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From the Center Director

Spring is here, and we are well into planting summer crops at the Jay Research Facility. Our corn variety trials, research plots, and grits/cornmeal acreage were planted a couple of weeks ago and good stands have emerged. Speaking of grits and cornmeal, the WFREC is now fully licensed for retail sales of these products; check out our Gator Grind Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/GatorGrind/>. Over the next month to six weeks, we'll be planting cotton, peanuts, soybean, and sorghum. We could use some rain before planting these crops, as the fields are relatively dry. Let's hope the weather forecast includes rain soon.



Weekend before last (April 7-9), we had our annual Spring Festival of Flowers on the WFREC Milton campus. The weather was beautiful for the event, and thousands of people attended. The festival showcased plants from vegetables to trees, vendor artwork, and extension educational presentations. Folks left the festival with plants and the knowledge of how to care for them. The event was successful, raising thousands of dollars for scholarships and UF Milton student activities. I thank the many WFREC personnel, UF Milton students, and IFAS Extension agents that helped make this event successful.

On 5 May, Dr. Ajay Sharma will join the WFREC faculty. Dr. Sharma's expertise is in applied forest ecology, and he will hold a 60/40 teaching/research appointment. Ajay is no stranger to the WFREC, as he was in a Postdoc position here before he took an Assistant Professor position at Lincoln University in Missouri. We welcome Ajay back, and I ask everyone at the WFREC to help smooth the transition from Missouri to Milton for Ajay and his family.

On the faculty front, congratulations are in order for Dr. Unruh who was named to a UF Term Professorship last month. These three-year professorships are given to recognize and reward faculty achievements. The term of this professorship is 2017 -2019. During each of these three years, Bryan will receive a salary supplement of \$5000. Congratulations are also owed to Dr. Mulvaney, who was recently elected to the UF Faculty Senate. I have confidence that Mike will do a great job of representing the interests of the WFREC, the IFAS, and the UF. In other faculty news, I have mixed feelings about the departure of Dr. Leon for North Carolina State University, i.e., I wish Ramon, Rocio and their boys all the best, but it's difficult to lose an exceptionally talented and productive faculty member who charmed us with his warm and humorous personality. Ramon and his family will be missed. We are fortunate to have many outstanding faculty and staff at the WFREC even though it sometimes means we lose them as they are offered opportunities that improve their careers and personal situations.

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Lastly, please keep abreast of the many WFREC events to come in near future, the first of which is our Spring Undergraduate Graduation ceremony that will be held on the evening of 2 May in the Bo Johnson Center on the PSC Milton campus. Throughout the summer and into the fall, we'll have several field days at the Jay Research Facility. I hope to see you at these events.

Until then, **Go Gators!**

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New Grants and Publications



Peer-reviewed publications:

M.J. Mulvaney, K.S. Balkcom, C.W. Wood, D. Jordan. 2017. Peanut residue carbon and nitrogen mineralization under simulated conventional and conservation tillage. *Agronomy Journal* 109: 696-705. doi:10.2134/agronj2016.04.0190

Grants:

Dr. Mike Mulvaney

\$178,014, FDACS, Establishment and management of olive orchards in Florida. 2017-18.

\$9,040, FDACS, Dryland Farmers' Cover Crop Demonstration and Soil Moisture Evaluation. 2017.

\$7,667, FDACS, Using soil moisture sensors to improve irrigation efficiency: A hands-on workshop and demonstration for row crop farmers in Jackson County, FL. 2017

\$9,200, FDACS, Using irrigation apps and soil moisture sensors in in the western Panhandle. 2017

Conference presentations:

M.J. Mulvaney, H.A. Enloe. 2017. Blends and timing of polymer coated and uncoated urea: Effects on corn and cotton in the deep South. Southern Branch American Society of Agronomy Abstr., Mobile, AL, Feb. 7, 2017.

1. Jani, A.D. (g), **M.J. Mulvaney**, D.L. Rowland, A. Couch, J. Erickson, R.G. Leon, C.W. Wood. 2017. Temporal patterns of sesame (*Sesamum indicum* L.) nutrient uptake in the Southeastern US. Southern Branch American Society of Agronomy Abstr., Mobile, AL, Feb. 6, 2017.

Pierre, A.K. (g), **M.J. Mulvaney**, D.L. Rowland, TL. Grey, B.L. Tillman, E. van Santen. 2017. Tissue analyses as a peanut seed quality tool. Southern Branch American Society of Agronomy Abstr., Mobile, AL, Feb. 6, 2017.

