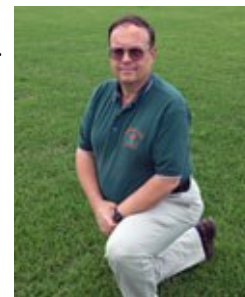


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**From the Interim Director**

The calendar says it is Fall even if the temperatures haven't cooled much yet. But a new school year has begun and Fall Semester classes are in full swing with several new students in the very successful UF/Milton academic program. All the best to our students during the coming school year.



There were a number of great events at WFREC this summer. The annual Gulf Coast Turfgrass Expo and Field Day was held on June 19 with over 250 in attendance. A wide variety of topics of interest to turfgrass managers were covered during the field day. On July 8, a Corn Variety Field day was held for area growers. Over 40 attended the morning event to learn about the latest corn varieties available to northwest Florida farmers.

The Santa Rosa County Farm Tour is a long-standing tradition that provides "city dwellers" a taste of rural life. It is the oldest county farm tour in Florida and continues to be very successful. The 200 plus participants visited the WFREC Jay Research Facility on July 18 to learn about corn and soybean production and the impact animals such as deer and wild hogs have on crop production in Santa Rosa county.

Another major summer event was the Extension Farm Field Day held on August 20. Ninety growers from the area learned about the latest in various aspects of row crop production including new varieties, insect, disease and weed management and the potential for growing bioenergy crops in the region.

We had several groups visit the WFREC Research facility during the summer. In July a group of students from the local Gospel Projects School visited to learn about agriculture in Santa Rosa County. Blake Thaxton, Santa Rosa County Horticulture Agent, took the lead and developed an excellent program for the grade school students. We also had a visit from the Board of Directors for the Florida Farm Bureau in September. The Directors were from all over Florida and were impressed with the broad range of projects that are underway at the WFREC.

(Cont'd on page 2)



**Gators in China**

In July, the International Turfgrass Society Conference was held in Beijing, China. Four years ago the previous conference was in Chile and the next conference will be in New York City in 2017.

The University of Florida was well represented in China. In attendance were Dr. John Cisar (treasurer of the society), Dr. Bryan Unruh, Dr. Kevin Kenworthy and four graduate students: Norma Flor, Jing Zhang, Esteban Rios, and Prasert "Moo" Stavornvisit. The conference was over a five day period and included scientific research presentations from turfgrass scientists around the world and tours of the area's turfgrass industry. Tour stops included a golf course, a turfgrass research and seed warehouse facility, a polo club, and a Chinese manufacturer of turfgrass equipment. This year's conference included, for the first time, a graduate student presentation contest. Esteban Rios was awarded third place for his presentation titled, "Root and Shoot Characterization of Mutant Turf-Type Bahiagrass. Pictured are Norma Flor, Jing Zhang and Esteban Rios "Gator Chomping" at the Great Wall of China.



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## From the Interim Director (cont'd from page 1)

WFREC received a grant from the UF College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to upgrade our teaching facilities. The over \$30,000 grant was used to replace or upgrade aging equipment used in the two UF classrooms on the Pensacola State College, Milton Campus. The new or upgraded equipment will enhance the learning experience for students participating in Distance Education courses as well as courses taught at the Milton Campus. We greatly appreciated the support from CALS.

In addition to the grant from UF/CALS, WFREC also received \$3,000 for the Richard K. Schoellhorn Scholarship Fund from The Friends of the Gardens of Northwest Florida. The Schoellhorn Scholarship has provided funding for many students over the years and often provided the support needed to make it possible for the student to continue attending UF at WFREC. We appreciate the long standing relationship with The Friends of the Gardens and the support for the Schoellhorn Scholarship.

A new telephone system was installed at both the Milton and Jay locations during the summer. The new VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) system allows easier communication between the Jay and Milton locations and improved telephone options. Now instead of dialing a central number and then an extension, each office has its own phone number. The new numbers are listed below.

Interviews for a new Center Director have begun and will be completed by mid-October. The candidates are faculty members at Louisiana State University, Auburn University and the UF/IFAS South-west Florida Research and Education Center near Immokalee, FL. Visit the WFREC website at mil-tongators.com for a link to information about each of the candidates.

