

The TRAIL BLAZER

SPRING 2024



Appreciating the APSAF leadership and the change that is happening

By Patrick Hiesl, 2024 APSAF Chair

If you attended the 2024 APSAF Winter Meeting in Roanoke, VA, you likely noticed that the APSAF leadership is changing, with quite a few young professionals stepping into leadership roles with the board of directors. Before I highlight our new board of directors, let me say “thank you” to Michael Downey, Amy Doty, and all the members of the programming and planning team that organized the APSAF Winter Meeting. The meeting was a success, and I trust that all the members who attended the meeting had ample time to network with fellow foresters, talk to the vendors on-site, and learn about the research that is being conducted in the APSAF region. The silent auction and raffle sales, led by Mike Skinner and Pat Straka, raised over \$4,000 for the KP Funderburke Jr. Educational Endowment Fund and the Foresters Fund. It takes many volunteers to make the meeting go smoothly, so thank you all for helping make this meeting a memorable event.

As for the board of directors, you will notice a new set of young professionals taking over the lead of the three state divisions: Ricky McCutchen with Charles Ingram Lumber Company (South Carolina), Blair Owen with Weyerhaeuser (North Carolina), and Bill Sweeney with the Virginia Department of Forestry (Virginia). The APSAF Chair-Elect, also a young professional, is Tara Dickson with Weyerhaeuser in North Carolina. APSAF Treasurer Ed Stoots recently had some health issues, and during the APSAF Winter Meeting another young professional, Alex Thompson with Manulife Investment Management in North Carolina, agreed to step into the role of Co-Treasurer to learn from Ed during the year and take over the reins as treasurer in 2025. Thank you all for serving in these important leadership positions.

Several of the committees on the APSAF leadership team have also changed. Sara Cerv with GFR

Forestry Consultants in North Carolina is taking over from Tres Hyman as the Membership Chair. Scott Reigel with Mountain Gateway Community College in Virginia is taking over from Dr. David Coyle as the Science & Technology Chair. And lastly, Dan Scheffing (retired) in South Carolina, is taking over from Scott Shallenberger as the Professional Recognition Chair. I would like to sincerely thank Tres, David, and Scott for their years of service to APSAF in their respective roles, and I truly wish them all the best in their personal and professional lives.

It is great to see how APSAF is changing and that we are able to have young professionals step into these leadership roles. And it is not only the young professionals that we engage in leadership positions but also the students in our region. Ethan Elder, a sophomore at Virginia Tech is taking over from Connor Austin as the APSAF student representative. If you know Ethan and have been following the SAF social media posts recently, you may have spotted him in some pictures from the SAF Rising Professionals Conference in Baton Rouge, LA. Speaking of social media, let's not forget to highlight our APSAF social media manager, Trisha Markus (PhD student, Clemson University) who oversees the three social media interns this year: Jon Carter (MS student, Clemson University), Casey Wofford (MS student, NC State University), and Hilary Harvey-Cutter (AS student, Mountain Gateway Community College). While I am not the most active social media person, I do enjoy seeing these posts on our APSAF social media pages. If you are not following our social media pages yet, please consider following them on Facebook (@AppalachianSAF), Instagram (@appalachian_saf) and LinkedIn (@apsaf). If you would like content to be posted on the APSAF social media pages, please reach out to our social media interns, or send your request by email to



2024 APSAF Board of Directors

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phiesl@clemson.edu

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tara.dickson@weyerhaeuser.com

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Ed Zimmer
ed.zimmer@dof.virginia.gov

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Neil Clark
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Treasurer

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blair.owen@weyerhaeuser.com

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rmccutchen3@gmail.com

Virginia Division Chair

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bill.sweeney@dof.virginia.gov

Communications Chair

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gatlinnp@gmail.com

Forest Science & Technology Chair

Scott Reigel
rreigel@mcgg.edu

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SAF Board Member
tdoster@resourcemgt.com

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Lesha L. Berkel
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Appreciating the APSAF leadership, *continued*

our social media manager at APSAF.SM@gmail.com. Let's share all the great things we do in forestry and tell the world what we are all about as a profession.

Let me not forget to mention the board members and committee chairs that have agreed to continue their service to APSAF in their current roles: Neil Clark (Virginia Cooperative Extension) as Secretary; Nathan Gatlin (NC State Extension) as Communications Chair; Bill Worrell (Virginia Cooperative Extension) as APSAF Funding Program Coordinator; Tara Dickson (Weyerhaeuser) as Student Engagement Chair; Barry New (North Carolina Forest Service) as Historian/Archivist; Liz Bourgeois (retired) as Auditor and Copy Editor; Tony Doster (Resource Management Services) as District 8 Board Representative; and Lesha Berkel, who continues as editor of the *Trail Blazer* newsletter. Thank you to all for your continued service to our organization.

Lastly, I would like to thank Immediate Past Chair Ed Zimmer for his leadership during the past year. Ed has worked diligently with

national SAF to bring our bylaws into compliance with their standards, and the membership at the APSAF Winter Meeting voted to implement and adopt the revised bylaws. Being part of the process behind the scenes, I have an idea of how much work went into this. I enjoyed learning from Ed, and I hope that as the new APSAF chair I can continue to build on his leadership.

Ed will serve as the Nominating Committee Chair for this year, and he is tasked with recruiting our next APSAF Chair-Elect. I can only encourage all of you—especially young professionals—to consider serving in this important role. The skills you learn serving in a leadership position within APSAF are transferable to your day-to-day job, and the connections and friends you make will last a lifetime.

