Embracing hands-on learning

Warnell already an experiential learning veteran
Since moving to the Dean’s Office, I’ve had the opportunity to hire 10 faculty members in 18 months, which is pretty remarkable for a faculty of about 60. Three of these were new positions in outreach funded by the General Assembly with your support. Others filled vacant positions or recent retirements. All of these faculty members will be in place as we end 2016 and most are introduced here. Their arrival has added new excitement to the school due to their enthusiasm and energy. You will enjoy meeting them when you come to campus or when you interact with them in your professional work. I’ll admit I am biased, but they are special people in the tradition of the faculty who have long served this school.

Dr. Robert J. Warren will retire after fall semester, and his former graduate students held an event to honor Bob at Flinchum’s Phoenix. They are also working to fund an endowed graduate fellowship in Bob’s name, and we are fully supporting them on that effort as well. Few members of the faculty have left the impact on their professions as has Bob Warren, and we have all been blessed by working or learning alongside him.

While more than 80 percent of our 192 graduate students receive an assistantship, they must still pay fees of more than $3,000 per year. During 2016, we created five new graduate fellowships through the sale of previous land gifts by the Rhodes and Cooper families that will cover all fees that graduate students on assistantships have to pay. Having these endowed fellowships will help us to continue to compete well against other institutions in attracting the very best graduate student talent to our programs.

Equally important are endowed professorships. In July, we signed an agreement with the Boone and Crockett Club to place its next endowed program and professorship in wildlife conservation in the Warnell School. This will ensure that future students continue to understand the success and importance of the North American model of wildlife management and the critical need for regulated sport hunting. (See Page 6 for more details.)

We are indeed blessed with outstanding alumni and supporters. Dennis Carey is this year’s recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award. Dennis Carey (BSFR ’74) has had a very successful career in the forest industry and was the driving force securing the long-term future of TimberMart-South, including its move to the Warnell School 20 years ago. Amanda Hamsley Lang (BSFR ’05, MS ’08) is our Distinguished Young Alumnus and was recently named to the UGA 40 Under 40 List. Amanda is a partner with Forisk Consulting who has been instrumental in its recent rapid growth. We will have full coverage of these recipients in the spring issue.

Your vital support of our school in so many ways helps make great things happen every day. We thank you and we hope to see you soon. Go Dawgs.
The University of Georgia now requires undergraduates to complete an experiential learning requirement in order to graduate. This may be new to some schools at UGA, but Warnell was already an old-timer when it came to this type of hands-on learning. Photos on the cover illustrate several courses, senior projects or thesis opportunities or field camps Warnell undergraduates were already offered. Graphic by Wade Newbury. All photos courtesy of Warnell students, faculty and staff.

Table of Contents photo:
Students pose on a mountain in New Zealand during a study abroad trip. Photo by John Maerz.

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How are we doing?
We welcome letters to the editor and feedback from our readers. Submit news items, questions or address changes to: thelog@warnell.uga.edu

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Fall 2016
It was actually “serendipity” that brought Warren to teaching in the first place. After earning his bachelor’s degree in zoology from Oklahoma State University, the economy was terrible. Warren was facing either a daunting job market or something he feared even more — going to graduate school and conducting original research. He decided to work as a wildlife biologist, but instead he joined the military and enrolled at Virginia Tech, and “once I got into it and saw how exciting it could be, it was a real motivator. I don’t know what I was afraid of.”

Working on a research assistantship there, Warren found himself in unfamiliar territory when funding ran out and he ended up with a teaching assistantship. “I was equally fearful of teaching,” he laughed. “But it clicked! Working with students one-on-one in the lab I realized how rewarding teaching could be. Serendipity is what it is.”

Warren ultimately earned both his master’s degree and Ph.D. from Virginia Tech, then began working at Texas Tech in 1979. A longing for the Southeast led him to apply for a job with what was then the School of Forest Resources at UGA, and he landed a faculty position in 1983.

In the past three decades, Warren has witnessed and been part of incredible expansion and growth of the wildlife program at Warnell. When he started 33 years ago, the school had few wildlife faculty and was sharing professors with other departments. Not only has the wildlife enrollment exploded since then, but the expertise among faculty has increased and diversified and Warnell now “has the best quantitative wildlife program in the world.”

His contributions to this legacy — and the impacts he’s made on students — has not been forgotten by those he’s helped over the years. Susan K. Allen (BS ’86, MS ’88) not only graduated from Warnell, but worked here for several years. She happily volunteered to help plan a retirement celebration for Warren in November — precisely because of his enthusiasm for mentoring students, including taking her on as a master’s student. “What I learned about Bob during my graduate program is echoed by his students: he is a mentor, teacher and friend. His door is always open for personal and professional advice, and his enthusiasm for wildlife conservation and management is unmatched. He is humble and honest, and he makes a difference in his students’ lives.”

Allen said her career has taken some interesting turns, and she is now associate director of the Georgia Center Hotel on UGA’s campus, “But Bob has been my role model for how I mentor, advise and treat people.”

Warren said he’s been glad to be part of Warnell’s history. And his contributions have not gone unrecognized. Over the years, Warren has been honored numerous times for his contributions not only to Warnell but wildlife management and conservation. In 2000 he was named the recipient of the Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professorship, and just two years ago he won the highest conservation award there is from The Wildlife Society, the Aldo Leopold Memorial Award. He’s been recognized for his teaching, research and his work in natural resources.

But, he said, he’s 64. It’s time to retire. His kids are looking forward to him hanging it up, as well, he said. Christopher, Alyssa and Bethany all scolded him when he delayed retirement by a semester. But he wanted to wrap up some projects and properly hand the reigns over to his successor, Gino D’Angelo. But now? “I’m outta here,” he said. ☺
Warnell teams up with Boone and Crockett Club on wildlife professorship

In the past few years, there’s been a noticeable shift in wildlife management education. As the number of hunters across the U.S. falls, fewer college students are also interested in traditional wildlife management or in understanding the role of hunting on the success of wildlife conservation over the past century.

The Boone and Crockett Club has turned its focus to this problem, establishing programs across the country to allow universities to focus on field science and application through endowed programs that provide stable funding. The Warnell School is now the fifth college chosen for the organization’s University Endowed Professorship.

The University Endowed Professorships are designed to pair science-based graduate students with a supplemental public policy education, said Morrie Stevens Sr., president of the Boone and Crockett Club.

“This will generate the future leaders for state fish and game departments, as well as federal agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service,” Stevens said. “It will also create leadership for the NGO community in the forestry and wildlife area as well.”

Stevens said Warnell was a logical choice to expand the program to the southeast region of the country because of its “rich history in forestry and wildlife management specialties.”

Warnell and Boone and Crockett Club have committed to raising $5 million over the next five years to endow the program and professorship. Warnell Dean Dale Greene said that once the program is fully endowed, a search will be launched to hire someone to fill the distinguished professorship position. This professor will focus on big game management with a particular emphasis on how to do this in the privately-owned landscape of the southeastern U.S.

“I’m tremendously excited about the opportunities that partnering with the Boone and Crockett Club brings to the Warnell School,” Greene said. “The goals of our two organizations make this partnership a natural fit and this will provide additional experiences for our faculty and students in our highly regarded wildlife management program.”

Founded in 1887 by Theodore Roosevelt and George Bird Grinnell, the Boone and Crockett Club is the oldest wildlife conservation organization in North America. It focuses on promoting the conservation and management of wildlife, particularly big game, to preserve and encourage hunting while maintaining high ethical standards of fair chase and sportsmanship.

It also promotes the North American model of wildlife conservation, a set of principles that guides management and conservation decisions in the U.S. and Canada and is used by several conservation groups. These principles include considering wildlife as public trust resources, eliminating markets for game, and setting ethical standards for the killing of game.

