Outdoor Classrooms
Another academic year has passed and the School continues to make improvements in our core mission areas of teaching, research and extension. Our undergraduate and graduate enrollment has shown increases, we continue to be leaders in the AgCenter in publication numbers and extra-mural grant funds, and our extension and service contacts continue to increase. Given our economic situation this is a tribute to the quality of our faculty, staff, research associates, and graduate and undergraduate students. Similar to universities across the country we suffered budget cuts in operating funds, which has impacted all aspects of our mission. In addition we have lost several faculty positions, which have forced us to accomplish our charge with diminished numbers and resources.

Given the current economic circumstances and the likelihood that we will face continued budget down turns, we could be satisfied with letting the program remain static, but as a faculty we are committed to continued program improvements. To help guide us to become one of the country’s best natural resources programs we continue to revise our strategic plan. The School’s new strategic plan is currently in the draft phase and we will be soliciting input from stakeholders and alumni in the near future. Once it is completed we will post our entire strategic plan on our Web page (www.rnr.lsu.edu), which will include our mission and vision statements, identified programs of excellence, goals we will strive to achieve and specific objectives on how to achieve these goals. This will be an ongoing process and we encourage each of you to provide suggestions on how we can continue to improve the mission of the School.

Recent restructuring of our graduate programs was undertaken to allow more integration across historic degree boundaries, which should result in students that are better prepared to deal with the complexities of natural resources management issues. As a result we no longer have a M.S. degree in fisheries and a Ph.D. degree in wildlife and fisheries science. We have suspended these degrees, but have submitted paperwork to the Board of Regents creating a M.S. and Ph.D. degree in renewable natural resources with areas of concentration in forestry and forest resources, forest products, wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture and watershed science. These recent changes are just steps toward moving from our five historic graduate degrees (M.S. degrees in fisheries, wildlife and fisheries; Ph.D. degrees in forestry and wildlife and fisheries science) to one M.S. and one Ph.D. degree with identified areas of concentration.

This summer we successfully launched the first edition of the School’s Research Matters, an AgCenter publication spotlighting research from our team of faculty, post doctoral, research associates and graduate students. We have received many accolades concerning this new publication and plan to continue with annual issues. This first edition can be viewed on the School Web site.

We are constantly trying to maintain contact with the School’s alumni, which is a daunting task in a mobile society. I would ask each of you to update your contact information by sending me an e-mail (drutherford@agcenter.lsu.edu) or dropping me a note. If possible, we would love to be able to contact you by e-mail, so let us know where you are and what you are doing!

As you can see many exciting things are happening in the School. The quality of our core mission continues to improve giving RNR alumni and supporters many reasons to be proud!! During this time our biggest challenge is to maintain program excellence in the face of dwindling resources, thus any contributions you can make to support the program would be very helpful. If you need more information on specific ways of giving or priority area of need, do not hesitate to contact me (drutherford@agcenter.lsu.edu; 225-578-4187).

Thank you for your continued support.

Allen Rutherford
This summer I had the opportunity to teach 13 students a 10-day field course entitled “Wetlands of the Intermountain West”. The course focused on conservation and management challenges associated with selected wetland ecosystems of Utah, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. The students had varied backgrounds and included landscape architects, invertebrate specialists, a hydrologist and several avian and wetland ecologists. Although two of the students were from Louisiana, others were from Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylania, Georgia, California, Texas and Alabama, as well as Canada, South Korea and South Africa.

Students arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah on July 19, and we began the class with a visit to Bear River National Wildlife Refuge and the Great Salt Lake near Brigham City, Utah. In subsequent days we visited Cokeville Meadows, Seedskadee, Bear Lake, Grays Lake, Camas, Red Rocks Lake and Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuges, as well as wetlands on the Targhee National Forest. In all, we traveled over 2000 miles and were fortunate to meet with over a dozen biologists who shared their insights on wetland and wildlife ecology, restoration and management.

Obviously, the scenery was stunning but what did the students learn? Water rights are complex, they vary by state, and they affect refuges in a myriad of ways. Some refuges have too much water or water at the wrong time of the year, whereas others have too little water to support their functions. Wetland acquisitions are often necessary to secure or protect water, because the water is often more valuable than the land that comes with them. Wetland management strategies are often limited because of water rights issues and they are further complicated by the short growing season and cold climate. Reflecting on the course, Vanessa Tobias (Ph.D. student in wildlife) emphasized the importance of understanding water rights issues; “…I thought I understood how they worked pretty well before the class, but every refuge had a different set of issues that the water rights laws brought on.” Rachel Villani (M.S. student in wildlife) concurred, stating that she “…was amazed at the water rights, and water law, and how it was different between states, and how it could be such a challenge for management.”

What is the value in field-based courses? Field-based courses are often expensive, they require time to organize and they require a fair amount of the instructor’s time during the course. Plus, you may be sleeping on floors, camping and you have no down time. So why would we try to offer these courses? Well, most of us had at least one field course that had a significant effect on our career. For me, it was a 20-day field ecology course in Florida that opened my eyes to wetlands. Most managers that visited with us on the trip also recalled a particular field-based course that inspired them to pursue their current vocation. I also believe that students learn so much more from field-based courses, or at least courses with a significant field component, than strictly classroom courses. This idea is confirmed by comments from students.

“In the past, the classes that I’ve had that were at least partially field based are the ones I’ve learned the most from. This class was the same – I learned so much more by being out there, seeing it, getting dirty and talking to the managers than I ever would have in a lecture class.” (Rachel Villani) “I think the best way for me to learn is out in the middle of what I am studying. When there are structures, I can take notes and sketches on how they are built and what their function is in the landscape. I can begin to understand the purpose of the functions of the landscape as a whole: the hydrology, geology, history, geomorphology and tectonics.” (Brooke Donahue, M.S., landscape architecture).

The interaction with managers and biologists in the region are also extremely valuable. Classroom discussions are important, but largely academic and lack the full range of bio-political issues that dictate conservation and management decisions. Furthermore, students get a feel for the types of information needed to make land management decisions and the role of science in solving these problems. “Going out and being in a place, talking to the managers and biologists, and seeing the issues first hand is the best way to understand what is going on. There is no way I would have gotten (Continued on page 4)
even half as much out of this class if it had been based on traditional classroom lectures and reading discussions.” (Vanessa Tobias).

The managers at the refuges were also inspired by this group of bright, energetic students. One refuge manager commented that “These bright smiling faces remind me of why I do this; it truly inspires me”; another commented “You have to do this trip every year! This was great!”

The exposure to wetland systems in different regions is critical to truly understanding wetland processes and large scale wetland conservation issues. It is impossible to understand how climate affects wetlands, until you see wetlands under different climatic scenarios. The students obviously gain from these trips, but I also learn a great deal including that sleeping on a floor is not as easy as it used to be! These trips are also great exposure for the School of Renewable Natural Resources.

These courses are not cheap, but given the right planning can be fairly economical. In this class, we utilized free housing on refuges and tents for all but one night. A generous donation from an anonymous donor and funds from RNR covered the expenses. Without the donor, however, this trip would not have happened. In all, the trip cost about $3,300 and included the rental of 3 vans and all gas and miscellaneous items. The students paid their travel to Salt Lake City. We would love to continue to offer this course. The course evaluations are being used to modify the course and the experiences of the first trip will go a long way in improving this course. Please let us know if you would like to sponsor or co-sponsor this course next year, all donors will be gratefully appreciated.

**Award Recipients**

Congratulations to the RNR faculty and students that received awards at the recent Gamma Sigma Delta and Campus Life Leadership and Involvement Awards ceremonies. Students and faculty in the School were well represented at these awards programs.

