational experiences of students. Participants will be awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in forestry from MSU's College of Forest Resources and a Bachelor of Agriculture

degree from SDAU. Students at the College of Forestry at SDAU who have completed three years of study at their home institution will be eligible to transfer to MSU as part of the dual degree program. Candidates from SDAU must complete an MSU application, and the official agreement also outlines additional requirements and considerations for visa, English language proficiency, academic and financial considerations, among others.

NATIONAL TRAINING ACADEMY TO BE HOUSED AT MSU

A NEW PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN Mississippi State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's APHIS Wildlife Services program has made the university home to a national training academy. On Aug. 26, MSU President Mark E. Keenum and USDA APHIS Wildlife Services Deputy Administrator William H. Clay signed a "Resolution for Collaboration" to create a national training academy housed at Mississippi State. APHIS—the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service—provides a wide range of functions, including protecting and promoting U.S. agricultural health, regulating genetically-engineered organisms, administering the Animal Welfare Act, and carrying out wildlife damage management activities. The Wildlife Services National Training Academy, or NTA, is the country's first academy dedicated to training, instruction, and safely resolving human-wildlife conflicts and safety-related risks. The academy, headquartered at Mississippi State in the Center for Resolving Human-Wildlife Conflicts, can train up to 1,200 service personnel of USDA's Wildlife Services currently tasked with responding to human-wildlife conflicts across the U.S.

MSU SPEARHEADS EFFORT TO PROTECT LOCAL WATERSHED

MORE THAN 20 CAMPUS UNITS AND 30 FACULTY AND STAFF members at Mississippi State University are teaming up with state and federal agencies and local stakeholders to restore the water quality of a creek that flows through campus and is the focal point of the Catalpa Creek watershed.

MSU's Mississippi Water Resources Research Institute, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Forest

and Wildlife Research Center, and Extension Service are spearheading the comprehensive effort to conduct preliminary research, develop implementation measures, foster education and experiential learning activities, and seek funding that faculty and students would use to address erosion and nutrient impairment within Catalpa Creek.

LONGEST-RUNNING, LIVE, IN-WOOD EQUIPMENT SHOW

A RECORD CROWD OF 7,000 VISITORS attended the Mid-South Forestry Equipment Show at the John W. Starr Forest in late August 2016. The newest technology and machinery used to advance the South's timber industry was demonstrated during the biennial event. A record 93 vendors and exhibitors participated. Continuing education credits totaling 3,600 hours were earned by 1,600 loggers. B&G Equipment, Caterpillar/Thompson Machinery/Puckett Machinery, John Deere/Stribling Equipment, and the Mississippi Loggers Association raised more than \$10,500 for the Log-A-Load for Kids charity during the two-day event.



MSU WOOD MAGIC SCIENCE FAIR

MSU HOSTED 3,300 CHILDREN AND nearly 500 teachers and parents Oct. 17-21, 2016 as visitors learned about forestry, sustainable bioproducts like lumber and plywood, and wildlife. The annual Wood Magic Science Fair event has been going on for more than 20 years and draws students from all over Mississippi. The weeklong event took place at the R.T. Clapp Forest Products Laboratory in Starkville. The fair was sponsored by the MSU College of Forest Resources, the MSU Forest and Wildlife Research Center, the Department of Sustainable Bioproducts, the MSU Extension Service, 4-H, the Mississippi Forestry Association, the Mississippi Lumber Manufacturers Association, and the Mississippi Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

