

Forest Resources Alumni Group News

News for alumni and friends of Penn State's Department of Ecosystem Science and Management (formerly Penn State's School of Forest Resources)

June 8, 2021

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President's Message



As President of the Forest Resources Alumni Group, I was looking forward to many of the activities the board and the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management (ESM) are engaged in, especially our spring banquet. Having substituted for the previous president in a previous year and emceeding the event, I was especially looking forward to doing that for two more years. However, as pandemics will have it, it was not to be. Lost was the gathering of alumni, the stories, the alumni honoree ceremony, and a host of other interactions. As I reflect on this, I realize it is a small price to pay relative to the price paid by so many others who have suffered and are continuing to suffer. As I said in the first newsletter and I will quote myself "We are committed, with your participation and assistance, to moving this organization forward and improving upon past activities. Despite the constraints we are facing, there is a lot we can do moving forward." And so that is what we are doing.

In December 2020, Vice President Bill Donley and I sat down with the then incoming Department Head Dr. Bradley Cardinale. We expressed to him that the board wanted a heightened level of interaction with the

department, and we felt the department could in turn benefit from alumni participation. Prior to this meeting the board had reconfigured its proposed activity agenda going forward to those areas where it was most likely to succeed. This was the focal point of our meeting. We left with the understanding that once Dr. Cardinale got a toehold on his new position we could meet again in early spring 2021. I am pleased to say we met as agreed upon and included as many board members as wanted to attend this virtual meeting. Dr. Cardinale put forth a short summary of his responses to our previous points. There was a consensus among board members that he understood what we were saying in December, and he was committed to moving forward in those directions. At the conclusion of this meeting, there was a general sense of satisfaction with our new path forward.

One of our new agenda items listed in the document titled “Strengthening Communications among Alumni and Fostering Alumni Engagement with the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management” was about utilizing LinkedIn to aid in developing an effective alumni communications plan. Happily, our Forest Resources Alumni LinkedIn Group is up and running. Anyone interested in, or connected to, the Department of ESM and former School of Forest Resources (SFR) in the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State is welcome to join. The group was created to share related news, innovations, and employment opportunities. You can now log into LinkedIn and search for “Penn State Forest Resources Alumni Group” or go to <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12405836/>. Since it is a group, you will be prompted to request membership. If you are new to LinkedIn, there are many online resources to help, including a site hosted by Penn State Student Affairs. It will take time for our new LinkedIn network to grow. Invite your classmates and other alumni to join! Check the group regularly for updates and new contacts.

In light of our ongoing and developing efforts, we are certainly looking forward to your inputs on all of our activities. The current schedule of events is very much up-in-the-air so to speak. As activities or events are scheduled and/or reformatted or canceled, we will get the word out.

Again, it is my hope that you will help keep the alumni group going by donating to either the department, the RESOURCES newsletter, or the Student Support and Alumni Relations Fund. Since we do not charge dues for membership in the alumni group, we rely on contributions to support our activities including the publication and distribution of this newsletter. Also, keep in mind that if you can contribute to the fund, it will eventually help to support student travel to professional meetings, alumni receptions at those meetings, student registration at the annual alumni banquet, class field trips, ESM’s Career Fair, and other activities that foster student/alumni and department/alumni relations. While most of these events are on hold, we want to be ready to pick up in 2021 where we left off in 2019 and at the beginning of 2020.

Thanks for your continued support! I look forward to hearing from you and hopefully seeing you in the latter part of 2021.

Steve Grado

662-325-2792 (office); scg4@msstate.edu

1992 Ph.D., Major: Forest Resources; Minor: Operations Research
1984 M.S., Dual Major: Forest Resources and Operations Research
1979 B.S., Major: Forest Science

Interview with the Department Head



Q: Welcome to Penn State and to the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management! How has the transition been going these first few months, especially since faculty and staff are for the most part working remotely?

Brad Cardinale (BC): Thank you! Everyone has been very warm and welcoming, and I am thrilled to [join the department](#). As you can imagine, changing leadership in January 2021, in the middle of the academic year and during a global pandemic, was filled with challenges. Nevertheless, there are several reasons why the transition went more smoothly than might be expected.

First, Dr. David Eissenstat, who served as Interim Head, graciously stayed on as Associate Head over the spring semester to assist me during the transition. I am indebted to him for the help.

Second, the department's staff were remarkably dedicated and innovative while working remotely from home. They made sure the department continued to run smoothly through some difficult times.

