



## School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences

**APRIL 2025**



LAKEWATCH volunteers prepare to collect water quality data in a Florida lake, part of this statewide effort to track changes in Florida's water chemistry over the years.  
Photo by Suzette Cook.

### News

LAKEWATCH, a citizen science program that is part of SFFGS Extension, saved the state of Florida an estimated \$5 million in water-quality monitoring costs in 2024, according to its annual report. LAKEWATCH is one of the oldest and largest volunteer water-quality monitoring programs in the United States, with an estimated 883 active volunteers currently monitoring 627 waterbodies in 47 Florida counties, including lakes, rivers, springs, and estuaries.

SFFGS' Geomatics Extension program, the first of its kind in the U.S., has developed a Surveying Merit Badge for Scouts. On Saturday, April 12, 18 Scouts gathered at Austin Cary Forest to learn from experts in the field about mapping and drafting, leveling, creating boundaries, and 3-D laser scanning. All 18 Scouts earned their Surveying Merit Badges that day, which ultimately helps raise awareness about surveying as a career among Florida's youth.

SFFGS has launched an undergraduate certificate program in Forest Health Management, which will prepare students for research or forest management careers that proactively address issues such as invasive species, climate change and severe weather impacts, and disease. UF is one of the few institutions in the United States that offers credentials in forest health.



Scouts earn their Surveying Merit Badges. Photos by Suzette Cook.



## Awards

Dr. Frank Asche, Professor of Natural Resource Economics, was elected a Lifetime Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Dr. Lindsey Reisinger, Assistant Professor of Freshwater Ecology, received the 2025 VP Promise Award, a UF/IFAS award that recognizes exceptional mentorship of young scientists. Dr. Reisinger also received the Richard L. Jones Outstanding New Faculty Research Award for 2025, one of the most prestigious awards offered by the UF/IFAS Dean for Research Office. It recognizes untenured faculty members who have begun a distinguished research record since arriving at UF.

Dr. Jiangxiao Qiu, Assistant Professor of Landscape Ecology and Ecosystem Services, received the University of Florida Research Foundation (UFRF) Professorship Award, a three-year professorship created to recognize faculty members whose distinguished record of research is expected to lead to distinction in their field.

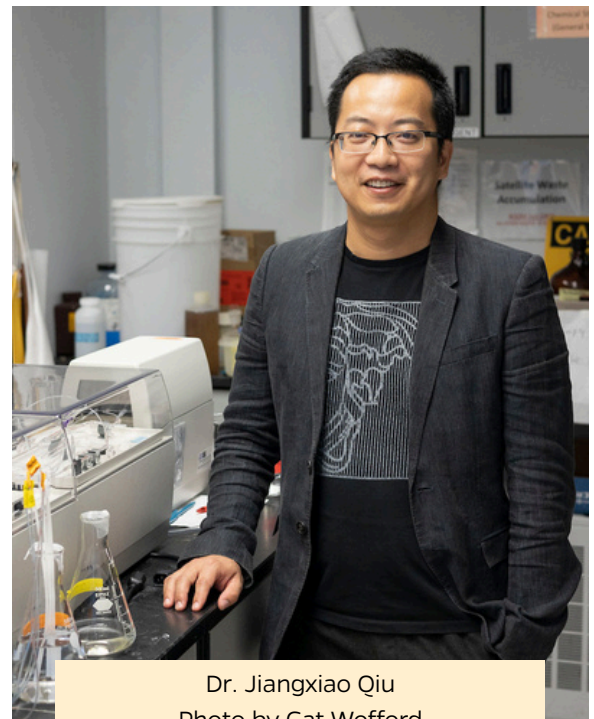
Scott Sager, SFFGS Assistant Director and Forester, received the National Agriculture Alumni Development Association “Above and Beyond” Award, which recognizes faculty or staff belonging to a NAADA member institution who has given freely of their time and worked outside of their official responsibilities to further the goals of their institution’s alumni, communications, development or student services programs.

The following SFFGS faculty members have authored or coauthored publications that have been distinguished by UF/IFAS as 2025 High Impact Research Publications:

- Dr. Frank Asche, “Environmental, economic, and social sustainability in aquaculture: The aquaculture performance indicators,” published in *Nature Communications*
- Dr. Stephanie Bohlman and Dr. Jiangxiao Qiu, “Grassland intensification effects cascade to alter multifunctionality of wetlands within metaecosystems,” published in *Nature Communications*
- Dr. Victoria Donovan, Dr. Raelene Crandall, Dr. Jennifer Fill, and Dr. Carissa Wonkka, “Increasing large wildfire in the Eastern United States,” published in *Geophysical Research Letters*



Dr. Lindsey Reisinger  
Photo courtesy of Dr. Reisinger



Dr. Jiangxiao Qiu  
Photo by Cat Wofford



Scott Sager (middle) with undergraduate students Trenton Waters (left) and Dylan Ballew (right). Photo by Suzette Cook.



## Recently Started Grants

“The Power of Connections: Harvesting Lessons and Strengthening Coalitions for Amazonian Conservation” – \$890,000 awarded to Dr. Karen Kainer from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

“Florida Lakewatch Pasco County FY 24/25” – \$16,000 awarded to Dr. Gretchen Lescord from Pasco County

“AI-Powered Characterization of Solids and Microplastics in Stormwater Runoff and Their Mitigation via Green and Gray Infrastructure in Urban Coastal Areas” – \$83,519 awarded to Dr. Anna Braswell from Florida International University

“Creating a Decision-Making Tool to Value Ecosystem Services on Potential Land Acquisitions in Hillsborough County Florida” – \$47,796 awarded to Dr. Kotryna Klizentyte from Hillsborough County

“Continuing the Support of Coastal Resilience with Inflation Reduction Act at GCOOS” – \$611,868 awarded to Dr. Susan Lowerre-Barbieri from Texas A&M University



Photos clockwise from top left: a child examines a dragonfly specimen at SFFGS' 2025 Spring Celebration; Dr. Wayne Smith, former director of SFFGS, stands with Dr. Ludie Bond, recent graduate of the Forest Resources and Conservation program; a Geomatics student conducts a water boundary survey in Cedar Key; staff member Aaron Smith displays his Young Forester Award from the Florida Division of the Society of American Foresters. Photos by Suzette Cook and Stephanie Castellano.

