The Fight Against Cancer Goes Underwater

Amendment I - What do you need to know? • Alumnus Joe Hamilton takes QDMA into 20th Year
The Okefenokee Swamp covers three southern Georgia counties and one in Florida, encompassing 438,000 acres, most of which includes the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The swamp, however, is about 7,000 years old and is a peat-filled bog inside a huge, saucer-shaped depression that was once part of the ocean floor.

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Our undergraduate enrollment has increased by 14 percent this academic year thanks to the efforts of many faculty and staff here at Warnell. Growing our enrollment further is a primary objective over the coming year, especially as the University of Georgia places increasing importance on enrollment. To reach that goal, we’ve made some changes we hope will draw more students to Warnell, and we hope you can help.

We are modifying our fisheries and wildlife majors to create one undergraduate major – similar to most programs around the U.S. We have worked hard to increase the visibility of our programs around campus and Georgia, another important component of increasing enrollment.

However, the single most effective strategy in attracting prospective students to Warnell is one-on-one contact with those interested in forestry and natural resources as a career. We visit high schools, job fairs, student orientation sessions and other in-person opportunities, searching for students that may have an interest in attending our school.

But you – our alumni and friends – can help us do more.

Every day in your hometowns across Georgia and the nation, you meet prospective students who could excel in our programs. When you do, please take a moment to contact us about these students. When we can talk with them about their hopes and aspirations in our profession, the results are simply amazing . . . these students are what we are looking for. So please help us with our recruiting efforts.

As many of you are aware, the Georgia state budget has been severely impacted by tax revenue shortfalls. As with most state agencies, Warnell has already undergone a 6 percent budget reduction. We are more fortunate than many schools and colleges here at UGA thanks to a well-developed endowment that helps us ride out these trying budget times. Thanks to all of you over the years who have contributed to our needs. At times like these, such contributions allow us to continue to offer quality programs at Warnell.

In other changes, we’ve added Sandi Martin to our staff as the public relations coordinator. She’d love to hear from you at smartin@warnell.uga.edu.

Finally, as football season approaches we look forward to seeing you on campus. Please come by and visit, let us show you around Warnell and even put you to work talking with our students about experiences in the “real world.”

Sincerely,

Mike Clutter,
Dean, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources
Scandinavian trip reveals foreign biofuel efforts

Americans getting sticker shock at the pump might feel some sympathy for drivers in Sweden, where diesel is more than $9 a gallon. But as Tommy Tye found out recently, the U.S. isn’t the only country eagerly searching for cheaper ways to create power. The Warnell research professional was part of a group that toured biofuel forestry operations, getting a close look at alternative fuels Scandinavians hope will replace traditional power production methods.

Held from May 25 to May 30, the Swedish Forest Biomass Operations Tour started in Stockholm, Sweden, and quickly swept across the southern part of the state with a stop for the Elmia World Bioenergy 2008 conference. The 17 forestry professionals hailing from Florida to Washington ultimately wrapped up their survey in Copenhagen, Denmark. Along the way, they received a thorough introduction to the many alternative power sources Scandinavians have been developing for decades – from bark, sawdust and pellets to black liquor.

Tye, impressed by the ingenuity the Swedes have shown in trying to overcome their own energy challenges, said that perhaps not all biomass initiatives being explored there would be appropriate for the U.S. However, “it’s obvious they’ve been tinkering with biofuel since the oil crisis of the 70s.” He said Americans can learn from their efforts. “Forest resources stand to play a significant role in future energy solutions for the U.S.,” he said.

The tour was co-hosted by the UGA Center for Forest Business and Forest Resources Association.

- By Sandi Martin

Warnell students win big at annual awards ceremony

Just three graduate students are honored each year at UGA’s Creative Research Awards Banquet, which rewards outstanding research accomplishments among faculty and students every spring. This year, two Warnell students took home top honors: Gino D’Angelo, a doctoral graduate in wildlife ecology, and Andrew K. Davis, a doctoral candidate in wildlife ecology.

D’Angelo won the Robert C. Anderson Memorial Award for his high-profile research project on ways to reduce deer-vehicle collisions. Funded by the Georgia Department of Transportation, D’Angelo conducted lab studies on deer sensory capabilities and field experiments on roadside deer-warning reectors. D’Angelo’s successful project landed another $300,000 from the GDOT for follow-up research.

Davis was the 2008 recipient of the James L. Carmon Honorarium for his study into amphibian health in the wetlands. Davis used a new approach to studying the animal population that would lessen the chances of detrimentally harming the animals and make it easier to assess the population: computer-based image analysis to measure and record subtle variations in coloration and asymmetry.

- By Sandi Martin

Andy Davis (left) collects macroinvertebrates at his Whitehall research site. Gino D’Angelo works with one of his whitetail deer sensory perception test subjects.
Wildlife professor John Maerz and his students are part of a team of researchers that have discovered a new species of salamander. Maerz’s students Joe Milanovich, Sean Sterrett and Daniel Sollenberger, along with University of Missouri graduate student Bill Peterman, found the first specimen — a female with fertilized eggs — in Stephens County, just outside of Toccoa, in 2007. Later, while the group was in the field searching for more individuals, Maerz’s then 10-year-old son, Jack, spotted the first male specimen. This is the second smallest salamander species in the world, and the first new vertebrate genus to be described in the U.S. in approximately 40 years.

At first, the investigators did not recognize the salamander as a new species. After further examination of the animal’s toes, however, Carlos Camp of Piedmont College realized it was. Genetic work has now confirmed the discovery. The new salamander appears familiar, but closer inspection reveals it is particularly unique. Amphibian evolution is often associated with a reduction of skeletal structures, such as the loss of certain bones. Yet examination of the skeleton by David Wake at UC Berkeley has revealed that this species has a very complete, primitive and heavily ossified skeleton. Additionally, males of this species have stripes on their backs, while females have none. This difference in patterning between males and females is seen only in other distantly related members of this family found in the New World tropics. “This salamander potentially shows us what the ancestor to a major group of eastern U.S. salamanders looked like,” comments Maerz.

Despite these unusual characteristics, this salamander is not easy to spot in the wild: it’s less than one inch long. The salamander’s proposed name honors Richard Bruce, professor emeritus at Western Carolina University and leading researcher on the ecology and evolution of southern Appalachian stream salamanders. Bruce has spent decades researching the phenomenon of miniaturization in salamanders, of which this salamander is a prime example.

