

FALL 2016

# MSU FORESTER

Redirecting

Michigan one of the largest forest diversity studies, page 6



Department of Forestry  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

## IN THIS ISSUE

CHAIR'S PERSPECTIVE	3
ALUMNI NOTES	4
LETTER FROM THE FAA INTERIM PRESIDENT	5
REDIRECTING MICHIGAN: MSU RESEARCHERS, DNR PARTNER IN ONE OF THE LARGEST FOREST DIVERSITY STUDIES IN THE NATION	6
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE: FOREST CARBON SCIENCE, POLICY AND MANAGEMENT	8
DON DICKMANN: AWARDED FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY	9
THE GIFT OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES: RON AND DIANNE HARRIS ENDOWED FUND	10

MSU Forester is a publication of the Department of Forestry at Michigan State University. It is a complimentary newsletter for Forestry alumni and MSU students, staff, faculty and friends.

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Images: On the cover, Forestry senior Trevor Kubitskey works with professor Mike Walters on sighting and marking tree stands for a collaborative project with the Michigan DNR (more on page 6). At left, the countertops for Sparty's Cabin, MSU's first tiny house, were made with wood from the MSU Shadows Collection (more on MSU Shadows, page 7). At right, MSU faculty, students, staff and volunteers participate in a prescribed burn at MacCready Reserve.

## CHAIR'S PERSPECTIVE

Dear Forestry Alumni and Friends,

The relationship between the MSU Alumni Association, MSU's umbrella organization for alumni, and its constituent groups (including the Forestry Alumni Association, FAA) is in the midst of major changes. The MSU Alumni Association recently transitioned from a dues-based membership organization to a unit that seeks to broadly involve all MSU alumni through three themes: **service, professional engagement and philanthropy**. This is consistent with changes in alumni organizations being made at other leading universities.

While the sharpening of focus and broader alumni engagement have clear benefits, the consequence of no longer collecting membership dues is that constituent alumni groups (including the FAA) no longer receive a portion of these dues to support activities. Strengthening relationships with our alumni is an essential goal of the department. Therefore, we will pick up support of FAA activities that strengthen the MSU Forestry alumni network. Furthermore, the new themes of the MSU Alumni Association align quite well with this goal.

After many years of generous service to the Department of Forestry and the FAA, our current FAA officers have decided to step down to make room for new leadership during the transition away from a dues-based model. FAA President Bill Schmidt, Vice President Kris Owen, Secretary John Anton and Treasurer Jim Kielbaso have provided more than 100 years of combined volunteer service to the department and our alumni. They have led the FAA and supported the department and our alumni through both good and challenging times. They have been a critical voice for Forestry alumni and for helping to secure a vibrant future for the department. While my stint as department chair overlapped just a small part of the time that they served the FAA and the department, I've really enjoyed my regular meetings

and collaboration with them, especially on the Forestry Cabin historical marker dedication and alumni reunion in June 2014. **To Bill, Kris, John and Jim: Thank you for your leadership throughout the years!** We look forward to seeing you all at future alumni events.



Continuing to have an active and exciting FAA is an important part of our future. One of my priorities as department chair is to broaden and deepen relationships with alumni. Towards building this vibrant Forestry alumni network, we want strong participation across years of graduation, career paths and location. We have terrific alumni, outstanding faculty and staff and wonderful students—all of the essential elements for being one of the leading forestry programs in the world!

If you are interested in building an exceptional MSU Forestry alumni network through serving on the Board of the Forestry Alumni Association, or would like to nominate another alumnus for this role, please contact me ([kobe@msu.edu](mailto:kobe@msu.edu)) or Lee Mueller ([muellerL@gmail.com](mailto:muellerL@gmail.com)), interim president of the FAA. There is a great future for the Department of Forestry and the FAA plays a critical role in it. We look forward to hearing from you.

My best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "R. Kobe".

Richard Kobe, Professor & Chairperson  
Department of Forestry



## ALUMNI NOTES

### **COURTNEY BORGONDY | M.S. '78**

I retired from the Michigan DNR, Forestry Division, in 2011 after almost 30 years with them. I spent most of my career in the Gladwin office where I started as a field forester and ended as the unit manager—managing and overseeing operations on 220,000 acres of state forest land.