With that, I am looking forward to serving all of you and working with our very energetic board of directors during the next year. Together we can achieve greatness and ensure that our organization will be around for decades to come.

SAVE THE DATE

2025 APSAF ANNUAL CONFERENCE



JAN | 22-24 | 2025

WILMINGTON, NC • HOTEL BALLAST

2024 APSAF ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

By Michael Downey, Annual Meeting Committee Chair



Above (l. to r.): Ed Zimmer welcomed attendees; Elizabeth “Liz” Bourgeois, center, received a SAF Award for Volunteer Service; Myron Floyd (NC State University) presented a session on forest impacts for human health at the meeting.



At left (top to bottom): The student chapters spent time connecting with professional members; NC State University’s Casey Wofford and Ana Cubas Baez presented posters during the meeting.

Thank you everyone who attended the 2024 APSAF Annual Meeting, January 23-25 in historic Roanoke, VA. The theme was focused on **Healthy Forests Healthy Communities** which are vital for social, environmental, and economic health. The meeting explored the diverse ways in which forests impact the health and vitality of communities, from human physical and mental well-being, to wildlife habitat, to economic and ecological impacts.

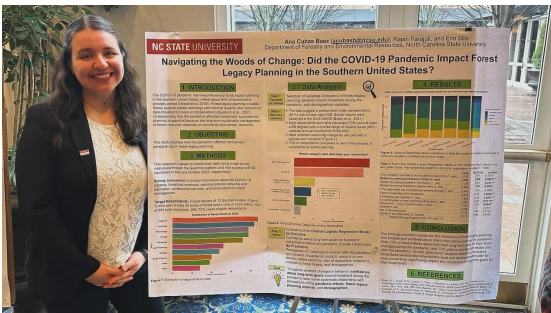
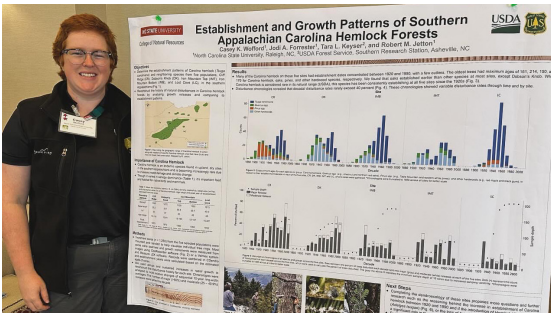
Our event began with a warm welcome from Ed Zimmer, APSAF Chair and Deputy State Forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry.

There were several pre-conference workshops including a “Hardwood Silviculture Update and Refresher” led by David Carter and Cory Green, Virginia Tech, Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation, and Joe Rosetti, Virginia Department of Forestry, as well as the “Catawba Sustainability Center Tour” led by Adam Taylor, Manager, Catawba Sustainability Center, and Ian Nichols, Virginia Tech Agroforestry Project Associate.

Keynote speaker for the conference was Bettina Ring, Virginia Director, The Nature Conservancy

During the conference participants had the opportunity to discuss what defines a healthy forest from various perspectives, including wildlife, environmental, industry, and non-governmental organizations. The final day of the conference discussed forest impacts on mental and physical health from Dr. Nils Person and Myron Floyd, North Carolina State University, followed by an update on invasive species by David Coyle. To end the day, Katie Martin, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, discussed forest health and how it relates to wildlife, and John Tracey, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources presented information on One Health.

The conference was a great success, and it was a pleasure to host this years event. [See the entire agenda from the event online.](#)



Report FROM THE TREASURER



APSAF FINANCIAL STATEMENT (as of January 31, 2024)

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
10000 APSAF Checking (0804) - 1	0.00
10050 APSAF - Regional	-146,943.44
10100 Virginia APSAF Checking	29,969.42
10110 Blue Ridge (VA) Chapter APSAF Checking	2,221.50
10120 Rappahannock (VA) Chapter APSAF Checking	8,098.32
10130 Robert E. Lee Chapter (VA) APSAF Checking	854.59
10140 Skyline (VA) Chapter APSAF Checking	14,996.24
10150 Southeastern (VA) Chapter APSAF Checking	4,616.15
10160 Southwest (VA) Chapter APSAF Checking	119.69
10190 Virginia Tech (VA) Student Chapter APSAF Checking	262.66
10200 NC APSAF Checking	20,416.69
10210 Albemarle (NC) Chapter APSAF Checking	150.00
10215 Catawba (NC) Chapter APSAF Checking	5,528.57
10220 Croatan (NC) Chapter APSAF Checking	4,875.34
10225 Piedmont (NC) Chapter APSAF Checking	5,139.86
10230 Pisgah (NC) Chapter APSAF Checking	1,792.02
10235 Sandhills (NC) Chapter APSAF Checking	3,736.53
10240 Tar River (NC) Chapter APSAF Checking	3,223.25
10245 Triangle (NC) Chapter APSAF Checking	5,907.10
10250 Waccamaw (NC) Chapter APSAF Checking	3,326.83
10270 Duke University (NC) Student Chapter APSAF Checking	0.00
10280 NC State University (NC) Student Chapter APSAF Checking	359.91
10300 SC APSAF Checking	51,919.13
10310 Central Carolina Chapter APSAF Checking	420.00
10315 Edisto Chapter APSAF Checking	11,344.36
10320 Enoree Chapter APSAF Checking	2,475.35
10325 Keowee Chapter APSAF Checking	1,761.28
10330 Old Hickory Chapter APSAF Checking	8,091.75
10335 Pee Dee Chapter APSAF Checking	5,671.98
10340 Santee Chapter APSAF Checking	8,853.65
10345 Winyah Chapter APSAF Checking	1,053.12
Total 10000 APSAF Checking (0804) - 1	60,241.85
11000 APSAF Savings (5123) - 1	19,542.19
11500 APSAF-PayPal	0.00
12200 APSAF First Citz Brokerage Shell Account (4992) - 1	226,102.59
12400 KP Funderburke Endowmnt Brokerage Shell Account (4984) - 1	152,240.12
Total Bank Accounts	\$458,126.75

Please direct questions, items for discussion, and receipts to apsaftreasurer@gmail.com. All checks should be made out to APSAF and mailed to: ED STOOTS, 194 Jay Ridge Road, Cloverdale, VA 24077.