Maerz and his collaborators have received funding from the TERN program, which supports Georgia nongame wildlife conservation research, to continue surveys and do further research on the animal. They need to find more individuals in more streams and confirm the species’ breeding status, says Maerz. “This is an exciting find for us. We want to make sure we do whatever we can to conserve the species. This salamander was found only one hour from Athens in an area with significant agricultural development. It makes you pause and wonder what we’ve lost without ever knowing, and what is still out there, waiting to be discovered.”

By KATE SPEAR

“...It makes you pause and wonder what we’ve lost without ever knowing, and what is still out there, waiting to be discovered.” — John Maerz

The male salamander (right) is differentiated from the female by the stripes running down its back.
A breakthrough cancer treatment could come from the sea: Gorgonian Coral might hold a cure
Last year, Herrin proposed experimental propagation of Gorgonian Coral in a controlled environment so that researchers might have better access to investigating the unique chemical compounds it produces. Herrin collaborated with Shelton and West to develop a laboratory culture methodology. The basis of this technique is “fragging” – taking a piece of coral from one location and growing it in another. Gorgonian Coral is a colonial species, meaning that once a piece is removed, the parent colony is able to regrow, and the removed piece establishes itself as a new, growing colony as well. The results Shelton has observed are exciting: not only is the propagation method quick and efficient, but also the new “fragged” colonies have a higher concentration of the compounds the researchers are interested in than the parent colonies had. This propagation method optimizes growth; it is a remarkable discovery for aquaculture.

Because Gorgonian Coral has a soft exoskeleton, it manufactures chemical compounds, such as eleutherobin, to serve as a defense against predators and other dangers in the wild. It is these chemical compounds that West finds so intriguing. “The anti-cancer properties they exhibit are similar to one of the most popular anti-cancer drugs currently on the market. The potential this coral has the possibility of saving lives. Propagating the coral in the laboratory is a much-desired feat for natural resources professionals. Instead of mass harvesting coral from wild reefs, and subsequently damaging and removing whole ecosystems in the process, scientists will be able to reap the natural, multi-purpose benefits of Gorgonian Coral while simultaneously protecting the species in the ocean. “Gorgonian Coral propagation and research addresses ecological issues for coral in the wild. Being able to do this while simultaneously addressing a major human health issue is a unique opportunity,” says Shelton.

For Shelton, propagating Gorgonian Coral has allowed him the opportunity to return to marine research and presented him with a new but surprisingly familiar challenge. Until now, the field of fisheries has focused mostly on fish, but there are many more animals in our waters, such as coral, mussels and a variety of other invertebrate species. Coral reefs host a plethora of different species, many of which have never been studied. Shelton is using his experience researching issues such as water quality to address the challenges of regulating the many
variables essential to optimal coral growth, such as mimicking tidal flow and sunlight, micronutrient levels, photosynthesis and algae health, zooplankton food sources, temperature and even the presence of substrate for attachment. It is the ability to control these variables that allows researchers to answer important ecological questions. For example, coral bleaching — a phenomenon where coral loses nutrients and color — is an indication of stress. Because of global warming and ocean acidification, coral bleaching has become a widespread problem. When coral reefs die, so do entire ecosystems. With this new propagation technique, Shelton and other coral researchers will be able to investigate what exactly triggers coral bleaching.

Stephen Hernandez-Divers of UGA’s College of Veterinary Medicine also has an interest in Gorgonian Coral. The epidemiological research potential of coral propagation extends far beyond human disease application. He said that he wants to see his college - and particularly zoological medicine - start making inroads into the diseases of captive corals. Until now, veterinary pathology involvement has been lacking.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars of captive coral are kept in reef tanks by hobbyists and reef clubs across Georgia and throughout the world. Yet “there has been little interest in pursuing improvements in coral health, understanding captive coral disease and decline and improving the veterinary approach to these fascinating animals,” says Hernandez-Divers. “With coral reefs on the decline, it is likely that harvest for the pet trade will continue to decrease and will eventually cease altogether. If we don’t resolve the disease issues facing captive corals, we may see the captive reef aquarium disappear in the future.”

Indeed, schools across campus are interested in Gorgonian Coral propagation and the opportunity to study a captive, controlled population. The Odum School of Ecology, the departments of plant biology, marine sciences and biological and agricultural engineering and the College of Public Health’s Environmental Health Science Department — not to mention UGA’s future Medical College — will all benefit from the research opportunities Gorgonian Coral propagation provides. “This interdisciplinary interest reflects the reality of working with the marine world,” says Shelton. “Cross-disciplinary cooperation is necessary to solving the immensely complex problems and issues facing coastal and marine environments.” For this reason, Shelton and West hope to establish a Coral Propagation and Research Facility at the fisheries laboratories in Warnell’s Whitehall Forest. “Collaboratively, we will
be able to answer many questions, investigating issues such as human and animal diseases, public health applications, coral reef declines and marine conservation, whereas individually we could not. There is no one better equipped to lead this revolutionary natural resources research than Warnell.”

“Cross-disciplinary cooperation is necessary to solve the immensely complex problems and issues facing coastal and marine environments.”

—Jay Shelton
Warnell draws 2 new faculty

There seems to be a shortage of folks in the area who know forest protection and health. But Warnell is helping fill that void with the addition of Kamal J.K. Gandhi to the faculty.

Gandhi started at Warnell on Oct. 1. She was a postdoctoral researcher in Ohio State University’s department of entomology and Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center before moving to Georgia. Ron Hendrick, associate dean of academic affairs, said Gandhi will fill the need in Georgia for forest protection experts. “There’s a lot of teaching, research and outreach opportunities in the area of forest protection,” he said.

Gandhi will teach forest ecology and will assist in forest health and protection instruction. She said she was drawn to UGA because of the statewide facilities and wide-range of opportunities UGA has to offer students. “I like that the faculty does different things,” she said. “They have a very diverse faculty.”

Gandhi said she believes her background will be a good fit for Warnell. The India native comes with her husband, Nathaniel LaTrace, and toddler daughter, Aleiah.

– By Sandi Martin

New director of development

Kim Holt has been hired to be Warnell’s new director of development. She will be responsible for raising private dollars to benefit Warnell. The University of Georgia alumna and native Athenian most recently worked as an attorney in Athens, focusing on residential and commercial real estate, estate planning and corporate law.