(g) - Graduate student

New Students Join Turfgrass Science

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My name is Natasha Restuccia and I began my PhD program with Dr. Bryan Unruh this spring. We are hoping to determine the effect of root zone temperature on the growth and development of warm season turfgrasses, with an emphasis on seasonal root growth. I earned my MS from UF in spring 2014, with Dr. Jason Kruse. Starting in the summer of 2014, I was hired as a biological scientist with Dr. Kruse and have been over seeing his research at the Turfgrass Envirotron in Gainesville ever since. I was born and raised in Lakeland, FL but have lived in both Gainesville and Jacksonville before settling back down in Gainesville. When I am not working with turfgrass, I enjoy being outdoors and spending time with my husband and spunky 18 month old daughter.



Mark Kann is a Master's student from Citra, FL. He is majoring in Environmental Horticulture and earning a minor in Agricultural Education and Communication. He previously earned a Bachelor of Science Degree specializing in Turfgrass Science from the University of Florida in 1999. Mark is currently employed by the University of Florida as a Coordinator of Research Programs at the Plant Science Research and Education Unit in Citra, FL. In his position, he oversees the development and maintenance of research projects involving turfgrass, ornamentals, and greenhouse production. Prior to his employment at the University of Florida, Mark worked as a golf course superintendent in Hudson, FL.

Mark has over 20 years of experience in the turfgrass and golf industries and has been an active member of many allied associations. He has served as president of both the Seven Rivers Golf Course Superintendents' Association and the Florida Golf Course Superintendents' Association. He served as both FGCSA Education and Golf

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BMP Committee Chairs for close to a decade before resigning in August 2016 in order to concentrate on his graduate studies. Mark's research will focus on the validation and implementation of best management practices programs for golf courses. Mark was vital in the development of the Florida GCSA Golf BMP Certification Program and looks forward to continuing the effort of promoting environmental stewardship of golf courses.

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We will miss you Dr. Leon and Rocio!
Best of luck!



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Employee Happenings

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Dr. Ajay Sharma is an applied forest ecologist with multiple years of teaching and research experience. In the past 16 years, Ajay has conducted forestry and ecological research in diverse ecosystems of the United States and India. Most of his current research has focused on silvicultural applications to restoration and management of Southern Pine Ecosystems and Central Hard-

wood Forests.

Using empirical, experimental, and modeling approaches, Ajay's research aims at understanding the effects of alternative forest management and silvicultural treatments on stand structure, composition, and development over time, particularly for stands with multiple-use or restoration management objectives. This understanding of stand dynamics helps forest managers to devise appropriate interventions to meet the diverse goals of management including timber production, enhancement of wildlife habitat and biodiversity, structural complexity, carbon sequestration, biomass harvest, and forest restoration. In his free time, Ajay enjoys playing with his little son and reading autobiographies.



My name is Latisa Ledbetter-Kish, I am joining the Entomology Program at WFREC as the Technician for Dr. Silvana Paula Moraes. I am excited to be a part of her developing program. I will assist in advancing her lab, teaching program, and research. I look forward to participating in the contributions this program will add to Integrated Pest Management in the Southeast. I am pursuing my long-term goal of achieving my undergraduate degree in Natural Resource Conservation with the University of Florida's distant education program in Milton. I also look forward, to the applications this career will add to my education. It is great to be a part of the team here!

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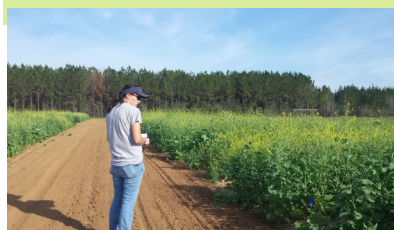


Lee Thrasher joined the WFREC as our new End User Computing Specialist II. He previously worked at Pensacola State College where he provided computer technical support.

Lee has an Associate degree in Computer Information Technology and is currently enrolled in Cyber Forensics.

Awards

Our Associate Center Director, Dr. Bryan Unruh, was selected to receive a UF University Term Professorship award for the term 2017—2019. This award is given in recognition of faculty achievements.



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Dr. Michael Mulvaney, Assistant Professor of Agronomy, was elected by the IFAS faculty for membership in the University Senate.

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Congratulations to Drs. Barry Brecke and Ramon Leon for awards they received at the recent Florida Weed Science Society Annual Meeting.