I still keep my hand in the forestry business as a consultant helping landowners market their timber—part time that is. I manage to keep quite busy with gardening, racquetball, sightseeing and family.

### **BOB PEDERSEN | B.S. '76**

I'm recently retired from the U.S. Forest Service after 33 years—mostly as either a fire suppression crew member, a helitack squad boss, a research forestry technician and finally serving as an engine captain, or what they used to call back in the late 1970's, a TTO, tank truck operator. The last six years I was a front desk information receptionist—filling out firewood permits and the like for folks in Flagstaff, Ariz. in the Coconino National Forest. My wife, Phyllis, and I are new great grandparents! My time at MSU Forestry was great. I remember my mom sewing a Forestry Club patch on my jacket, spending time at Baker Woodlot and the wild times in Bailey and Butterfield Halls (the hall turned co-ed that year, 1973). I have fond memories of Drs. Dickmann and Kielbaso, who got me my first job with the Forest Service sophomore year on the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire as a volunteer recreation counselor at the old Gorham Civilian Conservation Corps camp living in army tents supervising high school age children for the Young Adult Conservation Corps. It's good to

hear all the updates from Spartan grads!

### **RUSS GARTNER | B.S. '00**

I started a retail building supply store, Studs Lumber Company. We focus on rebuilding the forest products industry in the Southern Rocky Mountains. We buy regionally harvested and milled wood and retail it to building professionals in our area. A few milestones to date; we took delivery of the first load of 2x4 and 2x6 dimensional lumber produced in our region in over 20 years, expanded the market for the “blue stain” beetle kill fiber epidemic, sold two local mills out of product three times (so far) and achieved multi-million dollar status in less than 18 months!

### **JERRY GELOCK | PhD '62**

Retired after 29-plus years with the U.S. Forest Service in the Intermountain Region and California; another 10 years with Kern County Parks Dept in Bakersfield, Calif.; 10 years of full-time volunteer service for my church and another two-plus years in customer service with a small manufacturing company. I still reside in Bakersfield. All in all, a great career. The MSU Department of Forestry prepared me well.

### **TOM BARIBAUT | PhD '11**

My work lately has been split between planning and inventory. Most recently, I completed an invasive species survey for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. I feel bewildered about how to properly characterize the surroundings—this mix of native and invasive species is unique and very challenging to manage in a productive way. Challenges of the tropics, and of islands in particular.

### **LARRY AMOS STONE | M.S. '88**

Fellowship through U.S. Forest Service—Larry Leefers advisor. I have been a Forester with the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Forest Service: Forest Inventory and Analysis in Asheville, N.C.; Tuskegee National Forest in Alabama; District Silviculturist, Stearns RD; Forest Planning Team and Forest Silviculturist Daniel Boone National Forest, Winchester, Ky. I retired from the USDA-Forest Service in December of 2011. Thirty-six years with Forest Service, four years in the USN = 40 years with Uncle Sam. Still volunteering on the Daniel Boone National Forest doing stand exams—where pines are now dead from southern pine beetle outbreak in 2000-2001; working with Habitat for Humanity and travelling the world with Charlene until the IRAs run out.

### **ALIMGIR KHAN | M.S. '83**

I worked in the Forests, Environment and Wildlife Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. My last posting in the organization was as Chief Conservator of Forests, Malakand Forest Region, Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The forests in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa include dry temperate forests, moist temperate forests, sub-tropical forests and tropical forests. Most of the time I have been managing the temperate and sub-tropical forests while in the Forest Service. Currently, I am teaching on a part-time basis as senior visiting faculty member at two Institutes in Peshawar: Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar, Pakistan (teaching forestry-related courses) and the Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar (teaching environment and sustainable development, climate change and resource economics courses).

## RAY BORG | B.S. '67

Retired from the Syracuse Airport in January 2015. We are selling the New York house and moving to Hilton Head Island, S.C. in September.