Greene said the organization’s University Endowed Professorship program is vital as society becomes increasingly health conscious and values wildlife. Boone and Crockett Club has long partnered with the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Institute for research and outreach services.

For more information about supporting the Boone and Crockett Club Wildlife Conservation Program at the Warnell School please contact Bridget Harden at 706-542-6522 or bharden@uga.edu.

Warnell unveils 10-year strategic plan: Plan lays out a decade of ambitious goals

This past spring, the Warnell School finalized a plan that will help guide its programs over the next decade. Faculty, staff and external supporters began working in the summer of 2015 to update the strategic plan that will be in effect through 2025. This plan outlines aggressive goals that will direct Warnell’s efforts to improve upon its instruction, outreach and research programs through specific benchmarks we have set, said Dean Dale Greene.

“The Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources has been a leader in the disciplines where it has been active since its creation in 1906,” said Dean Dale Greene. “Our objective is to be world-class at all we do and in each of our missions — research, teaching and outreach — by the end of this planning horizon in 2025. Our goal was to have a new plan in place in early 2016 as we began the 110th year of the Warnell School.”

The final strategic plan was improved through multiple revisions that incorporated input from faculty, staff, Warnell’s advisory boards and committees, as well as key officials with natural resources agencies, companies, and non-governmental organizations throughout Georgia and the Southeast. It has been published online on Warnell’s website, and an outline was mailed to key stakeholders this past spring. Some of the areas the plan focuses on:

- Increasing alumni engagement and support,
- And securing funding that will allow Warnell to fulfill its mission, through increased annual giving, endowments and other giving opportunities.

The Warnell School hired the firm Lighthouse Counsel to help guide the development of the new strategic plan. The firm works with nonprofit organizations to develop and implement effective strategies that will help accomplish mission priorities.

These goals, which set benchmarks and deadlines for execution, were devised after gathering feedback from several hundred constituents and stakeholders. “This plan will be a key guidepost for us as we make plans for the years ahead, although we will also regularly re-evaluate and revise this plan with our external supporters as conditions and events dictate,” Greene said.

An effective strategic plan will allow Warnell to remain a world-class leader in teaching, research and outreach services, Greene said. “We must build on our current strengths and seek to leverage the strengths of our many partners and the advantages of the region where we are located. We can serve the globe, but as a state-funded, land grant institution we must serve Georgia first.”

For more information, contact Bridget Harden at 706-542-6522 or bharden@uga.edu.
A Warnell master's student was one of just 12 UGA students to receive a National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program Award earlier this year. Micah Miles studies the urban ecology of reptiles and amphibians in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. He also works to further public awareness about urban wildlife and increase environmental literacy for all ages by collaborating with artists to create signs for urban parks and green spaces. This award recognizes and supports outstanding early career graduate students in NSF-supported science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines who are pursuing research-based master's and doctoral degrees.

The Warnell School has launched a newly redesigned website that builds on a clean, updated look, offering visitors easier access to information about the oldest forestry school in the South. Visitors to the new, mobile-friendly site can easily find information about the oldest forestry school in the South that boasts a clean, updated look, offering visitors easier access to information about the oldest forestry school in the South.

Visit the new site at warnell.uga.edu.

Contact information for faculty, staff, and graduate students. A new, robust directory also quickly guides visitors to as a leader in natural resources management, teaching and research initiatives, and facts about Warnell’s long history.

Visitors to the new, mobile-friendly site can easily find information about the oldest forestry school in the South.

The Warnell School has launched a newly redesigned website to information about the oldest forestry school in the South. That boasts a clean, updated look, offering visitors easier access to information about the oldest forestry school in the South.

Several Warnell graduate and undergraduate students have conducted research projects on in vitro propagation of chestnut and other forest trees in Scott Merkle's lab over the past 20 years. Now, for the first time, a gift to Warnell from John Allan of Atlanta has made it possible to support a student internship in the lab to help with research on American chestnut restoration, which is being conducted in collaboration with The American Chestnut Foundation.

The lab’s first “Chestnut Intern” is Marjorie “Maisy” MacKnight. The Warnell junior is majoring in wildlife and fisheries ecology and has a large interest in conserving trees. She also won two scholarships at the annual Warnell Spring Awards Banquet last April — the Gordon J. Yancey Scholarship and an Alumni Scholarship. She's also active outside of Warnell — she’s a UGA Majorette, practicing hours each week and committing her time during Georgia football season. “Maisy actually started working in the lab last May as an hourly wage worker, mainly cleaning glassware,” Merkle explained. “But she became interested in the chestnut research and now, as an intern, is learning different aspects of the chestnut in vitro propagation procedure. She is helping with everything from culture initiation to somatic seedling production.”

Dr. Elizabeth Benton recently won the 2016 Southern Forest Insect Work Conference Outstanding Graduate Student Award at the North American Forest Insect Work Conference. Benton, a recent graduate of the University of Tennessee, has joined the Warnell faculty.

Dr. Michael Conroy is spending his fall semester at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada, courtesy of a Fulbright award. Conroy’s grant, awarded by the William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, will allow the senior research scientist in wildlife biometrics to work with Dr. Aaron Fisk and others at the University of Windsor and its Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research. They’ll be studying Arctic and Great Lakes fish population data, and Conroy will also be teaching classes in statistical modeling.

Conroy returns in December. “I look forward to these collaborations and cross exchange of ideas, and to returning to somewhat warmer temps in January,” Conroy said.

The University of Georgia is the first school in the SEC to implement a Green Lab Program (GLP), which is currently under development by Warnell graduate Star Scott (BSFR ’01). The purpose of the program is to implement sustainable practices and technologies into UGA’s 1900+ research labs. The program reduces water, energy and hazardous chemical usage, and projects an annual savings of $187,000.

The program will create tremendous improvement on our main campus and in our town. Research labs use five times the resources of a classroom and generate tons of waste each year. This program is about small changes that can be made which will have huge impacts on resources consumed without compromising the quality or ease of the research conducted.

Many of the initiatives from the GLP identify simple steps toward sustainable lab practices, such as stickers to remind lab workers to close fume hoods when not in use, and postings to help educate users to know if autoclaves are multifunctioning. Automatic timers are provided for benchtop equipment, such as water baths, for labs that leave equipment turned on 24/7 so it will be ready when the researcher needs to use it.

The biggest cost savings of a single initiative will be to ‘temperature tune’ many low freezers from -80 to -70. This reduces the energy consumption by 20 percent or more. If 500 ultra-lows at UGA were temperature tuned, it would save us about $60,000 annually. Most research samples do not require storage at -80 and are stable at much warmer temperatures. In fact, the move to -80 storage was actually driven by the refrigeration industry, not by scientific need.

Scott (pictured left) has advocated for this program for many years, since her time as a research professional in the Odom School of Ecology and Warnell, and is excited to bring this program back to her roots in Warnell.

For more information on the Green Lab Program, please email greenlab@uga.edu or visit sustainability.uga.edu/get-involved/labs/
PMRC celebrates 40th anniversary, looks to the future

There’s no doubt that the Plantation Management Research Cooperative has beaten the odds. When Dr. Jerry Clutter founded the PMRC in 1976, the UGA forest biometrician actually launched a program now known worldwide for its biometrics and silvicultural research and management tools.

It’s not the only cooperative that’s been around, said Dr. Michael Kane, director of the PMRC. But it’s definitely one of the few to celebrate 40 years. “There have been a number of co-ops in the South similar to the PMRC, and some have survived and some haven’t,” Kane said. “For the PMRC to reach 40 years, there have been a couple of years under its belt, and still be so active, it’s a testimony to the interest in the private sector and the contributions from Warnell.”

When Clutter founded the PMRC, he introduced Southern forest managers to computer simulations, operations research and sophisticated growth and yield models. The PMRC’s first priority was to develop growth and yield tables for the millions of acres of plantations in the South. The studies initially conducted by the PMRC set the foundation for the strong biometrics and silvicultural research conducted today. Kane said with a new strategic plan in place, the PMRC now has a heavy emphasis on analytical projects such as quantifying uncertainty in growth projections and validating and improving current model systems that build on a very active South-wide field program.