Third, ESM's students were adaptive and resilient. I was impressed with how they handled with their own education through the pandemic, and impressed with how they supported each other as a community.

Lastly, our faculty made a herculean effort to maintain quality learning experiences for our students. Not only did they adapt to the online teaching format, they continued to lead socially distanced field and lab work simply because our students need hands-on experience in their training. So special thanks to all the faculty who went above-and-beyond this last year.

Q: You no doubt gathered information about the University, college, and department when applying for the position and then accepting the offer. Has your work as department head these first few months largely been what you expected or have there been "surprises"?

BC: I did indeed do much homework before deciding to change my academic home and join Penn State as head of the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management (ESM). My decision to join ESM reminds in some ways of my ongoing search for a new house in State College. As I look for a new house with my family, my priority is to make sure the core of the house – the structure and the bones -- are solid and in good shape. I also want the house to be in a good location, as that cannot be changed. Everything else is secondary because it is comparatively easy to renovate and update rooms, and to make the cosmetic changes needed to create a home that all of my family will enjoy living in.

Similarly, as I considered moving to a new academic home, I saw ESM as a department whose core is in great shape. The location is near perfect -- not only is Penn State a top-ranked university that sits in a beautiful part of the country, the College of Agricultural Sciences and its mission makes it a great location for our department. All else beyond the core and location is cosmetic. It takes comparatively minor changes to create a department that all of our academic family enjoy living in, and where others want to visit and join us because we work in an amazing place.

Q: What are your hopes and plans for the department in the near term? And in the long term?

BC: My vision is that ESM become a top-ranked department for natural resource science and management in the United States, and a program that is internationally renowned for its innovative solutions to modern environmental problems. As a department in a College of Agriculture, a key role of ESM should be to set the example for how society can sustain healthy forests, maintain clean soil and water, and ensure ecosystems have abundant wildlife and fish even while feeding the growing human population. To achieve this vision, I believe we need to:

- *Create a broader, more interdisciplinary program.* Addressing the so-called ‘wicked’ environmental problems we face today requires a broader, more interdisciplinary approach than ever before.
- *Achieve excellence at both local and global scales.* The department must be a leader in solving problems that plague the planet as a whole while, at the same time, setting the example for conservation and management in our own state.
- *Redefine how universities engage with society.* ESM must be a leader in connecting academia to society, using the university as a ‘collaboratorium’ to engage a wide variety of sectors – beyond just agriculture and forestry -- in the co-design and coproduction of knowledge that meets societal needs.
- *Build a more diverse and inclusive community.* Academic departments characterized by racial, ethnic, and gender diversity are not only smarter and more innovative, they are better able to engage the variety of stakeholders who perpetuate and suffer from environmental problems.
- *Inspire the next generation of champions.* ESM must provide innovative new experiences that inspire an increasing number of students to follow in our footsteps and work on the major problems facing the sustainable use of limited resources on our planet.

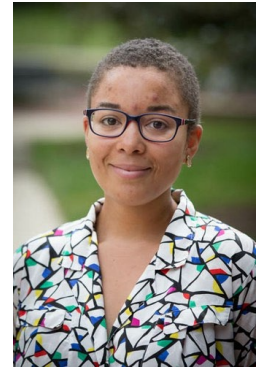
ESM is in the midst of a visioning and planning process that will improve how our research, teaching, and extension programs accomplish the goals above. The next few years are going to be a very exciting time for the department!

Student News

- **Alex Curtze**, M.S. student in Forest Resources, won 3rd place in the Forest Science & Technology Board’s contest for best student poster (“Seeing Past the Green: Quantifying the Characteristics of High-graded Forests”) at the 2020 Society of American Foresters National Convention.
- **Eamonn Powers** (WFS) was among the students honored with a [College of Agricultural Sciences Alumni Society 2020 Internship award](#).

- **Christopher Sabol** (FOREM) [was awarded the John Mabry Forestry Scholarship](#) from the Railway Tie Association.
- **The Roger M. Latham Memorial Graduate Award**, created in 1981, memorializes Dr. Roger M. Latham (1914-1979), who devoted his career to promoting conservation and management of renewable natural resources. Latham was well known as an author and the outdoor editor at *The Pittsburgh Press*, a lecturer, a photographer, a naturalist, a teacher, and a resource conservationist. The Latham Award is given annually in late fall to an outstanding full-time graduate student advised by a Wildlife and Fisheries Science faculty member. The 2020 recipient is **Asia Murphy**, a Ph.D. candidate in the Ecology program, advised by Dr. Duane Diefenbach and Dr. David Miller.