## JAMES SPENCLEY | B.S. '00

Although I practiced arboriculture for a few years after graduating, I chased a couple of different careers before getting the opportunity to work for the military again in 2004. (I spent four years in the Army paying for my MSU education.) I have been working several positions including interrogator, targeting analyst, trainer and biometric intelligence analyst for the military. I have spent four years in Afghanistan, seven months in Iraq, trained all over the world and now am stationed in Djibouti, on the horn of Africa, fighting terrorism. It has been a rewarding and exciting career. I still find myself happy to use my forestry and arboriculture skills to help out friends and family deal with tree issues when I'm back in the states. There is little else I love as much as climbing a good tree! I am now hoping to bring the two together and try to see if there is any way to create a better life for our deployed troops, as well as the people they live among. We are very short-sighted and wasteful when we are deployed and I think there are some good research and humanitarian possibilities in these places.

## IN MEMORIAM

### WALLACE "WALLY" GUNDERSON | M.S. '48

Wally, a retired DNR forester, passed away on July 26, 2015 in Marinette, Wisconsin. Fellow MSU Forestry graduate Mike Moore (B.S. '61) notes, "Wally, a member of the Greatest Generation, was a soft spoken fellow who was a mentor to many who worked for him throughout the years."

### GEORGE WILLIAM "BILL" IRVINE | B. '51

Bill called Cadillac home for more than 50 years. He passed away May 13, 2016 at his second home in Green Valley, Ariz. He was 89. Bill was a forester and a wildlife biologist, first for the state of Ohio and then for the U.S. Forest Service, much of that time at the Huron-Manistee National Forest. He was a member of the original recovery team that helped save the endangered Kirtland's Warbler.

## FAA INTERIM PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow Alumni and Friends,

Each of our paths down the forestry profession began somewhere. For many of us, myself included, that path began in East Lansing, Mich. In my freshman year while studying physics, I recall sitting indoors reviewing my calculus homework on one of those first sunny, spring afternoons. Outside, I saw students behind Hubbard Hall wandering from tree to tree under the guidance of a professor. Instinctively, I knew I would rather be with that class than stuck behind my desk. So began my journey down a career path that has carried me into the woods and away from the office.



Each year, we continue to add to our ranks of forestry graduates who carry our professional torch, something we have been doing since 1902. Our fellow graduates have come from and been sent all over the world to spread knowledge, experience and awareness first cultivated at MSU. Our graduates have made impacts in every corner of the forestry profession.

As we look to the future of the MSU Forestry Alumni Association and the continued growth of the department, I challenge you to remember your first steps down your professional path. Remember why and how you felt drawn to Forestry. Remember your experiences at Michigan State University. In the coming year, I encourage you to reach out to your fellow graduates, share your stories and reminiscence about your time spent at Michigan State. If you feel compelled, I welcome you to help us strengthen the Forestry Alumni Association, revisit your MSU roots and contribute as your time and resources allow. Together, we can help support the Department of Forestry as it continues to strengthen the foundation of our profession.

I look forward to working with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lee Mueller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lee" being the most prominent.

Lee Mueller  
[mullerL@gmail.com](mailto:mullerL@gmail.com)

B.S. '09, M.S. '11  
Project Developer  
Davey Resource Group, The Davey Tree Expert Company

# Redirecting Michigan



From left, Professor Mike Walters, Doctoral Student Catherine Henry and Technician Evan Farinosi mark the boundaries of a plot of land near Frederic, Mich. They require extensive sight lines to have a minimal margin of error when mapping the almost 1150-foot long edge of the forest stand.

## MSU researchers, DNR partner in one of the largest forest diversity studies in the nation

College of Agriculture and Natural Resources researchers Mike Walters, Department of Forestry, and Gary Roloff, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, are teaming up to study ways to increase sustainability and diversity of Michigan's valuable northern hardwood forests.

The study is one of the largest in the country, with Walters and Roloff examining almost 150 30-acre forest stands on public and private land in the Upper and Lower peninsulas.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Forest Resources and Wildlife divisions are partnering to fund the six-year, \$1 million project.

Northern hardwood forests cover 5.9 million acres in Michigan and are highly valued for forest products, wildlife and recreation. These stands are very important in Michigan and their future is being carefully monitored. Northern hardwood stands typically contain a variety

of species, such as sugar maple, American beech, basswood, white ash, red maple, hemlock, white pine and red oak. Declining tree diversity has caused concern among natural resource managers and researchers.

"There are really two big challenges that we are addressing with our research," Walters says. "The first is ensuring that a healthy diversity of tree species are regenerating in these forests, and the second is restoring the northern hardwood forests that have been degraded by beech bark disease, emerald ash borer and other factors."