In addition to her career in law, Holt has gained significant fundraising experience both in education and in the community. She served on the Athens Academy Alumni Association Board of Directors and spearheaded a fundraising campaign for that school that netted $55,000 in support. She has also served on the boards of the United Way, Prevent Child Abuse Athens Inc., and the Athens Area Association of Realtors, helping those groups increase giving as well.

Holt (JD ’99) also graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1995 with a bachelor’s degree in English. She joined Warnell in September and is thrilled to be a part of our team.

“I am delighted to be joining Dean Mike Clutter and the Warnell School at such an exciting time,” said Holt. “The Warnell School is a thriving institution, and I look forward to building a long and rewarding partnership with the school and its loyal and committed alumni.”

– By Sandi Martin
Susan Bennett Wilde isn’t used to teaching. Before joining the Warnell School this semester as an assistant research professor, she was strictly research at the University of South Carolina and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

It’s a good chance at this time in her career, she said, “but to tell you the truth, it’s my husband’s fault.”

Wilde’s husband Dayton joined the University of Georgia as a horticulture professor earlier this year. She came with him, along with the couple’s two children, Ben, 14, and Martha, 12.

She’s now teaching an introduction class on natural resources conservation. “It’s such a perfect class to start with,” she said.

Wilde’s not new to Athens or Warnell. She received her Master’s degree in zoology from UGA, and her Ph.D. from Warnell. She’s now working to secure funding for research projects on harmful algae bloom and invasive aquatic plants.

Ron Hendrick, associate dean of academic affairs, said having Wilde teach such an important introductory class will help recruit students into those fields.

“She has the personality and demeanor to be very effective in the classroom,” he said.

– By Sandi Martin

Getting extra schooling just got a little easier. Instead of holding classes at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, forestry and natural resources training will now be coordinated from the Warnell School. The move gives Warnell greater flexibility in scheduling and holding classes, said Jim Sweeney, associate dean for research and service. The greatest advantage afforded by the change, he explained, will be the opportunity to hold classes in other locations besides the Georgia Center. That means those interested in attending training sessions won’t always have to drive to Athens. The change is already in effect, he said.

– By Sandi Martin

Gail Lebengood Retires

She’s survived 11 years and five deans, but longtime Warnell administrative specialist Gail Lebengood can’t resist the call of retirement. The lung cancer survivor, who has been the right arm for every Warnell dean since then-Dean Arnett Mace, who is now UGA’s provost, asked her in January 1998 to help out in the dean’s office. She will continue to assist Dean Mike Clutter until Dec. 19, her last day at Warnell.

Lebengood says she’ll spend her retirement “catching up on a world of odds and ends that I have neglected for way too long.” She’ll also spend time with family and hit the beach whenever she can.

“I’ll miss the total support and friendship of the Warnell family, including all of the alumni I see every year,” Lebengood said. “I have felt very blessed — at most times — to have had the privilege of assisting and being involved with not only five deans, but the faculty, staff and students of Warnell. I’ll miss everyone — so therefore, I’ll come back and haunt you all still!”

– By Sandi Martin
Some serious discussions were on the horizon for the three families that own Toledo Manufacturing Co. The Charlton County-based timber company’s taxes have gone up 407 percent in the past seven years, and with wood prices down and everything else up, “we were getting squeezed,” said Joe Hopkins, president of the company.

“If things didn’t turn around, we weren’t going to be in the timber business much longer,” he said. Part of the owners’ solution was to possibly sell off some of the 50,000 acres of forestland held by the 96-year-old company.

And that’s exactly what state legislators don’t want. They’re hoping voters feel the same way by passing the Georgia Forest Land Protection Act of 2008 when it shows up on the ballot on Nov. 4. If approved, the constitutional amendment would give forest owners considerable tax breaks if they promise to conserve their land for at least 15 years. And it would save landowners like Mr. Hopkins from selling off property to pay hefty tax bills.
“If things didn’t turn around, we weren’t going to be in the timber business much longer.” — Joe Hopkins

The act has already cleared one major hurdle — it passed the state legislature one vote shy of being unanimously approved. Gov. Sonny Perdue signed the act in May.

But now it has to get past voters, who may be leery of giving tax breaks to landowners during a time of economic uncertainty, said Steve McWilliams, executive director of the Georgia Forestry Association. The GFA strongly pushed the act, McWilliams said, because the state’s 18-year-old forest conservation tax program didn’t go far enough to ease the burden of crippling property taxes for landowners.

Voters first have to approve of changing the state’s constitution. The proposal is slated to be Amendment 1 on the ballot.

The act, McWilliams said, will not only increase how much land is eligible for the tax benefits — it was previously 2,000 acres or less, but is now 200 acres and up — but it also allows timberland-owning corporations like Toledo Manufacturing Co. to reap the benefits, too.

Before, McWilliams said, landowners were forced to sell off acres to pay the “skyrocketing” tax bills, detrimentally impacting the future of Georgia’s forests. Once forest land is sold, he said, it fragments the land, encourages development and “ultimately the loss of the forest forever.”

A study done by the Warnell School indicates that up to five million acres of forest land could be eligible for the program if passed by voters. McWilliams doesn’t believe that many landowners will opt in, simply because “15 years is a long time,” and if they choose to break the covenant, “there are stiff penalties.”

McWilliams is worried about fickle voters. Economic hardships, which have hit the state budget hard, could turn voters off from approving a program that means fewer dollars in local coffers, although the state would reimburse local governments for much of those losses. Although all but one state legislator supported the act, McWilliams said he won’t assume voters feel the same way.

“My approach is going to be until Nov. 4 that we’re down by 10 runs in the bottom of the ninth inning,” McWilliams said.

Hopkins’ vote is obvious.

“I’m voting to stay in business,” he said.

AMENDMENT 1
What To Expect
Landowners who opt in must do so for 15 years. Because their land would be taxed based on current or actual use as forests instead of its potential value if developed, owners stand to see their taxes drop by much as 50 to 70 percent.

However, should a landowner break the covenant before the 15 years is up, there are stiff penalties: As much as three times the tax savings if they break the covenant in the first five years.