**Barry Brecke**

**Interim Director**

### Milton Campus Phone Directory

### Jay Research Facility Phone Directory

Baxley, Tim (Lab Tech)	983-7142	Brecke, Dr. Barry	983-7126
Bohn, Dr. Kimberly	983-7129	Dozier, Mike (Mechanic)	983-7117
Brecke, Dr. Barry	983-7126	Ging, Jayson (Turf Dept)	983-7113
Claypool, Sean (Lab Tech)	983-7141	Grad Student House	983-7114
Johnson, Merniece (Accounting)	983-7144	Howell, Sharon (Weed/Turf Lab)	983-7119
Johnston, Carol (HR / Grants)	983-7137	Hudson, Justin (Heavy Equip Op)	983-7118
Leon, Dr. Ramon	983-7131	Kimmons, Greg (Farm Manager)	983-7116
Miller, Dr. Debbie	983-7128	Leon, Dr. Ramon	983-7102
Potts, Jonathan (IT)	983-7136	McKeithen, Justin (NRC Lab)	983-7111
Program Secretary	983-7125	Merritt, Tracy (Secretary)	983-7121
Sharma, Dr. Ajay	983-7132	Moon, Phil (Turf Biologist)	983-7112
Thetford, Dr. Mack	983-7130	Murrell, Robert (Weed/Turf Lab)	983-7119
Tinney, Erin (Recruiter)	983-7138	Telenko, Dr. Darcy	983-7104
Unruh, Dr. Bryan	983-7127	Unruh, Dr. Bryan	983-7105
Vickers, Robin (Events Coord)	983-7134	White, Justin	983-7120

**"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself."**

**- John Dewey**



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UF/IFAS West Florida Research and Education Center

Milton: 5988 Highway 90, Bldg 4900, Milton FL 32583 Jay: 4253 Experiment Road, Jay FL 32565 Phone: 850.983.5216

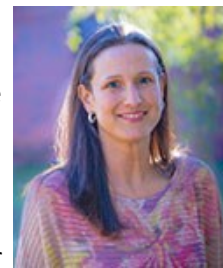
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## Recruiter's Corner

by Erin Tinney

**O**n September 21<sup>st</sup> WFREC started the Fall semester and welcomed 9 new students. The new Natural Resource Conservation students are Jeremy Bozeman, Leandra "Lea" Dawes-Vaeth, Christopher Johansen, Ella Jones, Case Pilcher, and Alexander Steed. The new Plant Science students are Alex Eaton, Cody English, and Matthew "Chris" Higbon. The students attended an orientation that day in order to learn about their online learning, email, and what to expect while attending University of Florida. After the orientation, the Student Club sponsored a fish fry for the new students, current students, faculty, and staff. Two of our Natural Resource Conservation students, Philip Garrett and Christopher Jones, prepared and cooked the catfish, hush puppies and fries. They did an excellent job, everyone enjoyed the fish fry. The student club also elected a new President Kevin Smith, Vice President Micah Byars, and Treasurer Courtney Culler. Julie Wood stayed on as Secretary.



**NEW STUDENTS:** Case Pilcher, Leandra "Lea" Dawes-Vaeth, Alexander Steed, Ella Jones, and Matthew "Chris" Higbon. Not Pictured: Alex Eaton, Christopher Johansen, Jeremy Bozeman, and Cody English.

Two of our Natural Resource Conservation students, Philip Garrett and Christopher Jones, prepared and cooked the catfish, hush puppies and fries. They did an excellent job, everyone enjoyed the fish fry. The student club also elected a new President Kevin Smith, Vice President Micah Byars, and Treasurer Courtney Culler. Julie Wood stayed on as Secretary.



**STUDENT CLUB:** Julie Wood – Secretary, Kevin Smith – President, Courtney Culler – Treasurer, and Micah Byars – Vice President

## Calendar of Events

- October 7 **Center Director Candidate Dr. Wes Wood Seminar:** "Integrating Research, Teaching and Extension at a UF/IFAS Research and Education Center to Meet State and Local Needs" (WFREC Milton Campus, Classroom Room 4814; can be viewed remotely in Gainesville, 1031 McCarty Hall)
- October 12–13 **Solon Dixon Field Trip** with Dr. Miller for students taking Dendrology, Sampling and Forest Ecology courses
- October 15 **Center Director Candidate Dr. Kelly Morgan:** "Integrating Research, Teaching and Extension at a UF/IFAS Research and Education Center to Meet State and Local Needs" (WFREC Milton Campus, Classroom Room 4814; can be viewed remotely in Gainesville, 1031 McCarty Hall)
- October 17 **Santa Rosa Leadership Agribusiness Tour** at the WFREC Research Facility
- November 22–28 **National Farm to City Week**—To promote agriculture and increase awareness about the importance of agriculture to consumers and the general public, we will distribute food (some locally grown) to 400 pre-qualified families in need. This food will provide these families with a healthy meal this Thanksgiving holiday.
- November 25 **Last Day** for students to drop or withdrawal for the semester
- December 7–13 **Final Exams**
- December 10 **Gulf Coast GCSA Annual Meeting**
- December 13 **Fall 2013 Graduation Reception**—The University of Florida, Milton Campus recognizes its graduates by hosting a graduation reception for students and their families. Fall 2013 graduates: Daniel Leonard, Paula Smith and Kenny McDonald.