"We want to keep diverse northern hardwoods as part of Michigan's working forests,"



Mike Walters



Gary Roloff

Walters says. “When we manage forests for diversity, they are more buffered from the impacts of invasive pests, and they contain multiple sources of food for wildlife.”

The loss of tree species diversity and, in some cases, reduced stocking levels in Michigan’s northern hardwood forests are linked to many factors. Walters and Roloff identified three that they think are particularly important:

- The legacy of long-term, single-selection silviculture (the practice of removing individual trees to create smaller canopy gaps and promote regeneration of more shade-tolerant species). Single-selection silviculture used to be the favored method for managing northern hardwoods; today, silviculturalists recommend a variety of techniques.
- Herbivory by browsers, most often deer.
- Pest and pathogen epidemics—e.g., beech bark disease and emerald ash borer.

Other factors likely include climate change, availability of certain tree seeds and seedling establishment limitations.

“Deer are an important part of the northern hardwood forests, both ecologically and recreationally,” Roloff says. “Our challenge is to figure out ways that deer and other wildlife and diverse northern hardwoods can co-exist, because both are critical elements of Michigan’s natural resources.”

Walters and Roloff will measure hardwood seedling growth and survival, quantify deer use and browsing behaviors in harvested areas, and assess the impacts of competing vegetation resulting from a variety of forest management techniques. They will also evaluate the use of small-scale treatments such as scarification, herbicides and seeding to encourage hardwood regeneration and survival.

Roloff and Walters will work closely with MDNR staff members from both the Forest Resources and Wildlife divisions.

“Working directly with the MDNR will help us ensure that the design, layout and implementation of the treatments are operationally feasible. The overarching goal is to develop integrated silvicultural techniques aimed at restoring northern hardwood regeneration to adequate stocking levels and achieving diversity in landscapes that also support deer,” Walters says.



## a piece of MSU history

MSU SHADOWS SALVAGES CAMPUS TREES  
AND CRAFTS THEM INTO HEIRLOOM-QUALITY  
FURNITURE, PENS, DIPLOMA FRAMES AND MORE.



[msusurplusstore.com/msu-shadows](https://msusurplusstore.com/msu-shadows)

New programming is extending the reach and influence of the MSU Department of Forestry across the globe. The Graduate Certificate in Forest Carbon Science, Policy and Management is the only program of its type and is pioneering a new standard of knowledge and proficiency in forest carbon management.



**“Worldwide, there are no other programs like this one concerning forests and their interactions with climate change.”**

—David A., Mexico

Delivered entirely online, the program consists of graduate-level courses that focus specifically on different facets of forest carbon management. Faculty leadership includes Dr. Dave Skole, Dr. David Rothstein and Dr. Runsheng Yin. Additionally, Lauren Cooper joined the department in fall 2014 as program coordinator.

- Plan, implement, manage and evaluate forestry-based climate change mitigation activities.
- Interpret scientific foundations of climate change and forest-climate interactions.
- Examine how forest management affects forest carbon balance.

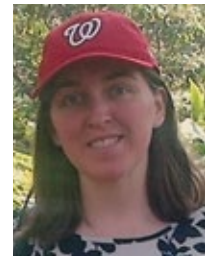
Participants gain a competitive edge in forest carbon project development, REDD+ policy and carbon offset investment advising for corporations, governments and non-governmental organizations. Courses are focused on practical application, closely linked to industry-leading methodologies and practices used in the field today. They learn from a variety of interdisciplinary activities, including how to:

- Investigate the mechanics of forest carbon markets.
- Frame the social context of forest carbon sequestration.
- Utilize tools for measuring, monitoring and accounting for forest carbon—including satellite imagery, remote sensing and integrated carbon sequestration models.

Applicants hail from a broad range of professional and disciplinary backgrounds, including current M.S. and PhD students, recent graduates and working professionals. The program hosts participants from the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Forest Service Climate Change Division, consultants, natural resource managers, forest technicians, policy makers, scientists and other professionals.

Once participants have completed coursework in the Graduate Certificate, they maintain access to our Forest Carbon and Climate Community—an online, professional group. Members receive news on policies and methodologies, internal networking and opportunities for research and employment.