**LSU Student Organization Advisor of the Year**

Niels de Hoop

**Gamma Sigma Delta Spring Awards**

Outstanding Master’s Graduate Student of the Year

Melissa Fries

Outstanding Senior-Scholarship Award of Merit

Ian Stone

Graduate Student Merit Honor Roll

Priyan Perera

Rangika Perera

Yanjun Xu

Faculty Research Award of Merit

Zhijun Liu

Special Award of Contribution to Gamma Sigma Delta, LSU Chapter

Mary Bowen

Teacher Merit Honor Roll

Michael Chamberlain

Cornelis de Hoop

William E. Kelso

D. Allen Rutherford

Charles Shilling

Outgoing GSD President

Richard Vlosky

Sophomore Scholarship Award of Merit

Carolyn Haworth

Lauren Hebert

Ryan Leeson

**Extension News**

**Louisiana Commercial Arborist Continuing Education Program**

This year marks the seventh year since the LSU AgCenter took on the task of training tree care professionals for the state licensing program. In 2002 the Louisiana Arborist Association, a non-profit professional society, turned over the continuing education program for state licensed arborists to the LSU AgCenter and Dr. Hallie Dozier. The program has gone from training roughly 300 license holders to almost 600 each year. The number of workshops has risen from five to eight (and following the hurricanes in 2005 and 2008 – up to ten).

Dr. Dozier takes advantage of professional tree care conferences each year to “shop” for professional trainers for Louisiana arborists who specialize in the basics: chain saw safety and precision felling, climbing safety and positioning; CPR and first aid, crane and air knife use and “tree detectives” (diagnostics). And she makes sure that the tree care specialists in Louisiana also have the opportunity to learn about legal aspects of their business, as well as new techniques and approaches for growing their business and improving service and client relations.

Louisiana has one of the best arboriculture training programs and also one of the most comprehensive and aggressive licensing programs in the country. In this mostly self-regulated industry, only Louisiana and a handful of other states require a license. Louisiana and Virginia are the only two that require continuing education as part of licensure.

The regulating agency for the arborist license in Louisiana is the Horticulture Commission of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. The LDAF and its predecessors have been licensing tree care experts since 1936. Roughly 600 individuals in the state
Louisiana 4-H’ers Earn 3rd Place in National 4-H Forestry Contest

A Louisiana 4-H team placed third among 14 state teams that participated in the National 4-H Forestry Invitational July 26-30 at West Virginia University’s Jackson’s Mill State 4-H Camp and Conference Center near Weston, W.Va.

Louisiana was represented by Karl Simon of Broussard, Morgan Smith of Sulphur and Amanda Wolff and Laura Wolff of Baton Rouge. The team was coached by Ricky Kilpatrick, LSU AgCenter agent in Bossier Parish. Lauren Smith helped Ricky to coach and chaperon the team. Lauren is Morgan’s older sister and is about to complete a degree in forestry from the School of Renewable Natural Resources.

4-H members competed for overall team and individual awards in several categories. Three of the four Louisiana 4-H’ers were in the top 10 for the individual award. Morgan Smith was fourth; Laura Wolff was seventh; Amanda Wolff was ninth.

Events included, tree identification, tree measurement, compass and pacing, insect and disease identification, topographic map use, the forestry bowl and forest evaluation.

The Farm Credit System and the Cooperative Extension Service sponsored the event.

More than 5.5 million young people participate in 4-H, and nearly 100,000 are part of the 4-H forestry program.

Dr. Charles Shilling Continues with Extension Activity

Dr. Charles Shilling helped in conducting three Louisiana Master Logger’s workshops. “Leaders, Managers and Followers” was presented in Ruston to an audience of twenty-two. Dr. Shilling joined representatives from Louisiana Logging Council in presenting the day-long workshop. Shilling and Dr. Niels de Hoop, LSU AgCenter, presented the workshop “Google Earth and GPS” in Natchitoches and Shreveport to a total of 54 participants.

Shilling, with Ed Robichaux and Alan Small of the Louisiana Department of Forestry and Agriculture, presented a three day prescribed burning and certification workshop at the War Memorial Center, DeRidder, La. Eighteen nonindustrial private forest landowners (NIPF) attended. The workshop was conducted at the invitation of Keith Hawkins, LSU AgCenter area forester and the Southwest Louisiana Forestry Association.

The three also conducted two prescribed burning certification workshops; 39 participants attended the workshops and passed their certification exams.

During the 4-H University forestry contest, Shilling directed three, two-person teams in the environmental threat contest. These proved to be outstanding 4-Hers who worked diligently during their time on campus researching the topic of invasive plant and animal species. The teams were required to write a short paper, develop a PowerPoint presentation and deliver the presentation to a panel of judges. The students performed magnificently.

Shilling and de Hoop have four additional Google Earth and GPS workshops scheduled during the remainder of this calendar year.

de Hoop Named Advisor of the Year

Dr. Niels de Hoop, advisor to the LSU student chapter of the Society of American Foresters, received the Advisor of the Year Award from LSU Campus Life, a division of the dean of students office, “for outstanding service, support and dedication to a student organization at LSU, 2008-2009.” He was nominated by the officers of the LSU student chapter and has done an excellent job mentoring students through the various club activities over the last several years.

Randy Graves, president of the student chapter presents the award to Dr. de Hoop.
RNR Hosts 3rd Louisiana Natural Resources Symposium

The School of Renewable Natural Resources hosted the third Louisiana Natural Resources Symposium on July 16-17, 2009 at the Lod Cook Conference Center and Hotel on the campus of Louisiana State University. The theme of the symposium was “Bioenergy Opportunities for Louisiana” and attracted over 120 participants from throughout the southeastern U.S. This year’s event was the third in the biannual series loosely modeled after the highly successful LSU Forestry Symposiums that were held on an annual basis but had become inactive through much of the 1990s. The 2009 symposium featured papers from leading international experts from academia and private industry covering all issues related to bioenergy. A professional proceedings edited by Drs. Todd Shupe, Mike Dunn, Kurt Guidry, Rich Vlosky, Niels deHoop, Dr. Richard Vlosky, director, Louisiana Forest Products Development Center, School of Renewable Natural Resources, LSU AgCenter, was re-elected as leader for the team of specialists on forest products markets and marketing under the auspices of the joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Timber Committee-UN Food and Agriculture Organization European Forestry Commission. The planning committee was comprised of LSU AgCenter faculty from various departments and academic backgrounds and included Drs. Todd Shupe, Mike Dunn, Kurt Guidry, Rich Vlosky, Niels deHoop, Glenn Thomas and Charles Clément.

Ragon Joins LSU Wood Durability Lab

The Louisiana Forest Products Development Center, School of Renewable Natural Resources, LSU AgCenter, is pleased to announce that Dr. Kevin W. Ragon was added to its staff as postdoctoral research scientist. Ragon has 10 years of experience, both industrial and academic, in the forest products industries where he has multiple publications and patent applications. He holds degrees in forestry, environmental science, and forest products. Ragon completed his Ph.D. in Wood Science from Mississippi State University in 2007 where his research was focused on the Formosan subterranean termite. During his doctoral program he was selected as the Ph.D. student of the year in 2007 for his body of work during his tenure. He also received the Ron Cockcroft Award from the International Research Group on Wood Protection, an outstanding service award for recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina, and received the inaugural Thad Cochran Entrepreneurial Award for entrepreneurial work with his intellectual property. In his current position, Ragon will be directing laboratory and field testing for the LSU AgCenter’s Wood Durability Lab (WDL). According to Dr. Todd Shupe, director of the WDL, “Kevin’s educational and employment background makes him uniquely qualified to help expand our testing capabilities and improve our service to our clients.”