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**Post-doc Spotlight - Dr. Darcy Telenko**

**D**arcy Telenko is a post-doctoral research associate here at WFREC working with the weed science and turfgrass programs. She is originally from Batavia, NY where she grew up on a dairy farm. She received her B.S. from Cornell University in biological sciences, plant biology, and her M.S. degree from Southern Illinois University in plant and soil science. Her master's research project examined the effects of soilborne pathogens on soybean nodulation and nitrogen fixation. Dr. Telenko then went on to receive her Ph.D. in plant pathology and crop sciences at North Carolina State University. Her dissertation examined the potential of using a biological control agent



in peanut production to reduce the severity of the disease. Eventually she was brought to this area when her husband's active duty military status had him transferred to the Pensacola area in 2007. She spent some time away from the area, but recently returned and is once again working at the Jay Research Facility. Dr. Telenko's responsibilities include studying the biology and management of tropical spiderwort (*Commelina benghalensis*) and assistance in management, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation for turfgrass and agronomic field crop trials. She is also currently working alongside UF county extension agents in developing research and demonstration trials for a Gulf Coast Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises initiative.

**Alumni Spotlight - Kaylen Rowland**

I was born into a farm family in Jay, FL; therefore, I have been around agriculture my entire life. Growing up, I loved assisting my dad in his farming endeavors and was often curious about what was going on. When I entered 7th grade, at Jay High School, I joined the Future Farmers of America. It was at that moment that I knew I would spend my life in the field of Agriculture.

I was unsure of exactly what I wanted to do in the field while completing high school and my first year of college. However, not long after starting at the University of Florida my dream became a little clearer. When hearing that my high school Ag teacher would be retiring in the next few years, it hit me that that was my calling. I then began taking Ag Education courses on top of my Plant Science courses, and quickly finished my Bachelor's Degree. I graduated with Cum Laude honors from the University of Florida and thoroughly enjoyed every minute I spent there.

The semester after graduation, I received a job offer at my Alma Mater. I was officially the Jay High School Agriculture Science teacher. It was a dream come true knowing that all of my hard work had paid off.

I am currently working in this position, teaching 8th thru 12th grade Agriculture Science and Technology courses. Being able to spread the word about the importance of Agriculture is truly remarkable. Each day is something new, and I honestly look forward to going to work every day.

Along with teaching the Ag courses, I am the JHS Future Farmers of America Advisor. My FFA members are phenomenal and I am looking forward to many great years with them! We are currently preparing for the Forestry, Parliamentary Procedure, and Public Speaking contest and will soon begin preparation for Tractor Driving and Land Evaluation.



**Alumni Spotlight - Evan Ohr**

Evan Ohr graduated from WFREC with a degree in Natural Resource Conservation with a minor in Wild Ecology and Conservation. He just recently took a job at Big Cypress Reserve at the Florida Everglades. He is a Fish and Wildlife Biologist and makes sure that the National Park Service is in compliance to protect the Red Cockaded Woodpecker, an endangered species. This is a permanent position working for the state of Florida.



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**Intern Spotlight - Timothy Ayankojo**

Timothy Ayankojo is a student from Costa Rica, who is working as an intern with Dr. Ramon Leon this semester. Timothy grew up in Ibadan, Nigeria and is currently a junior at Costa Rica's EARTH University studying agricultural sciences. EARTH University has a close relationship with the University of Florida, who often welcomes intern students at the various research and education centers. Timothy was interested in working in the United States to gain a better understanding of how science is conducted on a global scale and to gain knowledge in areas that may not be available to him in Africa or Costa Rica. For example, he is working on weed management research programs in turfgrass here at WFREC. Nigeria has no turfgrass to speak of and the information he's gaining about it now may prove to be relevant in his home country in the future. Just knowing that turfgrass exists and how to manage it is valuable for him. Timothy plans to further his education by getting a master's degree in soil science, agronomy or plant pathology; these are all subjects that interest him for further studies.