With 20 member organizations, the PMRC memberships cover more than 15 million acres across the South. Unlike other cooperatives, 95 percent of all field work for the PMRC is done by its own field crews. This includes studies establishment, application of treatments, maintenance and measurements. Having these tasks done by a dedicated crew guarantees that the PMRC has the best data for analysis, Kane said. The large database developed over 40 years, extensive field study program, engaged cooperators, and a committed Warnell team position the PMRC to continue making significant contributions to forest science and practice.

As a Warnell alumnus, how do you blend your experience of being a student here with teaching a new generation of natural resources professionals?

Being a former Warnell student was intimidating at first with so many of my professors still on the faculty. With a couple of years under my belt, I now see it as an advantage. I am only about a decade removed from being in their shoes, so I am very familiar with the stress and challenges that students face as they work through our program. I also know how important the Warnell family is and the importance of fostering this atmosphere during the short time students are here.

Your research heavily focuses on tourism. What about tourism do you find so interesting?

I am passionate about how tourism and the dollars exchanged between tourists and destinations can be harnessed as an economic force for the protection and promotion of all things unique within communities. With the right mindset, every community regardless of size, history or location has something interesting to offer tourists. I love helping these communities discover their unique natural and cultural features and the resulting pride they have from sharing these special features with visitors from around the world.

How do you inspire students to think critically about tourism and its effects on the environment?

Unfortunately, tourism is not always the "goose that lays the golden egg." All too often, tourism can “fowl its own nest” and lead to the degradation of the very natural resources tourists come to see. I try to get students to wrestle with the many positive and negative environmental, social, and economic impacts tourism has on destinations. This type of complexity leads to lively class discussions because these triple bottom line impacts (environmental, social, and economic) are often at odds with one another. Rather than having right or wrong answers, I try to give students a set of principles for sustainable tourism development and encourage them to enter into this complexity with the goal of maximizing the positive benefits of tourism while minimizing its negative impacts.

What kind of tourism research interests you?

I like tourism research that looks into incentives for sustainable tourism development. People often focus on the intrinsic reasons for sustainability, but I think tourism provides a strong economic incentive to protect natural and cultural resources.

How does your knowledge as a travel expert affect you personally when you go on vacation?

Our natural resources are a treasure and a gift; we have a great opportunity and responsibility to be good stewards for future generations. Education, leadership and effective communication of science to non-scientists are critical. One passionate person can make a difference, but passionate people working together in teams can accomplish so much more.

3. As a Warnell alumnus, how do you blend your experience of being a student here with teaching a new generation of natural resources professionals?

4. Your research heavily focuses on tourism. What about tourism do you find so interesting?

5. How do you inspire students to think critically about tourism and its effects on the environment?

6. What kind of tourism research interests you?

7. How does your knowledge as a travel expert affect you personally when you go on vacation?
NEW FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Name: Elizabeth Benton
Position: Forest Health Outreach Specialist
Education: BS ’02, University of Mobile; MS ’06, University of South Alabama; PhD ’16, University of Tennessee
Personal: Married with two children, ages 8 and 10; website: www.elizabethpbenton.com
Where I was before Warnell: University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee
My research/extension interests: Developing and improving pest management solutions to promote healthy trees and forests, assessing and minimizing environmental risks of pesticide use, and delivering forest health guidance to Georgia stakeholders

Name: Caterina Villari
Position: Assistant Professor, Forest Pathology
Education: BS ’05 and MS ’08, University of Florence (Italy); PhD ’12, University of Padua (Italy).
Personal: Married to Filippo — we love traveling, hiking, music and good food
Where I was before Warnell: Postdoctoral researcher at Ohio State University
Classes I am teaching: Co-teaching forest health and protection
My research interests: My main scientific interest has always been centered on the interactions between trees, fungal pathogens and herbivores, with particular attention to chemical ecological aspects. My work focuses mainly on symbioses between bark beetles and Ophiostomatoid fungi, and on tree defense mechanisms, driven by the curiosity to understand the role of associated fungi in bark beetle establishment in the host. My approach to answer these research questions involves ecological, metabolomic and molecular analyses.
Why I came to Warnell: I was searching for an engaging environment where forest and trees were the main focus, and where, besides conducting my own research, I could be involved in other new and stimulating collaborative projects. I was glad to find that environment in the Warnell School, which is a landmark in forest sciences and has a centennial tradition. Plus, I love pine trees, and Georgia definitely has them!

Name: Alex Bucksch
Position: Assistant Professor
Education: BSc and MSc, Brandenburg University of Technology (Germany); PhD, Delft University of Technology (Netherlands)
Personal: I enjoy rock climbing
Where I was before Warnell: Georgia Institute of Technology
My research interests: Computational plant science with a focus on masts and their environmental adaption using imaging and simulation tools.
Why I came to Warnell: I am a joint hire between the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, Department of Plant Biology and the Institute of Bioinformatics. The joint position is a nationwide, unique possibility for interdisciplinary research across traditional disciplines at an outstanding university.

Name: Jon Caulfield
Position: Hargreaves Distinguished Professor of Forest Finance
Education: BS ’75, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry; MS ’81, N.C. State; PhD ’84, N.C. State
Personal: This year Didi and I celebrated our 40th anniversary and 20 years in Athens. We are members of St. Joseph Catholic Church. My hobbies include hunting and fishing; Didi is an avid fisherwoman and cook.
Where I was before Warnell: I’ve spent most of the last 25 years in the TIMO industry and as an industry consultant. I was on the UGA forestry faculty from 1996 to 2000 and at Auburn from 1984 to 1992.
Classes I am teaching: Currently a work in progress, but classes will include forest finance and economics.
My research interests: Like most forest economists my training and early research focused on micro-level analysis. While in the TIMO world I realized there was much to learn about how macro drivers and trends impact forestry globally, nationally and regionally. A closely related interest is international forestry; as the forest products sector has globalized, timberland investments have followed. Finally, I have a longstanding interest in timberland as an asset class and how it relates to other assets in what has become a slower-growth world with a paradoxically riskier investment environment.
Why I came to Warnell: Warnell features the country’s best forest business curriculum and the nation’s only dedicated Center for Forest Business. I worked closely with both while here in the 1990s. In the private sector I continued that involvement via an adjunct faculty appointment, as a member of the CFB Advisory Board, and by hiring a half-dozen UGA Forest Business/Economics graduates over the years. When the opportunity arose to return to the program earlier this year I didn’t have to think twice about applying.

Name: Yanshu Li
Position: Forest Economics and Taxation Outreach Specialist
Education: BS ’97, Shanxi University; MS ’03, Purdue University; PhD ’06, Auburn University
Personal: Married to Zhenchuan Fan, have one 10-year old daughter, Lindsay
Where I was before Warnell: Forest economist, Texas Forest Service from August 2007 to December 2012.
My outreach and research interests: My outreach interests focus on providing education and information on forest-related taxation, economics of forest investment and management, forest products market analysis, and full economic benefits of forests. My research interests lie in economic analysis of issues related to forest taxation, forest economics and policy, and their economic, environmental and social implications on forest management.
Why I came to Warnell: I chose Warnell because of its strong faculty team with various interest areas in forestry and natural resources and its long and renowned tradition of special emphasis on the integration of research, outreach and teaching. Additionally, the school is well situated in Georgia, where the forests and the forest sector play an important role in the environment, economy and livelihood of many residents. Closely working with the local forestry community will allow me to make more effective use of my experience and knowledge in the area.
Name: Joe Conrad  
Position: Assistant Professor, Forest Operations  
Education: B.S., University of the South; MF and PhD, Virginia Tech  
Personal: Married to Anna Conrad. We have two dogs, Rusty and Dudley. I enjoy hunting and fishing.  
Where I was before Warnell: Assistant professor of forestry at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point  
Classes I am teaching: Forest harvesting and roads; field orientation, measurements, and sampling in forestry and natural resources; forest operations study tour  
My research Interests: I conduct research in forest operations with a focus on timber harvesting efficiency and delivered wood cost. The goal of my research is to generate data that will help forest managers implement their management plans efficiently and allow timber harvesting professionals to harvest and deliver timber to Georgia's forest industry at a competitive cost. Specifically, I am interested in timber harvesting productivity and cost, timber harvesting on small forest parcels, logging capacity utilization, timber procurement, and the impact of policies/restrictions/regulations on harvesting costs.