For more information on the Georgia Forest Land Protection act visit: www.forourforests.com
Chung Jui Tsai has been at the University of Georgia for a couple of months, but on a hot day in August, her lab is still in a holding pattern. She’s waiting on equipment, watching as graduate students start the meticulous process of characterizing tree samples.

A few days — or even weeks — shouldn’t interfere with her long-term objectives though. The research the Warnell School’s latest Eminent Scholar will be doing will require a bit of a commitment. Tsai wants to create better, smarter trees. The faster they can grow, the more forest products can be used as biofuel.

How long that will take “depends on the research findings,” she said. But it’s safe to say that it will be years before Tsai and others discover bioenergy solutions for use in the United States.

But she already knows current approaches need help.

“Grain ethanol is important,” Tsai said. “But it will not solve the country’s energy problem.”

So Warnell and UGA are tackling the problem on several fronts, researching ways to turn materials as varied as wood, plant debris and algae into fuel as part of its bioenergy initiative. Warnell is a key partner in the group. The goal, Tsai said, is to find a “diverse portfolio” of energy solutions for the future.

Tsai came to UGA with her husband, Scott Harding, who is leading a Department of Energy research project on carbon sequestration, where carbon dioxide emissions from facilities such as power plants are captured by trees rather than released into the atmosphere. Sitting in his
office in the couple’s lab in the life sciences building, he said using improving liquid fuel generation from wood feedstocks presents different research challenges than previously dealt with in developing grain ethanol. Land use, feedstock storage and transport all differ between tree and grain, he said. The reward, however, will be more economic flexibility than grain ethanol.

But researchers have to find a way to overcome its major disadvantage – cost effectively producing the fuel from wood. Researchers are also concerned that changes in global climate could affect tree growth, he said, while also trying to figure out a way to ease the demands growing the trees puts on the soil and minerals.

“These are tricky, tricky long-term things,” Harding said.

While Harding and Tsai look to the future, Dale Greene’s in the here and now. He’s just wrapped up the third year on a Center for Forest Business research project funded by the Georgia TIP program on harvesting biomass from existing forests – particularly how to get as much out as cost effectively as possible.

“If we start making fuel or electricity out of wood, it’s going to be made out of the trees that are already out there in the woods,” he said. “That’s in the short term. In the long run we’re going to grow better trees.”

Greene said they wanted to find out how much material has to be up for grabs before it’s economically feasible to harvest it. And what researchers found was that a small chipper works best when clear cutting rather than when thinning on 10 tons per acres or less. They also looked into using chips in bioenergy production, finding that residual biomass chips might be as productive – if not more so – as pure wood for fermentation into ethanol.

A fourth year of the project has started.

“It’s going very well,” Greene said. “There’s a lot of interest by industries and the logging community, and landowners. What we need to figure out is what systems to deploy in which situation. It’s not going to be a size fits all to harvest biomass.”

“…we need to figure out what systems to deploy in which situation. It’s not going to be a size fits all to harvest biomass.” — Dale Greene
Unprecedented red-cockaded woodpecker research

Professors Bob Warren, Joe Nairn and M.S. student Travis Alstad are leading the way in red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) conservation genetics research. Surprisingly, the RCW has been the subject of almost no conservation genetics research until now. Currently, RCW translocations move birds from stable populations across the Southeast to those in need of more individuals. Yet ensuring genetic diversity is crucial to the success of RCW translocation. Increased genetic variance leads to healthier populations with higher reproductive output, and most importantly, higher hopes of restoration.

Alstad hopes to identify divergence and variance in RCW genetic structures of four different populations found in the Southeast. To do this, he will conduct DNA sequencing from buccal swabs collected from the birds, a non-invasive sampling technique ideal for endangered species. Genetic variance seen in preliminary lab results is promising. Collaboration is key to Alstad’s research. Partnership between the Warnell School, Jones Ecological Research Center, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of Defense has made this otherwise impossible project a reality.

– By Kate Spear

RCW Restoration

Installation of artificial cavities is an essential component of RCW conservation and restoration efforts. The cavity inserts provide nesting habitat for translocated birds and population expansion. This is particularly important for sites where old-growth pine is absent or limited.

This pine cross-section reveals the nest where an RCW had once made its home. It is estimated that it takes 2-3 years for RCWs to excavate a cavity. This is dependent on old-growth pine and is facilitated by a fungus in the wood that makes excavation easier. There are reports that RCWs can locate sites of fungal growth, which plays a role in cavity site selection.

Source: Joe Nairn, Associate Professor
Applied Conservation Genetics Lab/Warnell
Sara Schweitzer: Atypical mom, dedicated bird researcher

By SANDI MARTIN

When Sara Schweitzer was seven months pregnant with her son Jacob, her friends threw her a baby shower. There was the typical frilly party fare: Silly games, presents and food. Not so typical for a baby shower was the rousing squirrel hunting the group engaged in before Schweitzer ever opened a single gift.

But she’s not your typical mom. Schweitzer was traipsing through the woods while seven months pregnant and helping with necropsy labs. She rides horses, hunts and enjoys fishing. The 45-year-old fits in well at the Warnell School, although the wildlife professor says it would be nice to have more women colleagues. Although she is accustomed to being the only female in the wildlife program, she welcomes the addition of four women faculty to Warnell in 2008.

When the North Carolina native went to Texas Tech in 1986 for her master’s degree, she found herself outnumbered by men. Of the few female graduate students, she was the only one to graduate and stay in the field of wildlife sciences. It was some of the older faculty members who seemed uncomfortable with the young woman sitting in their classes. Her fellow classmates, she said, “never treated me as if I shouldn’t be there.”

Although she focused on white-tailed and mule deer nutrition and habitat enhancement in Texas, she found she didn’t share her male colleagues’ passion for trophy antlers. She ultimately refocused her efforts toward conservation of rare and declining species. During her Ph.D. at Oklahoma State University, Sara studied endangered least terns, and now works primarily with birds dependent on coastal wetland and native grass habitats. Her research focuses on protection of nesting sites and the impacts of sea level changes, coastal development and recreation on bird species in the Southeast.

Schweitzer, who has been at UGA since 1995, accepted an International Fellows Program award and travelled to Croatia when her son was three months old. Three months later, she moved to Sofia, Bulgaria, as a Senior Fulbright Scholar, teaching wildlife conservation and beginning research on potential impacts of Bulgaria’s ecotourism business on wildlife populations. She’s been back with students twice since 2003 and has also returned to Croatia twice.