Dr. Murphy successfully completed her Ph.D. program this spring, having focused her work on “Examining how spatial-temporal interactions between multiple predators influence the distribution, vigilance, and survival of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) fawns.”



Asia has made outreach a priority throughout her academic career. “This is through the standard vehicles of presenting research results,” explains her Dr. Miller, one of her advisers, “but also through an active education mission, journalistic contributions, and a highly effective use of social media. Her dedication, reach, and effectiveness as a science communicator was recognized by Penn State as the recipient of the 2019 Graduate Outreach Award, which is given to one graduate student across the university each year.”

In the final year of her Ph.D. program, Asia was selected as the department’s Harrar Fellow; in that role, she designed and taught a special topics undergraduate course, Global Natural Resources Management and Conservation, in spring 2021.

- In February 2021, **Mara Cloutier**, a Ph.D. student in Dr. Mary Ann Bruns research group, received a **Future Leaders in Science Award** from the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA). This award provides opportunities for students to engage with policymakers to raise awareness and support for science, technology, and research funding. Mara participated in virtual Congressional Visits organized by SSSA, which involved meeting with congressional staff members of Pennsylvania representatives and senators to advocate for federal funding for the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.
- Early in the spring semester, two of our graduate students were awarded research grants from Penn State's Office of International Programs. **Nina Camillone**, a Ph.D. student in Dr. Mary Ann Bruns soil microbiology lab, for her work on “Basic biomolecular support for affordable agricultural soil health tests in Costa Rica” and **Jhony Armando Benavides Bolaños**, a Ph.D. student working with Dr. Patrick Drohan for his work on “Application of a low-altitude remote sensing system as a phosphorus management decision support tool.”

- **Alexander Curtze**, an M.S. student in Forest Resources working with Dr. Laura Leites, received a 2021 Distinguished Master's Thesis Award, and **Sarah Isbell**, doctoral student in Ecology working with Dr. Jason Kaye, received a 2021 Alumni Association Dissertation Award Distinguished Doctoral Scholar Medal during the virtual [Graduate Student Recognition Ceremony](#) in March.
- Undergraduate students **Chloe Destremeau** (WFS), **Joshua Gershey** (FOREM), and **Eamonn Powers** (WFS); and graduate students **Devyn McPheeters** (ECLGY), **Arun Regmi** (FORR) and **Sadikshya Sharma** (FORR) were among the award winners recognized by the Penn State chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta, the agricultural honor society, during its annual meeting, which was held virtually March 30.
- The **Orpha Kelly Rapp and Jesse Rossiter Rapp '15 Prize for Academic Excellence** is given each spring to the senior with the highest grade-point average. Elizabeth Rapp Tukey (now deceased) endowed the award in 1992 in memory of her father Jesse Rossiter Rapp (Class of 1915) and her mother Orpha Kelly Rapp. The award is a cash prize. Students graduating in spring, summer, and fall of a given year are considered.

Christopher Sabol is the 2021 Rapp Prize recipient. Chris will complete the B.S. in Forest Ecosystem Management in fall 2021. He earned the A.S. degree in Forest Technology at Penn State Mont Alto in May 2020 and re-enrolled in the baccalaureate program the following fall.

Chris has worked as a forestry intern with the PA Game Commission in the Jersey Shore area. He has been an SAF student member since 2018 (serving as vice president of the Mont Alto Forestry Club, April 2019 to May 2020) and a student member of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association since 2019. He was also a member of the Penn State Mont Alto Woodsmen Team.

Upon graduation, Chris plans to seek employment with the PA Game Commission or the PA DCNR in the northern half of the state, or perhaps pursue new experiences out West.



- In spring 2021, Wildlife and Fisheries Science (WFS) senior **Dana L. Arnold** received both the **John L. George Student Conservation Award** and the **Outstanding Senior Award**.

The George Award honors an undergraduate WFS student who best exemplifies the spirit of Dr. John L. George, who was the driving force behind the establishment of the WFS major at Penn State. Dr. George was known for his perseverance, dedication, and involvement in conservation service, and his remarkable teaching skills. The recipient of the George Award is selected annually by the WFS faculty.

