

SOUTHERN ASPECT



Southern Research Station

Asheville, North Carolina

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1998 Capitol Christmas Tree... a Carolina Native

by Trish Francis

In 1974, twenty-four Christmas's ago, North Carolina provided the Nation's Christmas tree for the U.S. Capitol. This year, once again North Carolina provided the tree, a 50-foot Fraser fir. This year's tree was chosen from a site only 200 feet from where the 1974 tree grew on Roan Mountain in Mitchell County (approximately 50 miles northwest of Asheville). The tree was harvested on November 12, cut by Forest Service employees and gently lowered to the ground with a crane. Then on November 15 a helicopter carried the tree off the mountain. The tree toured western North Carolina on a flatbed truck, appearing in many Christmas parades and Christmas gatherings where people could sign the truck's sideboards. It finally arrived at the Nation's capitol on November 30. The tree lighting ceremony took place on December 8.

No Federal funds were allotted for this project. Many partners and sponsors worked together to make it happen. The sponsors put out a brochure announcing the project that said, "Fraser firs, native to the high elevations of North Carolina, represent 90 percent of all Christmas trees grown in the State. Fraser firs were widespread during the Ice Age, but the warming climate left them growing only above 4,500 feet in the Southern Appalachians. This is generally an area of high rainfall, snow, and fog. Although there's a popular belief that air pollution is killing the trees, no scientific evidence supports that idea. Most agree mortality is due to a tiny, foreign insect, called a balsam woolly adelgid."

The adelgid, native to Europe, injects a toxin as it sucks tree fluids, and the tree dies 1 to 7 years after infestation. Today few old trees remain. However, the insect seems to have little effect on young trees. The Fraser fir Christmas tree industry should continue to thrive, if not to supply our Nation's Capitol, surely to add Christmas cheer to homes throughout the Eastern United States. 🌲

Coweeta Schoolyard LTER

by Robert McCollum

Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory is participating in the National Science Foundation's School Yard - Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) project. The Coweeta LTER site, administered and staffed by The University of Georgia, a long time Coweeta research affiliate, received a supplemental grant in their 1998-99 budget year to start this project. School Yard LTER is designed to formally provide instruction, field research experiences, data summary and analysis experience to K-16 students and instructors using Coweeta LTER research

projects as their example. The overall goal of the project is to reinforce the importance of long-term research and environmental awareness in the curricula of K-16 science instructors and to let students get first hand experience conducting field research alongside science professionals.

As a means of public outreach the Coweeta LTER and USDA Forest Service scientists and staff have for many years conducted science education tours for user groups including primary, secondary and college education classes, visiting scientists, forest and land managers, and community interest groups. As an extension of this involvement in education, the School Yard LTER project has provided the Coweeta LTER site with the means to establish research activities with student groups from Southwestern Community College in Webster, NC, 6th grade science students at Macon Middle School in Franklin, NC, and high school biology students at Rabun Gap Nacoochee School (RGNS) in Dillard, GA.

Students from Southwestern Community College have conducted three field measurements as part of the LTER Regionalization project involving the measuring of carbon flux in environmental components including soil, roots, leaves and tree stems.

Environmental Studies II students at RGNS conducted a riparian zone restoration along Sutton Branch which flows through school property and are now assisting Coweeta in the monitoring of the effectiveness of this restoration by collecting samples from seven over-land flow collectors after each storm event. The students will be bringing their stored samples to the analytical lab at Coweeta to participate in their analysis for chemical content and suspended solids.

(continued on page 2...)



Students collecting samples for Coweeta schoolyard LTER study.

From the Director's Desk...

Editor's note: In this issue of the Southern Aspect, we are departing from the series we began last year dealing with social changes and adaptive behaviors affecting us all. We will resume and complete the five-part series in the next issue.

Once again the holiday season has come upon us quickly, so quickly as to intensify what already may seem an impossibly fast-paced and complicated life style. Presents to buy, wrap, and send. Friends and family to host or visit. Cards to mail. Food to cook. Money to spend. Expectations to try to meet. All are a part of the season's festivities, but they can be overwhelming and exhausting if we let them rule our minds and hearts.

