Letter from the Chair

Recipients of this newsletter likely have some established relationship with Kentucky’s Land Grant Forestry Department; you may be one of our students, alumni, stakeholders, partners, interested friends, or some combination thereof. As you read through the following pages, I ask you to reflect on the positive impacts that your forestry department has on the many people, including yourself, who pass through our classrooms, benefit from our research, and who participate in our Forestry Extension programs. These people go on to make their own significant contributions to society and to the forestry and natural resource professions at large. For example, in this issue you will learn how our students not only succeed in the classroom, but are beginning to make their own marks in the communities around us. Like the alumni that preceded them, these students will go on to achieve even more after they graduate. A good illustration can be found in Kate Robie, who has already accomplished much in the forestry profession, and is now looking for ways to help organize our alumni and support efforts to create a vibrant learning environment for our students. The exponential potential of this kind of commitment, and of a well-executed pursuit of the land grant missions of teaching, research, and Extension, should be obvious. It is important to remember that it starts with a relatively small group of dedicated people in UK’s Department of Forestry. As you read through this issue, please reflect on the most important assets we have for making a difference in the world: the people who work here and the people we reach.

Terrell T. “Red” Baker
Chair and Professor

Welcome New Forestry Faculty: Contreras and Price

We would like to welcome two outstanding individuals to our forestry faculty—Dr. Marco Contreras, Assistant Professor of Forest Management, and Dr. Steven Price, Assistant Professor of Stream and Riparian Ecology.

Dr. Contreras joined us last year from the University of Montana, where he received his M.S. and Ph.D. in Forestry. Thereafter he worked as a post-doctoral researcher for a joint project between the University of Montana and the U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station in Missoula, MT. He teaches Forest Inventory and Measurements, GIS and Spatial Analysis, and Forest Management. Dr. Contreras conducts research related to the development of decision support systems to help forest managers improve the efficiency of forest operations while reducing environmental impacts.

Dr. Price joined us this summer from the Biology Department at Davidson College, where he worked for over eight years. During his stint at Davidson, Dr. Price also attended Wake Forest University completing his Ph.D. in 2011. At Davidson College, he worked closely with student researchers on various field projects focusing on the effects of land-use and land-use change on reptiles and amphibians. Dr. Price will teach a herpetology class and continue his research on understanding the effects of land-use change on animal populations.
Student News

UK Forestry is on Facebook. Become a fan to stay up to date on news and events.

At the end of the spring semester, the forestry seniors presented their management plans for the FOR 480 Capstone course.

In April 2012, the University of Kentucky was recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree Campus USA. The UK Student Chapter of the Society of American Foresters was instrumental in achieving this recognition and will continue to play a role in maintaining the Tree Campus USA standards.

Forestry students participate in the 2012 Southern Forestry Conclave. UK placed first in the Compass and Pacing technical event.

Sean Murphy (former M.S. student) (left) and Tom Maigret (current M.S. student) (right) won awards for outstanding poster and paper, respectively, at the Kentucky Chapter of The Wildlife Society annual meeting in Lake Barkley, Kentucky in February 2012.

Students at the first annual forestry department Spring Recognition Dinner. Undergraduate and graduate students were recognized for various awards and scholarships they received in 2011-2012.

Students observe a controlled burn in the longleaf pine ecosystem at Tall Timbers Research Station during the Spring 2012 FOR 599 Florida ecosystems graduate course taught by Dr. John Cox. The next course in this series will be focused on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and offered during spring 2013. Front center: Jim Shaffer. Back left to right: Stratton Hatfield, Nathan Klar, Hillary Otte, Aaron Hildreth, John Hast, Tom Maigret, and Marie Bourguignon.

At the Kentucky Woodland Owners Association Annual Meeting, Kentucky Senator Joey Pendleton presents forestry student, Kayla Price, a Kentucky Colonel certificate. Kayla was also the recipient of the KWOA forestry scholarship.
Marco Contreras

I am broadly interested in developing decision support systems to improve the economic efficiency of forest management and forest operations practices. I am particularly interested in combining modern optimization and modeling techniques with advanced geographic information systems and remote sensing technology to address a number of important problems facing forest managers. I have developed computerized models to assist in forest operations planning including i) finding logging routes that minimize transportation costs, ii) determining the optimal location of log landings, spur roads, and skid-trails to minimize timber harvesting costs and soil disturbances, and iii) estimating tree-level skidding costs for ground-based harvesting systems. I have also conducted research using tree-level LiDAR data to improve forest management decisions.

