

# MSU

# FORESTER

SUMMER IN **RURAL** AND **URBAN** FORESTS



Department of Forestry  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

FALL 2017

On the cover, undergraduates share their internship experiences. Left, Shannon Poon holds a morel mushroom she found in rural Michigan. Right, Andy Gordon spends the summer as an urban forester in Indiana (see page 5).

Current page, Assistant Professor Dr. Mojgan Nejad demonstrated that lignin (a byproduct of paper and bioethanol production) can completely replace phenol in phenol-based adhesives. [canr.msu.edu/news/lignin](http://canr.msu.edu/news/lignin)

Right, students estimate the value of trees. They calculate their impact through i-Tree Design, which compiles satellite imagery, location-based climate information, and tree species, size, and condition.

Back cover, MSU Forestry hosts a field trip with the Greening of Detroit at MacCreedy Nature Reserve.

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Greetings from a colorful autumn in East Lansing! I am very pleased to report that the Department of Forestry continues to grow. Our **undergraduate enrollment is now 72**. This is an **85% increase** throughout the last five years and at a 17-year high. An additional 20 students are enrolled in the Forestry or Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) minors. **Doctoral student enrollment has grown to 21, more than doubling in five years.**

While student numbers are important metrics of success, maintaining a vibrant, long-term forestry program depends on our faculty. I am delighted the Department of Forestry has received authorization to **fill two positions of retired (or soon to retire) faculty and two new faculty positions**. We are conducting searches for a forest economist as a successor to Dr. Karen Potter-Witter (see story on page 7) and Director of the Forest Biomass Innovation Center Dr. Ray Miller, who will retire May 2018. (We will greatly miss you, Karen and Ray!)

While retaining these positions is significant, obtaining two new faculty is a remarkable feat! Soon, we will interview candidates for a tenure-stream position in UCF and a faculty member focused on teaching.

We listened to your suggestions and made rebuilding the UCF program a top priority for the department. A new faculty position focused on UCF, together with current faculty expertise and the academic minor, will put MSU Forestry on the map for UCF.

The UCF position was made possible through an innovative collaboration with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the "Partnership for Ecosystem Research and Management" (PERM). PERM provides the DNR with critical research expertise to manage Michigan natural resources while building faculty capacity at MSU.

The new faculty member focused on teaching will lead innovative teaching and learning in introductory courses as well as online and field-based courses. This position is largely funded through a share of tuition that comes back to departments for online and off-campus courses. These are exciting additions to the faculty and we look forward to the vitality that comes from introducing new and diverse faculty perspectives.

I always value alumni perspectives and invite you to consider ways that you and other alumni can contribute to the continued vitality of the Department of Forestry. (Please also see Lee Mueller's comments on page 4). We invite your suggestions and engagement.

## CHAIR'S PERSPECTIVE



**Richard Kobe**  
Professor and  
Chairperson  
Department  
of Forestry  
[kobe@msu.edu](mailto:kobe@msu.edu)



**PAUL FILARY | BS '02**

After graduation, I started working for the Michigan Department of Agriculture on the Emerald Ash Borer project. I did this for 4-5 years. I traveled throughout the state and gained experience in nursery inspection and pesticide inspection. After being laid off by the state in 2007, I moved to the Chicago area to work in arboriculture for Kramer Tree Specialists. I started as a Sales Associate, moved into the Sales Manager position, and now am Director of Operations. I've been in my current role for about three years. I thoroughly enjoy the field of arboriculture and have expanded my skills in management and communication leadership.

**GARY STACHOWICZ | BS '92**

Since January 2006, I've been the city forester in Hillsdale, Michigan. Before that, I worked for the U.S. Forest Service (after graduating from MSU). With the Forest Service, I worked with the Forest Inventory and Analysis branch conducting tree inventories throughout 11 states in the Midwest. My hope is to retire within the next few years.

**SUSAN CHALPIN | BS '77**

I've had an environmental consulting firm, Chalpin Environmental, in the Sierra Foothills since 1988. Previously, I worked as a Forester for the U.S. Forest Service.

**KEN GUENTHER | B '50, M '50**

Developing five acres of residential property in Portland, Oregon. Planted two sequoia seedlings there 45 years ago. Trees now 30-inch diameter breast height and growing. Planted Douglas fir at the same time—not as big. Recently sold a house with a 60-inch sequoia in the back yard. Been in Yosemite Valley recently—magnificent park, falls at their best flow. Just returned from 10 days in Alaska. Saw whales doing bubble net feeding. They come eight feet out of the water. Come west and see our great country.