A Cradle of Forestry *Love Affair* Forester Gifford Pinchot and Laura Houghteling

By Robert Beanblossom

Gifford Pinchot was focused on but one goal. As the first American to receive professional forestry training, he desperately wanted to be the first to introduce the concept to the United States.

He had studied forestry in France and was able to do so by virtue of being from a fabulously wealthy family from Pennsylvania. So, it was with this goal in mind that he accepted George Vanderbilt's offer of employment not for the salary he was to receive. As a matter of fact, he was so rich that he and Vanderbilt met as equals—not as employer and employee.

On a cold, early February day in 1892, he arrived in Asheville to assume his duties and quickly wrote and implemented the very first scientific forest management plan in the country on the Biltmore Estate. He had successfully achieved his goal. He was first!

Now his thoughts turned to other matters. At different social functions throughout that winter and early spring, he again met Laura Houghteling, a lovely blonde-haired beauty with piercing eyes and a kind face. A stunning woman by all accounts. In addition to her beauty, she was also smart, assertive, a lover of poetry and deeply spiritual.

Laura was the offspring of a wealthy family, too. Both had met previously on several occasions since they belonged to nineteenth-century high society and had met at glittering parties and social events in such diverse places as St Augustine, Florida, and San Francisco, California. This time, however, was different. Romance was in the air!

By April, when their paths crossed one day while horseback riding along the French Broad River, both sensed there was more—way more—and over the next 18 months their previous casual acquaintance deepened into love.

They were inseparable. They took long horseback rides, recited poetry, and read Emerson, Swedenborg, and the Bible together. Days filled with romantic longing and desire. Seldom did their thoughts stray from one thinking of the other.

But Laura was in Asheville for a much different, compelling reason. She was suffering from tuberculosis and was seeking medical treatment. As their love grew her medical condition only worsened, but how she and Gifford longed to marry! Both families were reluctant to bless the reunion because of her fragile condition but relented on New Year's Day, 1894 giving their consent. A little more than a month later Laura lay dead.

Pinchot was devastated but outwardly continued with the same calm courage that he had shown during her illness. He traveled with the Houghteling family to Chicago to attend her memorial service and then returned to New York to his consulting forester's office (by this time he had left Vanderbilt's employment). Answering a backlog of mail, he apologized for his tardiness by explaining that there had been an "illness in the family."

But those despondent feelings were short-lived. Exactly, 38 days after her death, she re-appeared to him, and on that day he wrote a startling passage in his diary: "My lady is very near." Gifford Pinchot was literally in love with a ghost, although it is perhaps more accurate to

say he possessed an abiding spiritual love for her. He talked to her portrait daily and consulted her before making any major decision in his life.

Later, Pinchot became the first chief of the U. S. Forest Service when it was created in 1905. During his tenure, when he testified before a congressional committee, she was by his side offering encouragement and advice. When he traveled abroad, she was by his side. And she was with him in the Rocky Mountains on the nights when he slept alone.

In addition to his home—Grey Towers—in Milford, Pennsylvania, Pinchot also owned a 53-room mansion in Washington, DC. One can imagine the talk in DC social circles. Here was this vibrant, handsome, rich bachelor, a close confidant of President Theodore Roosevelt, who showed no interest in women whatsoever; but little did they know how much he loved his departed Laura.

Interestingly, he wore black for two years but abruptly stopped one day. His mood changed! He was buoyant, smiling, gay! He was in love! And he was married! To Laura, of course! They were one! To Pinchot, God had joined the two for eternity. Twenty years elapsed after meeting Laura in Asheville before Pinchot finally married Cornelous Bryce, a remarkable woman in her own right.

Why did such a robust young man fall in love with someone who was so very ill? More importantly perhaps, is the question of why he held such intense affection for her ghost for so long after her death? These and numerous other questions remain a mystery and their answers Pinchot carried his to his grave.

This article originally appeared in Asheville (North Carolina) Citizen Times, February 12, 2024 and is published here with permission from the author.

Robert Beanblossom, a member of the Society of American Foresters, retired from the WV Division of Natural Resources and is currently the volunteer caretaker at the Cradle of Forestry in America. He can be reached at r.beanblossom1862@outlook.com

NORTH CAROLINA

Get to Know Blair!



Blair Owen
North Carolina Division Chair

NC Executive Committee

Chair - Blair Owen, Weyerhaeuser

Chair-Elect - Seth Plank,
Weyerhaeuser

Immediate Past Chair -
Nathan Gatlin, NCSU Extension

Secretary - AJ Lang,
NC Forest Service

Treasurer - Olakunle Sodiya, NCSU

Professional Recognition Chair -
Clay Altizer, Forest Resources
Association

Continuing Education Chair -
Hans Rohr, NC Forest Service

Science and Technology Chair -
Mike Berzinis, Southern Forestry
Consultants, Inc

Registration and Licensing Chair
- Tommy Tew, Corbett Timber
Company

Communications Chair -
Noelle Arena, FORTA

Albemarle Chapter Chair -
Mike Neal, Michael D. Neal &
Associates, Inc.