Vlosky Re-elected

Dr. Richard Vlosky, director, Louisiana Forest Products Development Center, School of Renewable Natural Resources, LSU AgCenter, was re-elected as leader for the team of specialists on forest products markets and marketing under the auspices of the joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Timber Committee-UN Food and Agriculture Organization European Forestry Commission.
In the Spotlight

Seeking a career in the out-of-doors?

You need to know and will want to know Dr. Charles L. Shilling.

Are you an undergraduate student and need a scholarship, an internship, advising, mentoring, a summer job or a permanent position upon graduation? Are you a parent and need help in advising your son or daughter? Do you need assurance that the degrees we offer are right for you or them? Do you want to know more about careers in renewable natural resources, forestry, wildlife, fisheries or environmental consulting?

Dr. Charles L. Shilling can provide the answers, based on his experiences with undergraduate students for over 35 years and his role as director of student services in the School of Renewable Natural Resources for the past twenty years. Dr. Shilling has long been known as “the person to see” for advice about most things that affect undergraduate students, from pre-enrollment counseling of incoming freshmen or freshmen to be, to job placement assistance upon graduation. Students often say they could never have made it without his advice and often give him credit for the many good things to come their way regarding education and career opportunities. While most faculty members in the School are very knowledgeable advisors and mentors, or counselors, few have had a positive effect on so many students as Dr. Shilling. Nearly every student over the last 20 years has visited with him more than once, and some have visited him a number of times each semester. Dr. Shilling is responsible for the academic records of all undergraduate students in the School, he advises 8 to 10 students each semester as their assigned advisor and also advises all students with academic problems.

Perhaps most importantly, Dr. Shilling is responsible for coordinating with the associate dean, College of Agriculture, regarding review of degree audits of graduating seniors. This process begins the semester prior to graduation for all students or those with 100 hours of degree credit, and records for each graduating student are reviewed at least three times to avoid errors. Dr. Shilling also works with Dr. Kelso to advise new freshmen at spring testing (April), during several summer registration periods and at the beginning of the spring semester.

Transferring students should always seek his advice before and soon after their arrival at LSU. Most faculty members will tell students interested in transferring from other universities or other college programs to “check with Dr. Shilling.” He possesses significant experience when it comes to dealing with registration problems and opportunities, and can evaluate transcripts and advise students transferring to RNR from other LSU departments, as well as evaluate transcripts and determine course equivalents for students transferring to the School from other universities.

Want to get started early on ensuring your position in the job market and a great career? Look to Dr. Shilling and other faculty for advice. Shilling advises students interested in cooperative education activities and assists in completing required forms for university credit, and also advises students and assists in development of transfer credit forms on courses taken while on national or international exchange programs. He is the School’s chief placement officer for summer employment, summer intern positions, cooperative education positions and entry-level employment upon graduation. He assists students in obtaining position descriptions, preparing resumes, providing letters of recommendation and scheduling their interviews with employers visiting the LSU campus.

Dr. Shilling also serves as chair of RNR scholarship committee and is involved with other faculty in selecting students best meeting criteria as recipients for various RNR scholarships. In this role, he also coordinates with the Louisiana Forestry Foundation to announce scholarships and distribute applications. In addition he schedules courses for the School and serves on the College of Agriculture courses and curriculum committee. Over his career he has served and continues to serve on a variety of committees that place emphasis on undergraduate student education, courses, curricula, scholarship and other related activities.

Dr. Shilling is in large part what undergraduate education at LSU, and in the RNR in particular, is all about. Faculty members in the School gratefully acknowledge his critical contributions to the education and employment of our undergraduates, and if you are a current or prospective student, you will likely find that you are extremely lucky to have him advising and caring for you!

Visit our Web site

www.rnr.lsu.edu

Perera and Vlosky Publish Book

Dr. Sabrina Taylor is a new assistant professor in the School of Renewable Natural Resources specializing in the field of conservation genetics. Her research interests include (1) the relationship between genetic variation and fitness in individuals and (2) the population structure of threatened species, especially studies that use vintage DNA to examine historical genetic structure prior to population bottlenecks. She also enjoys participating in behavioral ecology studies that have a genetic aspect: for example, studies that use genetic data to assess inbreeding avoidance and extra-pair paternity in birds.

Dr. Taylor is currently working on three collaborative projects. The first examines whether genetic variation in Arctic Peary caribou is lost more quickly at functional genes than at neutral “junk” sequences, the sequences that are typically used to measure genetic variation. If functional genes maintain genetic variation and neutral sequences do not, then accurate measures of genetic variation should probably include functional genes. This project uses museum DNA to determine baseline levels of genetic variation prior to population bottlenecks—luckily, Captain Robert Peary collected hundreds of Peary caribou in the early 1900s and deposited them in the American Museum of Natural History.

The second project is part of a 35-year study on song sparrows, a particularly useful data set for in-depth genetic studies because it contains complete sparrow pedigrees. The project is focusing on a comparison of genetic variation between unhatched eggs and hatched nestmates to assess whether individual genetic variation affects survivorship when inbreeding is controlled. Analyses are underway and future work will likely involve assessment of variation-fitness relationships based on functional genes.

The last project will examine population structure and assisted migration in New Zealand rock wren. In New Zealand, most threatened species are translocated to offshore islands to protect them from introduced predators. However, rock wrens are restricted to alpine areas and there is insufficient alpine habitat on offshore islands to provide an adequate sanctuary. This problem is compounded by global warming, which is decreasing the amount of alpine habitat available on the mainland (the treeline is rising with increasing temperature). Sabrina and her collaborators propose to examine population structure and explore the possibility of moving low elevation populations to high elevation areas in combination with predator control in those areas.

Dr. Taylor is excited about establishing her research program in Louisiana and would like to begin with studies examining the population structure and dispersal capability in threatened gopher tortoises, as well as other species such as raptors and snakes that are hard to catch or have a low density, but which are commonly brought in for rehabilitation.

Show your support!
For contribution information call 225-578-4131 or complete the form on page 23.
“Sounds of Healing” Concert Raises Funds for Komma and Allam Memorial Fountain

Recognizing the healing and uplifting power of music, the “Sounds of Healing” concert series returned to the LSU International Cultural Center on May 1. Dr. Richard Vlosky, faculty advisor for the International Student Association at LSU, and his son James were among the performers featured at the concert, sponsored by the LSU Chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta, the Honor Society of Agriculture and Allied Sciences.

Begun as a means of lending support and calling attention to international disaster relief projects in the wake of the devastating 2004 tsunami that hit Southeast Asia, the concert presented an evening of hopeful and engaging music in an acoustic setting. The concert series has generated funds for the victims of the tsunami, those affected by Hurricane Katrina, an orphanage in Pakistan that cares for orphans affected by the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, and a memorial fund for of Chadrasekhar Komma and Kiran Allam, two international students who were killed in 2007.

The concert raised more than $1,000 to go toward a memorial garden to be built at LSU in remembrance of Komma and Allam including a $300 contribution from the Indian Student Association at LSU. On completion of the memorial garden, there will be an official dedication ceremony to honor and remember the two students.

Shupe Elected SWST Vice President

Dr. Todd Shupe has been elected vice president of the Society of Wood Science and Technology (SWST). Shupe will officially assume this new responsibility at the Society’s next international annual convention in Boise, Idaho. The following year he will assume the role of president elect. He will ascend to the role of president for one year at the Society’s meeting in 2011. Shupe will be the youngest president in the history of the organization, which was founded in 1958. The SWST is an internationally recognized professional organization of wood scientists, engineers, marketing specialists and other professionals concerned with science and technology of wood and lignocellulosic materials. The SWST Web site is www.swst.org.