“It has been incredibly rewarding to go from a North Carolina kid simply fascinated with wildlife to being the first female full professor of wildlife ecology and management in the Warnell School,” she said. “Working with young students who also embody that fascination and helping them develop into professional biologists, even taking them to ‘exotic’ countries such as Bulgaria and Croatia, has been icing on the cake.”
Graduate students April Conway and Jena Hickey took their studies outside the classroom this summer with the UGA-Mongella Initiative’s Ukerewe Service Learning Program in Tanzania. Conway and Hickey led the science component of the program, whose primary goal is to work with women and girls to improve local social, economic and environmental conditions. They lent their expertise to community projects such as pine tree seedling preparation and planting, improving mud cookstove efficiency, creating drip irrigation systems, building chicken coops and writing a grant for funds to build a community well. Both Conway and Hickey will return to Africa this year to begin their graduate field research. Neither Conway nor Hickey is a stranger to Africa.
April Conway worked in Niger for two years with the Peace Corps before coming to Warnell. She will return to Africa this year to study Sierra Leone’s pygmy hippo. At a mere 500 pounds, the pygmy hippo weighs ten times less than common hippos. Conway will use camera traps to estimate abundance and collect tissue samples to identify individuals through DNA analysis — the first such research to be conducted on the pygmy hippo. Conway is the first researcher to use the newly renovated Environmental Foundation for Africa research station on Tiwai Island since its reopening after being looted and occupied during Sierra Leone’s recent civil war. She will traverse the island and surrounding mainland on foot and in canoe with local trackers to investigate the pygmy hippo population. John Carroll and Sonia Hernandez-Divers are advising Conway in her research, which is being funded by Conservation International.

The pygmy hippo might weigh 10 times less than the common hippo, but their interest to scientists makes them worth their weight in gold.
Jena Hickey traveled to the Democratic Republic of Congo during her fifth year working for the U.S. Forest Service in 2006. There she explored landscape-level land-use planning — how local communities can live sustainably, conserve natural resources and simultaneously alleviate poverty. It was this life-changing experience that convinced her to return to school and conduct more extensive research in this naturally rich but war-torn country. Hickey’s research, advised by Nate Nibbelink and John Carroll and funded by the Wildlife Conservation Society and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Great Apes Conservation Fund, will estimate bonobo (pygmy chimpanzee) abundance in Congo’s Maringa-Lopori-Wamba rainforests and examine how it changes with forest fragmentation. Bonobos are a globally endangered, matriarchal species, well known for their sexualized social interactions. Poaching and the rampant bushmeat trade remain a serious threat. Hickey hopes to create a predictive model of optimal bonobo habitat, which will enable policymakers to protect crucial bonobo conservation areas in the future.
Furthering your education by studying abroad might not be just for current students anymore. The Warnell School is gauging interest in an alumni study abroad program in New Zealand and Australia. Alumni who sign up for the educational trip could spend summer in the Southern Hemisphere in December 2009. The South Pacific program will focus on global issues in that region.

Education credits may be available.

Contact PACIFIC@UGA.EDU for more information.
Jonathan Lee: Outdoors crusader

Foresters never seem to age. They are full of life, and they love what they do. That’s what Jonathan Lee thinks. The 21-year-old said the perpetual youth and enthusiasm of foresters is partly why he chose forestry as his major at Warnell. He also didn’t want his office to have four walls he could see over.

“I did not want to be in a cubicle,” Lee said, shortly after returning from two internships totalling six-months, with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. House Natural Resources Committee in Washington, D.C. The job may have cost him an earlier graduation date, but made up for it in eye-opening experience, he said.

Not only did he get to work on presidential natural resource campaigns, but he was there for groundbreaking debates in the U.S. House of Representatives on gas prices and alternative energy developments. Interning in the nation’s capital, he said, opened up networking possibilities that he hopes to exploit once he’s graduated and working in the forest industry.

Lee hopes to one day work on state forest policies, but said he may seek out employment in wood procurement for either wood products or bioenergy.

“Long-term, I want to work in forest policy,” he said. “It’s important to me that I get field experience – get out there on the ground. I think too many people don’t have that experience.”

Born and raised in Macon, Lee hopes to graduate after the Fall 2009 semester. He credits a family farm with inspiring his career aspirations. He “grew up a suburban kid,” he said, the second son of five generations of farmers and timber growers. It was his grandparents farm that let him loose outside. He’s eager to start work.

“It’s going to be a very intriguing and exciting time in the industry,” Lee said.

– By Sandi Martin
As a graduate student in Warnell’s Natural Resources Recreation and Tourism department, I have a great passion for environmental conservation. I hope to spark this enthusiasm in others. My research focuses on environmental education (EE) for teachers, specifically what constitutes a successful EE training workshop for teachers in terms of their gaining knowledge and practical experience. Through such workshops, I hope to spread knowledge of nature by giving teachers the information they need to teach their students. I also volunteer with various schools and organizations teaching kids about the outdoors by using animal tracks, signs and interpretative interactions with wildlife.

I was recently involved in an ethnobotanical teacher workshop through the State Botanical Gardens of Georgia. The workshop introduced teachers to environmental education through the awareness of different ecosystems and the different cultural uses of plants around the world. In light of the recent federal No Child Left Inside Act, I hope this workshop will spark ideas in teachers for their students and help promote the growth of future naturalists.

My research has led to collaborating with the Forest Service’s Southern Research Station Laboratory, located on the University of Georgia’s campus. This lab is the home of The Natural Inquirer, an integrated science education journal targeted to middle school science students. The Natural Inquirer transforms published forest service research articles into a “7th grade cool” journal that introduces students to scientific methods, while giving them an inside look at research being conducted by environmental and natural resource scientists. Each article is written in the same format as a scientific journal article. First, students “meet the scientists” who conducted the research, then an introductory section on the scientific method and the environment prepares students to read the scientific article. In between the standard scientific sections of introduction, method, findings and discussion, students are given the chance to critically reflect on what they’ve read. Students are then encouraged to become scientists when they do the “Discovery FACTivity.”

I assist the journal by handling the database and journal distribution, writing article sections, identifying and collecting photographs, and interacting with participating scientists. I send out an average of 600 journals to teachers each week. In fact, I am presently writing one of next year’s articles.