**NICK BOLTON | BS '08**

I graduated from Michigan Tech with my PhD in Forest Science and a Certificate of Sustainable Water Resource Systems. I am now a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Georgia investigating how North American forest management practices influence insect pollinator populations. Most importantly, a future defender of forests (Erica's and my daughter) Sylvia Marion, was born June 20th and she already says, "Timber stand improvement" and "Go Green!"

**ROGER FAIRCHILD | BS '84**

Thirty-two years ago, I went to work for TruGreen in Kalamazoo, right out of college. Knew nothing about lawn care and worked in their tree/shrub division. Relocated and promoted to South Bend, Indiana. I worked in every position and have been General Manager for 14 years. What was a small lawn care company is now the nation's largest. It is still challenging and rewarding. I still think back on the great education and experiences MSU gave me. This spring I was able to hire a 2015 Forestry graduate and he's been outstanding. MSU is still graduating excellent students! There's nothing better than getting back to East Lansing and walking the campus, which I do every year. Great place and great people.

**MERLE PERRINE | BS '66**

Fully retired from both the USAF and the FAA and live on our farm north of Jackson, Michigan. It doesn't mean, however, that we are inactive—just not getting paid for working. Upon graduation/at the end of Forestry Summer Camp at Dunbar, I had not seen a single one of my classmates, with the exception of a chance meeting on an airfield in Vietnam in the late 1960s. In June of this year, Jeanne and I visited our son (and especially our grandchildren) in Boise. During that visit, I made contact with my fellow alumni Tom ('67) and Larry ('66). All three of us attended Dunbar Experiment Station the summer of '66.

**DAVID MAASS | MS '74**

This is the first time I've written a statement for an alumni newsletter. Although I retired a few years ago, I picked up a project that I worked on in the 80's—research on the growth and economics of exotic larches (European and Japanese and their hybrid). A number of us are working on this project, which we call Larch Virtual Experiment Station (LVES). Lloyd Irland, another MSU alumnus, and I have a website: larchresearch.com. There is roughly 15,000 acres of exotic larches being grown in Michigan. If anyone is interested in joining us, please contact me at dmaass@maine.rr.com.

**PATTY BEYER | BS '82**

I am in my 30th year with the U.S. Forest Service. I'm looking to retire in 2018. I've been serving the last 13 years in the Washington office Enterprise Program as an environmental coordinator, program supervisor and group manager. We

provide short term land management personnel to national forests and other federal land management agencies. I am currently on the MSU Forestry Alumni Association board and would love to encourage my friends and colleagues to volunteer for the board too. Stop by and visit me in Marquette!!

**JENNIFER BOICE | BS '96**

I am celebrating my 15th anniversary with the Wisconsin DNR, and my 10th anniversary of working in the Black River State Forest. This property is located in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, which is about halfway between Madison, Wisconsin and the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

**PATTY HESCH | BS '85**

I am in my third year as the Rocky Mountain Region Land Ownership Adjustment Program Manager, and my 34th year with the U.S. Forest Service. I spend weekdays in the Denver Metro area and head for my mountain home every Thursday evening. We are in the process of purchasing several beautiful parcels of land to add to the National Forest System in Region 2. Forestry students—please check out the Pathways Program with the Forest Service. There are a lot of great opportunities for you.

**JIM STARKEY | BS '89**

I commissioned from MSU Army ROTC in 1989. After serving 11 years as an officer in the U.S. Army Military Police, I left active duty to pursue a career in federal law enforcement with the U.S. Forest Service. Since 2001, I have served as a Patrol Captain in the National Forests in Alabama, a Special Agent for 10 years in the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee, and am currently the Patrol Commander of the East Enforcement Zone in the Southern Region, U.S. Forest Service. I am responsible for supervising six captains and 50 law enforcement officers in eight national forests and recreation areas (covering seven states). My sons, Jimmy ('13) and Josh ('14), are both MSU alumni. Josh also commissioned into the U.S. Army, currently serving as a first lieutenant in Hawaii.

