



PennState

February 2023

**Candidates for Election to the
Forest Resources Alumni Group Board of Directors**

*The **Forest Resources Alumni Group Board of Directors** includes 12 at-large members who are elected to serve a three-year term, and who may serve a second consecutive term if re-elected.*

Below, in alphabetical order, are brief biosketches of candidates running for Spring 2023 election to the board. Degrees listed are those earned in the School of Forest Resources/Department of Ecosystem Science and Management. Candidates noted with an asterisk () are incumbents. [This year there are no incumbents running for re-election.] Write-in candidates are permitted.*

Vote online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AlumniBoardElection>, or print the ballot and mail it to Ellen Rom, 114 Forest Resources Bldg., University Park, PA 16802.

Vote for no more than four candidates. Ballots must be received by Friday, March 17, 2023.

Daniel R. Cardenas (2014 Forest Science)

My journey began at Penn State Behrend in 2007, moving to the University Park in 2008. My first year was spent studying Meteorology, but I quickly realized that was not the right direction for me. I knew I wanted a degree with a science background, and with a strong passion for the outdoors, Forest Science became the path I decided to pursue.

In summer 2009, I started my career in arboriculture as an intern for Bartlett Tree Experts in McDonald, PA. This internship taught me proper pruning and climbing techniques as well as introduced me to a number of leadership opportunities within the industry. After my first summer with Bartlett, I decided to take summer classes in State College while working with Meek Tree Care from 2010 through 2011 as a Crew Leader. Growing up in urban south Florida, arboriculture felt natural to me. I always seemed to prefer taking care of trees in an urban setting compared to managing timber rurally.

While completing my studies at Penn State, I participated as a teaching assistant in Professor Jim Savage's Horticulture 201 and 301 courses, utilizing the knowledge I learned through my internship and sharing it with his students.

In 2012 and growing close to graduation, I decided to finish my bachelor's degree online at Penn State World Campus. I began working full-time for Bartlett Tree Experts as a Plant Healthcare Technician, learning the ropes of integrated pest management.

I graduated from Penn State with a Bachelor of Science in Forest Science, Forest Management Option. I transferred to Bartlett's Chambersburg, PA, office, where I received my International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), Certified Arborist and Tree Risk Assessment accreditations and was promoted to Arborist Representative within the company. In this capacity, I simultaneously managed a sales territory including southern Franklin County in Pennsylvania, three counties in Western Maryland, and five counties in West Virginia. I was responsible for providing landscape recommendations to clients and helping to manage Bartlett's local office.

In 2018, I transferred to Northern Virginia where I was promoted and still currently remain as Local Manager of Bartlett's Ashburn, VA, office. Our office consists of three Arborist Representatives and a production staff of 12 Field Arborists, and together we manage Loudoun, Fairfax, and Prince William counties. I am currently studying to become an (ISA) Board Certified Master Arborist and plan to have that accreditation in place in March 2023.

Working for Bartlett in a territory that is far from home, I have recognized how vital it is to remain active in the community. I was an active member of the Rotary Club in Waynesboro, PA, from 2014-2018, and the Great Falls, VA, Rotary Club from 2018 through the present date. I currently serve on the board for the Great Falls Rotary Club and act as the Sergeant at Arms. Not only have these groups helped me become part of the community but have also allowed me the opportunity to show the local communities the benefits of arboriculture. I often organize volunteer projects that focus on landscape management and seedling plantings for other non-profit organizations in Great Falls, VA.

As a proud Penn State alum, as well as a season ticket holder, I often find myself coming back to State College to cheer on the Nittany Lions, and frequently speaking in Jim Savage's Horticulture 201 and 301 classes every semester.

Nothing makes me happier than adding Penn State alumni to our staff at Bartlett. I head up recruiting at Penn State for Bartlett, so you will often see me at the Bartlett booth at both the spring ESM and fall Ag Science Career Fairs.

As a prospective member of this board, my goal is to represent and further the interests of arboriculture and urban forestry. Jobs in our field are plentiful, very well-paying, and full of opportunities for growth and advancement.

Travis Cunningham, CF (2014 Forest Science)

My journey at Penn State began in fall 2010 when I started my undergraduate work as Wildlife and Fisheries Science major. After having taken several intro forestry classes, I quickly found that my true interest and passion was geared towards forest management, and I changed my major to Forest Science during my sophomore year. I graduated in fall 2014 with a B.S. in Forest Science, Forest Biology option, and a minor in Wildlife and Fisheries Science.