In the future I will continue to nurture my passion for the outdoors and for educating kids and adults about the world they live in. I hope to set an example for kids to look and venture further than just their backyards. As I like to say to kids, “Be a natural investigator! Who knows what you might find!”

For more information, visit: www.naturalinquirer.org
The journals are free, and when you order, your order will be received and processed by Warnell’s own Rachel Small.

Rachel Small is completing her master’s degree under the supervision of professor Gary Greene. Rachel can be contacted at: smallr@warnell.uga.edu
Joe Hamilton doesn’t hunt nearly as much as he wants to anymore. But the 61-year-old North Carolina native has certainly had a profound effect on the country’s – and world’s – deer population. Hamilton (BSFR ’71, MS ’78), is the founder of the Quality Deer Management Association, whose 50,000 members celebrated its 20th anniversary in September.

The little organization that started out in South Carolina’s Lowcountry has grown to all 50 states and at least six foreign countries. Over the past two decades, it changed names a couple of times while bringing the overabundant deer population down, bettering the quality of deer habitats and producing better mature bucks. It astounds Hamilton how far-reaching his group has become. The QDMA started because of poor buck quality, he said, and “it was time to turn things around.”

He got the idea from the Australians, and he fully believed that deer hunters should be organized. “The timing was right,” he said, because the deer population was up and someone needed to step in and properly harvest the herds and protect young bucks. But it wouldn’t work without voluntary participation from hunters, he said.

So far, it has. Over the past two decades, Hamilton explained, hunter cooperation has increased dramatically through education and hunters realizing that it “is the right thing to do.”

“Our little organization that started in the Lowcountry in South Carolina has fairly long tentacles. It now extends worldwide. I think that’s commendable.”

And he says he couldn’t have done it without the University of Georgia, or the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. It was the connections he had at the school that enabled the group to start up and spread strong. Working for the group he founded is now Hamilton’s full-time job. He worked for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources for 12 years as a deer research biologist before leaving in 1997 to work for Ducks Unlimited and then The Nature Conservancy. Since July 2006, he’s been the QDMA’s director of education and outreach for the southern region.

He now lives in Hendersonville, S.C., with his wife of 15 years, Donna.

For more information about QDMA, visit the group’s Web site at www.qdma.com.
100 Years of Alumni Giving

By BRIDGET HARDEN

“We owe our deepest gratitude to our supporters who have demonstrated their enthusiasm with consistent, yearly contributions to the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources over the last century.”

When the Warnell School on Forest Resources celebrated its Centennial in 2006, Alumni Association president Steve Worthington invited all alumni and friends to join the Centennial Society with a gift of $100 or more. The effort was extremely successful — Steve and the Centennial Society Committee raised more than $180,000 to benefit Warnell.

The Centennial Society initiative is a wonderful illustration of how cumulative efforts can make a big impact. Our constituents share a common bond to the school where connections were made and lives were changed through the Warnell experience. The school would not be here today without the generous support from you.

We owe our deepest gratitude to our supporters who have demonstrated their enthusiasm with consistent, yearly contributions to the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources over the last century. State support is on the decline every year, and we increasingly depend on private dollars to continue providing academic excellence and quality programs for our students and alumni. Every gift counts — you can make an impact with your annual gift. Now more than ever, we need the combined enthusiasm of all of our supporters. And hopefully, our second century will bring as many loyal friends as we have today.

It is now 2008 and we’re still celebrating. During Homecoming weekend, October 17 and 18, we will honor all of our alumni and friends who participated in the Centennial Society Campaign with a commemorative plaque with all the names of the contributors to the Centennial Society. I hope you will join your fellow alumni and friends at Homecoming this year to honor those who have made a difference. We would also like to thank the following Centennial Campaign Committee members and students for their contributions to this effort:

Steve Worthington, Campaign Chair
Brian Wommack, Campaign Co-Chair

Andy Barrs, Bill Berry, Bill Breiner, Steve Chapman, Dan Forster, Ken Gibson, Wes Godbee, Sandy Gorse, Mary Gresham, Bill Guthrie, Fred Haeussler, Liberty Haray, Mike Hunter, Bob Izlar, Scott P. Jones, Bob Lazenby, Bob Leynes, Tim Lowrimore, Gene Martin, Todd Mullis, Rob Olszewski, Jim Ozier, Ken Riddleberger, Tom Ritch, Harold Rozier, Earl Smith, Mike Smith, Andy Stone, Brian Stone, Sharon Valitski, Will Varn, Heather Venter, Van Wier and Warnell Student Ambassadors

For more information you can contact Bridget Harden at bharden@warnell.uga.edu or call: (706)342-0713
1930s
Roy A. Grizzell (BSFR 1939) observed his 90th Birthday on March 14 with a big party hosted by his family. More than 100 people came for the celebration!

1950s
William Sheppard (BSFR 1951) and his wife Nadine welcome the birth of their great-grandson Charles.

Donald C. Freyer (BSFR 1956) has been retired from the Georgia Forestry Commission for 10 ½ years.

Fred Haeussler (BSFR 1954) was honored with the 2008 Maroon lifetime achievement award from his high school alma mater, Western Hills, for his leadership and successful career in forestry.

James Hefner (BSFR 1958) reports that he and his wife Andree are still living in their Athens area, 45-acre hardwood “woodlot” where they retired to in 1980. They had traveled a great deal until last year, when his doctor told him to slow down. He would love to hear from the “boys” of the class of 1957-1958.

1960s
Paschal Brewer (BSFR 1960) is the owner of Brewer’s Christmas Tree Farm in Midway, Ga. He and his wife have been growing and selling Christmas trees since 1982. They’ve won the state fair blue ribbon for the last three years. In 2003 and 2006, they grew the grand champion at the state fair in Perry, Ga. The Brewers donate 10 trees each year to Trees for Troops.

1970s
Wayne Barfield (BSFR 1970) has been appointed the new general manager of ArborGen in the U.S. because of his 35-plus years of experience. His job will be to oversee various commercial production, sales and distribution operations.

Herbert Boyd (BSFR 1971) is an agriculture teacher at Winter Haven Senior High School in Polk County, Fla. Boyd is involved in many of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) functions.

