

**Director's Letter**



Tim White

As a Land-grant university, the University of Florida (UF) has a tripartite mission involving teaching, research and Extension. Extension is a partnership between state, federal, and county governments to provide scientific knowledge and expertise to land managers, educators, decision makers, youth and the general public. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) delivers extension programs statewide (<http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu/index.shtml>) to provide information, build skills and help people in agriculture, natural resources, life sciences and human systems.

The School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC) has rich extension programs spanning our diversity of terrestrial and aquatic expertise. Inside this newsletter, we highlight 4 of our long-term Extension programs that have been reaching thousands of people annually for more than 3 decades: Fishing for Success, Forest Stewardship, LAKEWATCH and Project Learning Tree. Each program has its own special activities and objectives, but they share a common goal of improving people's knowledge about the management, sustainability and conservation of Florida's natural resources.

In addition to the 4 programs featured in this newsletter, SFRC faculty and staff are working on many other issues related to production, management, sustainability and conservation of natural resources, such as: (1) Boating and waterway management; (2) Ecotourism and recreation; (3) Forest health and tree diagnostics; (4) Fish health and fish diagnostics; (5) Invasive plants and vegetation management; (6) Shellfish production; (7) Silviculture of managed forests; (8) Lake and pond management; (9) Urban and community forestry; (10) Prescribed fire; and (11) Management of conserved and public forests. Details for these programs can be found on the SFRC website: (<http://sfrc.ufl.edu/extension/index.html>).

Extension programs convey information and build skills through a variety of activities such as podcasts, short-courses, workshops, videos, publications, newspaper articles, radio programs, site visits to woods and waters, and interaction with decision and policy makers. Short publications are produced that answer specific questions or needs; these can be found in the EDIS database (Electronic Data Information Source) at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>. The EDIS database is free and available to everyone. You can enter key words and search the data base for articles relating to your question.

Extension is integral to the fabric of UF/IFAS and the School of Forest Resources and Conservation. Extension connects us with the people, communities, needs and opportunities in Florida. It keeps us grounded and focused on providing solutions to important problems that will make a difference in our State. Furthermore, this connection that Extension creates directly informs our research programs of priority needs and enriches our teaching programs with real-world examples. So today, more than 150 years after President Lincoln signed the first Land-grant legislation in 1862, the tripartite, integrated missions of teaching, research and extension are just as relevant and vibrant.



2014 Annual 4-H Forest Ecology Contest – first Extension event ever held at the Austin Cary Forest Learning Center.

**Appreciation For Our Supporters**

Without the support of friends we could not maintain our level of academic excellence.

Thank you to the following for supporting the SFRC's Unrestricted Fund: **Mark ('74) & Anne Miller, Deborah McGrath ('98) & C. Ken Smith ('96), Till & Kathleen Lybass, Diane Ensminger ('80) & Frank Spirek ('82), Roy ('78) & Diane Lima, Curtis Gardner, Jim & Mary Helmers, Roger ('61) & Janie Bollinger, Robert ('64) & Erika Simons, George ('54) & Arlene Park, Lizzy Houska, Louis ('51) & Grace Gaby, Gary ('77) & Aven Warner, Ryan ('92) & Kimberly LaPorte, Dennis Howerton ('64), Tom ('57) & Ramona Leetch, Janet ('74) & Lowell Hinchee, Norfolk Southern, and Kendall Hearn.** Thanks to **North Florida Woodlands, Inc., RockTenn and Rayonier Foundation, Inc.** for your support of Project Learning Tree. Thank you to **Herbert & Carol Ireland** for your support of the Louis F. Conde Memorial Scholarship Fund.

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**AWARDS**



SFRC Alum, **Terry Baker**, received a Certificate of Appreciation from an Oregon County Board of Supervisors.



Dr. **P.K. Nair** received the National Award in Forest Science from the Society of American Foresters.



**Angela Gifford** received UF's Superior Accomplishment Award in the Administrative/Professional category.



Dr. **Martha Monroe** received the William C. Everhart Award from Clemson University.

If you haven't already, please consider making a gift to help us complete the Learning Center project. See "How you can help" at [http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/Learning\\_Center/](http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/Learning_Center/).

## FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Forest stewardship is a commitment to forest land now and for the future. If managed properly Florida's private lands can yield economic and environmental benefits for generations to come. The Forest Stewardship Program, administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Florida Forest Service (FFS), seeks to help private nonindustrial forest (PNIF) landowners develop a multiple-use management plan designed to increase the economic value of their forestland while maintaining its environmental integrity for future generations.

In support of the FFS goal of helping PNIF landowners with forest management, the UF/IFAS School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC) delivers an educational program, called the Florida Forest Stewardship Program, for Florida's PNIF landowners, foresters and natural resource professionals. The mission of SFRC's Florida Forest Stewardship Program is to help and encourage Florida's PNIF landowners to actively manage their land for long-term environmental, economic and social benefits. This is implemented through outreach events, printed materials and internet resources.

The program includes the quarterly "Florida Land Steward" newsletter in both print and electronic format, a series of extension publications on various stewardship topics, workshops and field tours, web pages, short on-line videos, email updates, and social media pages.

In 2014 the program reached 503 landowners and professionals directly with workshops and field tours. These landowners and professionals collectively own and/or manage over 2 million acres across Florida. Eighty-eight percent of those completing event evaluations gained new information about the topic(s) covered and 92% will put that information to use on their land or as part of their job. A total of 520 volunteer hours were involved in 2014 events. The program reached 4,600 landowners and professionals with the Florida Land Steward newsletter and more than 1,700 landowners and professionals receive regular email updates. Web resources collectively registered more than 684,600 views. To learn more, visit: [http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/forest\\_stewardship](http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/forest_stewardship)



### ADDITIONAL EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Podcasts about aquarium fish attract listeners on multiple continents: <http://www.petliferadio.com/aquariumania.html>

Tree health program with **Jason Smith**: <http://sfrc.ufl.edu/treehealth/index.shtml>

A new PLT module for high school teachers on climate change and southeastern forests, addressing system thinking skills, helping students engage in climate change conversations: <http://sfrc.ufl.edu/extension/ee/climate>

The SFRC is active on facebook. Please log on to our page for School updates, more pictures, and to connect with your fellow alumni, students, and friends.



## FISHING FOR SUCCESS



Fishing for Success (FFS) was initially designed as a mentoring and career-counseling program for underprivileged youth. A growing demand from teachers, parents, and youth groups resulted in expansion of the program, which today provides education, recreation, and rehabilitation therapy to a diverse group of participants.

More than 150,000 children have been involved in FFS. In 2014, 9,000 youth, parents, and teachers experienced hands-on learning in the program's activities. Approximately 120 groups, including schools, 4-H, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and scout troops participated in on-site activities tailored to their ages and interests.

During a 'typical' on-site program, youth learn about the identification, anatomy, biology, and ecology of common freshwater fish. After collecting aquatic invertebrates and plants from ponds with nets, youth learn to identify the organisms and discuss their biology and importance in freshwater food webs. Youth also fish in stocked ponds, where many have their first experience catching a fish. When groups are unable to come to Gainesville, FFS takes the program to them through interactive exhibits (live fish, plants, and invertebrates) at youth fairs, 4-H ecology/Ag days, summer camps, and museum events.

FFS hosts monthly family fishing days in Gainesville, providing tackle, bait and help to an average of 300 participants per event. FFS provides physical, therapeutic, and behavioral therapy to groups from the Association of Retarded Citizens and Meridian Behavioral Center. A fishing pier, built by the Rotary Club, serves as a staging ground to accommodate people with disabilities, special needs, and the visually impaired from the Alachua County Council for the Blind, Shands Rehabilitation Hospital, Eldercare of Gainesville, Gainesville Healthcare Center, Harbor Chase (assisted living/Alzheimers), and Sydney Lanier Center.

