Duke Forestry and the Duke Forest: Impact through Partnership

Duke UNIVERSITY

Thanks to your support and generous donations, the Nicholas School's Master of Forestry Program and the Duke Forest continue to educate, inspire, and facilitate research for our shared natural resources.

Jeffrey Vincent Reflects on Forestry After 20-Year Career at Duke

Jeffrey Vincent, Clarence F. Korstian Professor of Forest Economics and Management and former co-chair of the Master of Forestry program at the Nicholas School of the Environment, is planning to retire in 2027. We spoke with Jeff about what he's most proud of during his 20 years at Duke:

There is a lot to be proud of. The Master of Forestry program has been **reaccredited twice** by the Society of American Foresters since I joined Duke in 2007, which is evidence that we're doing what's necessary to train our students to be effective foresters. I'm also proud of the achievements our students have made. **Graduates of the program are leaders** in the forest carbon space, as well as the space of forest certification: programs that give consumers confidence that when they buy something made of wood, they know it came from a forest that is managed sustainably. Our graduates are also experts in areas from renewable energy to urban forestry to land conservation.

We have an **exceptional and supportive alumni network** that continues to be a source of ideas for program innovations, such as a short course on timberland investment for working professionals that Chris Zinkhan MBA/MF'81 designed and, on a bigger scale, the Natural Resources Finance Initiative (NRFI). Scott Jones MF'81 identified an opportunity to train students in forestland investment, and our alumni community made contributions that enabled us to hire Joe Bachman MF'95 as an executive-in-residence to launch NRFI.

The forestry program has also been connected to **environmental justice** for some time. Forests are too often an overlooked source of rural livelihoods. About ten years ago, Sari Palmroth started requiring students in her Silviculture Prescription class to develop forest management plans for disadvantaged landowners in the state. Land is a critical asset for these landowners, who are harmed if they don't have access to best management practices.

Finally, I'm proud of the **camaraderie of the program** across students, faculty, and staff and the partnerships we enjoy across the university. The first and foremost partnership is with the Duke Forest. There would literally be no MF program without the Forest. Within the school, the program benefits from exceptional support from the Office of Development and Alumni Relations and Student Services.

Read the interview here

Edward McDonald MEM/MF'26 Gets Hands-on Experience During Assistantship with Duke Forest

In his first year as a MEM/MF student, Eddie McDonald became the stand-out candidate for an assistantship with the Duke Forest. Since then, Eddie has become an invaluable member of the team.

Managing a teaching and research forest comes with a wide variety of responsibilities, and Eddie eagerly jumped in to help. His attention to detail proved essential for carefully updating their database of Duke Forest research publications and refreshing the content for their educational materials. In the field, Eddie was just as thorough and productive. He honed his sawyer skills clearing storm debris and conducting trail maintenance, and he quickly became a trusted field team member.

This year, Eddie continues his work with Duke Forest as a Green Devil. Through this program, he serves as an intern with their team while also serving as an ambassador for the Office of Climate and Sustainability.

Alyssa Briggs MF'26 Joins the Duke Forest Team as Summer Intern

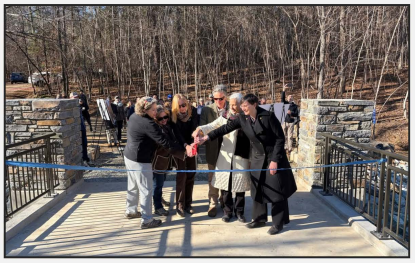
Alyssa is a talented and passionate Master of Forestry student who contributed to three major projects this past summer as the second Bruce and Ginny Roberts Intern: a resample of the Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) plots, site preparation for the New Hope Creek Restoration Projects (see below), and cleanup of roads and trails after Tropical Storm Chantal.

The Bruce and Ginny Roberts Internship Fund, established in 2023, is now the sole source of funding for internships in the Duke Forest. With continued support, this fund can provide more students like Alyssa with transformative opportunities to apply classroom knowledge in the field.

News You'll Love: New Hope Creek Restoration is Complete!

New Hope Creek is the lifeblood of the Duke Forest's Korstian Division and a vital tributary to Jordan Lake, a drinking water source for our region. This undertaking, supported by conservation-minded members of the Duke Forest and Nicholas School communities, was deeply collaborative, uniting staff, students, researchers, experts, and community members in a shared responsibility to promote a healthy, resilient stream ecosystem. The completed phases include:

- Deconstruction and removal of the Concrete Bridge.
- Construction of a new, clear-span bridge approx. 150 feet upstream from the Concrete Bridge.
- Demolition of the defunct Billy Erwin Dam to restore more natural flow conditions.



Teaching and Research

Restoring this vital ecosystem is about more than just completing the construction projects; it's about ensuring that the restoration efforts have a lasting and measurable impact. To fully understand the ecological benefits of these projects and provide students with hands-on field experience, Duke Forest is:

- Capturing high-resolution LiDAR data with seasonal drone flights
- Monitoring New Hope Creek for macroinvertebrates
- Providing students with hands-on learning opportunities
- Sustaining their partnership with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- Funding exploratory research opportunities

Supporting Duke's Climate Goals

The New Hope Creek restoration projects support Duke's Climate Commitment by enhancing local biodiversity, improving ecosystem resilience, and creating expanded opportunities for climate-related research and education in the Duke Forest.