



School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences

JUNE 2025



Customers browse the inventory at the UF/IFAS Native Plant Nursery Sale on June 22. This year's sale raised nearly \$30,000 for the nursery, which works to increase native plant supply within the horticultural market and educate the public about the benefits of native plants. Photo by Suzette Cook.

TENURE & PROMOTION ANNOUNCEMENTS



DR. KAI LORENZEN, PROMOTED TO
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR



ERIC CASSIANO, PROMOTED TO
EXTENSION ASSOCIATE SCIENTIST



DR. CARLOS SILVA, PROMOTED TO
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

CONGRATULATIONS!

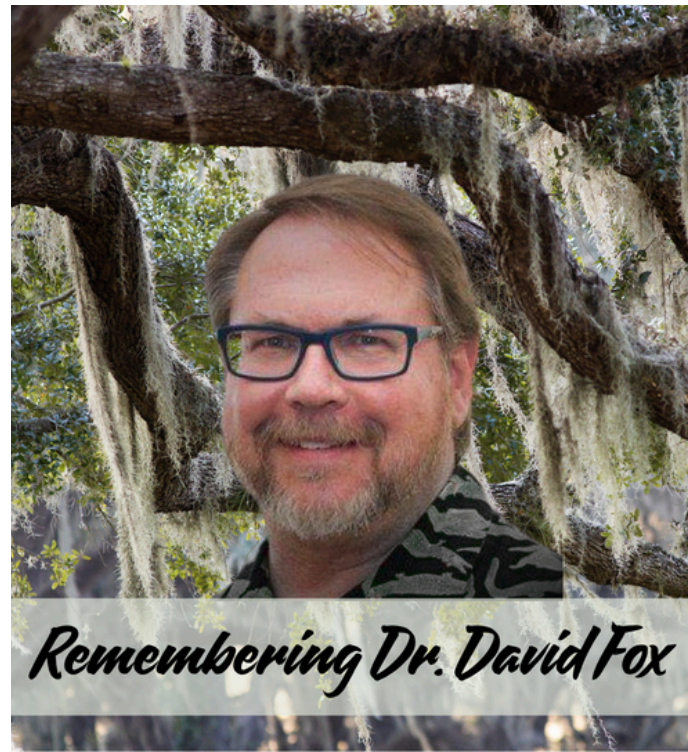
It is with great sadness that we share the news of Dr. David Fox's passing on Friday, June 27, 2025. Dr. Fox was an adjunct faculty member and urban forestry specialist in SFFGS.

Dr. Fox earned his Ph.D. from the School in 2015, studying the ecology and growth of Sabal palmetto, Florida's state tree. After a distinguished 30-year career in public and private forestry, he returned to academia with the goal of preparing and inspiring the next generation of natural resource professionals. He served our students and School with dedication, bringing unmatched field experience and a calm, generous spirit to every course and project.

Dr. Fox helped teach several of our core undergraduate classes, including Urban Forestry, Forest Conservation and People (affectionately known to many as "Trees and Peeps"), Florida's Forest Communities, Natural Resource Sampling, Forest Resource Information Systems, and Dendrology and Forest Plants. His ability to bring relevance to the classroom through real-world application left a lasting impact on students and colleagues alike.

We will miss David's expertise, his mentorship, and most of all, his kindness.

A memorial will be held on July 19 at 11 a.m. at North Central Baptist Church, 8001 NW 23rd Ave, Gainesville, FL.