**MICHELE TADIAN | BS '81**

After graduation, I worked for the state of Minnesota as a crew chief for the DNR youth program. We maintained recreation trails and walnut and pine plantations. I really loved my botany classes at MSU, and took more of an interest in art and a variety of plants/trees later on. I also farmed organically in Wisconsin and managed our own woodland areas. Went back to school and got a graduate degree

in counseling. I worked as a school counselor, and now as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, currently with the public school system in New Mexico. I continue to have a deep appreciation for the beautiful and varied public lands. I love to hike and have extensive organic gardens at our home!

**ALAN FOWLER | B '60**

Have enjoyed 15 years of retirement (so far) and highly recommend it! Career included stints with the U.S. Forest Service, Ohio Forestry Association, CSX Transportation, and finally 14 years with Gray Construction in Kentucky. Wouldn't trade my MSU Forestry education for anything—use it every day in some way! Would love to hear from any of my old classmates.

**ROBERT "JACK" GOULD | B '55**

After graduation, I was immediately drafted (but still made the trip to the Rose Bowl) to serve a two-year stint in the U.S. Army, mostly at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. Married a smart, beautiful nurse in 1958, and we have two great children, one of each. I was employed by the South Carolina Forestry Commission in 1958, and worked in all of the various categories. I achieved State Forester in 1987. Just in time to supervise our 615 employees as they responded to the forest disaster during Hurricane Hugo, one of the most devastating in U.S. history. Retired in 1993, and my wife and I traveled throughout Europe and the U.S.—fly-fishing wherever the location permitted. Salmon in Alaska, and trout in Scotland! I lost my beautiful wife after nearly 54 years of marriage, in 2012, but still live on Lake Murray in South Carolina. I continue to fly-fish, and participate in the challenging craft of "wood-turning." I just turned an active 85-years-old! Classmates are encouraged to email rgould@sc.rr.com

**TIM BARDEN | BS '80, MS '83, MBA '84**

After graduation, I spent a year with the Michigan DNR and re-

turned to MSU to pursue a joint MS/MBA degree, a program Dr. John Gunter spearheaded. After completing an MS in Forest Business Management and an MBA in Material and Logistics Management, I accepted a contracting position with what's now the Navy Exchange Service Command, (NEXCOM), then located in NYC and since 1993 located in Virginia Beach. I've been married for 33+ years to a Brooklyn girl, Terri. We are recent empty nesters. Our oldest son recently moved to Richmond. We hope to retire by 2021, when our youngest son graduates from James Madison University.

**CHET BARTELS | B '63**

After 40 years of wearing a prosthesis on my left leg, and more recently an artificial hip/knee on the right leg and back surgery—I'm actually doing quite well. We still have a big garden and store quite a lot of food for our own use. I've experienced reduced eyesight, luckily my wife is a good driver and took us to Utah for her 55th reunion. We go fishing nearly weekly and take week-long fishing trips a few times each summer and fall. We hope to spend a few months in Arizona in our 5th wheel trailer near one of our sons and his four daughters. One of our sons has three buckles earned at the Colorado Leadville 100—riding his mountain bike more than 100 miles at 9500 ft. elevation in less than 12 hours. His 12-year-old daughter is nearly 6-foot-tall and is a wiz at tennis and especially basketball. Sometime in the future she may be playing for MSU as her aunt, Kristen Rasmussen, did several years ago.

**IN MEMORIAM**

Ken Cavanaugh | B '39

Jim Gerber | B '62

Bob Cool | MS '71

Don Kuhr | BS '89

Ed Ferguson | B '53

Once again, summer has melted into Fall. Leaves are changing, animals are getting restless, and the nights are getting colder. As a forester, I've always loved fall ... the bounties of the natural world become fully apparent, and the forest gives one last blaze of glory before drifting into relative dormancy. I remember the start of fall semester: reconnecting with friends after a summer away, frantically studying new trees in dendrology, and watching the hustle and bustle as campus comes alive after a balmy summer.

Fall is also a time of sharing. The Forestry Alumni Association takes this opportunity to share with you. At the annual fall meeting and football game, I had the opportunity to share our recent activities. They include luncheons with graduating seniors and plans to engage alumni in forestry-based volunteer opportunities. (We've proposed the Spartan Global Day of Service, April 21, 2018.) If you would like to participate or have volunteer projects that might be of interest, please contact me.

Throughout the last year, we established goals that align with University Alumni Association priorities: service, philanthropy, and professional engagement. We continue to identify opportunities to best meet these goals. We welcome your input on alumni events or activities.