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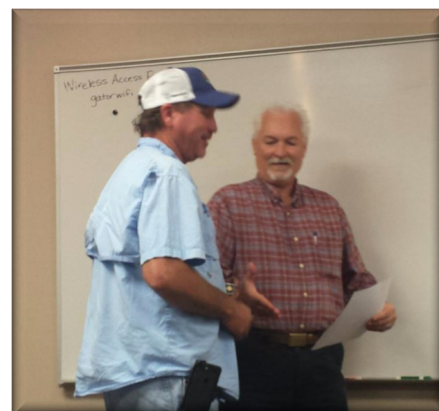
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Dr. Brecke received the "Joseph R. Orsenigo Lifetime Achievement Award". This award honors members that have been part of the Florida Weed Science Society for at least 20 years and that have made remarkable contributions to Weed Science in general, not only at the state level.



Dr. Leon received the "Outstanding Weed Scientist" award for 2017.

Turfgrass Science Lab Technician III, Jayson Ging, was awarded a 10 year Service Pin by our Center Director Dr. Wes Wood.



Agronomy graduate student Krystel Pierre was a co-recipient of the 2017-2018 Paul Robin Harris Award. Krystel received \$500 in recognition of the high quality peanut research she has done pertaining to global concerns.

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Agronomy graduate student, Arun Jani, won 2nd place in the PhD oral presentation competition held at the Southern Branch ASA conference in Mobile, AL.

Arun presented information on nutrient uptake (N, P, K, Ca, Mg, and S) by high-yielding sesame varieties well-adapted to the Southeast. The goal of the research was to determine the timing of nutrient uptake so that we could provide recommendations to farmers about optimal timing of fertilization.

Recruiter's Corner

by Mark Long



Meet our new Student Club Vice President:

Scott Singletary

Scott is a senior at the University of Florida. He is working towards his degree in Natural Resource Conservation and hopes to continue a career that allows him to share his love of the outdoors and promote the importance of Conservation. He has lived a great deal of his life in Navarre, FL but spent two of his teenage years living in the Aleutian Islands on Adak, AK. Scott works full-time as an airplane pilot for the Florida Forest Service. During the school year, Scott serves as the student club vice president, helping to coordinate the annual plant sale on campus, and he also volunteers with the Florida Fish and Wildlife commission. He can be contacted at ssingletary@ufl.edu

UF Milton Scholarships

The Hooper W. Matthews Jr. Forestry Scholarship was established in honor of Mr. Matthews by his children and the University of Florida at Milton. Hooper Matthews Jr. was a local forester and entrepreneur widely recognized for his

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sincere belief in the importance of education and his lifelong devotion to forestry and environmental science. This scholarship has helped many students pursue a degree in forestry and wildlife at UF's campus in Milton. The current recipient is Brandon Boutwell, who graduated from Jay High School in 2014. Brandon is a second semester student at UF Milton and doesn't know how he would have pursued a degree with UF without the help of the Matthews family. Brandon is very grateful for this opportunity and honored to pursue a degree in an area that was so important to Mr. Matthews Jr.



Brandon Boutwell

To be eligible for the scholarship the applicant must have graduated from high school and have completed two years at a community college or university. The applicant must also major in Natural Resource Conservation (NRC) with an emphasis in forestry or wildlife at the University of Florida in Milton. The student must also be from Escambia, Conecuh, Monroe or North Baldwin counties in Alabama. The University of Florida program in Milton works with students who have busy work schedules and families who desire to get a bachelor's degree in NRC or Plant Science. Students attend classes in the evening and labs every other Saturday.

Recently Dr. Wood and Mark Long had the pleasure of attending a luncheon in Mobile, AL with the Community Foundation of South Alabama. The foundation manages the Hooper W. Matthews Jr. Forestry Scholarship. At the luncheon, the Matthews family was honored for their philanthropy work.

The Matthews siblings, including Dale Matthews Ash, Hooper W.

Matthews III and Cindy Matthews Colville were



Bob Higgins, Chairman of the Board for The Community Foundation of South Alabama, presents the 2017 Ann & Fred Delchamps Distinguished Philanthropist Award to, from left, Hooper Matthews III, Cindy Matthews Colville and Dale Matthews Ash. (Photo by Michael Dumas Image Arts)



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honored with the Ann and Fred Delchamps Distinguished Philanthropist Award.

The University of Florida at Milton is grateful for the support the Matthews family provides with the Hooper W. Matthews Jr. Forestry Scholarship. If you are interested in earning a degree in Natural Resource Conservation at the University of Florida Milton campus please contact Mark Long at 850-983-7138.

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Upcoming Events

UF Spring Graduation / UF Milton Campus Bo Johnson CenterMay 2

Gulf Coast Turfgrass Expo & Field Day at the WFREC Jay.....June 21



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