FACULTY/STAFF AWARDS



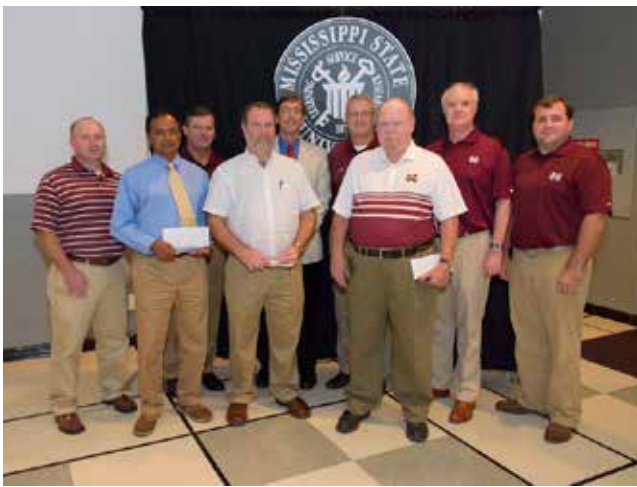
BURGER RECEIVES POWE RESEARCH AWARD

DR. WES BURGER, LEFT, THE 2016 RALPH E. POWE RESEARCH Excellence Award honoree, is congratulated by MSU President Mark E. Keenum. Burger is associate director of the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, associate director of the Forest and Wildlife Research Center, Dale Arner Distinguished Professor of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture, and Grisham Master Teacher. He has secured more than \$19 million in research grants, and authored 229 publications including 89 peer-reviewed journal articles, 47 peer-reviewed proceedings articles, 14 book chapters, and 79 semi-technical bulletins and articles. In his current role, Burger works to define, develop, and administer a broadly-based research program of national significance in agriculture and natural resources. The Powe Award is a memorial to the MSU alumnus and longtime research vice president who died in 1996.



GRADO RECEIVES ACCOLADES

DR. STEPHEN C. GRADO IS AMONG 80 SELECTED THIS YEAR for Phi Kappa Phi's Love of Learning award. The nation's oldest and most selective honor society recognized the 21-year Mississippi State faculty veteran for dedication to the education profession and the society. Founded in 1897 at the University of Maine, PKP currently has more than 300 university and college chapters throughout North America and the Philippines. Membership is by invitation only to academically achieving seniors and graduate students, as well as some second-term juniors. A member of the College of Forest Resources faculty since 1995, Grado holds the George L. Switzer Professorship in Forestry. He also is the forestry department's undergraduate coordinator. Grado was also recently elected to the Penn State University Forest Resources Alumni Group Board of Directors.



DAFVM/REGIONS BANK AWARDS

For outstanding service and achievements during the 2015-16 school year, Mississippi State's Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine honored more than two dozen employees. Faculty and staff in the College of Forest Resources were honored including:

DR. DONALD GREBNER, recipient of the 2016 Regions-DAFVM Superior Faculty Award for Research. He is a forestry professor in the College of Forest Resources and Forest and Wildlife Research Center;

DR. BRONSON STRICKLAND, recipient of the 2016 Regions-DAFVM Superior Faculty Award for Outreach. He is an associate extension professor in wildlife, fisheries, and aquaculture and a researcher in the Forest and Wildlife Research Center;

DR. MICHAEL BARNES, recipient of the 2016 Regions-DAFVM Superior Faculty Award for Service. He is a sustainable bioproducts professor in the College of Forest Resources and Forest and Wildlife Research Center.

Additionally, **CHARLSIE HALFORD**, an administrative assistant in College of Forest Resources, received the inaugural Stellar Staff Award, in the support staff category.

OTHER RECOGNITIONS:

JHONDA SOWERS, received the Wise Award in the secretarial/clerical category. She is an accounting assistant in the forestry department.

DRS. STEPHEN DICKE and **JASON GORDON** of the forestry department, received a William White Award for urban tree-hazard strike team training.

MSU OFFICE OF RESEARCH & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ORED)/DAFVM AWARDS

DR. PETER ALLEN, associate professor in wildlife, fisheries, and aquaculture, received the ORED/DAFVM faculty award.

DR. SASITH KARUNARATHNA, research associate in the Department of Forestry received the ORED/DAFVM research support staff award.

OTHER AWARDS

DR. BRADY SELF, assistant extension professor in forestry, received the 2015 Early Career Programming Excellence Award from the Mississippi Association of County Agricultural Agents.

DR. BRONSON STRICKLAND, associate extension professor in wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture, received the Mark Keenum Award for Distinguished Professor in Extension, a significant lifetime achievement and the highest recognition awarded by the MSU Extension Service.

ADAM ROHNKE, senior extension associate in wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture located at the Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center in Raymond, received the MSU Zacharias Staff Award.

MSU FACULTY RECEIVES MISSISSIPPI SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS AWARDS

THE MISSISSIPPI SOCIETY OF AMERICAN Foresters honored **DR. IAN MUNN**, associate dean and forestry professor, with the 2016 Distinguished Service Career Award and **DR. BRADY SELF**, assistant extension professor in forestry, with the 2016 Young Forester Award.