This fall also marks the end of the initial term for a few board members. We welcome others who are interested in guiding the FAA towards supporting the department and MSU. If you or someone you know might be a great addition to our board, please reach out to me.

Fall will merge into the holidays, winter, and all the cold weather that comes with it. As this year winds down, I hope you take time to reflect on your career experiences. I invite you to share stories, accomplishments, and memories in these newsletters. As a fellow alum, I am always impressed by the breadth and diversity of alumni experiences.

I wish you well in this changing season.

**Lee Mueller**

BS '09, MS '11

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## ANDY GORDON

Forestry Intern

City of Indianapolis  
Department of  
Public Works



## SHANNON POON

Field Technician

Dr. Mike Walters  
and the Michigan  
Department  
of Natural  
Resources



# SUMMER IN RURAL AND URBAN FORESTS

"I learned hands-on things that you simply cannot learn in an academic setting," says Andy Gordon. "I also made great professional relationships to help expand my urban forestry network."

This summer, MSU Forestry senior Andy Gordon and junior Shannon Poon experienced what it means to be a forester. They had internships in urban (Gordon) and rural (Poon) forests.

MSU Forestry students complete an independent study, study abroad, or professional internship before they graduate. These give undergraduates experiential learning opportunities and contribute to job placement ... One of the many reasons why 95 percent of MSU Forestry graduates have found positions in their field (for the past ten years!).

Gordon interned with the City of Indianapolis Department of Public Works. He spent his summer learning about urban forestry and conducting roadside brush inspections. He helped organize the removal of 'priority one' obstructions and made the city a safer place.

"I wanted to see if urban forestry was something I really wanted to get into. I really took it seriously," he says. "I tried to put myself out there as much as I could. Otherwise, I might not have gotten the full experience."

Gordon worked closely with and learned from government employees, nonprofit groups, and residents. All of his supervisors were dedicated to giving him a positive and enriching learning experience. "It almost felt like class sometimes," he says.

"I learned that even city slickers can have a green thumb and that trees bring out a lot of passion in people—whether it's planting more trees or getting rid of 'those poles' that drop leaves," he says. "Working for Indianapolis DPW helped me begin to narrow down the many careers I can choose from in forestry and I am very grateful for that."

Poon interned with Associate Professor Mike Walters on a multi-year forest diversity project with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The crew members surveyed tree stands. Later, these trees will be harvested using different, sustainable silviculture methods.

They also documented the impact of beech bark disease. It is a relatively recent concern in Michigan and the crew investigated how it affects regeneration and diversity in northern hardwoods.

"I was really interested to learn what an unsustainable harvest looks like," says Poon. She was able to see first-hand how varying degrees of forest management can positively and negatively impact the health of a forest for years to come.

"I started to get an idea of how plot [management] today changes the future makeup of the plot 10-20 years later," she says. "This was really special because it's the kind of learning that I personally prefer, being taught in the field through experience rather than a lecture or textbook."

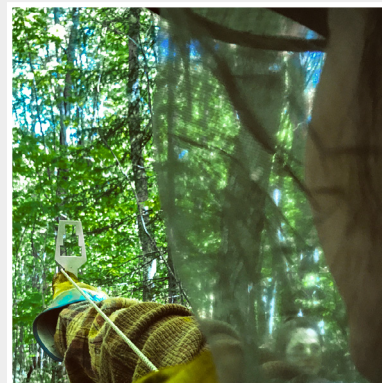
Poon said she gained both industry-specific and transferable skills. She learned technical language and forestry tools, as well as how to drive a manual transmission. She also experienced a broad range of opportunities available after she graduates—private timber sales, employment as a state forester or forest manager, graduate school, and serving in the Peace Corps.

Learning in the field is a priceless experience. "There's something about being outside. It's almost meditative," she says. "I don't really get that in the lab. Even though the tasks are somewhat similar because they're repetitive. It's just different when you're outside. I feel a little more connected to the work when I'm being active in the fresh air and around all the green."

However, the most valuable lesson she learned this summer was to be industrious. "Whatever you're doing, wherever you are, hard work really pays off," she says. "Working in the field for really long days isn't easy. It is really rewarding and that's a lesson I'm glad to have learned before starting my position at AmeriCorps."