Our department's Outstanding Senior Award is given in recognition for service to the department, academic performance, service to the University and society, and professional promise and experience. Undergraduates and faculty submit nominations either individually or as a group, and the award recipient is selected by a committee of student and faculty volunteers.



Dana began her Penn State journey at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, in fall 2017 and transitioned to Penn State University Park in fall 2019.

Her work student experiences include volunteering as a rehabilitation assistant at Centre Wildlife Care, bird banding at The Arboretum at Penn State, volunteering at Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium in the Sea Turtle Second Chance Program, and as an undergraduate researcher, utilizing program R, local weather data, and GPS collar locations to model deer movement to assess the correlation between oncoming winter storms and white-tailed deer behavior.

Most recently, she was a successful applicant to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Directorate Fellow Program in summer 2020. That experience included remotely managing a regional database of Fish and Aquatic Conservation for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Lakewood, CO, and working in person as a hatchery technician, at the Ennis National Fish Hatchery in Ennis, MT.

Dana was a member of the Penn State chapter of The Wildlife Society and served that organization as treasurer and as social media director. She was also an active member of Sigma Alpha, which is the only professional agricultural sorority in the nation

Dana graduated completed the B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science, Wildlife option, with a minor in Forest Ecosystems in spring 2021. She has accepted a full-time position as a wildlife refuge specialist with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service at the Marais des Cygnes National Refuge in Kansas.

- Each spring, our undergraduate students are asked to nominate individuals for the **Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Award**. A committee of student representatives selects the recipients after reviewing feedback from the student body. The 2021 recipient was **Jonathon Chester**, Ph.D. candidate in Forest Resources, a teaching assistant for FOR 455, Remote Sensing and Spatial Data Handling.
- **Ryan Trexler**, a PhD student in Dr. Estelle Couradeau's lab, received a \$5,000 [NASA Pennsylvania Space Grant Consortium](#) Graduate Fellowship for the 2021-2022 academic year.
- Forest Ecosystem Management senior **Joshua Gershey** took first place in the Physical Sciences category for "Combined effects of climate change and competition on tree survival and growth of Juglans nigra natural populations" and Wildlife and Fisheries Science senior **Sage Saum** took second place in the Health and Life Sciences category for "Evaluating Dietary Shifts of the Flathead Catfish due to Size Differences" and at [Penn State's 2021 Undergraduate Exhibition](#).

Faculty and Staff News

- **Rachel Smith** joined our department in September 2020 as administrative staff assistant in the Undergraduate Programs Office.
- **Dr. Beth Boyer**, professor of water resources, was among those [named fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) (AAAS) in November 2020.
- **Dr. Allyson Muth** was [named director of Penn State's Center for Private Forests](#) in November 2020.
- **James F. Ayers**, former Stone Valley sawmill operator and research technician in the School of Forest Resources, [died](#) January 19, 2021.

- **Dr. Jason Kaye**, professor of soil biogeochemistry, was named a [University Distinguished Professor](#) in February 2021.
- **Dr. Ephraim Govere**, director of the Soils Research Cluster Lab, retired March 31, 2021.
- In April 2021, **Brosi Bradley**, a research technologist in Dr. Jason Kaye's research group was awarded the **2021 Staff Morale Award** from the Penn State Staff Advisory Council. This award recognizes a staff member who "embodies the University Values of integrity, respect, responsibility, discovery, excellence and community. The recipient of this award leads with enthusiasm and fosters a respectful, cooperative work environment. They are considered trustworthy by their peers and work with others in an honest, ethical manner. The nominee for this award must recognize potential in those around them and encourage creativity, active listening, and a culture that safe and inclusive."
- Water Extension Associate **Bryan Swistock** received an Individual Impact Award at the Annual Penn State Extension Conference in April 2021. Bryan received this award based on his work with the Master Well Owner Network Program in 2020.
- Each spring, our undergraduate students are asked to nominate individuals for the **Outstanding Undergraduate Advising Award** and the **Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award**. A committee of student representatives selects the recipients after reviewing feedback from the student body.
 - 2021 Advising Award co-recipients: **Dr. Paola Ferreri**, associate professor of fisheries management, and **Mr. Joe Harding**, assistant teaching professor.
 - 2021 Teaching Award recipient is **Dr. Margot Kaye**, associate professor of forest ecology.
- **Joanne Loose** joined our department as a financial assistant in May 2021.
- **Dr. Robert P. Brooks**, former faculty member in the School of Forest Resources, founding director of [Riparia](#), and professor emeritus of geography, [died](#) May 17, 2021.
- **Dr. Henry "Hank" Gerhold**, professor emeritus of forest genetics, [died](#) June 6, 2021.
- **Laurie Sparks**, financial assistant, plans to leave our department June 16, 2021.
- **Dr. John Carlson**, professor of molecular genetics and director of The Schatz Center for Tree Molecular Genetics, will retire June 30, 2021.
- **Dr. Kim Steiner**, professor of forest biology and founding director of The Arboretum at Penn State, will [retire](#) June 30, 2021.
- **Dr. Doug Miller**, professor of geography and Director of the Center for Environmental Informatics, will retire June 30, 2021. Though housed in the Department of Geography, Dr. Miller taught FOR 455 (Remote Sensing and Spatial Data Handling) and GIS-related graduate courses in our department for many years.
- Promotions effective July 1, 2021, include **Dr. Patrick Drohan** to professor of pedology, and **Dr. Margot Kaye** to professor of forest ecology.
- Beginning July 1, 2021, **Dr. Sanford "Sandy" Smith**, teaching professor in forest resources and natural resources and youth extension specialist in our Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, will serve [as interim director of the Arboretum](#) while the search for a new director is underway.
- **Dr. Chris Scott** will join us July 1, 2021, as the Maurice K. Goddard Endowed Chair in Forestry and Environmental Resource Conservation. [Dr. Scott](#) is currently Director of the University of Arizona's Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, and a Research Professor in the School of Geography, Development and