Catawba Chapter Chair -
Nathan Herring, American Forest
Management

*Croatan Chapter Chair - Vacant

Piedmont Chapter Chair -
Brad Howard, Retired

Pisgah Chapter Chair -
Dan Callaghan, Wildwood
Consulting PLLC

*Sandhills Chapter Chair - Vacant

*Tar River Chapter Chair - Vacant

Waccamaw Chapter Chair -
Robbie Evans, Resource Manage-
ment Services

Duke University Student Chair -
Melissa Merritt

Haywood Community College Faculty
Advisor - George Hahn, HCC

NCSU Student Chair -
Cassidy McCarty

*Anyone interested in filling these
positions, please reach out to Blair at
blair.owen@wy.com

Hello fellow APSAF members! I am excited to represent the NC Division for 2024 and would like to share a few things about myself. I graduated from NCSU in 2017 with a degree in forest management. I have been a forester for Weyerhaeuser based out of Vanceboro, NC, since graduation. A member of SAF for seven years, my local chapter is Croatan. Currently, I am working with the Sandhills Chapter of NC to plan an engaging and impactful 2024 Summer Meeting and am acting as the Conference Chair for the 2025 APSAF Annual Conference in Wilmington, NC.

I have been a member of the SAF Young Professional (YP) Planning Team since 2022, which has been one of my favorite groups to be a part of so far. This team plans virtual workshops and meet-ups at conventions specifically for YP's. Prior topics have included; how to build your personal brand; how to advocate for yourself; how to set boundaries without setting career limitations, and so many other great topics. We also have a "Young Professionals" section in the *Forestry Source* (every other month starting in January).

In 2024, I will focus on membership engagement and retention throughout the NC Division. I plan to bring forward new ideas for local, state, and regional meetings. One new idea that is already in the works is the NC Leadership Summit, which you can read more about below. I will also focus on engaging the young professional community of SAF. I will continue to serve as a SAF YP committee member and use this experience to bring forward new ideas to engage the NC young professional community. Stay tuned for exciting workshops coming to the 2025 APSAF Annual Conference. Lastly, I will commit to sharing my positive SAF experiences and praising the good work we do.

Leadership Summit Coming to NC

The NC Division is excited to host its first-ever Leadership Summit. The idea for the Leadership Summit stemmed from a group project on member engagement and retention at the APSAF Leadership Academy with Tom Davidson. Tara Dickson (NC-Croatan) led a small Chapter Engagement Committee consisting of Noelle Arena (Catawba), Greg Cooper (NC-Pisgah), Kenneth Dunn (SC-Pee Dee), Michelle Kaiser (NC-Triangle), Blair Owen (NC-Croatan), Seth Plank (NC-Croatan), and Alex Thompson (NC-Sandhills). This committee agreed that the best way to improve membership retention and engagement was to first improve leadership engagement and retention.

Membership and leadership in NC SAF have been declining at both the division and chapter levels. We have chapters that do not have Chairs or other officers at all. Some chapters are maintained by the same officers agreeing to be leaders multiple times. Other chapters struggle to find anyone who will agree to lead. We need to identify and equip new leaders to step up and be a part of SAF locally, regionally, and nationally. In addition, supporting and providing members with the proper tools will build a strong leadership foundation that will entice new members to be part of

NC DIVISION LEADERSHIP SUMMIT AGENDA:

- Ice Breakers
- Successful Communication
Timely response to emails, phone calls, etc.
- How to Plan a Chapter Meeting
- How to Run a Business Meeting
Anti-Trust Statement, agenda, minutes, treasurer's report
- Robert's Rules
- Structure: SAF, APSAF, and NC Division
APSAF bylaws, incorporation, credit cards, insurance; SAF Website (membership directory, new members, members at risk of dropping, working groups)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at SAF
DEI Policy; Unconscious Bias Activity
- Challenge Question Activity and Group Activity

a winning leadership team. We anticipate the Leadership Summit will provide participants with skills and confidence that promote personal and professional development, adding tangible value that will reflect positively on each NC SAF chapter.

The Leadership Summit will be a full day of information sessions/training and conclude with a team-building activity. Three objectives that we will be focusing on are:

1) Building up Confidence in SAF Leadership; 2) Leadership Support; and 3) Communication. Building up Confidence in Leadership will be addressed by reviewing with attendees how to conduct a business meeting that includes the Anti-Trust Statement, agenda, meeting minutes, treasurer's report, etc. Leadership Support will include expectations for division leadership and chapter leadership, how to host chapter meetings, and how to better engage members. Attendees will also benefit from networking with other chapter leaders and division leaders at this Summit. Lastly, Communication will be addressed by reviewing what is a timely response to emails, phone calls, etc., as well as how to look up members on the SAF website via Leadership Central.

■ Croatan Chapter

The Croatan Chapter kicked off the year with a roadside cleanup along highway 70 near the Hoffman Forest. The chapter is meeting on March 14 in New Bern for dinner and a presentation by Colleen Olfenbittel, a Game Mammals and Surveys Supervisor with NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Colleen will be presenting on the history of bear management in NC, as well as bear behavior and habitat. The chapter is also a Flying Squirrel level sponsor for NC Coastal Envirothon that is hosted at Cool Springs Environmental Education Center in Ernul, NC, on March 19. Many chapter members have also signed up as volunteers for this event. Their final roadside cleanup will be held on Saturday, April 20, at 10AM and will be followed by lunch.

