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Calendar of Events

Midyear Commencement  December 13, 2008
FRES Natural Resources Career Fair  January 29–30, 2009
Winter Carnival  February 4–7, 2009
Symposium and Banquet  April 2009
Alumni Reunion  August 6–8, 2009
Dear Alumni Friends,

We are located in one of the largest freshwater ecosystems in the world, anchored by Lake Superior and the forests and wetlands that make up its watershed. Sustainability of these systems is critical, but what does sustainability mean to foresters, ecologists, wildlife biologists, biotechnologists, and wood scientists? When defining “sustainability,” I am reminded of what G.L. Hartig wrote in 1804:

“All wise forest management must ... utilize [woodlands] ... in such a way that later generations will be able to derive at least as much benefit from them as the present generation claims for itself.”

We should always ask ourselves if we are maintaining or enhancing the potential productivity of the area. We also need to consider if the next generations will value the forest the same way as we do. As an educator, the question becomes, “Are we teaching students these principles? Are we providing students the necessary science and basic skills for them to manage sustainability?” Another question is, “Are we providing students with the knowledge base they’ll need to address new issues that go beyond what they learned in their formal education?”

We often hear that we are a global society, and the Internet reminds us of this every day. Yet we often forget the land-use decisions we make in one area can affect others very far away. We are working to build the knowledge base for our students here locally and also for students from other countries. In this newsletter some of the exciting people we have just hired and the exciting instruction and research that is expanding the perspectives of our students, faculty, and staff, particularly regarding land management in Michigan, across the US, and around the world. All of these initiatives provide a wealth of new ways to help sustain our resources.

I would love to hear about your global experiences and how your education provided you with the necessary tools to meet those demands. Please email me or call anytime (906-487-2352). Have a great winter!

by Chris Hohnholt

The job market’s up, the job market’s down; it’s a cycle that we see mirrored by our enrollment numbers. It makes sense; if you spend four years in college, you want a job when you graduate.

The School’s undergraduate enrollment this fall is up to 188 students, the highest since 1989, due primarily to the largest freshman class since 1997. Our School offers three undergraduate majors. We are the largest undergraduate forestry program in the state. We are proud of and dedicated to our strong tradition in forestry and graduating students who excel.

Roughly half of our undergraduate students are foresters, and they are entering a job market that looks good. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) reports a 5-percent growth in jobs for foresters in the next ten years and forecasts a wave of retirements. In addition to the promising job market, our students’ prospects look particularly bright thanks to an active alumni network that funnels notices to me of openings. Please keep them coming!

About one-fourth of our students are applied ecology and environmental sciences majors. In this field, the BLS indicates growth is expected to be much faster than the average for all occupations, particularly for those earning a master’s degree. While the overall market looks incredibly promising for these students, I encourage you to look for these openings and send me notifications of them. Many of our students who graduate with this degree do find a job, but we need to expand our network and look out for our fellow alumni.

The third major is wildlife ecology and management. We highly encourage our students interested in this major to look at graduate school. Although the BLS reports 5-percent growth in this field, most will occur far from the Great Lakes region. What’s more, most of the entry-level jobs pay entry-level wages. This is a popular major, and we’re upfront: in order to be employed in this field, the students need to do something to differentiate themselves from their peers. This could be additional statistics and computer modeling courses, graduate school, or traveling far from home during the summers to gain valuable experience. Please help! If you know of work opportunities or want to mentor a wildlife student, please let me know. I can match you up with a student who would be thankful for your time, knowledge, and expertise.

I’ve been a professor here for 38 years now. It’s been a distinct pleasure to meet some of you in your homes, places of business, or somewhere else along the road. Together we can help our students that take critical first step in becoming a professional.

Please write often. I’m always available at cahohnho@mtu.edu or 906-487-2417.

In the News

by Carrie Richards

In May, Associate Professor David Flaspohler appeared on the outdoor show Discovering, hosted by Buck LeVasseur. It is broadcast on WLUC-TV6 out of Marquette, Michigan. The show focused on raptor migration in the Keweenaw.