So my wish to you is to take care of yourself. To find the peace and happiness that comes from being good to yourself and the people around you. And to take pride in your accomplishments for the year that has passed.

Here at the Southern Station, our accomplishments have been many and significant—I'm so proud of the science we've created and of the progress we've made in serving our customers and each other. Here are some highlights:

- 1 We lead the Nation in transforming our periodic inventory process to a continuous annual inventory (SAFIS). This year we began inventories in six States, with more than \$2.7 million in State contributed funds leveraging Federal funding.
- 1 Our national Forest Health Monitoring program has begun preparing a special supplement to the RPA Assessment using the Sustainable Forest Management Criteria and Indicators.
- 1 Work is nearly complete on the updated "National Survey on Recreation and the Environment in the United States."
- 1 In cooperation with Region 8, Region 9, and the North Central Station, our scientists contributed significantly to the assessment of the ecological, economic, and social conditions in the Interior Highlands, scheduled for printing early next year.
- 1 Our research units and their collaborators published 751 technical publications, including 223 articles in refereed journals and a book on forest sustainability in a changing environment.
- 1 Station research products continue to be sought out and used by the southern forestry community and beyond, as evidenced by customer orders for over 120,000 publications and increasing reliance on Web site access to data and publications.
- 1 The Station received the Chief's Customer Service Award, recognizing our high level of emphasis on prompt and courteous response to customer requests.
- 1 Our university science seminars reached over 20,000 people, and our Conservation Education Outreach (summer intern) Program reached 2,500 children.
- 1 The Station Civil Rights Implementation Team led us to adopt a paradigm shift in the way we define Civil Rights and address interpersonal problems. Through personal contacts, handouts, and a videotape, the team aggressively marketed an innovative move toward a human rights perspective and a recommitment to the Continuous Improvement Process.

We all can take pride in these accomplishments and feel optimistic as we contemplate what can be achieved in the coming year. But for now, ease back, take the time to savor the joys of friendship and family, invest in yourself, and have some fun. I wish you and yours a safe and happy holiday and don't worry about the extra pounds—I expect that next year will be at least as busy and productive as 1998!




People Profile

by Trish Francis

Nathan Schiff, Research Entomologist at Stoneville, Mississippi was born in New York City, and "raised everywhere." Nathan spent 10 years in England, from ages 6 to 16, where his father was a businessman. He has worked

for the Forest Service for nearly two years. Nathan was working as a post doctoral fellow for Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in Albany, CA when he applied for his current position in Stoneville. Nathan says he loves being an entomologist. In fact he doesn't consider his job work at all. "As far as I'm concerned, I've never worked a day in my life. If I won the lotto, I'd do the same thing I'm doing now. I'd travel the world collecting bugs." Nathan went on to say that he is naturally curious. "I study things nobody knows about."

Nathan loves to travel. He's made it to 43 countries so far, and has a personal goal of traveling to 100 in his lifetime. His most notable trip was an expedition to map caves in Borneo, an adventure that was written up by National Geographic in the September 1998 issue. Another of Nathan's loves is volleyball. While at Vanderbilt University, Nathan coached the men's club team.

When at home, Nathan grows orchids and carnivorous plants. He said you'd be surprised to see how easy it is to germinate seeds from fruit bought in supermarkets. Especially easy to grow are kiwi and papaya plants. 🌱

**Happy Holidays from
the editorial staff of
Southern Aspect!**

Coweeta (from page 1...)

Sixth grade science students at Macon Middle School have collected litterfall as part of the LTER gradient study, sorted and "walked through" the analytical process of determining nutrient content of litterfall, and conducted a plant community survey at another of Coweeta's riparian restoration sites. Brian Klooppel, LTER site manager, Lynne Garrison, Sixth Grade teacher, and Bob McCollum, USFS Biological Science Technician recently attended the first School Yard LTER Education Workshop at the Biosphere-2 in Oracle Arizona. This workshop was held to allow all the participating LTER sites to have input into the design and future direction of the School Yard LTER project. It is hoped that School Yard LTER will be able to help bolster the national science standards for each student group, improve the understanding of the need for long-term environmental studies among students and educators, and involve students in hands on research projects alongside people that do science for a living. 🌱

Notable Customer Comments from 1998....

