



MAY 2025

School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences



This month, students in Dr. Jason Vogel's "Longleaf Pine: Ecology, Management & Restoration" course traveled to Georgia to learn from researchers at the Jones Center at Ichauway. Photo courtesy of the Jones Center at Ichauway.

Awards

Deb Stone, Invasive Species Extension Coordinator, was recognized as the Staff Member of the Month for May. Deb was nominated for her "herculean" work developing a series of tiered invasive species trainings for the State of Florida. These trainings, which have attracted funding support from the Florida Forest Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and Florida Park Service, will have profound impacts on upland invasive species management and lead to more effective management of natural lands.

Recent Ph.D. graduate Dr. Audrey Looby (co-advisors: Dr. Charles Martin and Dr. Mike Allen) received a UF/IFAS Award of Excellence for Graduate Research. Her dissertation on "The Ecological Importance, Management Applications, and Outreach Potential of Underwater Sounds" was named the UF/IFAS Best Dissertation in the Natural Resources category. Dr. Looby is now a Banting postdoctoral fellow at the University of Victoria, where she researches anthropogenic noise pollution in seagrass, coral, and kelp ecosystems.

Recent M.S. graduate Maggie Dakin (advisor: Dr. Josh Patterson) also received a UF/IFAS Award of Excellence for Graduate Research. Maggie's thesis, "Exploration of Larval Biology and Juvenile Co-Culture with Corals in Three Sympatric Sea Urchins," was named Best Thesis in the Natural Resources category. Maggie now lives in San Diego, where she is applying to veterinary school with the intention to pursue aquatic medicine.

Dr. Mike Allen, professor of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences and director of the Nature Coast Biological Station, received the 2025 Rich Calteaux Award from the Florida Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. The award recognizes individuals who have maintained a long-term commitment to research, management, and conservation of Florida's fisheries and aquatic resources.

Congratulations Spring 2025 Graduates!



67 B.S.

19 Master's

2 Ph.D.

Recently Started Grants

"The Apalachicola Regional Restoration Initiative: Tactical Ecological Data Collection of Intact, Disturbed, and Restored Areas in the Apalachicola Region" – \$428,353 awarded to Dr. Eben Broadbent from Florida A&M University

"Testing Eucalyptus SPP for Biomass and Oil Yield" - \$18,837.96 awarded to Dr. Peter Gary and Christopher Dervinis from Oak Ridge National Laboratory

News

Ph.D. candidate Bana Kabalan (advisor: Dr. Lindsey Reisinger) had her paper “Intraspecific variation in crayfish behavior alters stream ecosystem functions” accepted to the journal Ecology Letters. Bana’s research shows that differences in crayfish “personalities” can determine their ecological roles.

Dr. Shirley Baker, director of the Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences program, completed UF’s Advanced Leadership for Academics and Professionals (ALAP) program, which offers leadership development training to UF faculty and staff in leadership positions.

Dr. Carlos Silva’s lab had their research on mapping hurricane damage using lidar remote sensing technology and AI featured on UF News. This project is funded by NASA, and Dr. Silva and several members of his lab traveled to the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland this month to present their results so far.

SFFGS was a sponsor of the GeoHab 2025: Marine Geological and Biological Habitat Mapping conference, which took place this month in the Florida Keys. The conference was organized by Dr. Vincent Lecours, courtesy assistant professor at SFFGS, and convened geomatics professionals and marine scientists involved in seafloor mapping projects.

The majestic Norman Hall live oak, which was felled by Hurricane Helene last September, will live on through its sprouts. Green acorns collected from the remains of the tree have germinated in their new greenhouse home, thanks to the efforts of Gage LaPierre, manager of the Native Plant Nursery and SFFGS postdoctoral associate. Dr. Michael Andreu estimated that the Norman Hall oak, an iconic and well-loved tree on campus, was probably around 200 years old when it fell. Some of its sprouts will be planted back in the Norman Hall courtyard.



Photos clockwise from top: Dr. Shirley Baker in February 2025 with an award recognizing her 25 years to service to the University of Florida; Dr. Carlos Silva’s students at NASA’s Goddard Center, where they presented their research mapping hurricane damage to forests; live oak acorns taken from the iconic Norman Hall oak are sprouting (against the odds) in the Native Plant Nursery; Native Plant Nursery manager Gage LaPierre proudly displays the live oak sprouts. Photos by Stephanie Castellano, Suzette Cook, and Carlos Silva.