CFR PROFESSORSHIPS



IAN MUNN

SHARP PROFESSOR

Dr. Ian Munn, associate dean and professor in the College of Forest Resources, has been designated as a Sharp Professor of Forestry. He has been a faculty member at MSU for nearly 23 years. Munn is a fellow of the Society of American Foresters and served as a council member of the organization's administrative council that oversees Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. He also served as editor of SAF's Southern Journal of Applied Forestry for almost a decade. He has been author or co-author on eight books or book chapters and 70 refereed publications. He has been the recipient of nearly 60 grants and awards. Munn was the president of the Mississippi Forestry Association in 2016.



JERRY BELANT

DALE ARNER PROFESSOR

Dr. Jerry Belant, wildlife biologist and internationally-renowned expert on carnivore ecology, has been designated the Dale Arner Professor of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture in the College of Forest Resources. Belant has been a faculty member at MSU since 2008. He is also director of the Carnivore Ecology Lab at MSU, which seeks to improve understanding of all aspects of carnivore ecology and management through theoretical and applied research. In his time at MSU, Belant has published 154 peer-reviewed journal articles, obtained more than \$13 million dollars in extramural funding, and advised 10 research associates, many of them post-doctorates. He has served as committee chair for 13 master's students and 10 doctoral students and been a committee member for nine additional graduate students.



JILEI ZHANG

**WARREN S. THOMPSON PROFESSOR,
CFR/FWRC RESEARCH AWARD**

Named the Warren S. Thompson Professor of Sustainable Bioproducts in the College of Forest Resources, Dr. Jilei Zhang, is also the recipient of the 2016 CFR/FWRC Research Award. Zhang's career at Mississippi State spans nearly two decades. In the last three years alone, he has secured \$500,000 in extramural funding, coauthored 26 peer-reviewed publications, and mentored several graduate students. Zhang's research has branched out from furniture engineering and design into composites, non-destructive testing, and nano-particles and fibers. He collaborates with researchers around the world and his work informs industry at the local, regional, national, and international levels. This year, he was awarded a patent for work in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service.



DONALD GREBNER

**GEORGE L. SWITZER PROFESSOR,
CFR/FWRC SERVICE AWARD**

Named the George L. Switzer Professor of Forestry, Dr. Donald Grebner, is also the recipient of the 2016 CFR/FWRC Service Award. Grebner has been a steward of his community for several years. He is active locally, nationally, and internationally. Grebner focuses on the enrichment of young people. He is active in the Boy Scouts of America and conducts educational outreach in various local schools. As a member of the Society of American Foresters, Grebner has volunteered extensively at the local and state chapter levels. Most recently, he was chosen to serve for the organization nationally as both the Chair of the SAF House Society of Delegates and on the national council, now referred to as the Board of Directors. He also serves as past-chair of the International Society of Forest Resources Economics and is an officer in the International Union of Forest Research Organizations' Economics Group.

CFR AWARDS



COURTNEY SIEGERT

CFR TEACHING AWARD

Dr. Courtney Siegert, assistant professor in the College of Forest Resources, earned the 2016 CFR Teaching Award. Siegert has been a faculty member in the Department of Forestry for three years. Since that time, she has developed five courses for the department from the ground up. One of Siegert's courses is part of the Forestry Summer Field Program. The program requires long hours in hot, and sometimes, inclement weather conditions. Siegert's demonstrated tenacity, ingenuity, and dedication as faculty member and mentor to countless students including undergraduate research scholars and graduate students make her an ideal fit for this honor.



MIKE COLVIN

CFR/FWRC EARLY CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Dr. Mike Colvin, assistant professor in the College of Forest Resources, earned the 2016 CFR/FWRC Early Career Achievement Award. Colvin joined the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture in September 2014. He is also a researcher in the Forest and Wildlife Research Center. Colvin teaches two undergraduate courses and co-taught a graduate course in 2015. In addition, he developed an Undergraduate Research Scholars Program on the study of crappie and mentored an undergraduate researcher who matriculated into a graduate student. He has advised 10 master's and three doctoral students as committee chairman, co-advisor, or committee member. On the research side, Colvin has 11 peer-reviewed articles published or in-press from 2014-2015. He has also helped secure \$236,000 in research program support.