John Lhotka

My research program focuses on forest regeneration and growth. My research involves understanding the oak regeneration process and evaluating practical silvicultural methods. One study documents the long-term effect of silvicultural gaps on oak stand development and economic returns. Other projects evaluate interactions among canopy structure, forest microclimate, and oak seedling response to midstory removal. While these individual oak regeneration projects provide important insight, study findings are used to formulate an expanding gap system for regenerating the region’s oak dominated forests. My research also examines silvicultural and socioeconomic questions surrounding woody biomass utilization from natural and plantation forests.

Steven Price

My research interests are broadly based on the conservation biology of freshwater vertebrates and concentrate on the responses of populations to disturbance. I have conducted research in a broad range of aquatic environments including Great Lakes coastal wetlands, ephemeral wetlands, first-order streams and riparian wetlands associated with large rivers. My specific areas of research include understanding the effects of land-use disturbances on semi-aquatic animal populations; the importance of current and historic land-use on animal distributions, abundances and vital rates; and the effects of climate change and hydrologic alterations (i.e., damming) on distributions, abundances and communities. Although most of my current research has focused on reptiles and amphibians, I have previously conducted studies on birds, mammals, and invertebrates.

Andrew Stainback

My research interests are in the broad area of natural resource and environmental policy. Specifically, I investigate the policy and economic dimensions of forest management, natural resource management for climate change mitigation and ecosystem service provision, and sustainable development. My recent research has focused on the production of bioenergy and carbon offsets from private forestlands in the southeastern U.S., sustainable agroforestry in Rwanda, and community forestry in Nepal. I use a variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches in my research including economic modeling, focus group studies, surveys, and legal analysis.
Spring Field Semester 2012

When the forestry department revised its undergraduate curriculum a few years ago, one significant change was the replacement of the traditional summer camp with a field semester during the spring of the junior year. This change served a three-fold purpose. First, and most importantly, it allowed the entire summer following the junior year to be available for valuable internship experience. Second, it provided 14 weeks of field-based learning instead of eight. Third, by eliminating a summer tuition bill, it accomplished the above objectives at a significantly reduced cost to students.

This past spring semester was the inauguration of this new experience. Sixteen students spent the first part of the semester based on the UK Lexington campus. Some of the covered material, such as field exercises in silviculture and measurements, would be very familiar to alumni. Other topics, such as fire use, winter dendrology, and forest health, are new to the curriculum. The open course structure of the semester facilitated a three-day tour of wood-using industries in the Central Kentucky region as well as a week-long trip to North Carolina (see photo above). Many of these experiences involved our partners across the region and forestry profession (e.g., U.S. Forest Service, KY Division of Forestry, KY Forest Industries Association, KY Woodland Owners Association, and KY Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources), and we appreciate their important contributions to our students’ success. In the last half of the semester, students spent eight weeks at Robinson Forest honing their skills in measurements, silviculture, hydrology, wildlife, and forest operations.

Overall, students reported a very favorable experience. - Jim Ringe

Got Wildlife? Wildlife Forester Program Begins Fall 2012

A wildlife forester has the skills to manage wildlife and their forested habits. Beginning in fall 2012, students with an interest in both forestry and wildlife studies will have the opportunity to enroll in a curricular path to meet the minimum course requirements for Associate Wildlife Biologist Certification by The Wildlife Society (TWS). For most students, it would take 4.5 years to complete both the forestry degree and the TWS course requirements. In the increasingly integrated and connected world of natural resource management, TWS certification coupled with a forestry degree could put graduates at a competitive advantage for jobs where more extensive knowledge of wildlife biology and management in forests is required. In addition, TWS certification alone provides the minimum qualifications for a number of state (including Kentucky) and federal wildlife agency jobs. - John Cox
**Flight 93**

*by Hannah Angel  
UK Forestry Student, Junior*

On September 11, 2001, an airplane crashed on an abandoned surface mine in western Pennsylvania. The 1,000-acre surface mine had been “reclaimed” ten years prior to the crash, but the original forest was not replaced. Instead, the mining operation created a barren, grass wasteland, incapable of natural succession to a forest without the intervention of foresters with the know-how to reduce the mine soil compaction and herbaceous competition and plant the right mix of tree and shrub species for the site.