Environment. His work focuses on the policy dimensions of global change with emphasis on water and energy security, climate adaptation, and urban/ agricultural water use.

- **Dr. Jack Watson**, professor of soil science/soil physics/biogeochemistry, will retire July 31, 2021.
- **Dr. Jill Hamilton** will join us August 1, 2021, as Ibberson Chair in Silviculture and Director of the Schatz Center for Tree Molecular Genetics. [Dr. Hamilton](#) is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at North Dakota State University where her work focuses on understanding the genetic basis of plant traits that are important for adaptation to climate change, climate-related stresses, and disease.
- **Dr. Margaret Brittingham**, professor of wildlife resources, will retire at the end of 2021.

ESM Faculty, Staff, and Students in *Penn State News*

[Study at Penn State to examine potential for birds to eat spotted lanternfly](#)

September 17, 2020

Do birds find the spotted lanternfly to be a tasty treat or a nauseating nibble? That is one of the questions researchers at Penn State hope to answer, and they are seeking citizen scientists, especially bird watchers, to help in their quest for knowledge.

[Team wins grant to develop nitrogen fertilizer decision tool for organic farmers](#)

September 24, 2020

Penn State researchers have received a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to perfect a tool they developed to help organic corn producers decide how much nitrogen — as fertilizer or manure — to apply to their crop fields.

[Penn State Extension testing new protocol for controlling oak wilt disease](#)

September 28, 2020

Another invasive disease is threatening an important Pennsylvania forest tree species, and Penn State Extension foresters are investigating ways to control its spread.

[Gender Fellows support research on gender differences in agriculture](#)

October 2, 2020

A Gender Fellows Cohort, which began last fall under the auspices of the College of Agricultural Sciences' Gender Equity through Agricultural Research and Education initiative, examines gender equity in rural sociology, soil science, plant science and entomology as part of the International Agriculture and Development dual-title graduate degree program.

[Misleading mulch: Researchers find contents of mulch bags do not match claims](#)

October 29, 2020

In response to complaints about misleading packaging and fraudulent behavior by some producers of bagged landscaping mulch, Penn State researchers conducted an investigation and devised a process to determine the wood species included in the products, and at what percentage.

[Arboretum at Penn State recognized as 'A Great Place in Pennsylvania'](#)

November 11, 2020

The Arboretum at Penn State has been recognized as one of three “Great Places in Pennsylvania for 2020” by the state chapter of the American Planning Association.

[Penn State botanists get state grant to study ginseng in Pennsylvania](#)

December 16, 2020

Two Penn State botanists have received a grant from Pennsylvania to study wild ginseng population genetics, morphology, and human influence through seed planting in the state.

[Levels of stress hormone in saliva of newborn deer fawns may predict mortality](#)

January 11, 2021

The first-ever study of the levels of the stress hormone cortisol in the saliva of newborn white-tailed deer fawns yielded surprising results, and that has Penn State researchers suggesting that predation on very young fawns may not be limiting deer herds.