Why I came to Warnell: Georgia harvests more timber each year than any other state in the U.S. and has a strong forest products industry, which makes this the perfect place to study forest operations. Furthermore, Warnell's outstanding reputation, strong connections with the forest industry through the Center for Forest Business, and the forest operations research conducted here by my predecessor, Dean Dale Greene, made this an incredible opportunity.

Name: Kyle Woosnam  
Position: Associate Professor, Natural Resources Recreation and Tourism  
Education: BS ’01, University of Illinois; MS ’03, Virginia Tech; PhD ’08, Clemson University  
Personal: I was born one month after Elvis passed away (my folks remind me of this from time to time). I’m from Northern Illinois originally and grew up on the Kankakee River in Momence. I met my wife, Margaret, at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg in 2001 while we were both pursuing our masters degrees. We married in 2003 and completed our PhDs concurrently from Clemson University (she in 2007 and me a year later). We have four lovely children; Josie (10), Ellie (8), Brady (5), and Sammy (2). Things I enjoy doing are homeschooling our children in math and language arts, running and cycling, woodworking, and dendrology. Our faith is quite important to us as we are members of the PCA denomination as well.

Where I was before Warnell: Associate professor in Texas A&M University’s Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Science.  
Classes I am teaching: NRRT 4700: Social Science Methods and Techniques in Natural Resources and FANR 1100: Natural Resources Conservation  
My research Interests: I focus on sustainable community tourism development, primarily in the areas of social-cultural impacts communities experience as well as the relationships that exist between locals and visitors. I enjoy engaging in research projects that take me all over the world that include World Heritage Sites, coastal and mountain regions, and amenity-rich destinations in and adjacent to parks.

Why I came to Warnell: I came to Warnell to experience a faculty climate where opportunities exist to collaborate with colleagues from various disciplines and fields. I look forward to bringing my social science experience in research methods, measurement and statistics to such collaborative endeavors. Being part of one of the best forestry schools throughout the world is also quite a benefit!

### Leave your legacy Naming opportunities available at Warnell

Launched just last year, a program that allows alumni and friends to name a room at Warnell has already gained significant support from those who want to “leave a legacy.” Several rooms at Warnell — including the Dean’s Conference Room and several classrooms — are pending or already fully sponsored. But there are still more rooms available for those who wish to leave their mark on the Warnell School and help raise funds for the next generation of natural resources professionals. Funds raised through this program will upgrade our existing facilities, providing the best learning opportunities for our students, and bring our classrooms up to basic campus-level standards. Your generosity will be recognized on the outside and inside of the rooms including a plaque that describes the story behind your gift. Investing in the facilities support fund is a great way to leave your legacy while enhancing the Warnell student experience. Funds for this initiative are invested to ensure immediate needs are met while providing a resource for years to come.

A full list of rooms available for sponsorship can be found at: [www.warnell.uga.edu/alumni/giving/warnell-naming-opportunities](http://www.warnell.uga.edu/alumni/giving/warnell-naming-opportunities)
RESEARCH NEWS

Warnell researchers evaluating angler wants to create Georgia trout management strategy

Cecil Jennings, head of the Georgia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and an adjunct professor in the Warnell School, and fellow Warnell researchers Bynum Boley, Brian Irwin and Nate Nibbelink, have received $149,193 from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to formulate a trout management strategy in Georgia.

The overarching goal of their project is to increase both the amount and usability of socioecological information available to managers when making decisions about the management of fisheries. The team will evaluate angler preferences for trout fishing in Georgia waters while also working to conserve trout habitats and protect wild stocks of fish.

This research, which will also be used to train graduate students, will ultimately help managers make important decisions about fishing regulation and how and when to stock fish.

Stream sampling on Lower Flint River gives new hydrological insights for region

With baseflow discharges in the Lower Flint River Basin declining in recent decades, researchers conducted coarse and fine-scale stream sampling on Ichawaynoonsway Creek, a major Flint tributary.

The project was led by then-Ph.D. student Kathleen Rugel, who was in both the Warnell School and the Odom School of Ecology, who worked with Warnell Professors Rhett Jackson and Todd Rasmussen and scientists at the Jones Ecological Research Center at Ichauway, where Rugel also studied. Dr. Rugel is now working on a book on water management issues.

While declines can be attributed to increased regional groundwater withdrawals, the location and nature of connectivity between groundwater and surface water in this karstic region are poorly understood. Because growing water demands will likely be met by further development of regional aquifers, an important management concern is the nature of interactions between groundwater and surface water under natural and anthropogenic perturbations.

Eastern White Pine now being attacked by Matsuococcus macrocicatrices in the Southeast

*Matsuococcus macrocicatrices* has been found in the Southeast. Warnell researchers published an article in the *Journal of Economic Entomology* recently that shows that the insect is now feeding and reproducing on eastern white pine in the Southeastern U.S. This insect has previously been reported only from the Canadian Atlantic Maritimes and Northeast regions. Field surveys and molecular analyses positively identified the insect in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. It’s associated with dieback and mortality of all diameter classes of eastern white pine, they say in the paper. The insect was found embedded in cankers or on top of the bark with necrotic tissue under the feeding area, indicating that they may be creating wounds for opportunistic pathogenic fungi to infect. The paper was written by Angela Mech (a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Washington), Christopher Aarons (with the U.S. Forest Service), Michelle Gram (with the U.S. Forest Service), David Coyle (extension associate with the Southern Regional Extension Forestry), Penelope Gullan (with the Australian National University), Lyn Cook (with the University of Queensland) and Kamal Gandhi (Warnell associate professor).

Warnell study finds private landowners have negative views of Endangered Species Act

Warnell researchers have been studying what private landowners think about the Endangered Species Act of 1973 — possibly the most powerful environmental law in the United States. Complying with ESA regulations can cause economic losses for private landowners, and failure to comply can result in fines and even imprisonment. Current policies create an economic disincentive for maintaining habitat for listed species on private lands, thus undermining the very purpose of the ESA. Warnell Ph.D. student Lauren Ward, Drs. Gary Green and Bob Warren, and Professor Bob Izlar examined non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners’ perspective of the ESA by sending out an electronic survey to members of national and state forestry organizations across the U.S.

Overall, landowners preferred economic incentives — such as compensation for losses, tax deductions, and tax credits — to other potential incentives. Results show that wildlife conservation is an important land management objective for NIPF landowners, but their attitudes toward the ESA are generally negative. Landowners with more negative attitudes toward the ESA are less likely to participate in endangered species incentive programs. A change in policy from disincentives to incentives could help improve attitudes toward the ESA itself, thus enhancing wildlife conservation on private lands. This study illuminates NIPF landowners’ perspectives on endangered species conservation, with implications for future policy changes that could lead to more effective protection of at-risk species in America.
Warnell researchers are looking at what residents in Atlanta really think about the Beltline project, which aims to network public parks, multi-use trails and transit along a historic 22-mile railroad corridor circling downtown and connecting neighborhoods. But these urban trails can be controversial developments due to their many positive and negative impacts — Dr. Bynum Boley is looking at what residents in three neighborhoods think of these urban trails through surveys. “We anticipate our study will help cities better understanding how diverse resident groups perceive the positive and negative impacts of urban trails located within their neighborhoods,” Boley said. “We also plan for the findings to provide cities with suggestions on how to develop urban trails in a manner that increases resident support.” Boley and Warnell master’s student Nahihan Palardy are compiling results now.

