

Forest Seasons

The Newsletter of the Northern Arizona University School of Forestry

NAU Students Visit Nicaragua for International Field Course

Fifteen students traveled to Ometepe Island, Nicaragua for 13 days in March, 2010 as part of a semester-long, international course called Tropical Forest Insect Ecology. Taught by Forestry Professor Richard Hofstetter and Adjunct Biology Professor Karen London with Seth Davis as Teaching Assistant, the course is one of the newest international field courses offered at NAU. By giving students the opportunity to carry out hands-on, scientific research in the field, the instructors hope to provide critically important experience and understanding not accessible in the classroom.

The course focused on teaching students how to conduct scientific research projects to successfully address forestry and ecological questions in the rigorous field conditions of the tropical forest.



Rachel Durban examining leaf-cutter ants at night

Students completed projects related to biodiversity, effects of forest disturbance and pesticides on insect abundance and herbivory, nest site selection by termites, ant-plant mutualisms, foraging behavior

of leaf-cutting ants, effects of lake pollutants caused by fisheries on aquatic invertebrates, and assessing non-chemical methods to address agricultural problems on Ometepe Island. Additionally, the collection and identification of insects by students has doubled the number of known species of insects on Ometepe Island.



Nicaragua class at Ometepe field station. Front row (left to right): Leo (Ometepe guide), Adam Polinko, Ben Jaffe, Rich Hofstetter; Second row: Kasey Yturralde, Laura Hagenauer, Rachel Durban, Karen London, Stephanie Selig, Diane Kennedy, Chris Foelker, Stephanie Rayburn, Kelcey Mead, Seth Davis; Back row: Chris Erickson, Nate Foote, Andrew Leach, Ben Ross

The entire group benefited from the interdisciplinary nature of the course—Forestry and Biology—plus the presence of both graduate and undergraduate students. The different talents, abilities, and interests of the group created a large pool of knowledge benefitting everyone.



School of Forestry

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From the Executive Director

Dear Alumni and Friends,

It seems hard to believe, but we are now halfway through another academic year. The fall semester was a busy one, in part because our undergraduate program continues to grow, with current numbers just over 250 students. Combined with our 61 graduate students, we are near the all-time high enrollments that we had in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Despite increasing enrollment, we have tried hard to maintain a high level of service to our students. For example, we taught five separate in-person sections of Introduction to Forestry this fall, as opposed to the more typical two or three, so that we can keep our usual class sizes. We also hosted our third "Centennial Campout" for new students, mock interviews, résumé workshops, and Fire Career Day. Some of these activities are described in Erin Saunders's article on Page 5.

It was great to see many of you alumni and friends at the Society of American Foresters National Convention in Albuquerque. I was very proud of the role that our alumni and current faculty, staff, and students played at the convention, which, among other things, included organizing field trips and conference sessions, giving presentations and posters, and volunteering for various duties around the convention center.

As you read through the various stories in this newsletter, I hope you will be as pleased with the work of our faculty, staff and students as I am!

Sincerely,

James D. Allen



We are pleased to welcome two new staff members this year. Kris Bellmore (left) is our new Business Manager, and Erin Saunders (BSF, 2009) is our new Student Services Coordinator.



Professor Tom Kolb received the Outstanding Contribution to Forestry from Inside the Profession award at the Southwest Section of the S.A.F. spring meeting. The award was presented by Mary Stuever, Chair of the Southwest Section.



Alumnus Michael French (BSF 2009) received the Outstanding Young Forester Award at the same meeting.

Logging Sports Team Participates in Conclave



Caroline Hernandez (left) and Jessica Smith compete in the Ladies Double-Buck competition

Seven members of the School of Forestry Logging Sports Team, along with Faculty Advisor Denver Hospodarsky (Dr. H), made the trip to Fort Collins, Colorado to participate in the Spring 2010 Conclave. The five-day competition saw 14 western Forestry schools competing in 38 different events. While the team did not take first place overall, they did come home with the Conclave Sportsmanship Award, complete with \$900 worth of Stihl chainsaw equipment. The team is looking forward to another good showing at the Spring 2011 Conclave at California Polytechnic in San Luis Obispo.