Todd Paschal (BSFR 1975, MFR 1981) is the director of the sales ratio division for the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts. Todd and his wife, Suzanne (BSFR 1975, MS 1983) reside in Oconee County, Ga. They have two daughters.

Tom Ritch (BSFR 1977), of Southern Heritage Land Company, has received the Top Performer Award for the second year in a row. Over a two-year period, Ritch sold $50 million in land.

1990s
Sam Carlton (MFR 1990), ACF member, was recently featured on “Get in the Game,” a National Wild Turkey Federation television show that shares land and wildlife management tips with the country.

The Rev. Stephen J. Pontzer (BSFR 1993) is a 2007 graduate of St. Vincent Seminary. He was ordained to Catholic Priesthood June 23, 2007. He is stationed in Savannah, Ga., at St. James Parish.

Shawn Diddie (BSFR 1994) has been working with the Georgia Forestry Commission as a forester for 2 1/2 years. She and her husband, Eric, have been married for four years and reside in Statesboro, Ga.

Lynn Lewis-Weis (BSFR 1995, MS 1999) and Dr. Kevin Weis (DVM 2004) announce the arrival of their son, Ethan Lewis Weis. Ethan was born on Feb. 25, 2008.

Wendi Weber (MS 1997), a native of Rochester, N.Y., is the new deputy regional director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast regional office. She worked in the Fish and Wildlife’s endangered species program in Washington, D.C., and Portland, Ore. She was the assistant regional director for ecological services prior to her newly-appointed position.

Mountain Ranger District of the Ochoco National Forest in Oregon. Queen will now be responsible for managing more than 378,000 acres of forest service land and overseeing a variety of natural resource programs and projects.

Harry Sargent (BSFR 1979) is the quality assurance engineer at MeadWestvaco’s Low Moor Converting plant in Virginia. Sargent’s responsibilities include producing reports on performance, trends and data analysis; assisting the product development department; serving as acting program deputy; and acting as champion of web inspection systems.
Jason E. Strickland (BSFR 1998) married Bronwyn Johnson on May 24, 2008, at The Lodge at Table Rock State Park in South Carolina. Strickland is currently employed with The Vanguard Investment Group at its Arizona location.

2000s
J. Mitchell Gibbs (BSFR 2001) received his law degree from Georgia State's College of Law in 2004 and recently joined the law firm of Rainwater & Harpe LLP, located in Cordele, Ga. Gibbs practices civil litigation and real estate and estate law.

Richard Cary (BSFR 2003) married Mary Purvis on Saturday, March 10, 2008. Cary, originally of Athens, Ga., is currently attending the University of Georgia as a graduate student of hydro-geology.

Tiffanie J. Starr (MFR 2003) is employed with Hancock Timber Resource Group in Boston, Mass. She was elected to serve a three-year term on the Warnell Young Alumni Committee.

Amanda Newman (BSFR 2003) is completing her MFR at Warnell in December. She was elected to serve a three-year term on the Warnell Young Alumni Committee.

Brooks C. Mendell (PhD 2004) is the founder and principle of Forisk Consulting, a research and education firm dedicated to the forest industry. Working also as a professional speaker, Mendell gives more than 100 talks a year on topics relating to forestry and leadership.

Susan Geiger (BSFR 2004), who was at the Kangaroo Conservation Center in North Georgia, is now the new retail operations manager at the Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens located in Naples, Fla.

Scott Coleman (BSFR 2005) recently tied the knot with Eugenia Ann Mathews in Statesboro, Ga. Currently employed on Little St. Simons Island as its ecological manager, the newlyweds are residing on St. Simons Island.

M. Chad Lincoln (MS 2005) was elected to serve on the Warnell Young Alumni Committee and will be relocating to Forest Investment Associate’s headquarters in Atlanta in October.

David Jones (PhD 2006) has joined the agency as the first forest products specialist of the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Jones conducted his post-doctoral work in wood quality at Virginia Tech.

Jason W. Carey (BSFR 2006) was promoted to a Procurement Forester at Georgia-Pacific in Naheola, Ala. Carey is responsible for trading enough timber to meet one-third of the mill’s production. With work and keeping up with his 1-year-old daughter, Kylee Grace Carey, he reports that things are going great in the Carey household.

Tyler Clemons (MFR 2006) is living in Fitzgerald, Ga. He was elected to serve a three-year term on the Warnell Young Alumni Committee.


Ken Eason (MFR 2007) works with RMS as the newly-appointed Georgia District Manager. Eason was in Pensacola, Fla., with RMS for one year prior to his promotion, but currently resides in Macon. He was elected to serve a three-year term on the Warnell Young Alumni Committee.


Timothy J. Gunter (BSFR 1981), named CEO of Industrial Development International in January, is leading one of the nation’s largest developers of industrial real estate. Gunter was instrumental in his company’s formation in 1989, and later served as chief operator and president. He will now be responsible for overseeing the company’s overall direction and development.

We Want to Know What You’re Doing These Days!
Please send updated employment information, personal achievements, family changes and new addresses to:
Alumni Office
Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources,
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602
Fax: (706)542.8356
E-mail: news@warnell.uga.edu.
Charles R. Franklin (BSFR 1939) died on April 24, 2008, in his home of Livingston, Texas, at age 89. Mr. Franklin worked for International Paper on Kiawah Island as one of his earliest jobs. He later worked for Brunswick Pulp & Paper Co. and the Georgia Forest Service in Soperton, Ga. Mr. Franklin joined the U.S. Navy in 1942 and was discharged in 1948. Franklin was instrumental in establishing thousands of acres of timber land for Wirt Davis Estate. The company’s timber productivity saw a 500 percent increase under the management of Mr. Franklin. He was an active member of the Society of American Foresters and the Texas Forestry Association. Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Franklin was made a Fellow of the Society of American Foresters, selected as Outstanding Member and received the Golden Membership Award for 50 years of service. He also received an award for Distinguished Service to the Forestry Profession in Texas where he received many other awards and recognitions for his service to the forestry profession. He was a proud supporter of the Boy Scouts of America and was a devoted member of the First United Methodist Church of Livingston.