Rolf Peterson and John Vucetich’s wolf-moose research on Isle Royale is featured in a slideshow on the Scientific American website. A link to the slideshow can be found at www.forest.mtu.edu/news.

Michigan Tech made the Washington Post with a story about how global warming is affecting the wolves and moose of Isle Royale. A link to the story can be found at www.forest.mtu.edu/news.

Assistant Professor Robert Froese was interviewed by WUON-10 on biomass harvesting workshops held near Munising. Froese sits on the steering committee of the BURN-UP project, www.woodybiomass.org, which organized the workshops. A link to the news clip is available at www.forest.mtu.edu/news.

Submit your Alumni News update to Carrie Richards, cاريخ@mtu.edu, or at www.forest.mtu.edu/alumni.
Honors


Graduate student Dan Haskell was awarded a grant from the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology for his research project, “Measuring the Ecological Benefits of Lakeshore Restoration for Breeding Birds in Northern Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Lakeshore Restoration Project.”

Dan also received a visit at his research project from two of Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle’s cabinet members: Rod Nisestuen, secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; and Matt Frank, secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. The visitors were interested in the shoreline restoration project at Found Lake, Wisconsin, which is evaluating the effects of native vegetation and habitat restoration on wildlife populations and lake water quality. The funding for this project totals over $250,000 in the planting of native trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants, and grasses; bioengineering techniques; and logistical support.

Graduate student Amber Roth was awarded a grant from the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology for her research project, “Golden-winged Warbler Habitat Research and Conservation from Wisconsin to Colombia.”

New Funding

Associate Professor Chris Webster received $30,000 from the USDA Forest Service and North Central Station for “Stable Isotope Analysis to Elucidate the Physiological Basis of Silvicultural Treatment Response in Great Lakes Pine Ecosystems.”

Associate Professor Andrew Storer received $30,499 for one year from the USDA Department of Interior and the National Park Service for “Multi-criteria Risk Models and Management Studies for Invasive Plants at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore: Development, Validation, and Implementation.”

Associate Professor Andrew Storer received $7,000 from the USDA, APHIS for “Multistate Comparison of Emerald Ash Borer Trapping and Survey Tools.”

Associate Professor Andrew Storer received $79,475 from the USDA Forest Service for “2008 Emerald Ash Borer Risk-Based Detection Survey in Wisconsin and Northern Michigan.”

Dean Margaret Gale received $2,500 from the USDA Forest Service-Northern Region Station for “Distinguished Ecologist Lecture Series.”

Professor Martin Jurgensen received $35,900 from the USDA Forest Service for “Evaluating Fire Impacts on Wood Decomposition.”

Assistant Professor Robert Froese received $13,007 from Wolverine Power Cooperative Inc. for “Carbon Inventory for the Wolverine Energy Crop Trials.”

Professor Martin Jurgensen received $66,011 from the USDA Forest Service, Custer National Forest, for “Validation of Region 1 Soil Quality Standards and Protocols on the Custer National Forest.”

Associate Professor Andrew Burton received $30,507 from National Science Foundation for the first year of a potential five-year project totaling $151,628, “Collaborative LTREB Proposal: Long-term Ecosystem Response to Chronic Atmospheric Nitrate Deposition.”

In Print


Assistant Professor Robert Froese, MSBA graduate Jillian Waterstraut, Associate Professor Dana Johnson (BBE), Professor David Shonnard (Chemical Engineering), MBA graduate James Whitmarsh and systems biologist Chris Miller published “Lignocellulosic Ethanol: Is it Economically and Financially Viable as a Fuel Source?” in Environmental Quality Management, Autumn 2008, Vol. 18, No. 1.

Hairong Wei has joined the School from Wicell Research Institute in Madison, Wisconsin, where he was a bioinformatics developer. He holds four degrees: a bachelor’s in agricultural sciences and master’s in forest genetics from Beijing Forestry University, China; a master’s in computer science from the University of Chicago; and a PhD in Plant Molecular Biology from the University of Hawaii. Hairong’s areas of teaching expertise are in bioinformatics programming and skills, computational genomics, data analysis, and systems biology.