Graduate Student Receives Peace Corps Award

Stephanie Rayburn, a Masters of Forestry student and NAU's Peace Corps Recruiter, was recently awarded a Certificate of Merit by the head of the Peace Corp's Los Angeles Area Office. Stephanie's exceptional work as a recruiter has resulted in a major increase in Peace Corps nominations from NAU in the areas of forestry and environmental science. NAU's contribution has in turn helped the Los Angeles Area Office to achieve the highest recruitment of any Area Office in the US in these two disciplines.



Stephanie making organic coffee on a recent trip to Nicaragua

Two Graduate Students Receive National Science Foundation Grants



Larissa Yocom (left) and Valerie Kurth (right)

Two School of Forestry Ph.D. students were recently awarded prestigious grants from the National Science Foundation. Valerie Kurth received a \$14,040 doctoral dissertation improvement grant for "Controls on Post-Wildfire Carbon Accumulation and Release Patterns." Larissa Yocom received \$11,283 toward her doctoral dissertation enhancement project, "Exploring Climatic and Human Drivers of Fire Regime in a High-Elevation Mexican Forest." In addition, Larissa was chosen by the Office of the Vice President for Research as NAU's Most Promising Graduate Student Researcher.

The Centennial Forest—10 Years of Education, Research, and Sustainable Forestry

When Dr. Michael Wagner, NAU Regents' Professor and the first Director of the Centennial Forest, convinced Cheryl Miller and I to take on the task of getting the University's new research and education forest up and running, he used enticing phrases like, "political hurdles," "murky management authority," and "no permanent funding."

At the time, the Centennial Forest had reached a milestone, transformed from an idea supported by the School of Forestry and conservation organizations, into a 75-year agreement with the Arizona State Land Department. Goals like, "conducting long-term ecological research" and "landscape-level restoration" were sprinkled throughout the agreement. Instructions for how to do these things were not included.

Progress was slow at first; ecological restoration was an untested paradigm on State Lands. Experimental control sites were viewed skeptically by government officials, who were concerned about losing access to timber. The steep increase in student use caused worries about conflicts with target shooting, ranching, and other forest uses. We spent over two years navigating the land management bureaucracy to gain permission to build a picnic shelter.



Forestry students get their hands dirty working on a community service project on the Centennial Forest Field Campus

With our Arizona State Forestry collaborators, we have reduced fire risk on over 2,500 acres in the Flagstaff Wildland Urban Interface. Wildfires may still start on or spread into the Centennial Forest, like the infamous 2006 Wagner Fire, but the risk of a catastrophic fire has been drastically reduced.

These successes were hard won, through the relentless efforts and contributions of Dr. Wagner, former Dean David Patton, NAU administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and many others throughout Arizona and beyond. To you, we extend our warmest thanks, and we look forward to working with you over the next 10 years.

- JJ Smith, Centennial Forest Manager

A decade into the effort, we have overcome many of these initial problems. Several large-scale, long-term research sites, including cutting-edge, global climate change experiments, have been established. Each year, more students discover a love of science, or find their personal niche on a field trip to the Centennial Forest. I can no longer count the number of times an energized student has approached me after a field trip and said, "That's what I want to do!" At our educational summer youth camps, hundreds of school children, some who have never spent the night away from home, have their first outdoor experience.