"Forest Service publications provided at no cost are extremely useful in Forestry education." D.Richter, Ph.D., School of Forestry, Houghton, MI

"I am a NIPL and greatly appreciate the forestry information available from the Southern Research Station." S. Ozier, Brandon, MS

"I deeply appreciate the opportunity to receive publications from USFS research stations." A. Lundgren, New Brighton, MN

"Thank you for the information received. This type of service provided a great reference source." Nature's Common Elements, Barrie, ON

"Great way to keep abreast of new technology and findings." W. Rosso, Central City, KY

"More research is needed that can be used by private landowners and field foresters." J. Maxwell, Waycross, GA

"The services provided by F.S. Research Stations are essential. District personnel can not do the research or access the literature these folks can." N. Barrett, Kremmling, CO

"I have been a long time patron of USDA Forest Service facilities and services and would like you to know I am continuously impressed with the quality and breadth of services." T. Mathers, Ontario, Canada

"Keep up the good work! Pubs are very helpful." D. McNally, Lothion, MD

"Thank you very much for the valuable literature provided over the years." D. Swanson, New Marshfield, OH

"Very good information resource. Thanks." K. Reitter, Skippers, VA

"The people at USFS have always served well. I wish I could say the same for those who are leading the organization. The current policy decisions are very poor and misguided." (no name given)

"I am very appreciative for the informative and useful literature. It is a worthwhile and helpful service." B. Valleskey, Stillwater, OK

"This is a tremendous service that should be continued and funded." (no name given)

"We need to continue to provide a wide range of goods and services from our National Forests. Research facilities help us know the right way to manage the forests." D.Soules, Coos Bay, OR

"Thank you! USFS research publications are an investment in knowledge dissemination that has no parallel in the public sector. Keep up the good work!" (no name given)

"Thank you for sending the publications I ordered. More agencies should be this efficient and responsive." (no name given)

"Please provide more pubs if possible. Keep up the good work." W. Calvert, Breese, IL

"I have received USFS Pubs for over 40 years and have always been satisfied with the service – good job." R. Evans, Oak Ridge, TN

"I appreciate the assistance that is provided by the USFS." B. Karr, MS State, MS

"Congratulations! You have a big service! Thanks a lot!" Juan Corral-Aguirre, Veracruz, Mexico

"Extremely pleased with quality of information (photos, specific pest info) contained in publication. T. Robertson, Westminster, MD

"This is for my silviculture (305) course that I am auditing. Many thanks." E. Thomas, USDA, SCS, Retired Deputy Chief, Bryan, TX

"Re: Kudzu control – neighborhood made decision based on material sent. Thanks." A. Lelavage, Asheville, NC

"As a county forester, the information I receive from the Southern Research Station is invaluable. Thank you." T. Tolano, Bronson, FL

"Very nice service since I am not American citizen/taxpayer." Dr. B. Riedl, Quebec, Canada

SAFETY UPDATE...Two people died and one is in serious condition in a hunting-related traffic accident at the Crossett Experimental Forest on the morning of Thanksgiving Day when the ATVs they were driving were hit by a tanker truck. The accident occurred on State Highway 133, which is the main 2-lane north-south artery between Crossett, Arkansas, and Bastrop, Louisiana.

The victims were on two fourwheelers, travelling from east to west along the northern boundary road of the Experimental Forest while deer hunting, or preparing to hunt, that day. The first ATV pulled part of the way across the highway and saw the truck coming through the fog. They stopped to flag down the second ATV, which apparently had no brakes. The second hit the first one, and as a result both drifted into the path of the 18-wheeler. Two people died at the scene, and the third died in transit to a Little Rock hospital.

