

## **Building Resilient and Healthy Southern Forests**

1-2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017, Athens, Georgia

### **Attendees:**

*University of Georgia:* Brittany Barnes, Elizabeth Benton, Nicholas Bolton, Joe Dahlen, Kamal Gandhi, Dale Greene, Scott Merkle, Cristian Montes, Larry Morris, Caterina Villari

*Georgia Forestry Commission:* Jeff Kastle, Chris Thompson

### *Private Companies:*

David Adams	Four Rivers Land & Timber Company
Wayne Bell	International Forest Company
Corey Davis	Superior Pine Products
Wilson Edwards	Weyerhaeuser
Tarryn Goble	BioForest Technologies Inc.
Don Grosman	Arborjet
Evan Johnson	Hancock Forest Management
Chris Johnston	International Forest Company
Kier Klepzig	Joseph Jones Ecological Research Center
Stephen Logan	F&W Forestry Services, Inc.
John McLaughlin	BioForest Technologies Inc.
Larry Newsom	BASF
Jim Peeler	Resource Management Services
Christopher Rosier	ArborGen Inc.
Tom Trembath	Forest Investment Associates
Alan Wilson	Rayonier

### **Synopsis of the Meeting:**

- Kamal, Caterina, and Elizabeth gave individual presentations on their background, interests, activities, and expertise related to research, extension, and teaching.
- Over 1.5 days, the group participated in extensive discussions related to the current and future forest health needs in the southern forests.
- The management goal for southern pine plantations were identified as: being healthy; having good stand quality and high productivity in a shorter period of time; being sustainable and resilient; having multi-use value; and having long-term stewardship. These desired conditions may vary depending upon ownership, e.g., public versus private lands.
- Amongst the >15 forest health issues provided by private companies, we narrowed the top three forest health issues with possible research topics as follows:
  1. Bark beetles → abiotic and biotic factors affecting populations and species of bark beetles, as well as effective prevention and control.

2. Pitch canker → early detection, screening for resistance, and identifying and understanding the various factors affecting it.
  3. Pine tip moth (PTM) → long-term impacts on productivity and wood quality, effects of management on PTM, effective management using new models, hot-spots for insect activity, and hazard rating.
  4. Two other forest health issues identified were drought and non-native species.
- We outlined that a new forest health cooperative at the Warnell School would ideally have the following features:
    1. A major source of forest health knowledge.
    2. A leader in cutting-edge research.
    3. Provide a unique function currently not being filled by other cooperatives.
    4. Multi-disciplinary at the nexus of entomology, pathology, policy, economics, and social sciences.
    5. Strongly focused on and prioritizing specific issues.
    6. Adaptable and able to respond to changes.
    7. Provide a long-term service (25-30 years minimum).
    8. Willing to partner with other forestry cooperatives (especially in terms of obtaining unpublished and long-term data on pests and pathogens).
    9. Demonstrate their clear value to the members.
    10. Provide actionable/tactical information with a focus on management.
    11. Conduct cost-benefit analysis of using a specific management tactic.
    12. Able to conduct effective technology transfer to growers.
    13. Keep open communication channels at all times.
    14. Proactive in informing growers about new and emerging pests/pathogens.
    15. Successful in finding additional research funding from internal and external sources.
  - Private companies expressed an interest in having additional assistance with social licensing, including the continued use of fire, environmental risks from chemicals management, and pest resistance.
  - Companies outlined their perspective that scientists may need to: 1) listen closely to the needs of the industry; 2) find common ground amongst the diverse needs of the industry; 3) do applied rather than just basic science; 4) not repeat research; and 5) be flexible. Scientists, outlined their perspective in turn, that: 1) applied research may be balanced with basic research in some projects; 2) changing research directions within a couple of years is difficult (especially with students' projects); and 3) professors are pulled in many different directions, i.e., research is only one part of their portfolio.
  - *A vision statement for a new forest health cooperative was identified as: To assist with building healthy, resilient, and sustainable forests in a rapidly changing world, using cutting-edge research and technology.*

- *Future steps and directions for the establishment of a new forest health cooperative were identified as:*
  1. Focus 100% on the group-identified current forest health issues for the next five years.
  2. Organize a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in early March 2018 for detailed strategic planning activities. Other important stakeholders such as Bugwood, Georgia Forestry Commission, USDA Forest Service, more timber companies, and forestry cooperatives will be invited.
  3. Submit a proposal along with budget to potential cooperative members for consideration (indirect costs will be negotiated with the university).
  4. In the first year, synthesize knowledge on top three pests – bark beetles, tip moth, and pitch canker (with inclusion of unpublished and long-term data). Initiate and conduct research in years 2-3 of the cooperative.
  5. Negotiate Kamal’s time and effort as the cooperative Director with the Dean.