Southern Regional Extension Forestry Awards

Drs. Richard Vlosky and Todd Shupe, Louisiana Forest Products Development Center, and Dr. Michael Dunn, Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, were recent recipients of Southern Regional Extension Forestry Awards. Vlosky received a silver award in the computer software and/or Web site category for building and maintaining the United Nations “Current Issues In Forestry and Forest Products Markets Web site.” Vlosky and Dunn received a silver award in the journal publication category for their paper “A Regional View of Extension Employee Perceptions of Scholarship in the Workplace” published in the Journal of Extension. Shupe received a bronze award in the journal publication category for his paper “Evaluating landfill disposal of chromated copper arsenate (CCA) treated wood and potential effects on groundwater: evidence in Florida” published in Chemosphere. He also received another bronze award in the short publication category for “Causes and Control of Wood Decay, Degradation and Stain.”

Baffoe Receives ITTO Fellowship

Twenty-three fellowships were awarded to 23 students at the 44th session of the International Tropical Timber Council in November 2008. One of this year’s fellowship recipients is Abraham Baffoe (Ghana), who is working on an M.S. research project entitled “Implications of Forest Certification on Forest Management and Timber Export Trade in Ghana” under the direction of Dr. Richard Vlosky, director and professor, Louisiana Forest Products Development Center.
International Crossings

RNR Hosts Intern from Zamorano Student Internship Program

The internship program is a 15 week program with 40 hour work week. The interns work with scientists in the School of Renewable Natural Resources to learn more about research related to the educational program and to explore avenues for research that may be related to their future graduate program. The main goal of the program is for these students to return to LSU for their masters degree. In the past, assistantships have been made available from the chancellor’s office.

Michelle Sabillon, RNR’s intern, graduated from Escuela Agricola Panamericana, also known as Zamorano University in Honduras. Zamorano is a very well known and respected, private international university. Michelle’s program was in socioeconomic development and the environment. The Zamoano programs concentrate on sustainability.

Michelle worked for three faculty members. Dr. Jim Chambers served as her primary advisor, but she also worked for Drs. Hallie Dozier and Richard Keim. Michelle explored a diverse set of projects for these three scientists. Her work included tree measurements, tree coring and growth analysis for an urban forestry project involving tree growth and flood responses following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. She assisted graduate students in research plot establishment regarding coastal wetland forests sustainability in south Louisiana and conducted some forest hydrology research and mapping of studies. During her internship she was exposed to the scientific literature, research methods and research techniques. She took advantage of some opportunity for travel to see different ecosystems and urban communities. In addition, she was exposed to the culture of south Louisiana.

Michelle Sabillon, a student at Zamorano University in Honduras, assists in tree-ring dating and growth assessments as part of an LSU AgCenter Internship program aimed at attracting highly qualified students into graduate programs within the School of Renewable Natural Resources.

Som Bahadur Bohora-New Master’s Student from Nepal

Som is pursuing a master degree in forestry concentrated on sustainability of southern forested wetlands. Som, a student from Nepal, will be evaluating the regeneration condition classes of cypress-tupelo swamps with regard to flood duration, depth and timing. The sustainability an health of many cypress-tupelo swamps in the southeastern coastal zone is currently in question. Without long-term hydrological data on each specific site it is currently difficult or impossible to evaluate the potential for natural regenerations. Som and Dr. Chambers, his major advisor, hope to develop techniques to identify the regeneration potential of each site through simple short-term evaluation techniques. Som’s research will help forest managers, state agencies and others evaluate the potential of various sites to regenerate when harvested.

RNR researchers studied birds in Amazonian rainforest fragments in 2009. Here are (from left) Dr. Phil Stouffer, RNR Ph.D. students Erik Johnson and Karl Mokross, and Brazilian collaborator Marconi Cerquiera at the conclusion of a survey of nocturnal birds. They found 10 species of night birds in this fragment- three nighthawks or nightjars, three potoos and four owls.
Matt Huber is an undergraduate student majoring in natural resource ecology and management who has spent the last year engrossed in wetland ecology and restoration. His wetland journey began in 2008 as a student worker providing field and laboratory assistance to Ph.D. students Amy Scaroni and Vansessa Tobias, who work with Dr. Nyman at the School of Renewable Natural Resources. Matt left his job as a student worker in the spring of 2009 when he was accepted by the America’s Wetland Conservation Corps. They place members at sites throughout Louisiana to coordinate hands-on coastal restoration projects and hands-on education projects for volunteers and communities in an effort to promote stewardship and conservation, raising public awareness of the negative impact that the loss of Louisiana’s wetlands has on the state, national and worldwide ecosystems. Matt continued working with Dr. Nyman, who also serves as a site supervisor via the LSU AgCenter’s partnership with the America’s Wetland Conservation Corps.

As a member of America’s Wetland Conservation Corps, Matt has accumulated a wide range of experiences but most of his effort has been focused on the Pass A Loutre Wildlife Management Area (WMA), which is operated by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and is at the very end of the Mississippi River. This area is known by many as the Bird’s Foot Delta because of its shape. It protrudes ~40 miles further into the Gulf of Mexico than the rest of Louisiana, but freshwater vegetation prevails because of massive freshwater inflows from the Mississippi River. Saline waters intrude only during tropical storms and extreme low flow of the river during continental drought. The most salt and flood tolerant plant species native to Louisiana, black mangrove (Avicennia germinans), currently does not occur in the Bird’s Foot Delta. In 1936, LSU Botany Professor Claire Brown wrote that many of the islands and lower bayous there had rank growths of black mangrove. By 1967, RNR Professor Robert Chabreck noted that black mangrove no longer occurred there. The loss of black mangrove from the Bird’s Foot Delta during the mid-1900’s occurred when navigation and flood control most confined the river within artificial levees, which probably increased freshwater flow through the Bird’s Foot Delta. Increased freshwater would allow less salt-tolerant species to out-compete black mangroves. In recent decades however, salinity has increased at Pass A Loutre WMA as indicated by the death of virtually all baldcypress and many willow trees since the 1980s. Factors that increased salinity since the 1980s probably include (a) reduced river flow caused by sediments that were dredged from the main navigation channel and dumped where the Mississippi River enters Pass A Loutre WMA; (b) freshwater diversions constructed miles upstream to restore river flow to marshes there, which reduced freshwater flow through the Bird’s Foot Delta; and (c) more frequent tropical storm surges. Tropical storm intensity is expected to increase further because of climate change, which would increase the number of storm surges affecting the Bird’s Foot Delta. The (Continued on page 15)
State Master Plan calls for two new diversions that will be large enough to create new wetlands. Those land-building diversions will further reduce freshwater and sediment inflow to the Bird’s Foot Delta, and eventually may require abandonment of the Bird’s Foot Delta. Even if approved today, those diversions would take decades to begin creating new wetlands. While wetlands in the Bird’s Foot Delta cannot persist indefinitely, their longevity can be promoted until land building diversions have begun to create new wetlands. In other words, a delta in the hand is worth two in a plan. Justification for longevity arises from the services that Bird’s Foot Delta wetlands provide in the form of storm surge reduction, fish habitat, wildlife habitat, recreation, and commercial fishing. A lack of salt tolerant plant species in the face of rising salinity is one factor limiting longevity of Bird’s Foot Delta wetlands.