For more information on the program and scholarship options visit [for.msu.edu/forestcarbon](http://for.msu.edu/forestcarbon) or contact Forest Carbon and Climate Program Coordinator **Lauren Cooper** at [forestc@msu.edu](mailto:forestc@msu.edu).



**“This program has immediately given me more insight into carbon accounting and social safeguards so that I can better contribute to project design, monitoring and evaluation.”**

—Lauren O., Washington, D.C.



## DON DICKMANN: AWARDED FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

“We survived,” says Professor Emeritus Don Dickmann about helping MSU Forestry through a restructuring process in 2010 and 2011. “I take no credit for turning that situation around. We worked as a team around here. I was just the team leader. We had a very strong core faculty,” says Dickmann. His humble emphasis on faculty and staff collaboration illustrates why Forestry is growing and why he has helped shape its success. Forestry is stronger as a department.

Dickmann was recently recognized with the MSU Faculty Emeriti Association Award for Outstanding Contributions by an Individual. He has spent more than four decades serving MSU through his contributions to forestry research and education. He retired not just once, but twice from MSU Forestry (in 2004 and 2011 respectively). He has a legacy of achievements at the department.

Some of his retirement accomplishments include co-teaching and curriculum development for our most popular class (FOR 101: Michigan’s Forests), teaching silviculture and forest ecology, advising doctoral students, co-authoring *Forestry Field Studies: A Manual for Science Teachers* and *The Forests of Michigan* (a revised edition came out summer 2016), outreach presentations, editor of the MSU Forester, collaboratively organizing the A. K. Chittenden Forestry Cabin Memorial celebration, being State Chair (2005) and Science and Technology Board member (2008-10) of the Society of American Foresters, achieving the appointment of 2007 Society of American Foresters Fellow (the highest recognition of the national professional society) and other activities.

Dickmann started at MSU in December of 1973 as associate professor of silviculture. He has had a long career in engaging students, scholarship and being a part of the evolution of Forestry. “I’ve seen some changes. I’ve seen water go under the dam, or over the dam, so to speak,” says Dickmann. He has been a part of department fluctuations—from changes in leadership to teaching forestry students in an online classroom.

He also helped navigate the department along its current path of revitalization. From May 2010-June 2011, he became acting chairperson. “There were a lot of things that worked in our favor. Many administrators and faculty believed that Forestry should continue to be part of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,” says Dickmann. Other important contributors to success were Forestry’s legacy, a strong alumni organization, individual alumni supporters, committed faculty and “a little bit of luck involved in there,” he says.



Pictured from left are Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs June Pierce Youatt, Professor Emeritus Don Dickmann and President Lou Anna Simon during the Awards Convocation.

Helping Forestry through a time of transition wasn’t the only challenge he faced in retirement. During his time as Acting Chair, Dickmann was battling cancer. “Beginning in June 2010... I started seven weeks of radiation therapy, which is the worst thing I’ve ever been through,” says Dickmann. “I look back on that and being engaged and actively working was good for me because otherwise I would have been sitting around thinking how terrible my situation was.” He survived his battle with cancer and also helped MSU Forestry survive a time of uncertainty.

He is optimistic for MSU Forestry because our graduates are dedicated students who can face the challenges of climate change, adaptability and exotic invasive species. “Foresters are going to have to be able to react in a positive way to those changes and deal with them. Change is not always something that people are anxious for, but it does happen. It happens all the time,” he says. Dickmann is hopeful for the future because of the leadership of Dr. Richard Kobe, department chair. The department is increasing enrollment by adapting to evolving needs of the forestry community and preparing students for employment.

“There’s no end of challenges facing foresters as we go into the future, but people love forests, they love to be in forests, they love to recreate in them, they love to watch them, they love the change of the seasons and they need wood products, so we’re always going to have a job to do,” he says. Thanks to dedicated educators and researchers like Donald Dickmann, MSU Forestry will thrive.

**SPARTANS WILL.**

## THE GIFT OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES



**Ron and Dianne  
Harris Endowed Fund**

**R**on Harris credits the MSU Department of Forestry for opening a lot of doors for him—an important thing to admit, especially since school wasn't really his thing.

"I hated going to school," says Harris. "In junior high I skipped school so much that the counselor asked my mother about my health." Thankfully, a biology teacher at Lansing Sexton High School inspired him to graduate. However, on the last day of high school, he signed up for the Navy—he wanted out of academics.