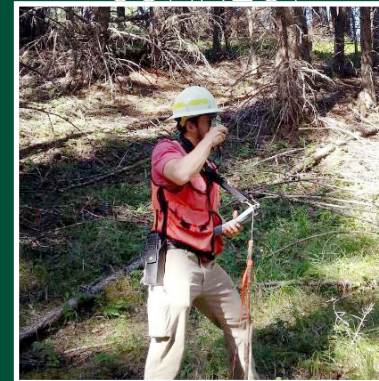
Poon is taking a gap year to serve as an AmeriCorps City Year member. She's teaching in elementary and middle school classrooms. She says she can directly apply what she learned in the field this summer to her year of service. She looks forward to teaching students about why she loves being outdoors and encouraging the next generation to walk in the woods.

Andy Gordon and Shannon Poon posted images from their internships on the MSU Forestry Instagram.



Top, Gordon measures sight lines on Indianapolis roadways. Bottom, Poon marks timber stands and collects vegetation surveys.

## CONNECT



Ben Eriman



Sierra Barfield



Levi Churches



Katie Mercer



### MSU Forestry students take over our Instagram

See forestry through their lens:  
[instagram.com/msu\\_forestry](https://www.instagram.com/msu_forestry)

### WORK WITH OUR STUDENTS:

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## OUTSTANDING EMERITUS FACULTY

Have you met Carl? **Dr. Jim Kielbaso** is why Carl is alive and standing proud in Lansing, Mich.



At the center of the State Library and Michigan History Museum is an iconic white pine, affectionately known as "Carl." Throughout the years, the tree has struggled to survive in the contained environment. Kielbaso is the only continuous individual involved in creating a maintenance plan for the tree. For promoting the health of this landmark tree, and for his lifetime of service to forestry, Kielbaso is the MSU Faculty Emeriti Association Award winner for outstanding contributions by a faculty member.

Kielbaso retired in 2004. However, he continues to make tremendous contributions to MSU and the greater forestry community through teaching, scholarly activities, and outreach.

Kielbaso has helped MSU Forestry students advance their educational opportunities through mentorship, connecting them with internships, and fostering connections for community-based research and scholarly publications. Also, he offers graduate students the option to take an informal urban forestry class, which is done on a complete volunteer basis. Recently, he taught 1-4 students for at least two hours a week in Arboriculture and Urban Forestry.

He guided Kevin Nietering (MS '17) through a research project that prevents tree roots from growing under and disturbing sidewalks. He mentored Nietering through internships, experiments, presentations, publication drafts, and methods to implement his findings. Their research is aimed at promoting urban tree health. It will also help maintain safe, accessible sidewalks across the state, possibly nationwide.

From 2007-2012, he led campus tree tours and was an ambassador to MSU alumni. He also represents the Alumni Association on travel excursions. Kielbaso is building strong personal relationships with MSU alumni and helping them stay connected to their alma mater. He also maintains these relationships and tries to meet up with past participants during MSU football tailgates.

He promotes forestry in Michigan through community partnerships. Each year before Arbor Day, he works with the Department of Forestry Tree Research Center to grow and facilitate distribution of Champion Catalpa seedlings to Michigan legislative districts. (The Catalpa tree was planted in Lansing in 1879 to mark the dedication of the Capitol building.) Kielbaso, staff at the TRC and Capitol Commission employees collaborate to ensure seedlings are distributed and planted on Arbor Day.

Kielbaso was a member of the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council. NUCFAC is a Congressionally designated advisory council to the Secretary of Agriculture on urban forestry and related issues. During his three years of service, Kielbaso helped address the present health and future preservation of U.S. urban forests, including creating a nationwide, consistent vision for urban forests and laying foundations for urban forestry policy.

He also represents MSU Forestry in the community. He is a part of both the Meridian Township Environmental Commission, and the Land Preservation Advisory Board. He also answers regular calls from community members about their trees.

He handles all of these concerns with patience, understanding and a polite sense of humor. Kielbaso proves that our faculty are problem solvers. "I love the field (of Forestry) and I enjoy the freedom of being retired," he says. "I never get tired of what I'm doing and I like to be of some service."

## RECENT RETIREMENTS



Left, A 1983 archive image of Karen Potter-Witter. Top, Potter-Witter works with her former graduate student (and current FAA President) Lee Mueller on a urban forestry project. Below (left/right), Potter-Witter is an avid angler. She looks forward to fishing with her family during retirement.