Hairong’s family includes his wife, Wenzhu Hao, who works for PPD Inc., in Madison; daughter Mian, a sophomore in high school; and three-year-old son Max.

Catherine Tarassof has accepted a position in our School as an assistant professor. Catherine earned her BS degree from Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia, in natural sciences and a PhD in Weed Science from Oregon State University. She is teaching Vegetation of North America (once commonly known as “dendro”) and Freshman Seminar. Catherine will hold a joint appointment in our unit and the Department of Biological Sciences, where she will teach botany. She is also an advisor for undergrads in the School and a mentor for the Learning Community.

New Arrivals

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Strategic Faculty Hiring Initiative

The Strategic Faculty Hiring Initiative, which cuts across academic disciplines to focus on a research theme, hired seven new faculty members whose research focuses on sustainability. Two of those new hires will have appointments with the School.

Paul Doskey comes to Tech from Argonne National Laboratory, where he worked in the Climate Research Section. He studies environmental and biogeochemical processing of organic chemicals and of gases and aerosols that affect climate. He also develops models to predict the fate of chemicals in the environment under various conditions. He will hold a joint appointment in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the School.

Audrey Mayer comes to Tech from the University of Helsinki. Her research focuses on sustainability indices, which can help manage environmental systems by measuring the impact of time and space as well as the interaction of ecological, economic, and social dimensions. She will hold a joint appointment in the Department of Social Sciences and the School.

Alumni News

Keeping Connected

1964

John Grossman is a “serial retiree.” Since his retirement in July 2000, after thirty-five years with the Wisconsin DNR, he has worked at various positions and for pay ventures, including managing a forest improvement education project and as a FEMA project officer in disaster response efforts. For the past four years, he has worked as the wildland fire training officer for USFS, State and Private Forestry, Northeast Area in Madison, providing coordination and support to the wildland fire programs managed by twenty states within Wisconsin. He serves the interagency fire community as the geographic area training representative, where his key mission is training and development of the workforce. John plans to “re- retire” again in July 2009.

1962

Gail (Hough) Trues is a full-time driver of the Honda Pilot Command One safety vehicle at all IndyCar Series road and street course races. A link to a story about Gail’s career can be found at www.forest.mtu.edu/news.

1983

John M. Bedford was recognized by Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) Director Don Kostiva, with a “Promising Practitioner” Award. This award, from the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and honors John for his work with USDA Cooperative Emerald Ash Borer Program (EAR). John began work with the EAR in 2001 as a field operations chief. In 2003, he is an affiliated survey volunteer and operations coordinator for the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division. John is interested in the life and detection work and facilitates other past surveys in the field.

 Alumni News

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### Family Ties

Pete Cattelino (1974) sent this picture of his son Jason (far left) and two friends, Bob Evans (center) and Ben Bachran, who recently completed a 100-mile unicycle ride from Houghton to Marquette to raise funds for two Upper Peninsula pediatric cancer patients. The unicyclists took a break for this photo op in front of the Ford Center sign in Alberta.

### Saying Good-Bye

The summer of 2008 saw many changes for the School, including some new faces, but we had to say good-bye to some old friends too.

### David Karnosky Passes Away

David Karnosky, one of Michigan Tech’s premier scientists, died October 24, 2008, at his home in Chassell. He was 59.

He was a professor of forest genetics and biotechnology in the School and had recently accepted an appointment as the Robbins Chair in Sustainable Management of the Environment. In addition, he was the director of the University’s Ecosystem Science Center and directed the Aspen FACE (Free-Air Carbon dioxide Enrichment) experiment near his hometown of Rhinelander, Wisconsin.

“At Seney National Wildlife Refuge, Rod is working on a long-term project that evaluates how climate change will affect peatlands, and how changes in peatlands will feed back to the atmosphere. He is investigating how changes in precipitation and temperature alter methane and carbon dioxide emissions, plant production and vegetation composition. The study takes advantage of long-term hydrological modifications made at the site in 1910, when the area was drained for agriculture.”