Campers at the Junior Forester Academy learn important skills such as using a map and compass during their week-long stay on Centennial Forest

2010 Centennial Campout for New and Transfer Students



Dr. Hospodarsky demonstrates to new Forestry students how to age trees using an increment borer

The School of Forestry hosted the 3rd Annual Centennial Campout September 10-12, 2010 for incoming freshman and transfer students. The Campout is held at the Centennial Forest Field Campus, where students can either stay the night in a soft-wall tent and bunk-beds, or sleep under the stars. Almost 80 new students attended this year. The first night, students enjoyed a BBQ with current Forestry students and faculty and an evening of socializing and axe throwing. The remainder of the weekend was filled with presentations from faculty on the various certificates offered by the School of Forestry, as well as a traditional Ghanaian meal cooked by our School of Forestry Student Ambassadors, Regents' Professor Mike Wagner,

and Peace Corps Recruiter Stephanie Rayburn. Participants wrapped-up the weekend with hands-on experience utilizing some of the tools they will be working with as professionals, such as a DBH tape, increment borer, clinometer, and compass. The weekend was a huge success, and students left with new friendships among their peers and with a greater sense of how a degree in Forestry can help them accomplish their future goals.

2010 Wildland Fire Career Day

On Wednesday November 17th, the NAU chapter of The Student Association for Fire Ecology (SAFE) hosted the School of Forestry's Second Annual Wildland Fire Career Day. This year, participating employers included The Coconino, Kaibab, and Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Grand Canyon and Mesa Verde National Park, and Black Mesa Hot Shots. Students turned out from not only the Forestry program, but from majors throughout the College of Engineering, Forestry, and Natural Sciences. This event gave students the opportunity to meet and network with prospective employers, pass out copies of their résumés, and learn about job opportunities in Wildland Fire for the upcoming 2011 field season. Overall, the event was a huge success, and an example of one of the many ways the School of Forestry is committed to helping our students locate and land valuable employment. The Wildland Fire Career Day event will be followed up in a few weeks by our Forestry Job Fair, January 2011, which is open to all natural resource employers. For information on the Job Fair, or to reserve an employer table at any of our 2011 career development events, please contact the School of Forestry Student Services Coordinator, Erin Saunders, at Erin.Saunders@nau.edu or 928-523-8956.



Students and employers meet and share information on Fire Career Day, Wednesday November 17, 2010

Nicaragua Field Course (Continued from Page 1)

In addition to the science, the students enjoyed cultural experiences: teaching English to elementary school students on Ometepe Island, teaching forestry practices to Ometepe inhabitants, and bringing books, shoes, and educational supplies to the children of the island.

NAU students also spent a day in the city of Granada, the oldest colonial city in all of Latin America, learning about the local architecture, culture, and history, as well as speaking Spanish as much as they could.

In addition to their research, the students and faculty enjoyed a range of ecological encounters, including climbing Volcán Maderas—a 1400 meter, 4600 foot volcano—into a tropical cloud forest while enjoying views of Volcán Concepción, the other volcano on the island, erupting at the time. Other adventures involved viewing monkeys in the wild, making organic coffee, touring a tilapia fish farm, touring local churches and forts, and shopping at the markets of Granada and Masaya. They also hiked through dry tropical forest, the most endangered tropical ecosystem, to the San Ramón waterfall—source of the drinking, cooking, and bathing water for the Ometepe Biological Station, where they stayed while in Nicaragua.



Diane Kennedy with Ometepe children at an English-Spanish school

The School of Forestry offers field courses like this one each Spring semester. The Nicaragua course is offered during even years.

Instructors:

Richard Hofstetter, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Research, School of Forestry NAU

Karen London, Ph.D. Adjunct Biology Professor NAU

Seth Davis, Teaching Assistant, Ph.D. Candidate in the School of Forestry and IGERT Fellow



Volcán Concepción erupting during the course trip

The NAU School of Forestry is on YouTube and Facebook

Visit our sites for news, events, and videos of School of Forestry happenings!