In 1983, **Dr. Karen Potter-Witter** became the first female faculty member in the Department of Forestry at MSU.

Potter-Witter is a pioneer in Forestry. She began her undergraduate education in an environment where 8 percent of her fellow classmates were women. “Why was I there? I always loved forests,” she said. “It seemed natural to me.” Potter-Witter grew up hiking, camping, and fishing. Forestry was the best option to merge her passions of being outdoors and working in economics.

As an MSU Forestry faculty member in the ‘80s, she taught in classrooms that were becoming more diverse. She helped foster environments that welcomed women to discover forestry as a career path. In the early 2000s, she lectured in classrooms with more than 50 percent female students.

She is proud of all of her students and reconnects with them at conferences and professional meetings. “It’s wonderful,” she says. “I’ve enjoyed seeing so many of our graduates go on to have great careers and do well.”

Potter-Witter retired on May 15, 2017. A few of her numerous and significant contributions to the department and the field of forestry:

- A decades-long effort to collaborate with private landowners and policy makers to increase knowledge about how policies affect private forest management and landowner behaviors.
- Provide leadership and encourage state and national professional involvement with the Society of American Foresters. In 1998, she was Program Co-chair for the SAF National Convention. In 1999, she became one of the few women to be elected a Fellow in the Society of American Foresters. Her leadership increased relationships between local/nationwide colleagues and the Department of Forestry at MSU.
- Mentor undergraduate and graduate students and guide them to successful careers.

- The Natural Resource Management Project, NARMA, a multi-million-dollar initiative to prevent soil erosion in the Dominican Republic. With their Dominican counterparts, the team developed the first national forest management plan and analyzed the feasibility of establishing the first national parks.

She taught courses in forest policy, management, measurements, and economics. Many students will remember a case study on property rights. Seats in the class were auctioned off to the highest bidder. While the majority of students respected the sales of their seats, some didn’t.

Students found themselves in intense debates over ownership, social contracts, assigned values, and the importance of cooperation. “Property rights are a social contract. If the individuals in society don’t agree on or respect the rights of others, then legally established property rights are meaningless,” says Potter-Witter. She was able to provide experiential learning opportunities for students that gave them tools to solve real-world problems.

She says the next generation of foresters has limitless opportunities. One of the biggest changes she’s seen is the ability to process data. When she was working in the Dominican Republic, she had one of the first portable computers—the size and weight of sewing machines.

They also processed economic analysis data on handheld calculators. “It took days and days and days,” she says. “Now I could do that same thing in an hour.” New technology and open-source software are letting students tailor programs to fit their needs. They can also communicate information and tools quickly. It’s completely changed the way they can work and share knowledge, she says.

Potter-Witter’s 34 years at MSU effected a great deal of change in the department and in the field of forestry. Her trailblazing spirit and career gave diverse groups self-efficacy, whether they were students, professionals, or private landowners.



Mid-1990’s archive image: Larry Leefers, far right, with training participants from Indonesia at the Pigeon River Country State Forest.

“We all belong to many countries,” says **Dr. Larry Leefers**, quoting Scottish novelist Robert Louis Stevenson. “MSU and my graduate students reinforced this for me.”

Leefers retired on December 31, 2015. His work with international students is one highlight of his 30-plus years at MSU. “They’re coming from a foreign land and have varied experiences. They bring those backgrounds and new opportunities for forestry education,” he says. “Because of my diverse students, I was able to have a more student-focused research approach. Each student was different, and each program was different.”

His varied research focuses on natural resource assessment, forest modeling, and hedonic pricing applied to timber and property values. He feels fortunate to work with students from a wide range of environments. “Because of [the students’] broad experiences, it required that I expand my areas of research,” he says. Leefers believes diversity is crucial to forests and the field of forestry.

Mentoring students is one of Leefers’ greatest achievements. During his career, he taught hundreds of students in forest economics, planning, and policy. He approached every class with a passion for education and the highest respect for students. He enjoys reconnecting with MSU Forestry alumni at forestry events, including Society of American Foresters meetings. “An important part of the process is to move from being a teacher, to a colleague, and over the long term, a friend,” he says.

Close relationships with students and faculty have led to some of his most fulfilling work. Another highlight of his career is the long-term collaboration with MSU Forestry Professor Emeritus Don Dickmann. They published “The Forests of Michigan” together and taught FOR 101: Michigan’s Forests. “We wanted students to learn about the everyday life and experiences in a forest,” he says. “It just made sense to teach a course about where you are in the world.”