Warnell master’s student Anna Taylor has found evidence of something researchers have long suspected but not proven: bottlenose dolphins migrate when the temperature in the Atlantic Ocean changes. This migration explanation is laid out in a new paper published in *Animal Migration* by Taylor and co-authors John H. Schacke of the Georgia Dolphin Ecology Program, Todd R. Speakman of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Warnell Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Steven Castleberry, and Warnell Professor Richard Chandler. The bottlenose dolphin migrates seasonally along the east coast of the U.S., but researchers wondered what influenced this movement. Taylor and her co-researchers used photographic identification of individual dolphin fins to track the movements of dolphins at study sites on the Georgia and South Carolina coasts. Dolphin fins are as unique as fingerprints, and researchers were able track nearly 1,000 dolphins for the study. They found that migratory movements along the South Carolina and Georgia coasts between spring and fall were prompted by water temperature, while water salinity explained seasonal abundance.

A new study has found that drivers have very different attitudes when it comes to hitting wildlife with their automobiles. Brian Crawford (MS ’11, PhD ’16) and co author K.M. Andreas of the Savannah River Ecology Lab, surveyed people who went to Jekyll Island to find out what they think when they hit wildlife while driving. They found evidence for something that many natural resource professionals have believed for some time: people are generally not upset when they hit snakes and hold negative attitudes toward this taxa. However, the researchers also found that these same people showed general concern for wildlife and positive attitudes toward turtles and mammals. Published recently in *Animal Conservation*, these results indicate that general conservation messages may be inadequate for changing people’s attitudes toward snakes, and species-specific outreach programs could be more effective at reducing human-caused threats, like road mortality.

Warnell Associate Dean for Research Scott Merkle has crossed American sweetgum trees with their Chinese cousins, creating hybrid sweetgum trees that have a better growth rate and denser wood than natives. They can also produce fiber year-round, Merkle said, unlike native trees. These new hybrids, being sold by ArborGen Inc. after extensive field testing, have enormous potential for the production of bioenergy and paper, he explained.

“The very best hybrid sweetgums are being propagated to produce elite varieties, so that landowners will be able to plant trees that produce more biomass in a shorter time than the top-rated native sweetgum trees,” he said.

Sweetgum trees thrive under diverse conditions, grow as fast as pine trees and provide the type of fiber needed for specialty papers — and they’ve long been desired by paper and bioenergy producers. But harvesting mature sweetgums can be costly because they typically grow the best on the edges of swamps and in river bottoms, which are often inaccessible during the wet winter months.

Tests showed the new hybrids outperform either of the parent species by 20 percent in both growth rate and wood density. The hybrid varieties are co-owned by ArborGen, a forest seedlings company headquartered in South Carolina, and UGA RE, the University of Georgia Research Foundation. ArborGen officials say they produced 300,000 rooted cuttings this year and sold out before the hybrid could even be marketed.

Merkle decided to combine hybrid breeding with somatic embryogenesis, an in vitro process of mass propagating trees from somatic cells — essentially propagating the embryos from seeds produced from crossing the two sweetgum species. Combining two techniques — hybridizing and propagating — sped up testing that could have taken much longer, Merkle said. It also allowed them to more accurately test the quality of the new trees than by growing one tree from one seed and then waiting. After planting the seedlings, researchers simply watched to see which ones fared the best, ultimately narrowing it down to four varieties that showed the best growth rate and the densest wood.
Although the Warnell School — and some other UGA colleges — have offered hands-on learning experiences for years, it was only in 2015 that the university decided that all undergraduates, regardless of major, would need to fulfill an experiential learning requirement. With this new rule, which went into effect fall semester 2016, UGA became one of the largest public universities in the nation to require incoming undergraduates to take advantage of experiential learning opportunities like undergraduate research, study abroad, service-learning, or internships in order to graduate. Future Georgia graduates would not only have vital coursework under their belts, but they’ll also have the real-world experiences that could land them their dream job.

Each of UGA’s 14 schools and colleges were tasked with determining courses and experiences students could take to fulfill this requirement. That was no problem at all for Warnell. Dr. John Maerz helped draft Warnell’s experiential learning plan, and he also serves on UGA’s subcommittee that reviewed all proposals for the new requirement. It was clear during the drafting process that Warnell would have no trouble providing these opportunities for students, Maerz said.

Before experiential learning became a mandate, he said, Warnell already had in place: formal internship programs with industry and government partners, senior projects or thesis required of all undergraduates that places them with external clients or independent research, hosting the largest study abroad program at UGA, professional field camps and programs, and service-learning courses and programs. “In essence, all Warnell had to do was submit its curriculum as an experiential learning plan, and it was well received,” he said.

Warnell was doing experiential learning….

Joseph Vaughn was sitting in Dr. Cristian Montes’ class when the forestry professor told them about the peculiar way top height definition varies around the world. It’s not only defined differently between countries, Montes told the class, but also between regions even within the United States.

“I want to do that!” Vaughn thought to himself. “Now I’m kind of regretting it.”

Vaughn, who will graduate with his bachelor’s degree in forestry this December, made top height definition the focus of his senior thesis project. He’s trying to find a superior definition to help create a more precise site index equation. Senior thesis has been enjoyable, he said, but also “frustrating.”

The University of Georgia has figured out something Warnell students and alums have known for years: Sometimes you do your best learning when you actually get your hands dirty.
“I can possibly change our profession,” Vaughn said. “I want to go to grad school, and I wanted to get my graduate. The new requirement does not actually increase the number of credit hours students must obtain to graduate, but Maerz said it hasn’t come without challenges: How do we make sure there are enough opportunities for all the students at UGA?

There will definitely be a “significant increase” in the number of students seeking out the independent research opportunities, taxing faculty time and resources, he said. That has to be taken into consideration, not only at Warnell but across UGA.

“We need to increase the number and diversity of professional internship opportunities, particularly outside forestry and forest business,” he said. “Some of our professional majors do not offer as many rigorous internship opportunities, particularly paid opportunities. We will need to develop these opportunities with our partners and alumni.”

There’s also the problem that although many of the courses and other hands-on opportunities cost nothing extra to students, many of them do. This will be an issue for students with “financial constraints,” Maerz said. “Many students, particularly those who are first generation university students, do not have the financial means to study abroad or take an unpaid internship.”

We certainly don’t want the experiential learning requirement to create a class system, and we don’t want finances to limit opportunities for some students.

The solution to that, Maerz said, would be for UGA and Warnell to increase scholarships, fellowships and paid internships for students in need.

Warnell might have already been ahead of the game when it came to meeting the experiential learning mandate, but Vaughn said there’s still room for improvement. Warnell’s doing a great job with hands-on learning, he said, from field courses to labs to even making available the outreach animals students can use in environmental education presentations. There are so many opportunities for experiential learning at Warnell, he said — except students don’t always know about them all.

“I feel like you have to ask around Warnell to find the specific opportunity that fits your needs,” Vaughn said. “That can be troublesome.”

Jessica Reynolds, a fisheries major who’ll graduate next May, thinks it’s about time students across campus got in on experiential learning. “Gaining experience in the field in which you wish to pursue your career is important,” Reynolds said. “It’s the way for us as students to find out if this is the area we want to be involved with for the rest of our lives, whether that be through an internship, practicum, or volunteer experience.”

Reynolds was picked for an internship at the Georgia Aquarium in the Quarantine Department after her freshman year. That was all she needed to know that marine and aquatic biology was for her — and it sparked a yearning for even more hands-on work. “Without receiving any type of credit for it, I pursued another internship this past summer with the St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network,” she said. “Warnell has allowed me to gain invaluable experiences through hands-on learning that has guided my career path, and I can’t wait for all students across campus to have this same opportunity.”