[Changing cropping systems in impaired watersheds can produce water quality gains](#)

February 9, 2021

Growing the right crop in the right place within an impaired watershed can achieve significant water quality improvements, according to Penn State researchers, who conducted a novel study in the drainage of a Susquehanna River tributary in an agricultural area in southeastern Pennsylvania.

[Songbirds' reproductive success reduced by natural gas compressor noise](#)

February 18, 2021

Some songbirds are not dissuaded by constant, loud noise emitted by natural gas pipeline compressors and will establish nests nearby. The number of eggs they lay is unaffected by the din, but their reproductive success ultimately is diminished. That is the conclusion of a team of Penn State researchers who conducted an innovative, elaborate study.

[Unique study of isolated bobcat population confirms accuracy of extinction model](#)

February 18, 2021

The reintroduction of 32 bobcats to an island off the coast of Georgia more than three decades ago created an ideal experiment to examine the accuracy of a genetic-modeling technique that predicts extinction of isolated wildlife populations.

[Lake turbidity mitigates impact of warming on walleyes in upper Midwest lakes](#)

February 26, 2021

Because walleyes are a cool-water fish species with a limited temperature tolerance, biologists expected them to act like the proverbial “canary in a coal mine” that would begin to suffer and signal when lakes influenced by climate change start to warm. But in a new study, a team of researchers discovered that it is not that simple.

[Young white-tailed deer that disperse survive the same as those that stay home](#)

March 8, 2021

Juvenile white-tailed deer that strike out to find new home ranges — despite facing more risks — survive at about the same rate as those that stay home, according to a team of researchers who conducted the first mortality study of male and female dispersal where deer were exposed to threats such as hunting throughout their entire range.

[College of Agricultural Sciences faculty member to host Marie Curie Fellow](#)

March 19, 2021

Estelle Couradeau, assistant professor of soils and environmental microbiology in the College of Agricultural Sciences, will host a Marie Curie Fellow. The award will fund postdoctoral scholar Jose Raul Roman to study for two years in Couradeau's Penn State lab.

[Uniform drying time for goldenseal to enhance medicinal qualities of forest herb](#)

March 22, 2021

Developing a standardized drying protocol for goldenseal could lead to more predictable health applications and outcomes by preserving the alkaloids found in the plant, which is native to Appalachia, according to Penn State researchers, who conducted a new study of the medicinal forest herb.

[Researchers ask anglers' help with study of brook, brown trout colors, patterns](#)

March 25, 2021

Penn State researchers, who are evaluating the colors, pattern variations and genetics of wild brook and brown trout across Pennsylvania, are asking anglers to help with their study.

[Forest-products professionals and vendors to gather, safely, for Timber 2021](#)

May 12, 2021

Forest-products business professionals, students and workers interested in forest-related careers, and vendors of equipment and supplies will gather for commerce, education and networking at the 2021 Forest Products Equipment and Technology Exposition, June 4-5 at Penn State's Ag Progress Days site at Rock Springs.

[CT scans offer new view of Lake Malawi cichlid specimens in Penn State museum](#)

May 18, 2021

Computed tomography — CT scanning — which combines a series of X-ray images taken from different angles around an organism and uses computer processing to create cross-sectional images of its bones, is providing new insight into an old initiative to characterize fishes in Africa's Lake Malawi.

2021 Outstanding Alumni

As announced via email in December 2020, our 2021 Outstanding Alumni Award recipients are **Wayne K. Murphey** (deceased), B.S. Wood Utilization 1952 and Master of Forestry 1953; **David P. Scott**, M.S. Wildlife Management 1986; and **Lisa Williams**, M.S. Wildlife and Fisheries Science 1994.

Unfortunately, we were not able to honor the recipients in person this spring and we also do not have photos to share. However, biosketches of our Outstanding Alumni are posted [online](#).

Our Forest Resources Alumni Group honors up to four Outstanding Alumni and at most one Outstanding Recent Alum each spring. These individuals are recognized for professional achievement, excellence, impact, and recognition; service to the profession, to the department, and to the community; and demonstration of high personal and professional standards. We welcome your [nominations](#); the nomination deadline is September 30.