BRADY SELF

CFR/FWRC EXTENSION AWARD

Dr. Brady Self, assistant extension professor in the College of Forest Resources, received the 2016 CFR/FWRC Extension Award. A forestry alumnus, Self has completed more than 350 technical presentations for landowners, professional land managers, or youth in the last three years. Self has helped plan more than 60 programs, including short courses, 4-H, field days, and more. He has been prolific in publishing, producing 70 extension publications, serving as author or co-author on 29 oral presentations and eight posters. Regarding research and grantmanship, Self has been principal investigator or co-investigator on 22 projects with total funding of more than \$200,000.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

NEW FACULTY

DR. BETH BAKER is an assistant extension professor in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture. Her research interests include water quality, natural resource conservation, agriculture sustainability, ecosystem health, and aquatic toxicology. Her extension responsibilities include the REACH Program, which stands for Research and Education to Advance Conservation and Habitat. She earned her Ph.D. in forest resources at Mississippi State.

DR. BLAIR GOODRIDGE is an assistant professor in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture. His research interests include hydrology, oceanography, geochemistry, and water quality. He is also involved in REACH. Goodridge earned his Ph.D. in aquatic biogeochemistry from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

DR. GANESH KARUNAKARAN is an assistant research professor at the Thad Cochran National Warmwater Aquaculture Center at the Delta Research and Extension Center in Stoneville, Mississippi. His research interests include alternate-production technologies for fish farms, catfish feeds and feeding practice, and optimum production strategies for catfish farms. He earned his Ph.D. in aquaculture/fisheries from the University of Arkansas.

RETIREMENTS

DR. SUSAN DIEHL, professor, sustainable bioproducts, retired after 25 years of service. Diehl was a previous recipient of the CFR Sharp Professorship. Her research focused on fungal bio-deterioration of wood, mold, and microbial ecology of wood organisms. Diehl's passion was centered on undergraduate and graduate education with an emphasis on recruiting females and minorities into the STEM field in which she worked. She advised six doctoral students and 13 master's students, half of whom are female, as well as two postdoctoral associates. In addition, she introduced nearly 30 undergraduates into her research program, where they conducted research in her lab. She has been author or co-author on more than 80 academic articles published in peer-reviewed journals since 2000.

DR. ERIC DIBBLE, professor, aquatic sciences, retired from MSU after 20 years of service in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture. Dibble served as interim department head in 2014-2015. Dibble is a nationally respected scientist in invasive aquatic plants, fish populations, and ecology. Teaching areas included ichthyology/fish ecology and research interests centered on community, behavior, and foraging ecology of fish. He also studied aquatic plant and fish habitat management. He has been author or co-author on more than 60 academic articles published in peer-reviewed journals since 2000.

DR. JEANNE JONES, professor, wildlife ecology and management, retired from MSU after 32 years of service in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture. The expert wildlife ecologist authored or co-authored more than 50 peer-reviewed publications since 2000. Jones is a fellow of the Wildlife Society. She is also an alumna of the College of Forest Resources.

DR. DAVE BURRAGE retired as extension professor of fisheries at the Coastal Research and Extension Center. He was with the university for 32 years.

DIANE WEEKS retired from MSU after serving as an office associate in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture for 18 years.

STUDENT NEWS



MSU FORESTRY STUDENT GROUP AGAIN PLACES FIRST NATIONALLY

STUDENT MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN Foresters at Mississippi State again are tops among their U.S. peers. As in 2011, the university SAF chapter has been awarded first-place honors. Also, the 30-plus member group is included for the 18th consecutive year among the top three of nearly 40 student chapters located from Virginia to California and Maine to Arizona. The first-place honor is based on accomplishments throughout

the academic year, with an emphasis on campus and community service and outreach programs. Professional engagement and organizational management also are considered. Chapters at Colorado State and Northern Arizona universities followed MSU this year at second and third place, respectively. Robert Grala, an associate forestry professor in the College of Forest Resources, has served as faculty adviser since 2007.