The purpose of Matt’s restoration project is to reestablish populations of black mangrove that can serve as a source of seed and vegetative spread in the Bird’s Foot Delta. Mike Materne, who works for the LSU AgCenter at the School of Plant, Environmental & Soil Sciences, donated 396 juvenile black mangrove trees that he and his team grew from seeds they had collected in the fall of 2007 from an intertidal saline Spartina alterniflora-mangrove marsh just north of Fourchon Beach. Matt organized a dozen volunteers, most of whom were RNR students, to spend their 2009 spring break planting those trees during very unpleasant weather. Todd Baker, the biologist at Pass A Loutre WMA, selected a barrier beach just west of South Pass as the planting site. In the summer of 2009, the LSU College of Agriculture awarded an Undergraduate Research Grant to Dr. Nyman and Matt to test hypotheses related to the effects of river water and seawater on the chemical composition of black mangrove leaves. Matt returned to the site during July with volunteers to count surviving trees (59%) and to collect plant samples for his research project. Matt also traveled to Grand Isle to collect samples for his research project from black mangroves growing in more saline areas. Matt will return to both sites in fall and spring to monitor survival for the restoration project and to collect plant samples for his research project. Although the primary purpose of undergraduate research projects is to provide learning experiences for students, these data may lead to techniques that restoration managers can use to determine how big of an effect river diversions have on our coastal wetlands.

New Graduates

In May 2009 the School of Renewable Natural Resources graduated eight students with a B.S. in Natural Resource Ecology & Management, six with a B.S. in Forestry and three with a M.S. Pictured are: (front row, l to r) Justin Thayer, Randy Graves, Ian Stone, Bonnie Britt, Connie Pope, Russell Freeland, Jr.; (back row) Hunter Hutchinson, David Smith, Kevin Borne, Alex Richard and Christine Wolf.

Student News

Student Gets Hands Muddy at the Mouth of the Mississippi

(Continued from page 14)

National Nonpoint Source Monitoring Conference

RNR graduate students Kris Brown, April BryantMason, Den Davis and Ryan Mesmer, all from Dr. Jun Xu’s watershed hydrology research group, recently presented at the 17th National Nonpoint Source Monitoring Conference. Their presentations included “Monitoring the effectiveness of forestry BMP implementation in a low-gradient watershed in Louisiana” (Den and Kris), “Comparison of nitrogen isotope signals between the Lower Mississippi River and its distributary - the Atchafalaya” (April) and “Stormwater effects on phosphorus mass transport to a subtropical urban lake.” (Ryan)

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The Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists Annual Meeting and Symposium was on August 13th and 14th, 2009 in Lafayette, Louisiana. Drs. Andy Nyman and Sammy King attended the symposium, accompanied by graduate students who presented talks or posters about their research. Cecilia Leumas, Hugo Gee, Matt Pieron, Vanessa Tobias, and Rachel Villani gave presentations, and Jake Gray, Sung-Ryong Kang, and Brad Pickens presented posters. Matt Pieron won the award for best student presentation for his presentation titled “Quantifying the Effects of Predator Management on Mallard Recruitment in North Dakota.”

The Waterbird Society held the annual meeting on South Padre Island, Texas, in November 2008. Brad Pickens (Ph.D. student; King) gave a presentation on conservation planning for waterbirds in southwestern Louisiana. Jonathon Valente (M.S. degree 2009; King) and Dr. Sammy King presented research on King Rails in Louisiana. Cecilia Leumas (M.S. student; Rohwer) spoke about social facilitation in seabirds on Louisiana barrier islands. Rachel Villani (M.S. student; King) and Sung-Ryong Kang (Ph.D. student; King) presented posters on shorebird use of moist soil units and Whooping Crane food availability, respectively.

The Society of Wetland Scientists met in Madison, Wisconsin, in June 2009. Vanessa Tobias (Ph.D. student; Nyman) talked about the effects of flooding on marsh grass productivity and attended the SWS board meetings as the student representative. Hugo Gee’s (Ph.D. student; King) presentation was about climate and river stage effects on tree growth. Brad Pickens gave a poster on factors affecting the distribution of King Rails in Gulf marshes. Sung-Ryong Kang also attended the SWS meeting. Dr. Jim Chambers presented his research on coastal wetland forests. Dr. Mike Kaller reported the impacts of feral swine on wetlands. Dr. J. Andy Nyman gave a talk about water levels and salinity in coastal restoration.

American Fisheries Society 139th Annual Meeting was as resounding success for RNR students and faculty. Two RNR students, Chris Bonvillain and Jonathan West, and one faculty, Dr. Mike Kaller, presented research in Nashville, TN. Mr. West and Dr. Kaller presented papers in a special symposium about Headwater Streams, which was also co-chaired by Dr. Kaller. Mr. West presented, “Spatiotemporal patterns of ecosystem respiration in Gulf of Mexico coastal plain streams,” and Dr. Kaller presented, “Fishes of concern in southeastern Louisiana: the rare are getting rarer and extirpation may be running rampant.” Mr. Bonvillain presented a poster entitled, “Biotic and abiotic influences on wild crayfish populations in the Atchafalaya River Basin, Louisiana.”

The School was well represented at the 17th Annual Meeting of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society in January 2008 in New Orleans. Faculty, undergraduate and graduate students as well as RNR alumni were all participants. Mike Kaller served as meeting Program Chair, Abstract Editor, symposium chair, and presented research. R. Glenn Thomas served on the Registration Committee, Organizing Committee, and presented research. Chris Green chaired an aquaculture symposium, served on the Programming Committee, and presented research. Graduate students Chris Bonvillain, Charles Brown, Raphael Cuevas-Urbe, Kayla DiBenedetto, Thorpe Halloran, Shauna Harris, E Hu, Melissa Fries, Douglas Kuenz, Peter Markos, April Newman, Noel Novelo, and Brian Ward presented their research. Charles Brown, Raphael Cuevas-Urbe, Melissa Fries, Peter Markos, and Jonathan West also moderated sessions. Catherine Murphy chaired and moderated a symposium. RNR undergraduate Chris Algero staffed a booth representing the Aquaculture and Fisheries Club. The meeting was considered, if not the best, among the top Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society in their 64 years of hosting meetings.
Several fisheries students attended the 62nd Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies held at Corpus Christi, TX, October 13-15. Fisheries students Thorpe Halloran, Chris Bonvillain, Melissa Fries, Peter Markos, and Brian Ward presented aspects of their graduate research. Melissa won the Best Poster award.

The 25th Annual Louisiana Remote Sensing and GIS Workshop was held at LSU in April, 2009. Graduate students, Biao Zhong and Fugui Wang, presented research in both poster and oral formats that they worked on with Dr. Jun Xu and Dr. Thomas Dean.

Graduate students and RNR faculty made a strong showing at the 5th North American Duck Symposium in Toronto, Ontario in August 2009. Dr. Frank Rohwer chaired and presented in one of the Plenary Sessions of this meeting that is held every three years. Four graduate students from Rohwer’s lab, Matt Pieron, Bruce Davis, and Tim Kimmel, presented 5 posters and papers. Dr. Alan Afton, who organized the first duck symposium, was also very prominent at the meeting. Graduate students Jacob Gray and Luke Laborde soaked in waterfowl knowledge and met waterfowl legends as well as fellow students from around the world. Matt Pieron came back flush with cash after winning both a poster award and an award for an oral presentation.

RNR graduate students Yu-Hsin Hsueh and Som Bohora attended the 19th North American Dendroecological Fieldweek (NADEF held) this year at Hampshire College, Ma. in June. Yu-Hsin is a Ph.D. student in Forestry; she is from Taiwan studying under Drs. Richard Keim and Jim Chambers. Som Bohora is from Nepal and is pursuing a M.S. in Forestry under Dr. Jim Chambers.
In August Dr. Phil Stouffer and graduate students Matt Brooks, Erik Johnson and Luke Powell traveled to Philadelphia for the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists’ Union, which was held at the University of Pennsylvania. Phil and Erik gave oral presentations on their research with Amazonian birds in rainforest fragments. Erik also presented a poster on the bird community at an undisturbed Amazonian site. Matt gave a poster on his research with winter bird communities in forests damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Stouffer was also elected a Fellow of the AOU, a prestigious honor that officially places him among the old farts in American ornithology.