Croatan Chapter Adopt-A-Highway sign on HWY 17 outside of Maysville. (Photo by Seth Plank)



■ Pisgah Chapter

By Dan Callaghan, Chair



The Pisgah chapter hosted a meeting on January 31 at River Arts District Brewing in Asheville, NC. Dr. Susan Loeb, a research ecologist and project leader with the USFS Southern Research Station, gave an informative and engaging presentation on how bats respond to various forest management activities and how forest management can be compatible with bat conservation at the stand and landscape scale. The chapter has been enjoying a recent resurgence in member involvement, and 30 people were in attendance.

CALL FOR NC DIVISION AWARD NOMINATIONS

2024 NC Division Award Recipient Nominations are now open! Please contact Clay Altizer, caltizer@forestresources.org, to submit your nominations by April 19, 2024. Nominees must be members of SAF. Award winners will be announced at the NC Division Summer Meeting in Aberdeen, NC, on July 11, 2024.

Division Merit Award The Division Merit Award is the highest award given by the North Carolina Division and is presented to an individual who has made an especially notable contribution to the profession of forestry.

Special Volunteer Service Award. The Volunteer Service Award was established to recognize special, sustained, voluntary service on behalf of SAF.

Young Forester Leadership Award. The Young Forester Leadership Award recognizes outstanding leadership by a young forestry professional in the development and promotion of an individual program or project or for a sustained leadership role benefiting the practice of forestry and the Society. *Nominees must be under 40 years old.*

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NORTH CAROLINA UPDATE, continued

Congratulations to the NC Division Award Recipients at the 2024 APSAF Winter Meeting!



Distinguished Service to Forestry Award - Joann Meyer Cox



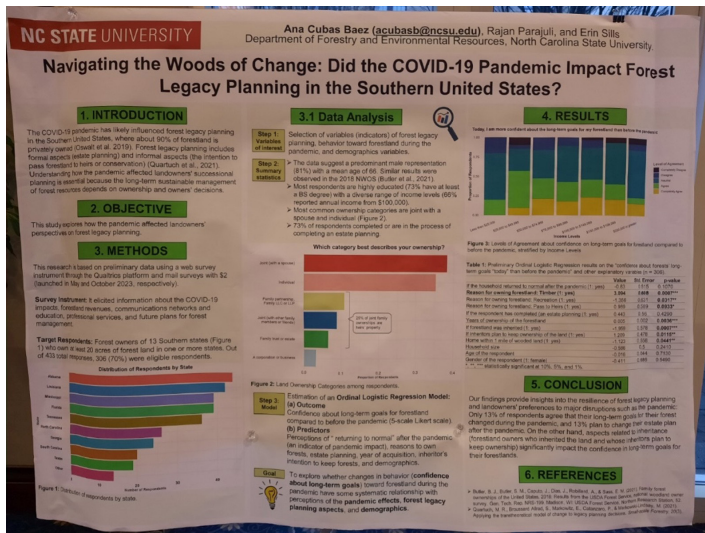
Young Forester Leadership Award - Greg Cooper



Volunteer Service Award - Tara Dickson



Student Presentation Winner - Lauren Gonzalez, PhD Student at NCSU. Lauren was also recognized for her work as the 2023 NC Social Media Intern for APSAF.



Student Poster Winner - Ana Cubas-Baez, PhD Student at NCSU. (Photo by Casey Wofford)

Triangle Chapter

By Michelle Kaiser, Chair

The Triangle Chapter will host its first meeting in 2024 on March 27 with a NC Forest Health Update from Forest Health specialist James Slye and his team with the cooperative forest health program in the NC Forest Service. We are also working in collaboration with the local NC State and Duke Student Chapters to promote their events this spring, and provide other support they need within SAF. All in the Triangle Area are welcome to our events.



Ricky McCutcheon
South Carolina Division Chair

UPDATES FROM THE PALMETTO STATE

SOUTH CAROLINA

Greetings everyone!

My name is Ricky McCutchen, and I am excited to serve as SC Division Chair for 2024. Here's a bit of background about me and my experience with SAF: I grew up in the small town of Bishopville, SC, and currently reside there with my wife and three boys. I attended HGTC and Clemson University. I have been a member of SAF since my days at Clemson and have served in several roles with the Pee Dee Chapter through the years. I work for Charles Ingram Lumber Co. Ingram is a family-owned southern yellow pine sawmill in Florence County. My family and I attend Trinity Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Florence where I recently completed serving two consecutive terms on the diaconate. I am currently serving on the Forestry Association of South Carolina's Board of Director's and participating in Cohort 3 of Clemson's PLEAF Program. Did I mention my boys are 6, 4, and 2? There is not a single dull moment to be found! Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

There is a lot of change currently happening in our nation, our states, and our industry. In some way, directly or indirectly, we've all experienced and have been affected by change in the last few years. This summer in Newberry, the SC Summer Meeting is going to focus on precisely that. Please be sure to mark your calendars for June 12-13, and plan to join us for a fun-filled meeting. Mike Keim, Michael Mills, and crew will be sure you won't leave hungry!