Alumni Board of Directors Election Results

In our spring 2021 election, **Chuck Strauss** (1958 FOR) and **Jason Wenrich** (2000 FORSC) were each elected to a second three-year term on the board. **Shorna Allred** (1997g FORR) and **Teddy Fisher** (2014 WFS) were each elected to a first three-year term. **Brian Lee** (2005g FORR) accepted an invitation to remain on the board to fill one of two vacant seats. You may recall that we had four seats available last year, but we had only two candidates. **Samantha Pedder** (2011 WFS) has completed two three-year terms of service but remains on the board as our immediate past president. Thank you to all who participated in the election and thank you to our [board members](#)!

Alumni Board of Directors Nominations

We annually seek candidates for election to the [Forest Resources Alumni Group Board of Directors](#). Please contact Ellen Rom (814-863-0362 or exr2@psu.edu) **by December 17, 2021**, if you are interested in running for election.

Alumni – In Memoriam

The name is linked to an online obituary, if available.

Degrees listed include only those earned in Penn State's former School of Forest Resources or current Department of Ecosystem Science and Management.

1950s

[Henry D. Gerhold](#) died June 6, 2021 (B.S. Forestry 1952 and M.S. Forestry 1954)

[Frederick William Klinefelter](#) died December 20, 2020 (B.S. Forestry 1952)

[Phillip Craul](#) died December 17, 2020 (B.S. Forestry 1954 and M.S. Forestry 1960)

[Phillip Eckert](#) died May 24, 2021 (B.S. Forestry 1954)

[Joseph Zylinski](#) died October 21, 2020 (B.S. Forestry 1954)

[Norman Douglass “Doug” Melvin](#) died February 23, 2020 (B.S. Forestry 1955)

[Ralph Les Cowan, Jr.](#) died April 1, 2010 (B.S. Forestry 1956)

[Merl “Bud” Filler](#) died March 26, 2020 (B.S. Wood Utilization 1956)

[Harold W. King](#) died September 28, 2020 (B.S. Forestry 1957)

[Gordon O. Mortenson](#) died September 12, 2020 (B.S. Forestry 1957)

[Donald E. Wermlinger](#) died June 13, 2020 (B.S. Forestry 1958)

[James Elmer Carrier](#) died June 4, 2020 (B.S. Forestry 1959)

1960s

[John J. Eastlake](#) died February 20, 2021 (B.S. Forestry 1964)

[David. W. Patterson](#) died April 2, 2020 (B.S. Forest Science 1966)

[Garry E. Leach](#) died May 4, 2021 (B.S. Forestry Technology 1967)

1970s

[Randal Thomas Baileys](#) died in March 2021 (B.S. Forest Products 1976, and M.S. Forest Resources 1979)

[Jane Albacker Darnell](#) died September 25, 2020 (B.S. Forest Science 1976)

1980s

[John J. Maza](#) died December 13, 2020 (B.S. Forest Science 1980)

Alumni News

1950s

Paul “Sunshine” Shogren (B.S. Forestry 1951), news from May 2021: “This may be a redundant message about a most fascinating book about wood, but since repetition is a form of education, I will proceed.

“I am referring to *The Age of Wood: Our Most Useful Material and the Construction of Civilization* (2020), by Roland Ennos. The book is part of a trilogy, *Trees: A Complete Guide to Their Biology and Structure* (2016) and *Plant Life*, (2000, co-authored by Elizabeth Sheffield), which I have not yet read.

“To give you an idea of the length and depth of the book, here are some chapter titles: Our Arboreal Inheritance, Losing Our Hair, Tooling Up, Melting and Smelting, Supplying Life’s Luxuries, Supporting Our Pretensions, Replacing Firewood and Charcoal, Wood in the Nineteenth Century, Wood in the Modern World, Mending our Strained Relationship.

“The book explains how, from ships to furniture and much more, the use of wood changed civilization, covering urban forestry, reducing CO₂ impact, the calming effects of both wood and the woods and some remedial solutions for some of our ‘wooden’ mistakes. You just have to read this book.”

1970s

Jim Purcell (B.S. Forest Science 1970), news from May 2021: “After graduating from Penn State in December 1970, I served two years as a Field Artillery Officer at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. After my active duty ended, I turned my attention westward to the California redwood region. I first worked as a forester for Masonite Corporation Western Woodlands Division based in Ukiah, CA. Later, I accepted a position with Sierra Silvics, a reforestation company from Oregon with planting contracts in California, where I supervised tree planting crews on harvested land.