DEAN'S COUNCIL PARTICIPATES IN SALVATION ARMY GOOD WORKS

THE DEAN'S COUNCIL ADOPTED FOUR families from Salvation Army's Adopt a Child project. All together, they adopted 12 children and divided these out among the ten CFR student organizations. Pictured from left to right: Jade McCarley (Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture), Davis Pigg (Forestry), Chandler Guy (Forestry), and Preston Bush (Forestry).



MSU BASS FISHING CLUB RANKED NO. 1 IN CABELA'S SCHOOL OF THE YEAR RACE

MISSISSIPPI STATE'S Bass Fishing Club ranked No. 1 nationally in the 2016 race for Cabela's School of the Year

title. Under the leadership of president **JEFF ROMAN CLAYTON IV**, a junior forestry major from Theodore, Alabama, the team held a commanding 20-point lead in The Association of Collegiate Anglers-sponsored competition. Comprised of 43 members, the Mississippi State club is one of many organizations that offer participation through the university's recreational sports department. Cabela's Collegiate Bass Fishing Series is considered the largest participatory collegiate tournament circuit in the country.



FORESTRY STUDENT ELECTED TO TOP POST

MERCEDES SIEGLE-GAITHER, A MASTER OF SCIENCE STUDENT STUDYING FOREST hydrology in the College of Forest Resources, has been elected president of the MSU Graduate Student Association. The Wisconsin native earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in 2014. She also completed a marine mammal care internship with the U.S. Navy's National Marine Mammal Foundation in San Diego, California.

AWARDS & HONORS

JOSH BANKSTON, forestry major, received the MSU's Office of Research and Economic Development and Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine undergraduate student award.

RAM DAHAL, forestry doctoral student, placed third in the student poster competition at the International Society of Forest Resource Economics.

FREDERICO FRANCA, sustainable bioproducts graduate student, was the recipient of the MSU's Office of Research and Economic Development and Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine graduate student award. Frederico along with his spouse, **TAMARA AMORIM FRANCA**, spent several weeks working at the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Products Lab.

NICOLE HORNSLEIN, forestry graduate student, won first place in the regional poster competition at the U.S. Forest Service Southern Hardwood Research Group meeting in Stoneville, Mississippi.

SUNIL NEPAL, forestry master's student, placed second in the student poster competition at the International Society of Forest Resource Economics.

ZACH PARDUE, forestry major, received the Student Leadership Award from the Mississippi Society of American Foresters.

RAJU POKHAREL, forestry doctoral student, placed first in the student poster competition at the International Society of Forest Resource Economics.

ALUMNI NEWS



DARREN MILLER (Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture 1993, 1997) is the incoming vice president of The Wildlife Society. Miller joined the student chapter of TWS as an undergraduate at Eastern Kentucky University. According to an

article in Today's Wildlife Professional, Miller credits The Wildlife Society for helping his career, not only professionally but personally. Miller will become president of The Wildlife Society in October 2018, at the organization's annual conference. Miller is a science adviser and the southern environmental research manager for Weyerhaeuser Company. His oldest daughter Hannah is pursuing a degree in Animal and Dairy Science at Mississippi State University. His younger daughter Heidi plans on pursuing a degree in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture at Mississippi State next year. Miller and wife, Michelle, live in Starkville, MS.



BOBBY BOND (Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture 1999), was awarded the 2015 Wildlife Manager of the Year by the Georgia State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. He also received the National Wild Turkey Federation's Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year Award at the 40th annual NWTF Convention and Sport Show. The Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year Award is named in honor of a former Georgia

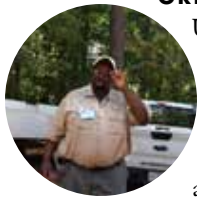
Department of Natural Resources wildlife chief for his leadership and the vital role he played in improving wildlife management. Kurz also was a principal figure in wild turkey trap-and-transfer programs across North America. Bond is a senior wildlife biologist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Bond coordinates two wild turkey surveys each year – a poult survey to determine reproduction and a hunter survey to estimate current turkey numbers and determine success rates – in an effort to help the state agency best manage its turkey population. Bond's efforts support the theory that reproduction declines are a result of population density. Bond also oversees and takes an active role in the habitat management of six wildlife management areas in central Georgia, working tirelessly to improve these areas for wildlife and hunters. (National Wild Turkey Federation)