Vaughn said he thinks his fellow UGA classmates will ultimately see the benefits of hands-on learning, and he firmly believes this requirement is an investment by UGA in the future workforce.

While senior thesis can be frustrating at times trying to finish his project, he said, “I think that is why it makes this experience rewarding.” Not only is his thesis project giving him a good idea of what it’ll be like in graduate school, but it’s also giving him the communication skills he knows he’ll need when he’s looking for jobs. You can’t always learn these things sitting in a classroom and taking notes from the whiteboard.

“Even though this capstone project is on a much smaller scale compared to the work done in graduate school, it is nice to gain a sense of the demands and skills needed to complete such a project,” Vaughn said. “In the end I’ll have a stronger background in forestry, specifically in basic principles of silviculture and forest mensuration.”
Matthew Thibodeaux

“I didn’t take long for Matthew Thibodeaux to realize he didn’t want to stick with a biochemistry major — or stay at Georgia Gwinnett College for that matter. The Snellville native was taking classes at GGC and majoring in biochem, but dreaming of the University of Georgia and natural resources. He just wasn’t quite sure what he wanted to do once he made the switch.

An introductory natural resources class taught by Drs. Elizabeth King and Joe Dahlen led him to Warnell’s forestry major, but it only took a couple of his major classes for Thibodeaux to realize he was “much more interested in water and soil resources than anything I had ever been interested in before.”

And that’s how this 22-year-old senior — he’s due to graduate in spring 2017 — not only joined the water and soil ranks and the American Water Resources Association, but also became a student research assistant in the water and soil lab at Whitehall Forest. Right now he’s processing soil, plant and water samples for chemical analysis and helping with other student projects. “This position is a great balance of field and programming and modeling skills he’ll later use to create hydrologic models of watersheds. “I am really interested in these hydrologic models as ways to better predict how water flows in a landscape and understand hydrologic behaviors and how to manage them, although to quote George Box, ‘All models lie, but not really a plan.’

But now, at 43, she’s very close to getting her Ph.D. in aquatic biology and starting that career she’s always wanted. “I was given some advice years ago,” she said. “What do you want your life to look like 10 years from now? How can you make it happen? Take advantage of opportunities. Ask for help if you need it. It doesn’t matter how long it takes or how many forks in your road, if you work hard and keep learning, you’ll get there.”

Haram has certainly taken an interesting road to Warnell. Graduating from high school in Italy, she started college as a biology major at 18, but moved around a lot. Over the years, she’s taken classes at multiple colleges. She’s also tried different careers, working in wildlife rehabilitation and as a massage therapist.

When her family was stationed in Spain, Haram learned to fly, and in the late 1990s she added pilot to her list of jobs, moving to Augusta, Georgia. That’s where she met husband Knut, also a pilot. After the two married and Haram became pregnant with daughter Lily, she quit her flying job and ultimately enrolled at then-Augusta State University.

She was in her 30s and had a young child at home. Returning to school was “challenging,” she said, but she planned to teach high school science after earning her bachelor’s degree. Instead, she found another fork in the road. “A friend of mine suggested I take a fish and wildlife field course which led me to seek out research experience, and I was hooked,” she said.

Teaching high school was out, and research was in. She found out that Dr. Susan Wilde was trying to learn more about a disease killing bald eagles around the Southeast, so she volunteered to help with fieldwork on the project — and got offered a graduate position at Warnell.

Now she’s focusing on what is known as Avian Vacuolar Myelinopathy, a neurological disease that bald eagles acquire from eating American coots, which get sick and die from eating aquatic plants coated with toxic cyanobacteria. Haram finds AVM fascinating, especially as they learn more about how it works and other aquatic species that may be affected.

Haram’s trying to nail down the disease causing agent, which could be very helpful for future studies on the disease, including ways to stop it. “There are some really talented people working on AVM, and we are chipping away at this mystery bit by bit,” she said. “I believe we are close to a big step forward in our understanding of why AVM occurs and the scope of organisms at risk.”
Hairy Dawg surprises Warnell Weekend visitors

Those attending Warnell Weekend this past spring didn’t just get the “Warnell experience.” A surprise guest VIP also gave them a taste of the University of Georgia when Hairy Dawg joined in on the fun at Whitehall Mansion.

It was just another reason parents and alumni have been boosting attendance of the five-year-old spring event each year since it began. When it started, organizers just wanted to give everyone a bit of the “Warnell experience,” particularly parents who don’t always get to see what their children are doing in class or labs.

Nearly 150 visitors came to Athens for Warnell Weekend, which kicked off with the 85th annual Spring Awards Banquet (see Page 28), but then festivities ramped up the next day with tours, class lectures, field labs and a special forest history showing. Then on Saturday, visitors who came to tour Whitehall Mansion were surprised by Hairy Dawg, who joined in on the tour, posed for photographs and even practiced his sawing skills with Dean Dale Greene.

Check back at warnell.uga.edu for a schedule of events for next year’s Warnell Weekend.

Weyerhaeuser Golf Tournament successful fall fundraiser

Great weather meant great results this fall — for golf, attendance and fundraising. Held on September 30, the Weyerhaeuser Golf Tournament and its numerous sponsors raised nearly $84,000 for the Harley Langdale Jr. Center for Forest Business. Weyerhaeuser generously hosted this fundraising event, drawing dozens of alumni and friends to the Georgia Club just outside of Athens. The 2016 tournament proceeds will benefit the Center for Forest Business Support Fund in the UGA Foundation. “We deeply appreciate Weyerhaeuser and those sponsoring or playing in the tournament for their continued support of our programs and their generosity,” said Dean Dale Greene. “With great partners such as these, our Forest Business program will remain strong for years to come.”

Special thanks to our tournament Co-hosts:

Deltic Timber Corporation
Enviva, LP
F&W Forestry Services, Inc
Forest Investment Associates
Forest Resources Consultants, Inc
Fulghum Fibers
Gay Wood Company
Georgia-Pacific
Graphic Packaging International
Hancock Timber Resource Group
Interfor
Interstate Resources, Inc.
LP Building Products
Resource Management Service, LLC
Superior Pine Products Company
Timberland Investment Resources, LLC
WestRock Land & Development

Sponsors

Photos by aMaleah Perry
 Warnell School celebrates student 85th Annual Spring Awards Banquet

The 85th annual 2016 Spring Awards Banquet this past spring attracted a record attendance as Warnell awarded more than 40 separate scholarships that support undergraduate and graduate education. Throughout the evening at the Athens Classic Center, guests learned of the many great achievements by our students and the Warnell School’s contributions to scholarships.

Our donors were also recognized, drawing attention to the extraordinary generosity of our patrons, who have created so many scholarships and endowed funds over the years. “With the generous support from our donors, the Warnell School is able to provide a large number of awards and scholarships to our students,” said Dr. Steven Castleberry, associate dean of academic affairs. “This year we awarded more than $175,000 to recognize the outstanding achievements of more than 100 students. We congratulate these students and thank all of our donors that make the awards possible.”

“Two years ago I received the Fred Hantusler memorial scholarship, and this year I am honored to be the recipient of the Georgia Division SAF scholarship. These scholarships take a tremendous pressure off of us as students and allow us to focus on the challenging coursework that we take in Warnell. There is no way I could have been involved on campus as I am without the support of everyone here. To that end, I would like to thank all of our guests – the Warnell faculty, staff, donors, and all of the special friends of the school. We are so fortunate at Warnell to have the support of generous donors like y’all!”