Leefers founded and has been involved with FOR 101 for more than 20 years. Initially, Leefers and Dickmann taught in the

classroom. Later, they transformed the course into one of the first online classes in the department.

The two faculty members introduced students to forests and forestry, noted the importance of social responsibility, and illustrated how forests fit into the history of Michigan. “We all have interactions with trees and forests. You can’t help but be impacted by trees,” he says.

FOR 101 continues to be a very popular online course. Non-forestry students often comment that if they’d taken the class early in their academic career, they would have become foresters. Leefers’ enthusiasm for forestry left a lasting impression.

Leefers and Dickmann pioneered online learning in the Department of Forestry. They paved the way for accessible learning through the web. Their work contributed to the creation of the Graduate Certificate in Forest Carbon Policy and Management. Leefers co-taught a course in the certificate, training forest carbon professionals throughout the world.

In retirement, Leefers continues some teaching and research. He is a member of the Governor’s Timber Advisory Council. He’s implemented a system to generate routine reports on the health of the forest economy at state, regional, and county levels. His efforts document the economic impact of forests with the goal of expanding forest products industries.

Leefers plans to spend some of his retirement visiting students, who are now old friends. “I’m visiting people who have had a very positive influence on my life—former graduate students,” he says. “They became my teachers.” Recent trips to the Philippines and Indonesia will be followed by visits to Kenya and Malaysia.

Leefers’ career has been enriching. We hope you’ll join us in wishing him a wonderful retirement. “I don’t have a bucket list,” he says. He keeps finding new adventures— skydiving with his family, scuba diving with his daughter in Bali, and exploring the world.

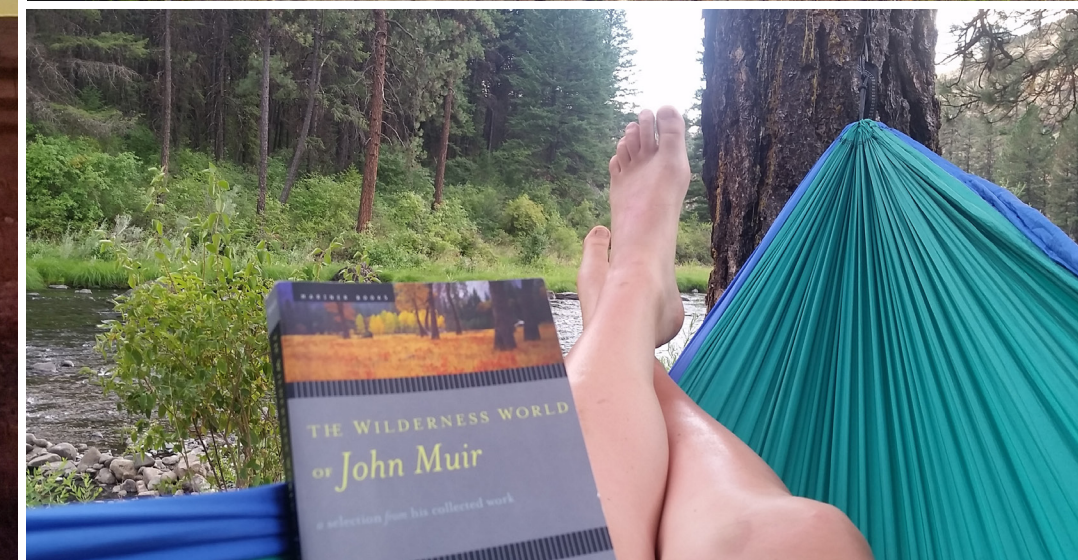
March 2017 gathering with MSU Forestry alumni and former visiting scholars in Jakarta, Indonesia. From left are Pungky Widiaryanto, Hartanto Sanjaya and Desi Diana, Yusuf Samsudin Bahtimi and Annisa Ratri, Becky and Larry Leefers, Wahjudi Wardojo, Dr. Putera Parthama, Dr. Boen Purnama, Dr. Rony Bishry and Upik.



GIVING: CARL AND HELEN BASEL | offering seniors the opportunity of a lifetime



**Emily Caretti**  
MSU Forestry senior



Above, Caretti's backyard sunset view during her Pathways position. Right top, Caretti overlooks the Blue Mountains in Umatilla National Forest. Right bottom, Caretti relaxes by the North Fork John Day River on a Sunday.