The research of **TAYLOR HACKEMACK** (Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture 2016) was published in the Wildlife Society Bulletin in November 2016. Hackemack now works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The study was part of research she conducted as an undergraduate research scholar. The work was initiated by Hackemack and the late professor, Sam Riffell, who was listed as a coauthor. Zachary G. Loman, a former MSU research associate who is now pursuing post-doctoral research at the University of Maine, and Scott Rush, MSU wildlife, fisheries, and aquaculture assistant professor, were also listed as coauthors.

The study evaluated the nesting habits of brown-headed cowbirds, a parasitic bird that lays eggs in host species' nests. The team researched the impact of nest size and shape characteristics on parasitism rates. Using existing research as a foundation, they hypothesized that bigger nests would have a greater rate of parasitism. They observed nests of host birds, including indigo bunting, prairie warbler, and yellow-breasted chat. The observations took place in 2012-2013 in managed loblolly pine stands in Kemper County, Mississippi. The team recorded nest parasitism of three percent, 18 percent, and 24 percent for yellow-breasted chat, indigo bunting, and prairie warbler nests, respectively. They found that nest size didn't determine rate of parasitism. Instead, the findings suggest that the relationship between host nests and risk of brown-headed cowbird parasitism likely varies according to species of interest, geographic location, and features of available habitat.

BLAKE HAMILTON (Forestry 2010) founded Nature's Eye LLC and is expanding its brand to include a media services division. This new division will cater to nature-based companies and others in the outdoor industry to provide both digital and print media services, including social media and website development, graphic design, brochures, and advertisements, among many others. The Nature's Eye brand has established itself as a leader in the industry with its forestry and wildlife management consulting division. Nature's Eye Consulting is currently managing properties all across the U.S. and is continuously expanding its influence throughout the country. The company is headquartered in Lufkin, TX, with offices in Jackson, MS and Jackson, TN.



ORLANDO ELLERBY (Forestry 2005) is the Underserved Outreach Forester for the Mississippi Forestry Commission. The Underserved Landowner Outreach Program is a joint project between the Mississippi Forestry Commission, Alcorn State University, and the USDA Forest Service.

ALI AKGUL (Forestry 2013) is pursuing a Ph.D. degree in veterinary medicine. He and wife Ayfer, a sustainable bioproducts doctoral student in the College of Forest Resources, both are studying genomics. They also are the parents of two children. Upon graduation, Akgul plans to complete a year of post-doctorate work and then return to Turkey, where he will begin work as a scientist and faculty member at Sinop University, a new institution established in 2007 in the city of the same name.



ALEX LITTLEJOHN (Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture 2009, 2013) is the associate state director of the Nature Conservancy in Mississippi. In his role with the Nature Conservancy, Littlejohn worked with the Mississippi Forestry Commission and the U.S. Forest Service to acquire the largest connecting tract of protected land in Mississippi. The Leaf River Forest Legacy Tract is comprised of 2,100 acres of working forestland along the Leaf and Pascagoula Rivers. Securing this property through state ownership will conserve forest habitat and connect over 450,000 contiguous acres between the De Soto National Forest and the Pascagoula River Wildlife Management Area. This acquisition will constitute the largest tract of contiguous protected lands for conservation in Mississippi.

Plans for the Leaf River Forest Legacy Tract include development into a working demonstration forest that will provide multiple benefits, including timber, wildlife habitat, and water quality in the Leaf River.

OBITS

BILLY JOE CROSS, 85, of Jackson, Mississippi, died on October 2, 2016. Cross was born on October 23, 1931 and was a native of Meridian, Mississippi. He attended East Mississippi Community College on a basketball and tennis scholarship. Cross ended his tenure at EMCC as president of the student body. It was at Mississippi College where Cross finished his education and completed his master's degree in education, combined science. Cross also worked toward a master's degree in wildlife sciences at Mississippi State University. As a former teacher and coach, Cross left his trademark character on the campuses of Hinds Community College, Holmes Community College, and Mississippi College, where he taught ornithology. In 1964, Cross was elected to the House of Representatives as the State Representative for Warren County. While in office, Cross served on the Game and Fish Committee. Additionally, he served as a chemist for Spencer Chemical Company of Vicksburg for four years. Cross was a leader in wildlife conservation and served as executive director of the Mississippi Game & Fish Commission. He was later appointed to the Commission Board by Governor Cliff Finch. While Director of the Commission Board, Cross worked with state and local leaders in getting the first state Museum of Natural Science constructed in Jackson. After serving on the Commission Board, Cross was appointed regional director for Ducks Unlimited. He was later promoted to marsh coordinator for fourteen states and later served as director of field operations for the southern region.