– Shane Patrick Matthews, undergraduate

“Donors, on behalf of my fellow scholarship recipients, thank you,” said graduate student Tara Gancos Crawford, recipient of the Martha Love May Scholarship. “Thank you for contributing to our well-being. Thank you for inspiring us to be accountable to a great legacy. Thank you for encouraging us to reciprocate for others the opportunities that you have afforded us. Thank you for helping us to establish ourselves as members of a multifaceted and renowned network. Thank you for empowering us to capitalize on opportunities to expand our worldview and skill set. Thank you for modeling the type of leadership we should aspire to replicate, and thank you for making a lifelong impact on our individual and collective professional journeys.”

– Tara Gancos Crawford, graduate

Last April, the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources celebrated our 85th annual Spring Awards Banquet, a beloved tradition at Warnell. One of the oldest events of its kind at the University of Georgia, the Spring Awards Banquet has withstood the test of time and continues to impact our students and our community, providing an opportunity to recognize our students’ achievements and to honor those whose generosity has made everything possible.

Increasing access to Warnell for all qualified students through both need-based and merit-based scholarships is a top giving priority for the school. Now more than ever before, contributions to Warnell’s thriving graduate program are of critical importance. Although Warnell is one of the smallest schools on campus, we have one of the largest graduate programs, with current enrollment nearing 200 students.

I am pleased to announce that several new funds have been added to the program to support both our graduate and undergraduate students. New funds created in 2016 include:

• The Martha Smith and Ed Newsom Cooper Graduate Fellowship
• The Clarence Lee Mutt Jr. Rhodes Graduate Fellowship
• The Burgin Timberland Endowed Scholarship in Forestry
• And the Young Alumni Undergraduate Scholarship fund, created by the Young Alumni Committee to support outstanding students of the Warnell School.

In addition to the funds above, the Robert J. Warren Graduate Fellowship was recently established in honor of faculty member Dr. Bob Warren for his outstanding career and achievements in wildlife ecology and management. Work has begun to secure funds for this endowment, and we look forward to awarding the fellowship in the near future.

All of these funds would not be possible without our alumni and friends who are passionate about our program and our students. Strong student support assists Warnell in remaining one of the top programs in the country; our ability to recruit and maintain top students — particularly at the graduate level — will help us compete with other premier institutions for the best and brightest scholars in the field.

As 2016 draws to a close, we encourage you to commit to Warnell by supporting our students who are our future forestry and natural resource leaders. If you would like to make a personal commitment to Warnell and impacting students is your passion, I welcome the opportunity to discuss options for you to either support an existing fund or create your own legacy. There are many options available to support the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources — a current gift, pledge or planned gift can transform a student’s life and is a wonderful way to show your commitment to Warnell and the University of Georgia. ●
Brian Simmons

How did you end up at Owen and Williams?
I started working at Owen & Williams when I was a sophomore in high school as a part time summer job. I was intrigued by the hatching and growing processes of raising fish and decided to make a career out of it.

What’s a typical day like for you?
A typical day at the farm starts in the office, checking on orders, and ends up at the hatchery or the ponds, making sure we are ready for the next day. Customers come and go as we harvest and feed fish for the upcoming days. Like all types of farms, maintenance of the facilities takes up most of our free time.

Is there a particular project you’re working on right now that really excites you?
Establishing new stocking rates for recreational ponds, as well as trophy managed ponds, has been very interesting as we experiment with different ratios of bass to bream. Fishing habits of most customers has shifted from a food source to a form of recreation, and very little research has been done to change the accepted stocking rates to ensure balanced fish populations. Almost everyone in Georgia wants to grow a 10 to 12-pound bass in their lake. We are trying very hard to make that a possibility.

How did your experience at Warnell prepare you for what you’re doing now?
My time spent at Warnell helped shape me and introduced me to friends and colleagues that I rely on still today. The classes at Warnell provided an extremely important background of knowledge that helps me grow fish, as well as handle customers professionally.

What advice would you give current students who’ll soon be looking for jobs?
My advice to the students of Warnell is to learn as much as possible, take a few classes out of your normal major, and enjoy the experience that the forestry school provides. Professors and classmates will always be there for you — try to get to know them as much as possible.

How have you stayed connected to Warnell?
I stay connected to Warnell by donating fish for research projects whenever possible as well as providing technical advice as needed. I have had the great opportunity to assist Dr. Jay Shelton with several continuing education classes for pond management over the years since I graduated. Whenever I can associate myself with the forestry school, I always take the opportunity seriously.

How did you get drawn to your industry?
I was drawn to the aquaculture industry because of the newness of the industry. Great role models (Paul Williams especially) helped nurture my interest in hatching different species of fish. The aquaculture industry in Georgia was really just getting rolling in the 1980s, and I wanted to be a part of it.

Name: Brian Keith Simmons
Education: BSFR ’93
Occupation: CEO of Owen & Williams Fish Farm Inc
Years at Job: Part-time 1987-93, full-time 1994-present
Hometown: Hawkinsville, Georgia
Personal: Married to Janna Simmons; daughter, Brianna Simmons (18) and son, Braden Simmons (12). I enjoy coaching youth sports, especially softball and baseball, whenever I am not at working.
Dean Dale Greene snapped a photo of some “Warnell legacy” recently. He calls them the “Marchinton Gang.” It’s (now retired Warnell) Professor Emeritus Larry Marchinton (seated) with his former graduate students. The gang was attending a retirement party for Dan Forster hosted by Dr. David Allen. (L-R standing) Mark Whitney (AB ’83, MS ’91, BS ’92), assistant director of the Wildlife Resources Division for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Dr. Karl V. Miller (PhD ’85), Wheatsley Distinguished Professor of Deer Management in Warnell; Dan Forster (BSFR ’86, MS ’88), retiring director of the WRD; and Brian Murphy (MS ’93), CEO of the Quality Deer Management Association.

1980s

Rusty Garrison (BSA ’80, MS ’84) was named the director of the Wildlife Resources Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources this past summer. Garrison has been with DNR for 18 years, having served most recently as the manager of the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center in Mansfield, Georgia. Before his career with DNR, Garrison worked for the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service for nearly nine years. He is married to Sue, has three daughters, and is a proud grandfather.

Susan Kieg Allen (MS ’88) is now the associate director for hotel operations at the University of Georgia’s Georgia Center Hotel.

1990s

Mike Mathis (BSFR ’95) is working as operations administrator at the Florida Forest Service in the panhandle of Florida. He is celebrating his 18-year anniversary to his wife. The couple have three wonderful boys.

Jonathan Day (BSFR ’96) recently accepted the position of head of Upper School at Savannah Country Day School.

2000s

Josh Harrell (MFR ’03) has been named a 2016 Society of American Foresters Fellow. The Fellow Award is a prestigious award that recognizes an SAF member for long-standing service to forestry at the local, state and national level. The SAF Fellow is recognized as an ambassador for the advancement of forestry. Harrell is a regional investment forester with Forest Investment Associates.

Thomas Reintern (PhD ’04) has been appointed regional director for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s South Region. Reintern will be working with commissioners, legislators, partner agencies and stakeholders to address a variety of fish and wildlife issues, including pythons in the Everglades and recovery of the endangered Florida panther.

Tina Hannon (MS ’06) won the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Resource Manager of the Year award at the Governor and Cabinet’s Sept. 20 meeting in Tallahassee. Hannon is a biologist at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area. This award recognizes outstanding resource management achievements by the hundreds of resource managers who protect state properties. Hannon has been with the FWC since 2006.

Emelia Jo Riley (BSFR ’97, MFR ’13) was recently awarded the YWCA: Lower Cape Fear 2016 “Women of Achievement Award” in the Environmental category. The WOA Awards provide recognition for outstanding contributions and achievements of women active in Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover and Pender counties. Riley currently works as the education coordinator for the New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District. Riley (center) is pictured with several county commissioners and staff.

Elissa Riley (BSFR ’07, MNR ’13) has been named a 2016 Society of American Foresters Fellow. The Fellow Award is a prestigious award that recognizes an SAF member for long-standing service to forestry at the local, state and national level. The SAF Fellow is recognized as an ambassador for the advancement of forestry. Harrell is a regional investment forester with Forest Investment Associates.