Edisto Chapter

By Asija R. Rice, M.S.CCF



The SAF Edisto Chapter has been busy with various events and meetings. On December 3, 2023, they volunteered at the South Carolina State Museum from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The event was a success, with 50 to 65 participants of all ages decorating tree "cookies" of approximately 3" in diameter for use as Christmas tree ornaments.

On January 15, the chapter held an in-person meeting with guest speaker Brooke McFarland. McFarland works as a National Program Specialist for the USDA Forest Service's Urban & Commu-

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SOUTH CAROLINA UPDATE, continued



nity Forestry Program (Washington Office) and has a BA in Political Science & Government and an MS in Urban Forestry. She discussed Equity and Environmental Justice, emphasizing the core components of successful urban forest management. This presentation has qualified for 1.0 Category 1 CFE.

Brooke McFarland, USDA Forest Service National Program Specialist, spoke to Edisto Chapter members in January. (Photo by Asija Rice.)



On Sunday, April 7, we will volunteer at the family-friendly "Good Fire, Bad Fire" event at the South Carolina State Museum. The event will offer children the opportunity to dress up in a Nomex shirt, hard hat and gloves, and deploy a fire shelter. Attendees will receive giveaways and educational materials for children and adults. Admission to the museum is only \$1 on the first Sunday of each month.

The next meeting is scheduled for



Wednesday, April 24, 2024, from 12-2 p.m. The meeting topic is "Navigating Challenges and Shaping the Future of Logging in South Carolina Together." The event will feature guest speaker Crad Jaynes, President & Chief Executive Officer of the South Carolina Timber Producers Association, Inc. The Association is committed to representing and servicing the professional timber harvesters, timber producers, and timber truckers of South Carolina. Interested individuals can RSVP via email.

■ Pee Dee Chapter

By Teddy Thompson

The Pee Dee Chapter hosted their annual Oyster Roast on February 22 at Damon Hunt Club in Darlington. The meeting was well-attended, and a good time was had by all! Matt Anderson with the NRCS also attended to provide an update and answer questions about current cost-share programs.

■ MARK YOUR CALENDAR Summer Meeting: June 12-13, 2024

SC State Division will host its 2024 Summer Meeting in Newberry from June 12-13, 2024. The meeting host committee includes Mike Keim, Micheal Mills, Tom Brant, Ricky McCutchen, and Tres Hyman. The committee has already started preparing for a wonderful meeting for the upcoming summer. The committee had its first meeting last week in Newberry.



Bill Sweeny
Virginia Division Chair

VIRGINIA

Happy Spring, Appalachian SAFers! It occurs to me that this first message should be full of hope, gratitude, and—with some luck—inspiration.

I'll start with a brief story of my experience. In 2008, as an older, non-traditional student at Haywood Community College, our Chapter Advisor Blair Bishop encouraged me—well, all of us, really—to become a member of the Society of American Foresters, as this was THE organization that represented our profession to legislators at the state and national level. Fast forward to 2009 and our class's first ApSAF Winter meeting and, as luck would have it, our first National Convention, in Orlando. While sitting and waiting for the opening address by the National Student Chair before Quiz Bowl, in a crowd of what seemed like hundreds of students and professionals our ApSAF Council Chair, Joann Cox located the three of us and came to greet us. I clearly remember her saying to us, "Welcome! We're so glad you're here!" We were blown away that someone of Joann's stature would seek our tiny contingent out to greet us personally. I was hooked.

Since then, I've attended every winter meeting that I can. The feeling of being among friends and family grows every year. Oftentimes, we as leaders are asked to describe the "what's in it for me?" to future members and leaders. It's a feeling that's difficult to convey in words. I will tell you that the more time and effort I've put into staying involved and helping with chapter or division projects and meetings, the more personal fulfillment I've felt. My father would tell me that service is its own reward, and he would be right.

I cannot help but be filled with pride as I start this new position within SAF, though you'd be right to admonish me for such a declaration, but I am also deeply humbled by the responsibility. I hope only to be a leader that you can rely on to represent you—all of you—in the coming year, whether you be seasoned, stalwart leaders or students, with your life and careers ahead of you.

To the former, I request that we reaffirm our dedication to our society and profession, and make this a great year. To the latter, I simply say this: Welcome! We're so glad you're here! Stay with us. Grow with us. Become a leader, and if needed, be the change you wish to see in SAF. We want you here.

VIRGINIA SAF UPCOMING EVENTS

We have a big year ahead of us! The Virginia Forestry Association's Forestry Summit at the Boar's Head Resort in Charlottesville is coming up rapidly and promises to be one heck of an event. It will be our next in-person meeting and may take the place of the previously scheduled virtual Executive Committee meeting already on the calendar. Get more information on the Forestry Summit at www.forestrysummit.com.

The annual CFE Extravaganza is currently being planned, with a generous boost of effort by our good friends at the Virginia Cooperative Extension. Look for more information to come in my next missive.

AWARD WINNING MEMBERS

I wanted to recognize Jim Schroering and Mark Books one more time as recipients of the Volunteer Service Award and Merit award, respectively. Each of them has dedicated numerous hours and tremendous effort to the leadership of our Division and their Chapters. Congratulations again, guys!

CONNECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Lastly, former chair Michael Downey made the request that we find opportunities to provide mentorship to our student members, and I'd be remiss if I didn't echo that request again this year. As traditional opportunities for internships become scarcer, I would urge you to reach out to Billy and Scott at Mountain Gateway Community College or Jen and Carolyn at Virginia Tech to find out what their students' needs are. Every opportunity is appreciated.

—continued on page 12

I look forward to speaking with more of you as the year progresses. You can reach me at 540-529-8549.