On April 21, 2012, I arrived with other UK forestry students at the Flight 93 National Memorial near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, ready to supervise volunteers who traveled from all over the eastern U.S. to help plant trees. Six hundred volunteers had signed up to plant 14,000 bare-root hardwood tree seedlings on the legacy surface mine. As a crew chief for a dozen volunteers, my responsibility was to provide my group with an enjoyable, productive, and educational tree-planting experience.

On that early morning drive to the Flight 93 Memorial site, I realized that this planting event was unique compared to the typical eastern Kentucky surface mine reclamation sites that I and other UK forestry students had planted. I recalled my feelings back on 9/11 when my fourth grade teacher revealed that our country was under attack. And now, as a forestry student, I was going to play my part in not only the healing of the land, but the healing of the heart.

Once the welcoming ceremony for the event concluded, volunteers were organized into groups of 12. I introduced myself to my group and learned that they were all from Virginia. After escorting my group to the planting site, I split the volunteers into six pairs, carefully demonstrated how to use a dibble bar to plant a seedling, explained where to plant the seedlings, and showed them the correct spacing. I was able to work alongside many of the volunteers and learn what brought them to the Flight 93 crash site to plant trees. It seemed that everyone felt a deep connection to the act of restoring the barren landscape to a healthy, productive forest. It was a very symbolic and rewarding day as a crew chief. My group happily and successfully planted all of the allotted seedlings—we even ran out of space in our plot and finished off our buckets by planting in between seedlings that were already in the ground.

There is now a beautiful array of tree seedlings rooted in the heavily disturbed land of the Flight 93 National Memorial. In years to come the landscape will return to forestland and the crash site will continue to be a sacred and memorable place for all Americans.

For more information on the Flight 93 project, email Dr. Chris Barton at barton@uky.edu.

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**Deborah Hill Retiring After 30 Years**

After more than thirty years of working for the forestry department, Dr. Deborah Hill, Extension Professor, is retiring. Dr. Hill has been influential in making landowners aware of agroforestry options and helping them understand how to receive economic benefit from their forest without cutting down trees. She created notable Extension programs on Christmas tree production and shiitake mushrooms. She has written over 100 publications, including the award winning Extension publication, *Managing Sustainable Forests in Kentucky*. She was instrumental in establishing state, national, and international organizations including Kentucky Women in Agriculture, Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals, and Association for Temperate Agroforestry.

Even though Dr. Hill is retiring, she still plans to stay involved in agroforestry work and was recently elected to the board of The National Network of Forestry Practitioners. When she is not working, she plans to travel and work on her farm. We wish her all the best in her retirement.
Kentucky Forest Leadership Program

The 2012 Kentucky Forest Leadership Program for high school students was held during mid-June with full enrollment. Student evaluations continue to reflect upon the great learning environment, great instructors, diversified subjects, and a desire for the program to continue for a second week! Students arrived from Florida and California as well as from across Kentucky to learn through a very integrated approach about the management of Kentucky’s woodlands and natural resources. Learn more about this year’s program and next year’s dates by surfing to www.kyforestrycamp.com.

Dr. Jeffrey Stringer Receives Henry Hardtner Award

In May, the Southern Group of State Foresters awarded Dr. Jeffrey Stringer, Professor, Hardwood Silviculture and Forest Operations, the 2012 Henry Hardtner Award. The purpose of the Henry Hardtner Award is to recognize efforts that directly contribute to increased forest stewardship and sustainable forest management on non-industrial private forest lands and/or the delivery of a positive and influential forest management message to landowners, public and natural resource professionals.

Woodland Owners Short Course

Many family forest owners are unaware of how to manage their woodland property. The Woodland Owners Short Course (WOSC) program, now in its eighth year, provides a great opportunity for Kentucky’s family forest owners to learn how to enhance and care for their woodlands. UK Forestry Extension works with more than ten Kentucky forestry, wildlife, and natural resource organizations to plan, conduct, and evaluate the WOSC. The mission of the WOSC is to educate Kentucky's woodland owners on the care and management of their woodlands and connect them with organizations that can help them. The WOSC is one of the largest woodland educational opportunities available in Kentucky for woodland owners. To date 1,127 WOSC attendees have returned evaluations indicating they owned more than 206,000 woodland acres. These woodland owners reported they would use the information they gained on more than 197,000 woodland acres. For more information visit www.ukforestry.org.