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Kristen Peney (BSFR ’07) became the community programs manager for The Landings, a private residential community on Skidaway Island. “It is a brand new position created in response to resident request for a position specializing in providing environmental education and healthy lifestyle program opportunities capitalizing on the natural resources within e.g. a perfect fit for my NRRT background,” she said. “I also see the possibility for future NRRT senior project work for anyone interested in community programming.”

Jane Diener (BSFR ’12) has recently obtained a full-time job for University Housing at the University of Georgia as the new sustainability coordinator. This is a brand new position that Jane helped develop over the course of her doctoral internship in sustainability at University Housing from 2013 to 2016. This new position allows Jane to work with students and staff to promote environmental sustainability and good conservation habits. Jane advises the EcoReps, a group of students who serve on the community council across campus to promote environmental awareness and behavior in the residence halls. Jane will run annual events for Housing, including move-in recycling efforts and the Greens Cup, an energy and water conservation competition. Jane will also coordinate the annual move-out donation event, Dawgs Ditch the Dumpster and Donate, which diverted more than 70,000 pounds of students’ unwanted items from the landfill and redistribut ed them to community organizations in need.

Nick Forsburg (MFR ’15, MBA ’16) was selected as one of the Top 5 MBA students by the UGA Terry College of Business in the Class of 2016. Forsburg is now a timberland acquisition analyst at Forest Investment Associates.
Warnell School recently honored two alumni for their service to the school and influence on the natural resources industry. At Homecoming festivities recently, Warnell named Dennis Carey the 2016 Distinguished Alumnus and Amanda Lang the 2016 Distinguished Young Alumnus.

A native of Madison County, Carey (BSFR ’74) started his career with Buckeye Cellulose Corp., but he left to start his own business. He founded Pine Timber Wood Production Inc. and Pine Timber Trucking Inc. in Oglethorpe, Georgia, in 1984 and currently partners with John Morris Sr. and Doug Wilkins. He is also the sole owner of Southern Wood Suppliers Inc., a chip mill in Macon County, Georgia, that in the 1990s provided more than half a million tons of hardwood chips per year to Japanese customers.

In addition to his businesses, Carey had tremendous influence on the forest industry in another way—he was instrumental in the creation of the Frank Norris Foundation and the move of TimberMart-South to the University of Georgia.

Lang (BSFR ’05, MS ’08) is a partner and senior consultant at Forisk Consulting, an Athens-based company that analyzes forest supplies, wood demand and timber pricing to develop forecasts and guidance for its clients. Lang first joined Forisk in 2007, working up to partner from project manager and education coordinator. She led Forisk’s bioenergy research program and manages client consulting projects. She is also a past chairman of the Warnell Young Alumni Committee and is the current chair of the Georgia Division of the Society of American Foresters.

She was also named to the University of Georgia Alumni Association’s 40 Under 40 earlier this year. This program recognizes exceptional young alumni who are achieving great success in their professional and personal endeavors. The 40 Under 40 program, created in 2011, honors alumni under the age of 40 who demonstrate commitment to UGA and who have made an impact in business, leadership, community, educational and philanthropic endeavors. Recipients for the award are nominated by their peers, and an external selection committee reviews those nominations and chooses the new class of 40 Under 40.

The campus-wide collaboration is supported by the division of development and alumni relations, division of student affairs and all academic departments. Nominations open each spring and honorees are announced mid-summer. Then, in early fall each year, the campus community gathers for the 40 Under 40 Awards Luncheon to celebrate these individuals’ leadership in business, research, the arts, philanthropy and education.
Charles O. Wike

Charles O. Wike (BSF ’50), of Columbus, Georgia, died July 9, 2016, at home surrounded by family. He was 89. Wike, son of the late Charles Oscar Wike and Kate Osmer, was born Jan. 9, 1927, in Atlanta. Wike served in the U.S. Navy and was a veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam. He retired as a Lieutenant Commander. Wike earned his bachelor’s degree from Warnell, and then a master’s degree in forestry from the University of Michigan. In addition to his service in the U.S. Navy, Wike was also an educator and retired a second time from the Muscogee County School District.

Robert J. Olszewski

Robert “Rob” Olszewski (MS ’80), of Marietta, Georgia, died April 19, 2016. He was 60. Born in Wyandotte, Michigan, to Lottie Magolan Olszewski and Carl J. Olszewski, Olszewski was drawn to forestry from his love of the outdoors. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Michigan Tech University and then a master’s degree in forest hydrology from Warnell, launching his long, stellar career in the forest industry. He began working as a state forest hydrologist in Florida in 1980, and then became the forestry association director of governmental affairs. The Olszewski moved to Atlanta in 1993 when he began working on the corporate side, first with Georgia Pacific and then with Plum Creek as vice president of environmental affairs. Olszewski was involved in several professional associations including the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, National Alliance of Forest Owners, Forest Landowners Association, and advisory committees at Auburn University and UGA.

An active volunteer in his community, Wike was involved with St. Francis Hospital, Spring Opera House, River Centre, Chattahoochee Valley Sports Council and the Bucik Challenge. He was also a member of Edgewood Presbyterian Church. He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 50 years, Katharine Ward Wike; and son, Charles Clifton Wike. He is survived by daughters, Evelyn Bain Riley and her husband Jake, Kay Wike Saunders and her husband Richard; grandchildren, John Mitchell Bain and his wife Alisha, Elizabeth Bain Denney and her husband John, Richard Vaden Saunders, Charles Garris Saunders and his wife Katharine; and five great-grandchildren.

Don Richard Taylor

Don R. Taylor (BSF ’63), of Greenville, South Carolina, died Thursday, June 2, 2016. He was 75. The son of the late Richard and Jane Holland Taylor, he was born in Tylers, Texas, and earned his bachelor’s degree in forestry from Warnell and a master’s degree in silviculture from Stephen F. Austin State University. He also earned an MBA from Columbia University.

Active in the forest industry, Taylor served on various forestry-related boards during his career. He served as vice president of the forest products division when he retired from Champion International Corporation. He then became lead auditor for Price Warehouse Coopers for its sustainable resource systems program. He also conducted several research projects for the Wood Source Research Institute, and his final project was as volunteer administrative minister for Holland Park Church where he served as an elder for more than twenty years.

He is survived by his wife, Sheila Morris Taylor, children Leigh Ann Taylor Vint, Richard Clayton Taylor, Rebecca Taylor Strickland and husband Brian; grandchildren, Georgina Vint, Cynthia Vint, Phoebe Vint, Noah Strickland, Aubrey Strickland, and Ricky Taylor; brother, Terrance Taylor and wife Gayle; sister-in-law, Ellen Duncan; and many beloved nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by daughter-in-law, Vivi Taylor.

Frank W. Norris

Frank Norris (BSF ’47) passed away on May 31, 2015, at a hospice in Atlanta after a brief illness. He was 95. Born and raised in Highlands, North Carolina, Norris attended the University of Georgia for forestry, leaving for more than four years to serve in the U.S. Navy during World War II. After serving in the Atlantic, Norris returned to UGA in 1945 and graduated in 1947. After graduation, he began his career in the private forest industry as a consultant, and then later owned a pulpwood dealership and logging business. He created TimberMart-South in 1976, launching a service that published timber price reports and market trends. It was with TimberMart-South that Norris made his lasting mark on forestry in the South (see Anniversary on Page 15).

Norris was preceded in death by his first wife, Vivian Constanbater, and his second wife, Kathy Saviano. He is survived by his daughter Sarah Norris Uzan; stepson Michael Saviano; step-grandchildren, Julian Saviano, Marjorie Saviano, and Satu Saviano; nephews, Luther Turner Jr.; and three step great-grandchildren.
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