Once again, Dr. Niels de Hoop traveled to the national convention of the Society of American Foresters with several RNR students – including (l. to r.) Lauren Smith (president of the LSU student chapter), Steven Upton, and graduate students Nathan Prince and Ragan Parajuli. The meeting was near Orlando in early October, 2009 so the group took time for a side trip to the Disney Wilderness Preserve, a 12,000-acre preserve of The Nature Conservancy that fulfills wetlands mitigation requirements for some of the Disney developments. Dr. de Hoop presented a poster that describes the results of hearing tests conducted on three logging crews (most loggers suffer from hearing loss at the 4,000 Hz. level due to noise).

April Newman, forestry graduate student and her advisor, Dr. Richard Keim, represented the School at the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco, Ca., December 2008. April presented a poster on her thesis research entitled “Water and Solute Transport in the Shallow Subsurface of a Natural Levee.” This fall, over 16,000 scientists from all over the world are expected to assemble for this premier meeting of the earth and space sciences.

Peter Markos and Jonathan West, RNR graduate students working with Drs. Kaller and Kelso, attended the North American Benthological Society conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan in May 2009. Peter presented his Master’s research on the effects of channel stability on benthic macroinvertebrate community structure in southeastern Louisiana streams. Jonathan West presented a part of his Ph.D. project involving spatial variation of primary production and ecosystem respiration in streams throughout the Florida Parishes.

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Club News

Activity of the LSU Student Chapter of the American Water Resources Association (AWRA)

Early this year, the LSU student chapter of AWRA teamed up with Colleen Morgan, founder and president of Bayou Rebirth Wetlands Restoration and Education, as well as a group of Tulane students, for a tree planting and invasive species removal project at the Audubon Nature Center in New Orleans. The event was part of ongoing efforts to restore habitat surrounding the Nature Center that was severely damaged following Hurricane Katrina.

In the spring, the chapter sponsored a seminar on technical and policy development for statewide watershed management. Invited speaker Jan Boydstun, senior environmental scientist at the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, introduced Louisiana’s Nonpoint Source (NPS) pollution control program and discussed with faculty and students from various departments about NPS pollution monitoring and abatement strategies.

Most recently, the chapter created a Facebook Web page to increase connectivity among RNR’s student organizations.

Society of American Foresters 2008 and 2009 Meetings

Dr. Niels de Hoop and four RNR students attended the national convention of the Society of American Foresters held near Orlando September 30 to October 4, 2009. The students enjoyed meeting foresters and other students from all over the country while absorbing a myriad of exhibits and scientific sessions. Dr. de Hoop presented a poster titled, “Hearing threshold shift of loggers exposed to long-term noise,” which describes the results of hearing tests conducted on three logging crews (most loggers suffer from hearing loss at the 4,000 Hz. level due to noise). The group took time for a side trip to the Disney Wilderness Preserve, a 12,000-acre preserve owned and operated by The Nature Conservancy that serves as a wetlands mitigation for some of the Disney developments.

Six LSU forestry undergrads attended the national convention of the Society of American Foresters held in Reno, Nevada in November 2008. They were Lauren Smith, Jacques Boudreaux, Ian Stone, Kevin Borne, Den Davis and Ryan Mesmer preparing to plant a seedling.

Den Davis and Ryan Mesmer preparing to plant a seedling.

Ryan Mesmer, Caitlin Zlatos and Brittany Roussel taking a break from the hard work.

Dr. Niels de Hoop preparing a snowball at Lake Tahoe. He accompanied the LSU students to the Society of American Foresters national convention in Reno in November 2008.
Aquaculture and Fisheries Club

The Aquaculture and Fisheries Club in the School of Renewable Natural Resources is dedicated to community service and fellowship among students who share a common interest in aquaculture and fisheries. The 2008-2009 school year was another exciting year for the club with many successful events. With the help of the Society of Wetland Scientists and the Wildlife Society, the annual fall Pig Roast and the spring Crawfish Boil drew big crowds. Last year also saw successful recruiting at Fall Fest and educating excited grade school students at Ocean Commotion. This coming year AFC will again host the annual Pig Roast and Crawfish Boil as well as several other social events throughout the year. All students are welcome to attend and get involved with AFC activities.

Jason Kalantari and David Smith. RNR Director Allen Rutherford and a graduate student also attended. Dr. Tom Dean attended the silviculture instructor’s tour. Besides attending some of the hundreds of scientific presentations, posters and exhibits, they had an opportunity to go up into the mountains around Lake Tahoe and observe first-hand some of the forest fuel reduction projects that are ongoing in an attempt to reduce wildfire hazards. Since fresh snow was on the ground, the U.S. Forest Service had begun to burn some of the slash piles while the fire danger was still very low. The students got to meet many foresters and forestry students from all parts of the country.

Ian Stone Receives the Xi Sigma Pi Regional Scholarship Award

Ian Stone, a forestry graduate from LSU, received the $1000 Regional Scholarship Award from Xi Sigma Pi, a forestry honor society. This prestigious award is given each year to a forestry student, selected among those nominated by six universities in the West-central region. Ian won the award because of his excellent academic achievements and his leadership involvement in Xi Sigma Pi (forester), Student SAF Chapter at LSU (president and vice-president) and the LSU College of Agriculture Les Voyageurs (ambassador).

Ian Stone received his B.S. in Forestry from LSU in May, 2009 and is currently a graduate student at the University of Maine.

Chapter Nu of Xi Sigma Pi at LSU has been producing outstanding members. LSU has been very competitive in the west central region, winning more than its share of Xi Sigma Pi Regional Scholarships. Recent RNR winners of this award are:

2002   Benjamin Hogue
2004   Angela Secott
2006   Matthew Reed
2009   Ian Stone

Jacques and Lauren overlooking Lake Tahoe. Yes, that’s a snowflake between Lauren and the camera, and the wind was very cold.

Forestry majors Jacques Boudreaux and Lauren Smith check out an area around Lake Tahoe where potential wildfire fuels (brush and low hanging limbs) have been cut and hand-piled, awaiting an appropriate time to burn. With the fresh snow, some of the piles were being set afire that day.
2009 Southern Forestry Conclave

Congratulations to the students who competed on behalf of the School at the 2009 Southern Forestry Conclave hosted by Alabama A&M! The RNR team of Kevin Borne, Jason Kalantari, Brent Tassin, Ian Stone, Jacques Boudreaux, Hunter Hutchinson, Lauren Smith, Merri Hull, Christina Perez, Billy Dahmen, Connie Pope and Randy Graves placed fifth out of fifteen schools! The team was led to a third place finish in the wildlife identification competition by Merri Hull and Connie Pope and to a third place finish in log birling by Randy Graves.

Hunter Hutchinson represented LSU in a 4-event iron man competition that was aired on ESPNU’s Stihl Timbersports Collegiate Challenge, placing third and fourth in two of the events.

The chainsaw company, Stihl, awarded our students a 2-man racing crosscut saw made by custom sawmaker Jim Taylor of California.

The conditions were cold, rainy and muddy, but our students warmed things up with a crawfish boil and the students reported having a great time! We appreciate them for representing the School so well.
Student Wetland Society

The Student Wetland Society at LSU had a busy year. In addition to our monthly meetings, our members have been involved in a number of social, outreach and professional activities.