Remembering Dr. David Fox

RECENTLY-STARTED GRANTS

- "Gone With the Wind: Hidden Forest Health Consequences of Hurricane Helene" - \$299,982 awarded to Dr. Tania Quesada and Dr. Bill Hammond from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture
- "Bioprofiles and Risk Screens 2025-26" - \$202,002.24 awarded to Dr. Jeffrey Hill and Dr. Quenton Tuckett from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- "Development and Testing of an Affordable and Efficient Marker Panel to Advance Southern Hard Clam (*Mercenaria campechiensis*) Aquaculture" - \$12,590 awarded to Dr. Angela Collins from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science
- "Restaurant and Supermarket Demand for Important Aquaculture Species" - \$35,909 awarded to Dr. Frank Asche, Dr. Thomas Anderson and Dr. Andrew Ropicki by Mississippi State University
- "Fish Spawner - Evaluating Environmental Drivers and Behavioral Traits Over Life Stages with Diverging Spatial Ecology" - \$30,445.58 awarded to Dr. Susan Lowerre-Barbieri by the Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior De Investigaciones Cientificas (Madrid, Spain)

NEWS & AWARDS

The annual UF/IFAS Native Plant Nursery Sale, which took place this year on June 21-22, raised nearly \$30,000! The Native Plant Nursery is run by postdoctoral associate Dr. Gage LaPierre, who oversees students growing an estimated 20,000 plants. Customers browsed an expansive inventory that included grasses, shrubs, trees, wild blueberries and even legumes. Proceeds fund the salaries of undergraduate students who intern with the Native Plant Nursery, as well as research and Extension activities.



Assistant Research Scientist Dr. Tania Quesada is the principal investigator of "Gone with the wind: hidden forest health consequences of Hurricane Helene," a project funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The project will investigate potential links between hurricane damage to trees and the spread of pitch canker disease, which has impacted natural and commercial pine forests around the world. The results will help timber companies and forest landowners plan for potential disease outbreaks after storms, as well as identify more genetically resilient trees. (In the photo to the right Dr. Quesada is collecting fusiform rust samples for another project.)



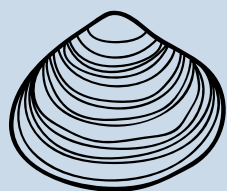


The 2025 Florida 4-H Forest Ecology Contest took place this year on May 29 at Austin Cary Forest. 4-H students from various Florida counties took part in competitions around tree identification, wildlife identification, forest health, tree measurement, and using map and compass. Thanks to the volunteers, faculty and staff from the Florida 4-H Youth Development Program, SFFGS, the UF/IFAS Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the Florida Forest Service for your help in making sure that these young scientists had a fun and successful day!



Dr. Karen Kainer (pictured at left in green) and Dr. Jonathan Dain are helping lead Amazon Connections, a project focused on building interdisciplinary partnerships to address conservation and bio-socioeconomic challenges in the Amazon. The project, which is managed by UF's Tropical Conservation and Development Program (where Dr. Kainer and Dr. Dain have joint appointments) kicked off last month in Brazil.

SFFGS faculty and staff members were featured in an award-winning episode of Voice of the Sea, a television program produced by Hawaii Sea Grant. The episode “Farming Clams, Sponges and Oysters” won two Telly Awards: a Silver Award in the Sustainability programming category and a Bronze Award in the Public Interest & Awareness category. Faculty and staff who appear on film include Leslie Sturmer, Dr. Savanna Barry, Dr. Angela Collins, and Dr. Brittany Hall-Scharf, recent doctoral graduate of our Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences program.



Dr. Carlos Silva, Assistant Professor of Quantitative Forest Science, received a 2025 CALS Innovation in Teaching Award, as well as a 2024 UF Excellence Award for Assistant Professors. Dr. Silva is also the recipient of the UF/IFAS Large Grant Leadership Award, stemming from his NSF grant “Frameworks: OpenForest4D - A web-based cyberinfrastructure platform for next generation 4D forest mapping and monitoring” (\$3.3 million).

Congratulations to David Godwin, winner of the Staff Member of the Month award for June 2025! David was nominated by Dr. Raelene Crandall for his exceptional performance and leadership as the director of the Southern Fire Exchange (SFE), a federally funded program connecting wildland fire scientists and fire practitioners across the Southeastern U.S.