While at Penn State, I was active in a multitude of student organizations including the Woodsmen's Team, Ag Student Council, ESM Student Council, Society of American Foresters (SAF), and Tau Phi Delta Fraternity, where I served as Treasurer and Alumni Chairman. It was through these organizations, along with my education, that I was able gain valuable experience in leadership and develop relationships with other students and alumni.

Since graduating I have been working for the past 8 years as a consulting forester with FORECON Inc. which serves New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia in all areas of natural resource management. My career at FORECON began as a Forest Technician in our Falconer, NY, office where I was able to gain valuable skills in timber inventory, log scaling, and interpretation of silvicultural prescriptions. I currently work as FORECON's Chief Silviculturist where I oversee the prescription writing, herbicide decisions, and general management planning for our 100,000+ acres TIMO client lands.

Professionally I am in involved in the Society of American Forester Plateau Chapter, where I currently serve as the Chair-Elect and the Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative – Silviculture Working Group. I also recently received my SAF Certified Forester credential.

Outside of work, I am heavily involved in the Boy Scouts of America where I am a Scoutmaster for my home troop as well as the Order of the Arrow Section Advisor for Section E-14.

I currently reside in Pittsfield, PA, where in my free time I enjoy rock climbing both indoors and outdoors as well as upland bird hunting with my Brittany Spaniel "Strider."

Having been raised by two Penn Staters, Renee Cunningham ('80 General Agriculture) and Barry Cunningham ('83 Forest Science), Penn State and the natural resource programs have been an important part of my life for 30 years. I look forward to the opportunity to have an impact on those same programs the way they have impacted me.

Hunter Kauffman (2019 Wildlife and Fisheries Science)

I currently work for Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as a DCNR Ranger Trainee at Pine Grove Furnace State Park, right at the midway point of the 2,198-mile Appalachian Trail. Having just completed the National Park Service's 5-month Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy, I will be returning this summer as a DCNR Ranger. In this position I work as a law enforcement officer for Pennsylvania state parks. In addition to my law enforcement duties, I get to interact with thousands of state park visitors every year through daily patrols, calls for assistance, and informal opportunities to educate.

I grew up an "FFA kid," spending a lot of my time deeply involved in the National FFA Organization. I had projects and kept meticulous records to climb the rungs of everything the organization offered. I wholeheartedly believe in the FFA's mission, and absolutely love the organization.

When I was old enough to start working, I worked (with my brother and sister) at Lake Tobias Wildlife Park as a tour guide, reptiles and exotics presenter, and zookeeper. I have always had a fascination for not only learning but sharing my knowledge with others. I got to do just that through the tours, formal, and informal educational programs I provided. I worked this job through the summers while attending college, too, staying with the zoo for nine years. Part of that work is what drove my decision to pick the Wildlife and Fisheries Science major when I started at Penn State.

During my time as an undergrad, I took full advantage of the opportunities to volunteer and to get involved in research, working with several professors in the ESM department on various projects. Some of these included mark-recapture and respirometer testing on Northern red-backed salamanders, looking at the effects of noise pollution on Eastern bluebird reproduction, and traveling with a lab to California to assist on a long-term study of Western terrestrial garter snakes. I was also an animal care volunteer and raptor training volunteer for Shaver's Creek during my last year of college.

I am one of those people who enjoys filling all of my free time. At Penn State, I served as an Ag Advocate for the College of Agricultural Sciences, was a member of The Wildlife Society, and was the Executive Director of Penn State Habitat for Humanity. I also spend much of my free time throughout the year volunteering with Central Pennsylvania's Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership organization (HOBY). Currently I have been helping the organization these last few years to secure guest speakers, plan activities, and work through logistics for their annual 4-day seminar. Admittedly, I have turned more into a back-end type of person, wanting to volunteer for organizations behind the scenes, doing the silent but necessary jobs.

After graduating from Penn State, I worked for two years as the Nature and Arts Educator at the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art, in Millersburg, PA. The Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit nature center started for its namesake, lifelong naturalist and *Pennsylvania Game News* cover artist, Ned Smith. I both planned and led several summer camps for children of a variety of ages, as well as worked festivals, traveled to schools, supervised volunteers on trail work and construction projects, planned and ran a trail run, led adult workshops and guided hikes, and created several new programs in the areas of natural resources and wildlife to enhance the center's existing catalog of offerings.

Looking for yet another challenge, I left the Ned Smith Center in spring 2022 to end up where I am now, with DCNR. I am still an educator at heart and will always be a life-long learner – just in a different role.