Last semester we participated in “Earth Day Baton Rouge” to increase public awareness of the importance of wetlands as habitat for fish and wildlife. We sponsored an RNR seminar inviting Dr. Craig Colten, LSU Department of Geography and Anthropology, to discuss environmental equities and hurricanes in coastal Louisiana. The spring canoe trip to Lake Fausse Point provided a chance for our club’s members to spend a stress-free weekend in the wetlands. We finished off the semester with a crawfish boil, jointly sponsored with the Aquaculture and Fisheries Club, that raised money for future endeavors. This fall SWS members will get their hands dirty picking up litter around the University Lakes during the 2009 Beach Sweep. They will also share their knowledge and love of wetlands with grade school children during Sea Grant’s annual Ocean Commotion.

A number of our students attended the annual SWS meeting in Madison, Wisconsin this past July. We also hope to send a contingent to the SWS south central chapter meeting this October in Denton, Tx.

The Student Wetland Society is excited to announce our sponsorship of a wetlands-themed graduate student symposium entitled, “Connecting Wetland Communities,” on November 14 at the Burden Conference Center in Baton Rouge. LSU has 20 departments that have been involved with wetlands research. This symposium will provide an opportunity for LSU students across a range of disciplines who study wetlands to get together and share their research.

To learn more about SWS, please visit our website, www.rnr.lsu.edu/sws or email sws@tigers.lsu.edu.
James Andrew Allen
“Alumnus of the Year” for 2009

Jim began his education with an A.A.S. in preprofessional forestry at Paul Smith’s College in New York. He completes a B.S. in forestry and wildlife at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia; a M.S. in natural resource policy and planning from Cornell University and finished with a Ph.D. in forest ecology at Louisiana State University.

From 1981 to 1984 he was a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV), Swaziland with primary duties including construction and management of a forest tree nursery, serving as a regional forestry extension officer and as a staff specialist in forestry for an integrated rural development project. In addition he assisted with administrative duties at Ministry headquarters, wrote publications on forestry-related topics and performed forest inventories.

From September 1986 to April 1996 he was a research ecologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Research Center, Lafayette, Louisiana. His primary area of responsibility was research on forested wetland restoration, ecology and management.

From April 1996 until July 2000 Jim was a research ecologist-forester with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service at the Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry, Honolulu, Hi. Primary area of responsibility was research on the ecology and management of mangroves and other tropical forested wetlands. Much of the field work was carried out on U.S.-affiliated islands in the Federated States of Micronesia.

In July 2000 he became dean of Paul Smith’s College of Forestry, Natural Resources and Recreation Division. He held this position until June 2006. Jim was the administrative head of the FNRR Division, which is one of three academic divisions at the college. Primary areas of responsibility included: oversight of twelve academic degree or certificate programs, supervision of 16 full-time and about 10 adjunct faculty members, oversight of the division’s budget and resource allocation and teaching (normally two courses per semester)

In July 2006 Jim became associate director and associate professor, NAU School of Forestry.

He then served as interim executive director from February 2007 until assuming his current position in July 2008 as executive director and professor, Northern Arizona University (NAU), School of Forestry. Jim has authored or co-authored 29 refereed journal papers, 3 book chapters and 46 other publications.

Nancy Lowe Young 2008 “Alumnus of the Year”

Nancy obtained a B.S. in forest management and wildlife management from Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, Louisiana, graduating Magna Cum Laude. She completed an M.S. in forest ecology from the School of Forestry and Wildlife Management (now the School of Renewable Natural Resources) at Louisiana State University. Our “Alumnus of the Year” in 2008 had a very successful career history. Her first job was as a forester with International Paper Company, Noble, Louisiana. After that she was a reclamation research forester with DOW Chemical U.S.A.

Between 1983 to 1989 she was self-employed as a forestry management consultant in Mansfield, Louisiana.

From 1989 to 1992 she was a soil conservationist (GS-457-09/01) with NRCS in Alexandria, Louisiana.

From 1992 to 1995 she was an area forester with USDA NRCS, Alexandria, Louisiana.

From 1995 to 2006 she served as state forester with USDA NRCS in Little Rock, Arkansas.

In October 2006 our Alumnus of the Year was promoted to state resource conservationist NRCS in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Our “Alumnus of the Year” took on two very special assignments. The first special assignment was a three-month temporary duty assignment in 2006 with the US Agency for International Development in Kabul, Afghanistan. Nancy provided forestry planning, project proposal writing and forestry technical training to personnel of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Forest and Range Department. The second assignment was a two-month temporary duty in 2008 through the U.S. State Department at the Embassy in Manila, Philippines.

Nancy provided assistance to the Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation to streamline their U.S. Debt for Nature grant process.
In addition to the above career accomplishments, since 1992 Nancy is a twelve-time recipient of “Certificate of Merit” for superior service in various activities including state-wide forestry initiatives, for outstanding productivity, teamwork, and program effectiveness, outstanding dedication implementing WRP and performance in assuring high quality forestry practices in all NRCS programs.

Nancy received the NRCS Group Award for outstanding productivity, teamwork and program effectiveness in 1996. She also has taken on additional leadership roles including chair for the Arkansas Board for Registration for Foresters, past team leader for the NRCS Ecological Sciences Team, past chair of the Caddo Chapter of the Society of American Foresters and past chair of the CenLa Chapter of the Society of American Foresters.

Alumni News

Rachel Rollason Billingham, ’96 B.S.F., works for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry in Harrisburg. She was recently appointed by the Society of American Foresters to chair the Public Outreach Working Group.

Rex H. Caffey, ’98 Ph.D. wildlife & fisheries science, Louisiana Sea Grant and LSU Ag Center faculty member, was quoted in the August 2009 issue of Country Roads Magazine. He has collected photographs of the Chandeleur Islands off the coast of Louisiana, especially of the 102-year-old lighthouse, which was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Rex collaborated with the Louisiana Sea Grant editor and the Web coordinator to make these images accessible to the public on a website: www.laseagrant.org/light-house. Rex commented “There’s a beautiful part of our coastal landscape that few people had the pleasure of seeing. If nothing else, maybe the Web site is a kind of call to see it while you can.”

Charles Thomas “Tom” Carpenter, ’64 B.S.F., wrote Dr. Paul Burns at LSU from Scottsdale, Arizona. Tom needed another copy of the 1963 LSU Forestry Summer Camp Log. He lost the copy of the ’63 Log which he had borrowed from his former classmate, Roy C. Beltz, ’64 B.S.F., ’76 Ph.D. forestry. Dr. Burns found the ’63 Log in the School’s archives, copied it, and mailed it to Tom. A Summer Camp Log has not been written for many years. When these Logs were written each day of summer camp was assigned by one of the class leaders to a particular student, who wrote a sort of diary, covering a subject to his liking without faculty input. The La. Forestry Commission’s typist wrote the diary, made copies and distributed them to the students. For example, for Monday, June 10, 1963, “Summer camp was officially begun today, early today by most standards! James Turk and the ‘Honorable Harvey Joe’ were elected to be the camp arbitrators (bitchers). After a briefing on the camp rules we embarked on a safari into the steaming forest led by Dr. Bateman and Dr. Glasgow. There were those who didn’t bring suits to the swimming hole this afternoon, and drawers from drab to iridescent shades lent a splash of color to the pastoral scene. . . A final note—on the first day of this week of dendrology, Carpenter’s bathing suit was partially devoured by a Houndstail Boixus muttii .” The Log was signed “Blitz.”

Henry R.M. Childres, ’70 B.S.F., lives in Watson and has worked in Livingston Parish for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry for the past 23 years. He wrote that he enjoys whitewater kayaking, basketball, several grandchildren, wildland firefighting all over the U.S., and of course, LSU sports. He is recuperating from prostate cancer surgery and encourages alumni to get regular check-ups. His email address is hbkayak@cox.net.