In the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, Rod has been working on a four-year study mapping wetlands, assessing their condition, and developing restoration plans. Through his EPA-funded work, he has discovered that mining is a primary cause of wetland disturbance in Colorado, as it is in the Keweenaw. Rod has also been working in the Andes Mountains and is mentoring a graduate student in Patagonia who is studying how grazing is altering wetlands.

Rod and his wife, Sigrid Resh, who is an adjunct assistant professor in forest ecology at the School, and their two children, Galen and Sage, enjoy both international travel and family road trips. Living in the Keweenaw, they play outdoors often and are active in mountain biking, cross-country skiing, telemark skiing, and hiking.

### Gift Enhances Peace Corps Programs, Orr to Direct

Patricia Nelson and the John and Elizabeth Widmerhofer Trust have given $185,000 to support the Peace Corps Master’s International (PCMI) Programs at Michigan Tech. As a result, Professor Blair Orr has been named on-campus director of the PCMI.

“These funds will also enhance the applied research component of students’ Peace Corps experience,” Blair said. “Recent research frequently focuses on community needs, from water supplies in Cameroon to waste management in Fiji and Armenia to enhanced agroforestry in Paraguay and Bolivia. Also, students will be able to use the resources we have back on campus more effectively.”

For more information, visit www.gradschool.mtu.edu/catalog/ms-peacecorps.html.
Emerald Ash Borer Found in Keweenaw

The emerald ash borer has made its first confirmed appearance in the Keweenaw. It was found by alumnus Mike Schira (1978), who is with the MSU Extension Service, and verified by faculty member Andrew Storer.

In looking further, Andrew and his colleagues found at least fifty infested or previously infested ash trees in the one-acre area surrounding the site and more infested trees within a few blocks.

What's more, the larvae of the glossy green beetles, which have devastated ash trees in southeastern Michigan, seem to have been churning away undetected for some time. "Based on the condition of the trees," Andrew said, "the emerald ash borer has clearly been here for a number of years."

The invasive insect has been spotted three previous times in the Upper Peninsula, but the closest known infestation was more than 200 miles from the Keweenaw site, in Laurium.

"It's disappointing to find them here, but since they are here, it's better that we know," Andrew said. "Now that we know they are here, homeowners and land managers will be able to protect or remove their ash trees as part of management efforts against this pest."

Meanwhile, Andrew and members of his lab are widening their search for the ash borers and the trees they kill. The Michigan Department of Agriculture is expected to join the hunt in an attempt to determine the extent of infestation and to develop recommendations for homeowners and land managers.

Emerald ash borer is native to China, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia and probably hitched a ride to the US in wood packing material used in cargo containers. Once here, and faced with few natural enemies, the invasive insects began attacking all native ash trees.

The beetles lay eggs on the tree's bark, and their larva tunnel underneath, eating the living part of the bark and the outer layers of wood. Eventually, the tree dies.

Emerald ash borer can only travel two miles in a lifetime, but they expand their range as people haul infested firewood or other infested materials to new areas with ash trees.

Forestry student Ashley Hippler walks the buck saw.

Tech Trails Continue to Improve

It was nasty in the woods adjacent to campus this summer. Trees were cleared to connect the Michigan Tech Trails with the Nara Trails at the Nara Nature Park. Approximately 7-1/2 kilometers of new trails were created resulting in a trail system of more than 30 kilometers. The trailhead at the Nara Park will feature a chalet with a stone fireplace, restrooms, and showers. Trail construction was completed in October.

Funding to create the trails comes entirely from two sources. One is proceeds of the timber harvest, which is being managed by the School. Jim Schmierer, school forester, says, "We are happy that we can put our expertise to work on this worthwhile project."

The second source is a gift from local philanthropists Bob and Ruth Nara. The University is extremely grateful for their vision of community recreation and their willingness to put significant financial resources behind their ideas.