GUY W. DAVIS (Forestry 1959) 81, of Jackson, Mississippi, died on April 24, 2016. A native of Lumberton, he enjoyed spending time on his farm and had a passion for Mississippi State football.

ROBERT EDWARDS (Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture 1952) 92, of Yazoo City, Mississippi, died on December 3, 2015. A member of the First United Methodist Church in Yazoo City, he was a dedicated employee of the U.S. Postal Service for many years.

MARION COOLEY (Forestry 1958) 80, of Brookhaven, Mississippi, died on June 11, 2015. A 50-year member of the Society of American Foresters and the Mississippi Forestry Association, he was a registered forester and land surveyor, and owned property recognized as a certified family forest. He was a lifetime deacon at First Baptist Church and a member of the George County Jaycees and the Exchange Club. He was named an alumni fellow by the Mississippi State University College of Forest Resources in 2011.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



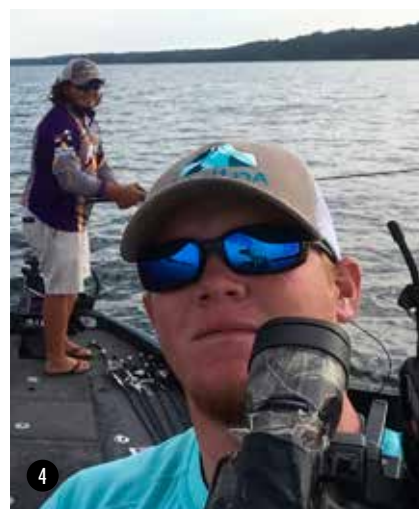
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1. **KAITLYN FILIPPI FULMER** is a 2016 wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture graduate. She is working as an intern at the Teton Trek & Northwest Passage Exhibits at the Memphis Zoo & Aquarium in Memphis, TN.

2. **KAMEN CAMPBELL** is a 2012 wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture graduate. He is working for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks in South Mississippi.

3. **CHIANA PALMER** is a 2015 wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture graduate. She is working as a soil conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



5a



5b



4. **LOGAN SMITH** is a 2016 wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture graduate. He is managing an 11,000 acre ranch in south Texas for Cabela's, as well as being a cameraman for the outdoor television show, "Americana Outdoors," hosted by Cabela's on the Pursuit channel.
5. **JONATHAN ROGERS (A)**, a 2016 wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture graduate, and **ZACH HUBBARD (B)**, a 2016 forestry graduate are both working as foresters with Deltic Timber in Arkansas. The lifelong friends graduated high school together, then graduated Mississippi State together, and are now working together.
6. **ADAM BILBO**, a 2013 forestry graduate, is a harvest manager at Weyerhaeuser in Meridian, MS.
7. **ZACHARY SENNEFF**, a 2015 forestry graduate, is a fiber buyer at Georgia Pacific Corporation in Jackson, MS.
8. **TYLER CATCHOT**, a 2015 sustainable bioproducts master's graduate, is an engineering intern/engineer in training at H.M. Rollins Company, Inc. in Gulfport, MS. H.M. Rollins Company, Inc. is an environmental engineering and consulting firm. Tyler received his undergraduate degree in civil engineering at Mississippi State in 2014.
9. **SPENCER BEASLEY**, a 2015 forestry graduate, is a forester for the Campbell Group in Ackerman, MS.
10. **ZACH PARDUE**, a 2016 forestry graduate, is the education and outreach coordinator for the Mississippi Forestry Association.
11. **KELVIN BANKS**, a 2014 forestry graduate, is a forest manager for The Molpus Woodlands Group.



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