Steven Narolski (1978 Forest Science)

I earned my undergraduate degree in Forest Science back in 1978. Though born and raised in Ohio, Penn State was where my high school counselor strongly suggested I enroll for which I am eternally grateful for that direction. Upon earning my B.S. from Penn State, I landed in the

Pacific Northwest to begin my professional career as a forester. My career path led me through numerous employment opportunities including USFS inventory supervisor, state forester for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, assistant district forester with Boise Cascade, a stint with forestry consulting, a registered professional forester with a redwood lumber company, and most recently working for the U.S. Department of Energy in keeping high voltage transmission lines clear of vegetation towards maintaining critical reliability across the Pacific Northwest and the Desert Southwest.

My generation had the mantra that one person can make a difference, and this was the drive that caused me to persevere throughout my professional career to maintain employment as a professional forester.

When I declared that I would pursue an education as a forester and study at Penn State, I heard all sorts of negativity about the lack of jobs within the profession and that I was wasting my time. It was only upon my graduation as the first in my family to go to college that I was a fifth-generation forester.

This determination helped me earn an invitation to participate in the graduate honorarium in the Continuing Education in Forest Ecology and Silviculture that I parlayed into a Master of Forestry certificate.

We all have our own motivations but mine was to embrace a career that I truly enjoyed. Striving to understand the synecology of western ecosystems was something that I credited to my college mentors – Chuck Strauss, Peter Fletcher, and Kim Steiner.

It was kind of what you hear professional athletes talk about—how the game slows down for them so they are able to perceive all the subtle nuances. The same became true for how to look at the interlocking parts of forest management and how to accomplish goals while protecting wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, environmental protection, and wildfire mitigation. These trials at applying management to mimic natural processes led to authoring many articles in peer magazines and public agencies.

It would be an honor to help guide the next generation of natural resource specialists based upon the wealth of knowledge and experiences accrued through my professional career. But most importantly, this would be my continued opportunity as an alum of Penn State's College of Agriculture to continue to lead in these disciplines.

Jennifer Stingelin Keefer (1997 Wildlife and Fisheries Science, 2002g Forest Resources)

Nature has always been a part of my DNA. At a very young age, my father, a geologist and amateur botanist, instilled in me a love of nature and the outdoors. As a native of State College, PA, my childhood playground included picking highbush blueberries in the bog at Bear Meadows Natural Area, exploring the old growth hemlock in Alan Seeger Natural Area, and hiking and camping in Rothrock State Forest. And while my current occupation focuses on students and science, I still feel strongly connected to the land and natural resources of

Pennsylvania and beyond. A position on the board of directors would enable me to leverage my current skills and expertise, reconnect with my former passion, and further the mission of the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management.

After earning a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science (1997) and minor in Forest Science, I took some time off before returning to Penn State to complete teaching certifications in Agricultural and Environmental Science (2000) and then an M.S. in Forest Resources (2002). While attending Penn State as an undergraduate student, I focused on fisheries and forest science, which included work study with Drs. Jay Stauffer and James Finley. I was also an active member and held multiple officer positions in the Xi Sigma Pi Honorary Forestry Fraternity and Society of American Foresters. After my graduate studies in invasive species management and ecology with Dr. Larry McCormick, I worked at Penn State for twelve years as a National Park Service contractor, Assistant Data Manager, and Invasive Species Specialist. Over the course of my career in natural resources, I worked at the Cornell Uihlein Maple Research Forest in Lake Placid, NY, taught field dendrology (FOR 203) as well as sustainability and conservation topics at the Penn State Conservation Leadership School, worked for the American Chestnut Foundation, and was a member of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association and Mid-Atlantic Invasive Plant Council boards of directors. In my spare time I honed my communication skills by writing Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship plans and communicating science to private forest landowners.

Since 2015 I have been working at Penn State in higher education as the Undergraduate Program Adviser and First-Year Seminar (PSU 16) instructor for the Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Department. My role is to support, challenge, and encourage undergraduate students as they navigate their educational paths. Some days I am a coach and a mentor and other days I am an adviser, counselor, and advocate. I am also an active proponent of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and students graduating with strong communication, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

My academic advising skills and dedication to climate and diversity in the Eberly College of Science were recently recognized by two awards: 2022-2023 Eberly College of Science Excellence in Advising Award and 2022 Dean's Climate and Diversity Award. In addition to working with students and helping them succeed in and out of the classroom, my professional interests include invasive species ecology and management, dendrology, taxonomy, and botanical nomenclature. On weekends you will find me in my native plant garden, kayaking, and hiking and camping in Penn's Woods. I reside in State College with my husband, Matt (1996, 2001g), and son Rowan.