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In the Field

In the Classroom

Summer Youth Brings Students to Our Programs

It has been fourteen years since Christa Luokkala attended Summer Youth at Michigan Tech and received an authentic look at college life. Christa participated in the medical physiology program and has vivid memories of everything from dissecting a chicken embryo to dorm life in Douglass Houghton Hall. Her experience and Michigan Tech’s reputation helped her to choose Tech, but her interest in the biology degree in biological sciences and now a master’s degree in applied ecology.

She is studying the influence of nitrogen pollution on fish that live in association with tree roots, called mycorrhizal fungi, in Alaska. Luokkala is trying to understand how these responses affect boreal and northern temperate forest ecosystems.

Stacy Osborne participated in the Summer Youth wolf ecology program and found it "amazing."

“We hiked all over searching for dens and prints," she remembers. “I learned so much. Being able to keep the casts of prints we found was the best part. This program convinced me of where I wanted to attend college and what my major would be.”

Jeff Autenrieth spent time at the Ford Center while enrolled in Summer Youth. He enjoyed the hands-on activities and eventually majored in forestry. While he was first interested in wildlife ecology, “I changed to forestry because I like hunting,” he said, “and wildlife people spend most of the hunting season looking at other people’s game instead of being in the woods.”

It was also a plus that both my parents Jeff Autenrieth Sr. (Forestry/Surveying 1978) and my mom Sandy (Penny) Autenrieth (Liberal Arts-History 1978) graduated from Michigan Tech,” he added.

Forestry Club Hosts Timbersports

Students from nine Midwest universities came together to match skills at the Ford Center in Alberta last September when the Tech Forestry Club hosted the 2009 STIHL Timbersports Collegiate Series.

The competition, which will be broadcast by ESPN-U next summer, is part of the Fifty-seventh Annual Midwestern Timber Sports Conclave, hosted by Michigan Tech. It began as one of five regional qualifying events leading up to the Collegiate Series finals in June.

In the Collegiate Series, one student from each of participating universities competed in four events: the single buck, stock saw, standing block chop, and underhand speed chop. Trevor Hakha, chair of the Forestry Club, represented Michigan Tech and saw and chopped his way to a respectable third place finish overall, even with an unfortunate disqualification on a technicality in the single buck event.

The rest of the crew from the School put in some extra effort to turn in a third-place team performance. Adding to our point total were Charlie Barna, fourth in bolt throw; Jake Reed, first, and Jeff Autenrieth, second, in the match split; Kristen Schaub, third, women’s tobacco spit; Bryan Watters, third, and Steve McIell, fourth, in men’s tobacco spit; Russell Gross and Josh Brinks, third in log roll; Russell Gross, first, and Adam Komar, second, in wood identification; the team of: Melissa Porter, Sarah Diehr, Kristen Schaub and Ashley Hippler, second in women’s pulp toss; team of: Trevor Hakha, Nick Mai, Paul Roell, and Wesley Proctor, third in men’s pulp toss; and Adam Komar, first, and Russell Gross, third, in dendrology.

Congratulations to all for representing our School so well!
Around the School

Reunion Review

Another great crowd came out for the School’s reunion activities in August. It was a pleasure to see all the alums from the Class of 1958 and others who joined the event. Again, the group included a fun-spirited gathering of alumni, family, former and current faculty, and friends. There were five alumni from the Class of 1958. Oh, the stories!

In addition to the University’s reunion activities, the School took time to honor some of its own. Nancy Wizner was named the School’s 2008 Outstanding Alumnus, and the School’s 2008 Outstanding Young Alumnus Award was presented to Jessica Turino.

Plan ahead: Next year’s Michigan Tech Reunion is scheduled for August 6-8, 2009.

2008 Outstanding Young Alumnus — Jessica Turino (1994)

Jessica began her career working in the private sector in procurement. Her first job involved working for a procurement manager at an lumber company. This was an opportunity to utilise the technical forestry skills she learned at Michigan Tech and her communication and social skills. This job was very challenging: it required meeting both the logging company’s goals and the forest landowner’s objectives.