Hilton Watson (BSFR 1939), 90, died at his Alabama home on March 25, 2008. He began his forestry career as a forest ranger for Tallapoosa County, Alabama, and later as district forester in Montgomery. He served in World War II as Major of the army’s horse cavalry unit. Mr. Watson then began employment with the Alabama Forest Products Association where he retired as Chief Executive Officer in 1986. He was chairman of the Alabama Forestry Council and was in the Alabama Foresters’ Hall of Fame. He was chairman of both the southeastern section and the Alabama Chapter of the Society of American Foresters. Mr. Watson was regarded throughout the state as “The Voice of Forestry in Alabama.”

John McCall Marshall (BSFR 1947) died on June 17, 2008, at the age of 91. Mr. Marshall was a veteran of World War II before attending the University of Georgia. He retired from the Greenwood County Health Department in Greenwood, S.C., and is survived by his two daughters and their families.

John W. “Jack” Gnann (BSFR 1948) died at the age of 85 in his hometown of Savannah, Ga., on July 3, 2008. Mr. Gnann started as a combat veteran from World War II, and went on to graduate from the University of Georgia in 1948 to begin a lifelong career working as a forester in the Woodlands Division for Union Camp Corp. He was an active member of both the Georgia Salzburger Society and the Savannah Exchange Club, as well as a longtime member of St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Elizabeth, his daughter and two sons.

Wallace Adams Binns, Sr. (BSFR 1949), 80, died May 15, 2008, at his residence in Sylvester, Ga. He requested his body be donated to the Medical College of Georgia. Before coming to the University of Georgia, Mr. Binns attended the Citadel Military Academy in Charleston and was appointed to West Point before leaving to enlist in the U.S. Army during World War II. After graduating the University of Georgia in 1949, Mr. Binns went on to become a self-employed consulting forester and a successful real estate investor. Mr. Binns was a member of the American Legion, the American Red Cross, Elks Club Lodge, Albany Moose Lodge and Sons of Confederate Veterans Army of Tennessee. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, their six sons and daughters, and their respective families.

Reuben Walter Martin Jr. (BSFR 1950), 78, died on Oct. 6, 2007. He was retired from Forest Services and was from Macon, Ga.

Al Smith (BSFR 1951), 78, died at his Macon residence on Nov. 4, 2007. Mr. Smith was a U.S. Navy veteran. He retired as Chief of Forestry Administration with the State of Georgia. He was a member of the Loyal Order of Elks and was a past president of the Georgia Elks Association. He was a devoted member to Vineville Baptist Church.

Floyd A. Smith (BSFR 1951) died on Nov. 4, 2007, at age 78. The Macon native was retired from the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Morris L. Miller (MFR 1952), died on July 22, 2007 at age 78.

William Slade Bacon (BSFR 1957) died in Douglas, Ga., on Oct. 6, 2007, at age 77. He was retired from AgFirst Farm Credit.


Andrew “Andy” Shellhorse (BSFR 1972), 63, died in Fairmount, Ga. on April 19, 2008, of natural causes. His college career was suspended for a short time when he served for four years in the U.S. Army. After returning, he finished his degree, served on the Cartersville School System Board and managed and owned Shellhorse Furniture Company for 20 years. Nicknamed “Allatoona Andy,” throughout his life Mr. Shellhorse remained an enthusiastic outdoorsman, adventurer and avid fisherman. He was a member of the Cartersville Country Club and the American Legion.
It was Tom Bell’s great-grandparents that bought acres upon acres of land on the Chattahoochee River in Early County back in the ’30s.

But it was his dad that took care of it — the land, the timber, the fish ponds and the 90 acres of crops. The younger Bell spent his childhood hunting and fishing — just like his dad before him.

“That’s what we did,” he said. “Instead of baseball or football, we went hunting and fishing.”

His father, Thomas “Tommy” Howell Bell Sr., died Monday, April 28, 2008, at the age of 65 at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital in Albany. Mr. Bell (BSFR ’64) was president of his own company, T. Bell Consulting Foresters Inc., and had worked for the Georgia Forestry Commission and the Florida Forest Service.

He is survived by his wife Diane Widener Bell, his father, one daughter, two sons, two sisters, two brothers and three grandchildren.

Born on July 12, 1942, in Early County, Ga., Mr. Bell had been a dedicated member of several community organizations and was the 1983 Early County Forestry Man of the Year.

Huddy Hudgens first met Mr. Bell when the Warnell alumnus worked for the GFC. The two had been friends for more than 45 years when Mr. Bell passed away. Mr. Hudgens, owner of Albany Land Co., often worked with Mr. Bell on real estate transactions.

“He was an honest forester, and those two words don’t always go together,” Mr. Hudgens said.

Mr. Hudgens praised his friend’s respect for hunting and fishing laws, how he never had "flamboyant" ways and the way he “raised his boys.”

“I’d rather him go out and look at a tract of land and tell me about timber than anybody out there,” Mr. Hudgens said.

The real estate owner still refers to his friend in the present tense.

“It’s a tragic loss,” Mr. Hudgens said, "not only to me personally, but also to a lot of our clients and friends. We still just shake our heads. We can’t believe Tommy’s gone.”
If you ask Joanna Stevens about Harold, the first thing she’ll say is, “He’s the sweetest thing!”

It’s not what you’d expect to hear about a four-foot-long, bright orange and yellow corn snake, but then Stevens has a soft spot for creatures that slither. As president of The University of Georgia’s Herpetological Society, the biology major helps teach people about reptiles, amphibians and conservation.

The group takes information and live animals to school classrooms, community nature centers, and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts troops across the state. Of the snakes, turtles, frogs, toads and salamanders they bring with them, there’s always at least one animal — a turtle, frog or snake — that students can touch and hold. Harold is almost always the crowd favorite.

“Usually the terrified kids are the ones that at the end of the program are standing at the front touching the animals and telling everyone else about them,” said Andrew Durso, a “Herp Society” member and UGA ecology major.

After letting snakes like Harold wind around their arms or slither up their shirt sleeves, elementary school students sometimes create snake bracelets by drawing and coloring the patterns of Georgia’s 42 indigenous snakes, only six of which are venomous.

“All the animals we bring to places for our outreach are animals that are found in Georgia so people can learn to recognize what they’re seeing around them,” Stevens said. “When kids are walking in the woods and they see this slimy thing go by, they can say, ‘Oh, I saw that at the herp thing.’”

— By Amanda E. Swennes
— Photos by J.P. Bond

To request a classroom visit or for more information, go to: warnell.forestry.uga.edu/ughs