This is just the latest manifestation of a growing problem--excessively heavy hunting pressure on the Crossett EF. Incidents reported by SRS-4106 project staff there include shots fired from the road into the woods (against state law), bullets heard whizzing near research field crews, ATV users on FS roads with loaded weapons (also against state law) following dogs, and vehicles speeding through stop signs on FS roads as hunters try to keep pace with dogs. Estimates of

hunting pressure on weekends or holidays are as many as 200 hunters for the 1500 acres at the EF that are easy to hunt.⁴⁴ Using dogs to hunt deer is legal in Arkansas, and the pattern of these deaths fits the notion that the victims were following their dogs on the ATVs. The victims were from central Arkansas, which adds to the notion that a contributing factor to this hunting pressure is the issue of access to hunting land. The Crossett EF is among the few parcels of land in south Arkansas that is not leased or in which hunting access is otherwise controlled, and on which anyone with a valid hunting license (perhaps even others as well) can hunt on any given day.⁴⁵ This situation is likely to change prior to the fall 1999 hunting season. As a result of this tragedy, SRS-4106 project staff will meet with staff from the Ouachita NF, the Jessieville-Winona RD (to which the Crossett EF is administratively attached), and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to propose restrictions on deer hunting at the experimental forest. Possible alternatives include restricting the forest to bow hunters only, closure of the forest to ATVs, or instituting a permit system for hunting. Whichever is selected, the overall goal will be to maintain the ability to hunt at the Crossett EF, but to do so in a manner that results in much less danger to project staff and to the hunters themselves. " 辜

Retirements

Jo Padgett, Executive Assistant to the Director, has announced her retirement effective January 2. Jo retires after 35 years of Federal Government service. She began her career in 1963 in Washington with the Department of Defense. Jo worked for the DOD from 1963 to 1980, when she transferred to the Southern Research Station as Secretary to the Deputy Director. In 1981 Jo was selected to be the Secretary to the Director, her current position.

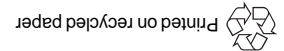
Jo plans to do quite a bit of traveling after she retires. She says there are lots of places she would like to see. Jo, along with some friends from California and Washington, have plans to take a cruise in the near future. Jo has set up an office in her house and eventually may work out of her home, although not full time. The employees of the Southern Research Station wish Jo all the best in her retirement!

Nell Godfrey, Secretary to the two Assistant Directors for Continuing Research, has announced her retirement effective January 2. Nell retires after 16 years of Federal Government service. She began her career in May 1982 with the Depart-

ment of Health, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. In December 1983 Nell transferred to the Southern Research Station in a data processing position. A year later she was selected to the position of Secretary to the Assistant Director (AD) for Planning and Applications. In December 1989 she took the position of Secretary to the Assistant Director (AD) South. With the combining of the Southern and Southeastern Stations, Nell became Secretary to AD South and AD North in mid-1995. Then in July 1996, she became Secretary to AD East and AD West. Seems Nell has covered the southern area in every direction!

Nell has lots of plans for her retirement. She lists many unfinished projects that she is anxious to start working on, including decorative painting, landscaping, and gardening. Nell also wants to do some traveling, as well as volunteer work both for Thoms Rehabilitation Hospital and for the Genealogical Society. Last but not least, Nell is looking forward to spending more time with her grandchildren. The employees of the Southern Research Station would like to wish Nell all the best in her retirement! 🌱

The Southern Research Station Newsletter represents events and employee news from the research laboratories and administrative staffs in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia—the States that make up the Station's territory. This newsletter is published quarterly by the USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Public Affairs Office, P.O. Box 2680, 200 Weaver Boulevard, Asheville, NC 28802; Editor: Rod Kindlund, Associate Editor: Trish Francis. To submit newsworthy stories for future issues, please send complete articles by hard copy or on diskette (WordPerfect or MS Word preferred) to Trish Francis at the above address; call (828) 259-0509, or e-mail to trancis/srs@fs.fed.us. Photographs are encouraged, preferably black and white. The USDA Policy prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer....Editor



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