Alumni Notes

Deanne Shulman, BSF 1981

Deanne is a Senior Emergency Management Specialist with the USDA Forest Service's International Programs Office. She spends quite a lot of her time working to provide technical expertise and training to forestry, natural resource management, and disaster management counterparts in Asia and Africa. As a member of our School of Forestry Advisory Council, she has made a special effort to stay in touch with the school no matter where she happens to be. Last spring she was able to visit Professor Aregai Tecle in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where Professor Tecle spent a year as a Fulbright Fellow. To participate in the Advisory Council's conference call in July, she called in from Jakarta, Indonesia!



Deanne Shulman and Dr. Aregai Tecle in Ethiopia

Alan Henceroth, BSF 1983

Alan is the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the renowned Arapahoe Basin Ski Area, through which he is able to help roughly 400,000 skiers per year enjoy a spectacular alpine setting. He lives in Dillon, Colorado with his wife Kay. They have two sons, Justin (23) and Whitney (20) who live in Breckenridge, Colorado and Park City, Utah, respectively. Alan is active with the National Ski Area Association, Colorado Ski USA, the Colorado Passenger Tramway Safety Board, and the National Avalanche Foundation. He and his family enjoy rafting, mountain biking, and generally being outside. "Al's Blog" is an enjoyable way to learn more about what is happening at the Arapahoe Basin Ski Area; it can be accessed at <http://arapahoebasin.blogspot.com/>.



Chris Sorensen and Jennifer Tsonis at their June Wedding

Chris Sorensen, BSF 2008 and MSF 2010 and Jennifer (Tsonis) Sorensen, BSF 2007

Jennifer Tsonis and Chris Sorensen were married this past June by SOF professor, Thom Alcoze in Flagstaff, AZ. After earning her BSF degree, Jennifer worked as the School of Forestry's Student Services Coordinator, as Chris earned his MSF. Although they moved to Twain Harte, CA after getting married, Jennifer is still working long distance with the School of Forestry as the Fire Program and Diversity Recruitment Coordinator. Chris is working as the Mi-Wok Ranger District Forest Planner on the Stanislaus National Forest.

In Memoriam

Professor Emeritus William A. Groman passed away on August 27th, 2010 at the age of 78. Professor Groman was a member of the School of Forestry's faculty from 1972 until his retirement in 1995. Dr. Groman was known for his dedication to advising and counseling freshman and sophomore students. His easy manner and low key approach to forest mensuration helped many students succeed in the early years of their degree program. Dr. Groman also served as Assistant Dean and helped students get summer employment through his contacts with federal and state agencies. Professor Groman is survived by his wife, Irene R. Groman; sons, Robert and James Groman; and four grandchildren.

We would like to include your update in an upcoming issue! Please send any info that you want us to print as an alumni note to ForestryAlumniInfo@xdl.nau.edu, or by regular mail c/o Jim Allen, Executive Director at the address listed on the back page.



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In Flagstaff: The Schultz Pass Fire



View of Mount Elden and the eastern side of the Peaks from Beulah Street and I-40 on June 20th

Beginning on June 20, 2010, the Schultz Fire burned 15,075 acres of the eastern slopes of the San Francisco Peaks, north of Flagstaff. While no lives or homes were lost in the fire itself, a heavier than usual monsoon season brought intense erosion and flooding off the peaks, resulting in damaged homes and properties and the accidental drowning of a young girl.



Karen Koestner addresses Dr. Fulé's Forestry class near Waterline Road

In November, the Ecological Restoration Applications course, taught by Dr. Pete Fulé, visited the burn area along with Karen Koestner, an NAU graduate student and researcher with the U.S.F.S. Rocky Mountain Research Station.

Forest Seasons is a newsletter for Northern Arizona University School of Forestry alumni and friends. We welcome your feedback on the newsletter and encourage you to stay in touch. Feel free to call us at 928-523-3031.

Or visit the following websites:

nau.edu/forestry for the School of Forestry

nau.edu/centennialforest for the Centennial Forest

nau.edu/eri for the Ecological Restoration Institute