VIRGINIA UPDATE, continued

Rappahannock Chapter

By Mark Books

Leadership roster for the chapter includes: Chair – Mark Books; Treasurer – Ken Sterner; Secretary – Byrant Bays

High points:

- Rappahannock received the Annual Membership Award at APSAF Winter Meeting in January.
- Bryant Bays stepped up to be Chapter Secretary.
- We are planning a mill tour for a May timeframe.

Low points:

- We are still looking for members to fill our Chair, Chair-Elect, and Membership positions. Please step up to fill these important roles for our chapter!
- Frank Brooks passed away earlier this year. His obituary is included in this issue on page 14.

Skyline Chapter

By Ed Furlow

The Skyline Chapter is building upon groundwork laid down by former leadership members. Former leadership recently completed state-level assignments and will now be drawn back to the local level. Ed Furlow was voted in as the newest Skyline Chapter Chair. He engaged in the 2023 APSAF Leadership Academy and will use the experience to help build future momentum for group. His main goal this year is to reenergize the membership base by providing casual meeting opportunities. On the business end, at least one past chapter idea is being developed for action later this year this year. Traditional annual events, such as firewood cuts, will need member reengagement but remain slated for later this year.

Mountain Gateway Community College

By Billy Newman, Chapter Advisor

Events are in full swing for the MGCC APSAF Chapter! The spring semester has been flying BY, with many students already looking at graduation in just a few more months. First-year students have been getting their first experiences “cruising” out in the woods in their Forest Mensuration class while second-year students have been working hard in the MGCC sawmill, sawing dozens of oak logs graciously donated by local residents.

Just before winter break, students were able to participate in an S-130 Wildland Firefighter Training field day on campus at MGCC. After spending the day cutting fireline, they were officially awarded their wildland firefighting red cards,



MGCC students along with local US Forest Service and VA Department of Forestry partners after their wildland fire field day.

enabling them to fight fire across the country!

In January, a number of students were able to attend the annual APSAF Winter Meeting at the Hotel Roanoke in Virginia. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about cutting-edge research pertaining to forest health, along with getting to network with numerous future employers!



MGCC students at APSAF's Annual Winter Meeting in Roanoke, VA.



Shannon Lewis, the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest Manager, explains various timber stand improvement practices to MGCC students.

In February, second-year students had the great opportunity to tour the Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest here in Virginia. Local VA Department of Forestry staff gave excellent talks about good silvicultural practices and how to sustainably manage forest land.

The rest of this semester continues to be jam-packed, with most students already preparing for summer internships or for taking their big, first steps out into the working world. Regardless of what the future may hold, everyone is looking forward to the spring thaw and the opportunity to get outside in the sun!

Virginia Tech

By Jennifer Gagnon, Chapter Advisor



VT SAF Student Chapter at the Virginia Tech Alumni Social. Back row (l to r): Jessica Rodriguez, Connor Austin, Jennifer Gagnon (faculty advisor), Ed Chamberlyn, Ethan Elder, and Ryan March; Front row (l to r): Jessica Showalter and the Hokie Bird.

The VT SAF Student Chapter sent nine members to the APSAF Annual Winter Meeting in Roanoke, VA. The students in our chapter greatly enjoyed the social at the Pinball Museum. Two graduate students, Austin Holloway and Daria Maslyukova, gave PowerPoint presentations on their research, while two other students, Connor Austin and Rose Wetzel, presented posters.



At Pinball Museum during the APSAF Winter Meeting social in January.

Congratulations to Austin Holloway for winning the second-place award for best student research presentation.

Current VT SAF Student Chapter Chair, Connor Austin, stepped down after two years of serving as the APSAF student representative, and incoming VT SAF Student Chapter Chair Ethan Elder stepped into the role. All of the students greatly enjoyed the conference and strongly recommend that other student members attend future meetings.

The VT SAF Student Chapter plans to continue fundraising through grilled cheese stands in downtown Blacksburg. The chapter also intends to have members participate in a tree planting event March 16 on Virginia Tech's campus. The final meeting before our annual officer elections event is a Quiz Bowl that will include Virginia Tech faculty, an SAF team, and teams from other groups in the College of Natural Resources and Environment. This event was held last year with great success, so our team is excited to bring it back, hopefully making it an annual tradition.



Attendees gathered for a photo at SAF's Rising Professionals Conference in Baton Rouge, LA, February 2024.

TESTIMONIAL FROM ETHAN ELDER AFTER ATTENDING THE RISING PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE:

My name is Ethan Elder, and I am currently the Chair-Elect for the VT SAF Student Chapter and the APSAF Student Representative. I had the privilege of attending SAF's first ever Rising Professionals Conference in Baton Rouge, LA. I attended with other students and young professionals in forestry from across the United States.

The main takeaway I had from the conference was how to introduce new technology into our field without undermining the original techniques foresters have been dependent on for many years. Other topics of the conference were problem solving, professional networking skills, leadership skills, innovation skills, and forest industry updates. I also participated in the Innovation Challenge, where teams of 4-5 participants were tasked with innovating a new product and selling it to the conference in a 1-3-minute elevator pitch. I am grateful to have


—continued on page 14

VIRGINIA UPDATE, continued


been a part of the Rising Professionals Conference and plan to attend again. I appreciate the financial support provided by APSAF, Virginia Division SAF, and the Blue Ridge Chapter that allowed me to attend.



VT SAF Student Chapter officers advertising upcoming events and T-shirts.