Since 1999 Jessica has been a forester at Great Lakes Forestry. Michigan, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. She has also worked in procurement and is responsible for supplying raw material to the Grayling OSB mill and hardwood sawmill located in Lewiston. Jessica has also been involved in Weyerhaeuser’s Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program since its inception in 2000, when the Grayling sawmill became an SFI-certified mill.

Jessica is also active in Michigan’s SFI State Implementation Committee and works as the state chairperson. She is a member of SAF and a certified forester.

Nancy Wizner (1977)—2008 Outstanding Alumnus

Nancy earned her Michigan Tech bachelor’s degree in forestry in 1977 and a master’s in fire management and emergency management from Oklahoma State University in 2002.

She began her federal career in southeastern Alaska, where she was employed as a forestry technician surveying logging roads in the Tongass National Forest. Her interests in conservation and protection brought her to the National Park Service in 1979. Throughout her career with the National Park System, Nancy worked as an emergency medical technician, a wild land firefighter, search and rescue team member, interpretive ranger communications center supervisor, program manager, incident commander, critical incident stress peer counselor, and federal law enforcement officer.

Her law enforcement experience began as a field ranger with daily road, foot, and boat patrols; she was subsequently promoted to a chief ranger responsible for management of protection operations. In 2007, Nancy moved to Redwood National and State Parks where she is chief ranger. In this position, she works in partnership with California State Parks. Nancy’s career with the National Park Service has included the following areas: Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Capulin Volcano National Monument, White Sands National Monument, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Haleakala National Park, the USS Arizona Memorial, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Death Valley National Park, and Redwood National and State Parks.

GLIAC Honors Student-Athletes

Three student-athletes from our School were among thirty-seven University-wide to be honored by the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Association All Academic Team. The award honors student-athletes who demonstrate hard work in the classroom; it focuses on excellence in both academics and athletics.

The GLIAC All-Academic Team are in men’s track and field, Scott Kentner, sophomore, forestry; Stuart Kramer, senior, applied ecology and environmental sciences; and, in women’s track and field, Laura Kangas, senior, applied ecology and environmental sciences.

Isle Royale National Park Wolf-Moose Research Celebration

The year 2008 marks the fiftieth anniversary of continuous wolf-moose research at Isle Royale National Park. The research, headed by wildlife ecologists from Michigan Tech, is the longest running predator-prey study in the world.

During July, a celebration was held on the island recognizing some of the scientists who have led the study, including wildlife ecologists Rolf Peterson and John Vucetich, from our School. Also in attendance were other ecologists who have been involved over the years, National Park Service personnel, environmentalists, politicians, and the public.

A consortium of educational, governmental, and natural resources organizations has led the year-long effort to celebrate and publicize the wolf-moose study. To read more, visit www.wolfmoose.mtu.edu.

Michigan Tech to Offer Transatlantic Forest Resources Master’s Degree

In the transatlantic graduate program, students on both sides of the Atlantic can now earn dual forest resources master’s degrees from Michigan Tech and a Finnish or Swedish university. The program is one of sixteen recently funded by the new US-European partnership, called ATLANTIS (Actions for Transatlantic Links and Academic Networks for Training and Integrated Studies).

Twelve Michigan Tech graduate students and twelve graduate students from Finland and Sweden will be able to spend one year at Tech and the other year at one of the Scandinavian partner universities. Students who complete the program will receive dual MS degrees, one from Michigan Tech and the other from the Swedish or Finnish university they attend.

The new dual-degree program is designed to enhance the global competitiveness of forestry in the temperate zone, to contribute to sustainable management of forests globally, and to improve the quality of higher education in forestry in the US and the European Union. A global perspective is very important, said Dean Peg Gale. “We’re living in a global society, yet our perspectives and practices are quite different,” she explained. “We need to understand how other countries are managing their natural resources, just as others are interested in how we manage resources in the US. This project will make the distance between us much smaller.”

“This is a unique opportunity for graduate students to get two years of education for one year’s investment,” said Professor Chandrashekhar Joshi, who will lead the program for the School. “They will also get an international experience and a chance to learn about each other’s approach to forestry and tree biotechnology.”