His break from education included three tours in Vietnam, where he spent all of his enlistment in Weapons Divisions on different ammunition ships. He also had a couple of starts and stops at a community college and worked at General Motors.

After learning about MSU Forestry from a co-worker, he decided to give education another try. This decision opened up countless opportunities and life changes for Harris. In the spring of 1973, he married his wife, Dianne. That was the beginning of a lifetime of adventures in and around national forests.

Shortly after their wedding Harris landed a summer job at the Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming doing timber surveys. His wife had

just gotten a new job in Lansing. However, when her boss discovered the newlyweds would be separated, she was given leave to join Harris camping on the Keystone District for the summer. "I was living in 'the sticks,'" says Harris, "Dianne bought all the camping gear in Lansing and hauled all of it to Wyoming and showed up one sunny June afternoon and said with a smile 'set up the tent.'"

While he was a student, Harris enrolled in an aerial photography class and studied photo interpretation. He thought flying all over taking pictures would be a great job to get into. Harris says his professor boldly pointed out there were only a "handful of those jobs in the U.S." and the chance was not good for anyone to get one.

As he received his undergraduate Forestry degree in 1975, Harris had two things he'd previously thought were unobtainable: an overall B+ average and a job offer as an aerial photographer at the Salmon National Forest in Idaho.

Later, both Ron and Diane Harris worked at the Fremont National Forest in Oregon and then Ron Harris jumped at the opportunity to fly as camera operator for the Pacific Northwest Regional. It was a temporary position that eventually turned into the career of a lifetime.

At the time there were only two aerial photo ships manned by forest service crews. One was Harris' crew stationed in Region 6, Portland, Oregon, the other crew was out of Region 4, stationed in Ogden, Utah. (A third crew was stationed near Denver, Colorado, but the crew was manned with contractors.)

He eventually became the Regional Aerial Photographer, taking aerial photos for the Forest Service, flying over forest and deserts in Washington, Oregon, Nevada and Utah. He took images of Mount St. Helens a few years after it erupted. He also created photo documentation for stream surveys, timber sales, trespass lawsuits, planning the Pacific Crest Trail, roadways, environmental damage from mining claims, eagle nests and map making. "It was a perfect job for me," says Harris. "We flight planned all winter and flew when we could all summer."

Harris says his days as a forester are unforgettable: confrontations with rattle snakes, unexpectedly encountering a black bear (always a thrill when you're armed with only a can of spray paint), flying in helicopters, fighting fires, hiking hours to get to a timber sale unit and the times he wondered "what the heck I just got into."

Diane Harris was swept up into the Forest Service life too. She traveled

extensively throughout the U.S. conducting employee training and development opportunities. In the course of her work she met with Senators and staff and was once photographed with President Clinton.

Ron Harris recalls MSU Forestry courses where he was able to get out of the classroom and apply what he was learning to the real world. While he was on campus, Forestry students did not have as many options for field studies as they do now. "At that time, Baker Woodlot must have been, and still is, one of the most studied areas on campus," he says, "But it was a great place to

reinforce what we were learning in the classroom. I just wish we could have gotten more field work."

In order to support out-of-the-classroom opportunities, Ron and Dianne Harris have made a \$500,000 estate gift called the Ron and Dianne Harris Endowed Fund. "Overall we have done and seen stuff in our careers that most people couldn't have ever imagined," he says. "It was great and a wonderful experience. That's why we are supporting MSU with our gift, so others have the same chance."

**"Gifts like the Harris' allow students to get outdoors and put their classroom knowledge into practice. Applying that knowledge in real forest ecosystems and human communities makes the learning real and tangible. That is exactly what gives our students an edge to be successful."**

—Rich Kobe, Forestry Chair

### Thank you to our generous supporters (gifts from January 1 - December 31, 2015)

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## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

Natural Resources Building

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East Lansing, MI 48824-1222

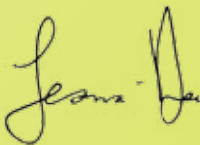
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Contact **Juli Mack** at [julimack@anr.msu.edu](mailto:julimack@anr.msu.edu) or **(517) 355-0090** to update your contact information.

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Thank you!



Jeana-Dee Allen, MSU Forester Editor



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