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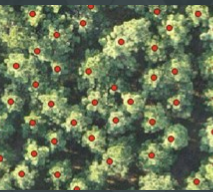
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IN MEMORIAM

FRANK O. BROOKS, JR.

Frank O. Brooks, Jr., manager of Forest Resources Management, Inc. in Aylett, Va., died at 79 on Feb. 13 at his home, Dunluce in King William. Since 1982, he was a consulting forester and state appraiser, first operating for over 30 years at his King William residence. Brooks was universally regarded as a consummate forestry professional, serving as a deeply respected mentor to leaders throughout Virginia's forestry community. As a forest landowner, he was a member of American Tree Farm Systems. He was a long time Board member, and honored "Forester-of-the-Year" (2002) as well as Treasurer of the Virginia Forestry Association. He served on the Virginia Board of Forestry, was a member of The Society of American Foresters, Association of Consulting Foresters, was a Certified Forester in Virginia and Maryland and a Certified General Real Estate Appraiser. As a member of Forest Landowners Association, he served on the Board, and was honored "Forester-of-the-Year" (2016).

Brooks held a B.S. in business administration from the University of Richmond and a Masters from Duke University in forest economics. He made early contributions to Best Management Practices in timber management and in quail habitat management. His favorite sport was hunting quail with his fine English setters.

THOMAS D. MAY

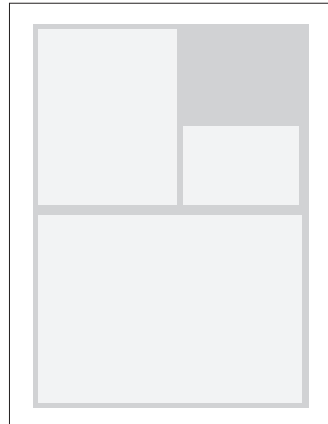
Thomas D. May, retired Virginia Department of Forestry supervisor for Charlotte County, VA, and member of the Society of American Foresters since 1963, passed away in hospital, after a brief illness on January 17, 2024. Forestry was his much-loved career, and he began forestry studies at Kent State University in Ohio in 1957, transferring to take a BA degree in forestry from the University of Michigan in January 1963. He took early retirement in 1991 and enjoyed traveling to European countries to observe forestry practices. He enjoyed driving local roads to point out tracts of local landowners whom he assisted as well as planting trees on his property. His collection of news clippings attests to his environmental concerns along with his complete collection of SAF and Virginia forestry publications.



The TRAIL BLAZER

The Trail Blazer is published quarterly for members of the Appalachian Society of American Foresters (APSAF).

Information on advertising in The Trail Blazer is available online at www.apsaf.org or contact the APSAF Treasurer by email at apsaftreasurer@gmail.com.



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EVENTS

■ **Duke SAF 14th Annual Symposium**
March 23, 2024 • Duke's Nicholas School
Monetization of Ecosystems in Forestry

■ **VA SAF Meeting at the Virginia Forestry Summit**
April 23-24, 2024 • Boars Head Resort • Charlottesville, VA
Information and registration are available at forestrysummit.com

■ **Invasive Plant Management Workshop**
April 24, 2024, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Edisto REC,
64 Research Street Blackville, SC 29817
Approved for 5 hours of Category 1 CFE credits, 5 credits of SC Pesticide Recertification CCH (CORE), and GA Pesticide Recertification Commercial Cat. 23 (3 credits) and Private (1 credit). This workshop is being held. Fees: \$30 (no credits) and \$80 (with credits). Registration includes morning break and lunch.

■ **SC SAF Summer Meeting**
June 12-13, 2024 • Newberry, SC

■ **NC SAF Summer Meeting**
July 11-12, 2024 • Aberdeen, NC

■ **SAF 2024 National Convention**
September 17-20, 2024 • Loveland, CO

MARCH 29 is the deadline for lecture presentations, organized sessions, panel discussions, roundtable discussions, science flashes, and workshops. [Find out more about submitting a proposal here.](#)



International Oak Symposium



Science-based Management for Dynamic Oak Forests

■ **International Oak Symposium: Science-Based Management for Dynamic Oak Forests**
October 7-10, 2024 • Knoxville, Tennessee, USA

(registration will open March 2024)

■ **SAVE THE DATE! 2025 APSAF Annual Conference**
January 22-25, 2025 • Hotel Ballast • Wilmington, NC

APSAF is one of 31 state/multi-state societies that make up the national body known as the Society of American Foresters (SAF). All forestry and natural resource management students and graduates are eligible for membership with SAF. For more information, visit apsaf.org

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR NATIONAL SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS (SAF) HEADQUARTERS:
2121 K Street NW, Suite 315, Washington, DC 20037 • Phone: 202-938-3910; Toll Free: 866-897-8720;
Email: membership@safnet.org or visit SAF's website at eforester.org.



2024 APSAF Board of Directors Meetings

Regular monthly board meetings are held via Zoom starting at 3:30 p.m. Upcoming meeting dates are as follows:

APRIL 1	MAY 13	JUNE 3
JULY 8	AUGUST 5	
SEPTEMBER 2	OCTOBER 7	
NOVEMBER 4	DECEMBER 2	

2024 SFI ANNUAL CONFERENCE



■ **SFI Annual Conference**
June 4-6, 2024
Loews Atlanta Hotel
Atlanta, GA

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is offering scholarships to selected American and Canadian young professionals and students studying environmental science, natural resources, sustainability, or related fields, to attend the 2024 SFI Annual Conference. Applications will be accepted until April 6, 2024.