**"I'm very grateful. I don't think I'd be where I am if it wasn't for this push of help," says MSU Forestry senior Emily Caretti.** "I'm really glad that I ended up here because this has been a great fit for me."

Caretti is the 2017-18 recipient of the Carl O. Basel Endowed Fund Outstanding Senior Award. Scholarships and an outdoor education initially attracted her to forestry. The financial support gives her the freedom to pursue experiences that are relevant to her career.

Her four years in the Department of Forestry have been filled with priceless hands-on learning. Caretti spent the past year building her leadership skills as the president of the MSU Forestry Club and developing a peer mentoring program for incoming students. She's gained a wide breadth of forestry knowledge through working with five faculty members as both a teaching assistant and research assistant—dating tree rings, setting up timber sales, and writing briefs for land managers on fire science and invasive species.

She's also attended professional development opportunities, including the Society of American Foresters annual convention. The 2015 SAF meeting directly resulted in her

achieving a U.S. Forest Service Pathways position. This lets her explore a career in the U.S. Forest Service while she's a student. She's spent the past two summers as a timber crew leader, marking trees and setting up prescriptions for dry forest restoration in Umatilla National Forest.

These positions have helped her discover what she wants to do with her future, as well as make the necessary connections to get there. "Through my jobs, I've learned that I hate research," she says. "[Working with faculty has] helped me learn a lot about myself and where I want to go with my career. It's been really nice creating relationships with professionals in our department."

She hopes MSU Forestry scholarships will continue to attract a diverse student body. "When I came in, it was a different crowd. I've seen a lot wider range of student backgrounds," she says. "People are coming from urban areas. A lot more women are getting involved. The direction that people want to go with careers is what stands out the most." She's excited for the future of the Department of Forestry as the student body, staff, faculty, and programs increase to meet the evolving need for sustainable forests.

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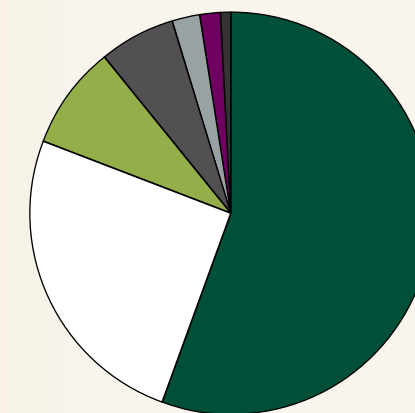
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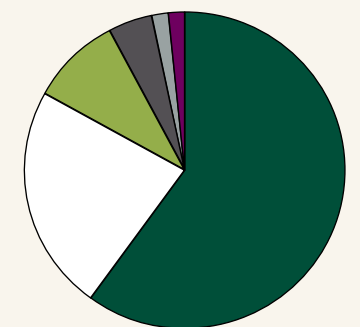
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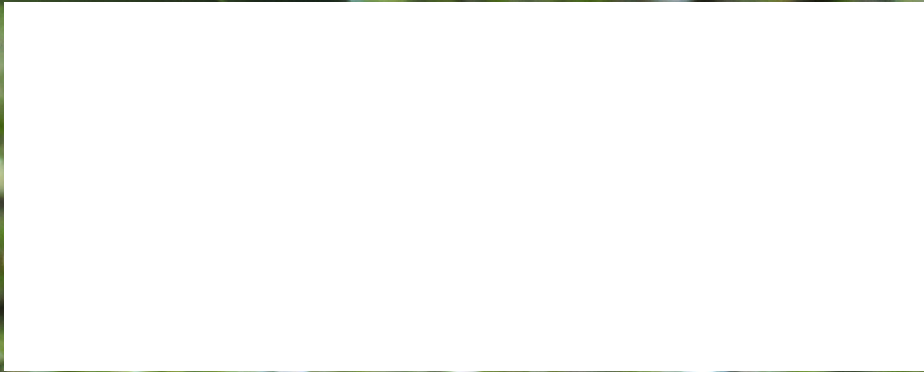
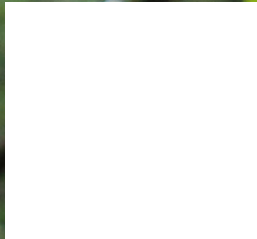
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