“I was later fortunate to be offered my ultimate career opportunity with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire). I was first assigned to work out of Cal Fire’s Northern Region Headquarters in Redding, CA. I trained all over the state and graduated from the Cal Fire Academy at Lone, CA, where I was certified for fire assignments and as a Peace Officer. I was then assigned to Cal Fire’s Butte Unit, where I primarily worked in fire control for two years. My long-held desire for a career in the coast redwood region was realized when I transferred to the Mendocino Unit after accepting a position in Cal Fire’s Forest Practice Program, which enforces the comprehensive Forest Practice Rules regulating timber harvesting on private lands in the state. In 1979, I passed the California Registered Professional Forester Examination, and I became a licensed registered professional forester. All Cal Fire foresters are trained to perform fire control activities, and I was assigned to many incidents throughout the state during my career, including working as a member of a Major Incident Management Team using the Incident Command System.

“In 2001, I was the recipient of the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection’s Golden Trowel Award. This award annually recognizes individuals for work related to the protection of archaeological resources in California.

“I retired from Cal Fire in December 2003 as a Division Chief in the Forest Practice Program.

“After retiring from Cal Fire, I still had the desire to work with skilled professionals serving the public in fire control activities. During the next twelve fire seasons, I worked for Silvertip Helibase Management Service. This company, owned and operated by retired Cal Fire employees very experienced in helitack operations, managed helibases on major fires throughout the state under contract with the State of California.

“My wife Mary and I are now enjoying retired life with our two sons and their families living nearby in the Ukiah Valley.”

Stephen Bratkovich (B.S. Forest Science 1973), news from September 2020: “I have a new book out, *The Baseball Bat: From Trees to the Major Leagues, 19th Century to Today*.

<https://mcfarlandbooks.com/product/the-baseball-bat/> or <https://www.amazon.com/Major-League-Baseball-Century-TodayThe/dp/1476679282>. It was quite a long and challenging process, but I finally did it. I combined the two topics I love, trees (wood) and baseball. I turned the manuscript in to the publisher 16 months ago

and it finally hit-the-streets last month. I am donating all author royalties to charity, primarily *Cerebellar ataxia* research (which some of you know is the neurological disease I have). Thanks for your support.” From the Amazon site: “Stephen M. Bratkovich is a retired forester and wood products specialist with the U.S. Forest Service in St. Paul, Minnesota and Dovetail Partners, Inc. in Minneapolis.”

1980s

Steven Hoover (B.S. Forest Science 1989), news from September 2020: “I retired from PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry as a Forester after 31 years of state service. I started a Private Consulting Forester business in Wellsboro, Tioga County, PA.”

2000s

Jake Novitsky (A.S. Wildlife Technology 2009 and B.S. Forest Science 2011), a PA DCNR forester, spent time in [fighting fires out West](#) in fall 2020.

Milton Newberry (B.S. Wildlife and Fisheries Science 2007), current Director of the Sustainable Technology Program at Bucknell University, participated in the Penn State College of Ag Sciences’ Minority Alumni Panel/Visit in March 2021.

2010s

Samantha Pedder (B.S. Wildlife and Fisheries Science 2011) began a new position in April 2021 as vice president of marketing at Terra Technology Group.

Board of Directors Nominations

We are seeking candidates for election to the Forest Resources Alumni Group Board of Directors. Please contact Ellen Rom (814-863-0362 or exr2@psu.edu) **by December 18, 2020**, if you are interested in running for election.

Contribute News

Do you have news for inclusion in a future issue or our alumni newsletter? Submit news [online](#), or mail to Ellen Rom, 114 Forest Resources Building, University Park, PA 16802.

Support our Alumni Group

[Donations](#) to support our Alumni Group’s communications and engagement activities are welcome. In you prefer to write a check, please make it payable to “Penn State” and write “Forest Resources Alumni Group” on the memo line. Mail the check to Ellen Rom, 114 Forest Resources Building, University Park, PA 16802. Thank you!

Calendar

- June 14-18. [We Are Week](#)
- June 16, noon - 1 p.m. webinar. [College Connections – Ag Workforce Development](#)
- August 10-12. [Ag Progress Days](#)
- September 30. Forest Resources alumni Group Outstanding Alumni [Nomination](#) Deadline
- Nov. 1-5. [TWS Annual Conference](#), virtual
- November 3-7. [SAF National Convention](#), virtual
- November 6-10. [AFS Annual Meeting](#), Baltimore, MD

Remember to join us on [LinkedIn](#)!