Charles A. Collins, ’69 B.S.F., visited the School in July 2009 with his two sons. Charles is district forester, Arkansas Forestry Commission, Greenbrier, Ark. One of his sons is a Ph.D. student in forestry at Mississippi State University; his major professor is David Lyle Evans, LSU B.S.F. ’78, M.S. forestry ’81, Ph.D. forestry ’86.

Emile S. Gardiner, ’86 B.S.F., works in the Center for Bottomland

Campus Live Oak Endowments

Many of our alumni may know that for several years the LSU Foundation has had a program of endowing live oaks on campus. For example, close to the RNR building there are live oaks endowed by alumni Bob Blackmon, ’69 Ph.D. forestry, and his wife, and by the family of James G. Warmbrod, ’38 B.S.F. The Foundation charges several thousand dollars for future care of each endowed tree.

Few people may realize that our School was about 30 years ahead of the LSU Administration. In 1969 a few friends gathered at the northeastern corner of what was then called the Forestry Building on South Stadium Road to plant a live oak in memory of Professor Martin B. “Apple” Applequist. He taught dendrology at LSU’s Forestry School from 1947 through 1959, when he went to teach at Northern Arizona University. He died of cancer in 1969. During the past 40 years, Apple’s tree has thrived—it is more than 3 feet in diameter. Apple, much loved by his fellow faculty members and his students, would be pleased.

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Emile S. Gardiner, ’86 B.S.F., works in the Center for Bottomland
Hardwoods Research, Stoneville, Miss. He wrote an article, published in the Journal of Forestry, on the value of the Sharkey Restoration Research and Demonstration Site. He wrote, that much of the work that he tries to advance in Stoneville is work initiated by Harvey E. Kennedy, ’64 M.F., ’69 Ph.D. forestry, and that Harvey’s work provides a solid foundation for much of the Stoneville group’s current research.

S.C. “Tony” Hu, ’71 Ph.D. forestry, has sold his restaurant in Baton Rouge. He and his wife Pai-Cha live on the Pride-Baywood Rd. near Clinton, La., in an old house surrounded by a 100-acre pine forest of pole-sized trees. Tony and his wife take weekly ballroom dancing lessons for exercise and recreation.

Edmonde “Mony” Jaspers, ’69 M.S. fisheries, returned to her native Belgium after she received her Ph.D. in marine sciences in 1972 and since has worked in Belgium. Mony, who lives in Bredene, was director, Institute for Marine Scientific Research, 1974-1999 and senior scientist, Flanders Marine Institute 1999-2003. Co-founder, board member, and Editor, European Aquaculture Society 1976-1985, she served on many national and international committees related to aquaculture and marine sciences.

Robert J. Lilieholm, ’84 M.S. forestry, Ph.D., has been named associate professor of forest policy at the University of Maine’s School of Forest Resources. Besides teaching forest policy he will teach and conduct research in economics. He went to Maine from the College of Natural Resources, Utah State University, Logan, where he spent 18 years.

F.N. “Nick” Margrave, ’48 B.S.F., wrote that “Martha and I moved to Texarkana, Tex. in December 2007 to be with a daughter and her family, including a grandchild and three great grandchildren from 40 plus years in Camden, Ark. I had to have five bypass surgeries. I am doing great with maintenance re-hab three times a week. But at 82 I am a little slow getting back to normal. I’m sure my years in the woods and my wife’s good cooking kept and is keeping me healthy.”


Steven G. Platt, ’85 B.S.F., is an assistant professor in the Department of Biology at Sul Ross State University, a small school at the gates of Big Bend National Park in far west Texas. He wrote that in 2005 his wife was conducting research on turtles in Malaysia, and he and his wife became acquainted with a Malaysian graduate of the School, Jasmi Bin Abdul, ’77 B.S.F. Jasmi, who prominently displayed LSU paraphernalia in his Malaysian office, was very helpful and granted Steven’s wife carte blanche to do whatever she wished.

Finis H. Prendergast, Jr., ’63 B.S.F, is director of the forest technician program at Louisiana Technical College, Oakdale. The executive committee of the Louisiana Society of American Foresters has awarded Finis a Certificate of Appreciation.

Nianfu Song, ’06 Ph.D. forestry, has left LSU and has gone to the forestry department, University of Missouri-Columbia, where he will work as a postdoc. Dr. Joseph Chang, Song’s major professor at LSU, reports that Dr. Song and his family are enjoying their stay in Missouri.

Ian Stone, ’09 B.S.F., worked for the University of Maine during the summer of 2008 and has gone there to begin work on his M.S. in forestry beginning in August 2009.

James H. “Jay” Wright III, ’57 B.S.F., in late 2008 celebrated with his wife their 50th year of marriage by going to the “Big Island” in Hawaii. He wrote that when he was in Thailand many years ago he was issued a used U.S. Air Force travel bag which had “Lt. Col. Ronald Dalrymple” permanently inscribed on the side. Ronald Dalrymple received his B.S.F. at LSU in 1956. Jay donated a photo of the LSU forestry class of 1928 for the School archives.

Alumni Deaths

Vernon C. “Buck” Adkins, ’50 B.S.F., died May 9, 2009 in Monroe, La., at age 86. A veteran of the U.S. Army during WW II and in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War, he retired from Smurfit Stone Container as wood procurement manager after a 38-year career. He was active in the Society of American Foresters, the Louisiana Forestry Association and the Lions Club. He is survived by his wife, three daughters and six grandchildren.

Daniel C. “Danny” Cameron, ’50 B.S.F., died March 1, 2009 in Denham Springs, La. He was an Army veteran of WW II and retired from the Army Reserve as a lieutenant colonel. He had a 43-year professional forestry career.
with Gaylord Container Corp. and Crown-Zellerbach and was active in the Society of American Foresters and the Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, two daughters, one grandchild and one great grandchild.

Hamp W. “Bill” Echols, ’60 B.S.F., died Feb. 29, 2008 in Mobile, Ala., at age 78. After earning M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in forest entomology, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service, the Mississippi Forestry Commission, Sline Coating, the University of Florida, and the U.S. Air Force, retiring to Mobile in 1989. He was active in professional, civic and Baptist organizations. He is survived by his wife, Melionee, a brother and a sister.

Arden O. French, Jr., ’56 B.S.F., died Feb. 13, 2009 in Monroe, La., at age 74. Son of LSU’s dean of students, he had a career of more than 40 years with the insurance industry. He was an avid outdoorsman and a member of Grace Episcopal Church in Monroe. Survivors include his wife Cathi, two sons and two daughters, and five grandchildren.

Robert N. Helm, Jr., ’82 M.S. wildlife, died Sept. 3, 2008 of brain cancer in his home town of Sunshine, La. at age 57. He was a waterfowl biologist with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. His major professor at LSU was John D. Newsom, and his thesis dealt with nesting of gallinules in marsh and rice fields of Louisiana.

George M. Purvis, ‘49 B.S.F., ’50 M.S.G.M., died Aug. 15, 2008, age 83, in Little Rock, Ark. After service as a Navy ensign he worked for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for 36 years, becoming a widely-known outdoor authority through newspapers, radio and television. Stressing ethics, he was a passionate duck hunter, an avid fisherman, an archer and an amateur painter. Survivors include two daughters and six grandchildren.


Robert F. “Bob” Westbrook, ’66 M.F., died Feb. 16, 2009 in Pineville, La. Before attending LSU he earned his B.S. in forestry at Louisiana Tech in 1959. He worked for the U.S. Forest Service, State and Private Forestry Division, at the Forestry Sciences Laboratory in Athens, Ga., then in Pineville, La. from 1976 until he retired in 2000. He is survived by his wife, two daughters, and one grandchild.

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