FFS is conducted by Mrs. **Sharon Fitz-Coy**, senior biologist, and Dr. **Chuck Cichra**, professor and Extension Fisheries Specialist. The program is operated almost entirely on donations and with volunteers, many of which are UF students. For more information, visit <http://lakewatch.ifas.ufl.edu/FishSUCCESS/>

### SAVE THE DATE FOR THE SPRING CELEBRATION!

April 10th & 11th at the Austin Cary Forest Learning Center

**Attention Alums: We want your email address! Please send it to [sfrc@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:sfrc@ifas.ufl.edu)**

## LAKEWATCH

Florida LAKEWATCH (LW) is a volunteer water quality-monitoring program where citizen scientists from all across Florida sample water from aquatic systems important to them for the analysis of phosphorus, nitrogen and algal biomass. They also measure water clarity of these systems with a Secchi disk. Generally, these data are collected monthly from 3 stations.

Since Florida LW's inception, thousands of volunteers have collected water quality data on more than 1,100 lakes, 175 coastal sites, 120 rivers, and 5 springs in 57 Florida counties. For long-term trend analyses, LW provides at least 20 years of monthly data on 27 lakes and 15 years of monthly data on 195 lakes. All the data collected by LW are publicly available in EPA's STORET as well as on the Florida LW website (<http://lakewatch.ifas.ufl.edu/LWCIRC.HTML>), along with publications and other information generated by the program to promote the science-based management of Florida's aquatic resources.

Data collected by LW volunteers have been shown to be comparable to data collected and processed by Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) professionals. These comparison studies allow FDEP to use LW data for regulatory decisions including development of numeric nutrient criteria, assessment of impaired waters, development of Total Maximum Daily Loads, and development of Basin Management Action Plans.

Over the last 28 years, LW data have been used in over 35 peer-reviewed scientific publications and three books. Florida LW has also cooperated with scientists from around the globe by sharing data for comparative ecological studies. Over 35 graduate students, all of whom received degrees in the lake management field, were mentored through the program. Undergraduate students are also mentored and supported in hands-on lake research and management activities.

The success of LW could not have been accomplished without contributions from many funding sources, scientists, staff, and volunteers. This year, LW volunteers received the SFRC 2014 Distinguished Service Award for their efforts.



### ADDITIONAL EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Online Resource Guide for Florida Shellfish Aquaculture: <http://www.shellfish.ifas.ufl.edu>

Take advantage of the many resources in the Sustainable Working Waterfronts Toolkit: <http://www.wateraccessus.com/index.html>

Everything you want to know about bugs that bother your trees and forests: The Ambrosia Symbiosis: <http://www.ambrosiasymbiosis.org>

## PROJECT LEARNING TREE



Florida Project Learning Tree advances environmental understanding and promotes stewardship through excellence in environmental education, professional development and curriculum resources that use trees and forests as windows on the world. The program is designed for teachers, non-formal educators, parents and community leaders working with youth from preschool through grade 12. The program uses a "train the trainer" method where current facilitators teach other educators how to incorporate the curriculum into their lessons and engage their students in the environment. There are currently nine PLT guides ranging from early childhood, to Pre-K through 8th grade and secondary modules for grades 9-12. In order to receive the curriculum, educators must attend a workshop either in person or online. The most popular workshop is our Pre-K through 8th grade Environmental Education Workshop, which includes our award-winning Pre-K through 8th grade Activity Guide.

Each year, Florida PLT conducts an average of 50 workshops reaching about 1,000 educators, foresters and environmental education professionals. An average of 40,000 youth and adults participate in the program on a yearly basis. Those who completed a PLT workshop in 2013 will teach approximately 250,000 students using PLT activities. The program has proven to be beneficial to both educators and students. Educators who participate in PLT can earn continuing education credits, use PLT to cover national and state standards, apply for mini-grants and gain access to our state-wide network. Students who participate in PLT gain an awareness of the environmental issues that shape our world, increase critical thinking, apply abstract science concepts to real world examples and feel empowered to improve their environment.

The program is guided by a Steering Committee comprised of teachers, environmental education specialists, foresters and forest industry representatives. In addition to the Steering Committee, PLT has a network in Florida that is supported by facilitators, designated PLT Schools and PLT EE Centers and trained PLT educators. In 2013, 145 volunteers donated 10,000 hours to the program. Impact: PLT Sustainable Forestry Educators Workshops addressed the lack of understanding about what is a sustainable forest and how it's managed. Prior to the workshop, only 1/3 knew of SFI, at the end 2/3 reported they will look for the SFI label. The program developed in Florida has been adapted in other states and the workshop materials are posted on the FPLT website.