Center for Forest and Wood Certification

A partnership venture providing solutions for forest and wood certification

The Center for Forest and Wood Certification is a partnership venture between forest industry, non-profits, consulting foresters, and UK Department of Forestry Extension. The Center provides education and training on certification and conducts programs to break down barriers that are currently impeding forest owners, loggers, and forest industry from becoming certified in the eastern U.S. The Center’s programs are operating in eight states. Two programs are large in scope developing alternatives for certifying hundreds of thousands of acres of private family owned forests. The Center is supported from industry gifts including Time Inc., Domtar Corp., Newspaper Corp., and Kentucky’s Sustainable Forestry Initiative Committee as well as grants from the U.S. Forest Service through the Kentucky Division of Forestry, the Central Appalachian Forestry Alliance led by Rural Action and the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development. For more information go to www.forestcertificationcenter.org.
Alumni News

Hello Fellow Alumni!

Are you in this picture, or did you graduate with someone in this picture (class of ’75, ’76 or ’77)? Did you graduate even earlier (’72, ’73 or ’74)? Seems like a lot of us in the early graduating classes are expressing interest in reconnecting with each other and with the Department. I would love to be in touch with those of you who share this interest, and the Department would too. We can enjoy catching up with each other, and talk about ways we can support the forestry program that launched us all. It’s been 35-40 years since we graduated—it’s time!

Please consider attending two events on Friday, Sept. 14th: a special reception for us “old heads” (’72-’77) in the afternoon at the beautiful campus Boone Center, and the Department’s Fall Picnic that evening where each attending member of the ’72-’77 classes will be hosted by a student and receive special recognition from the Department. Stay tuned for details.

In the meantime, the Department would love to hear from all alumni! Won’t you please get in touch to update or confirm your contact information? You can visit the website at www.ca.uky.edu/forestry and click on “Alumni Questionnaire,” or contact the Academic Coordinator, Laura Lhotka at laura.lhotka@uky.edu or (859) 257-8718.

Looking forward to seeing some of you again and sharing memories about Robinson Forest rattlesnakes and the old sawmill site, those awful mensuration exams, picking apart insects in bug lab, and so on . . .

All the best,
Kate (Hutcherson) Robie, Class of 1976

Kentucky Woodland Owners Association

Kentucky Woodland Owners Association is one of 36 state affiliates of the National Woodland Owners Association, providing members access to proven resources and successful programs. Our diverse membership’s interest in woodland ownership includes timber production, fish and wildlife management, recreation, and resource conservation. Woodland ownership ranges from those with several acres to those with more than a thousand. Membership includes those who reside on their woodland property as well as absentee owners.

The Kentucky Woodland Owners Association (KWOA) was founded in 1974 and maintains about 200 members representing woodland throughout Kentucky.

Our purpose includes advancing the skills of woodland owners through educational activities and interaction with other landowners and forestry professionals; promoting economically and environmentally sound forest management practices and serving as an advocate for Kentucky woodland owners in legislative activities. We strive to inform the public about the importance of woodland management and its contribution to the state’s economy, recreation, natural lands preservation, wildlife habitat, water quality, and the environment.

KWOA provides a wide range of services to woodland owners, including woodland updates through the board of director’s quarterly meeting, a newsletter published every three months, and an informative web page. For more information or to join KWOA go to www.kwoa.net. - Henry Duncan, KWOA President

Honoring Pete McNeill

Representatives from several Kentucky forestry organizations met with the family of Pete McNeill, noted forestry ambassador and leader, who passed away recently. This group expressed interest in establishing an endowment to support the advancement of forestry education by funding students in our forestry department. The endowment will ultimately honor Pete, and at the request of the family, other leaders from the forestry community in perpetuity. For more information contact Billy Thomas at billy.thomas@uky.edu or (859) 257-9153.

(top) UK Forestry Students from the 1970s in front of the T.P. Cooper Building. (above) Kate (Hutcherson) Robie (Class of ’76). Kate has spent most of her career in timberland investing, and lives in the Atlanta area. She soon will return to her native Kentucky, along with her husband Ed, to manage their Woodford County farm.
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