An interesting piece of trivia about Timothy: he arrived in Costa Rica just two days prior to starting classes at EARTH University without knowing any Spanish whatsoever. He was able to successfully pass his first classes by quickly learning as much Spanish as he could and with some help from fellow students. What an incredible hardship to overcome!

**Scholarship News**

Esteban Rios and Jing Zhang were scholarship recipients at the Florida Turfgrass Association conference and show in Orlando last month. Also, Daniel Leonard received a Sydney B. Meadows Endowment Scholarship for the Fall 2013 semester. Daniel is a Plant Science: Environmental Horticulture student.



Photo at left: Daniel Leonard. Photo at right: shown (from left to right) - Dr. Bryan Unruh, Jing Zhang, Esteban Rios, Dr. Kevin Kenworthy

**UF Milton Campus Student Club Message**

by Kevin Smith, Student Club President

The UF Milton Student Club raises funds to support our study/computer lab and to pay for student orientations, cookouts, weekend outings and other extracurricular activities. Money raised will also pay for a multi-class (dendrology, forest ecology, natural resource sampling) overnight Lab in October to Solon Dickson Forest in Alabama.

The student club of Milton recently had their fall plant sale. Several students volunteered to re-pot plants and work as sale's representatives for the sale. Though, it rained almost all day, we did have those people who know the quality of our plants and who were willing to endure the weather. We will reevaluate our inventory and be well-prepared for our spring sale in April.

It is difficult to plan activities during the semester with class work and Saturday Labs. This was evident this past week as we had several students in the study lab every day preparing for multiple exams. I hope all the studying paid off and resulted in good grades for everyone. Over the summer break, we enjoyed a couple of excursions at Adventures Unlimited Outdoor Center, canoeing and canopy ziplining. As students we have learned to appreciate the few times we have together participating in something other than studying and racking our brains in our pursuit of good grades.



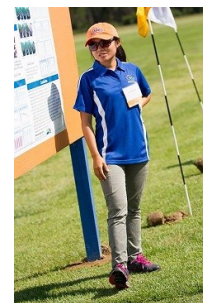
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## WFREC Happenings from the Past Three Months

June 19 was the annual **Gulf Coast Turfgrass Expo and Field Day** with over 250 participants in attendance. A wide variety of topics of interest to turfgrass managers were covered during the field day. Each participant had the option to follow one of two tracks: golf and athletic turf or landscape, parks and recreation.

The photo shows Jing Zhang, one of Dr. Unruh's graduate students, making her presentation.



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Col. Scott White, Major John Kolodziej, Sgt. Gennaro Murphy, Officer Judy Nidini, and Officer Justin Nowling from the **Santa Rosa Correctional Institution** visited the UF Milton Gardens on June 26 to learn about greenhouse production and plant propagation. Dr. Mack Thetford, Associate Professor for Environmental Horticulture, walked through the gardens and helped the officers take cuttings of various plants and instructed them on how to properly propagate the cuttings.

On July 18 WFREC hosted the **Santa Rosa County Farm Tour**, the oldest county farm tour in Florida. Over 200 participants learned about corn and soybean production and the impact animals such as deer and wild hogs have on crop production in this area.

In the photo, Libby Johnson, Escambia County Extension Agent, is talking about field corn. She had a few participants competing in a corn shucking contest, which was a lot of fun.



On August 9th Dr. Miller and Dr. Thetford took the summer semester **Plant Communities** students outdoors for their **final exam**. The students' newly acquired knowledge can't be tested with the traditional pen and paper exam as well as it can be in the field.

Another major summer event was the **Extension Farm Field Day** held on August 20. Ninety growers from the area learned about the latest in various aspects of row crop production including new varieties, insect, disease and weed management and the potential for growing bioenergy crops in the region.

In the photo, Dr. Leon is explaining biofuel crops, while Neeta Soni, a grad student, waits for her turn to speak.



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The **UF Milton Campus Student Club** held a **Plant Sale** on September 21 to benefit the horticulture and natural resource conservation programs in Milton. It was held at the PSC campus at the UF greenhouses.

In the photos, students are cleaning and repotting in preparation for the sale. Upper photo: Leandre "Le'a" Dawes (NRC) and Courtney Tyson (NRC). Lower photo: Matthew "Chris" Higdon (PS)

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## Current Extension Work at WFREC

by Blake Thaxton, Santa Rosa County Horticulture Extension Agent

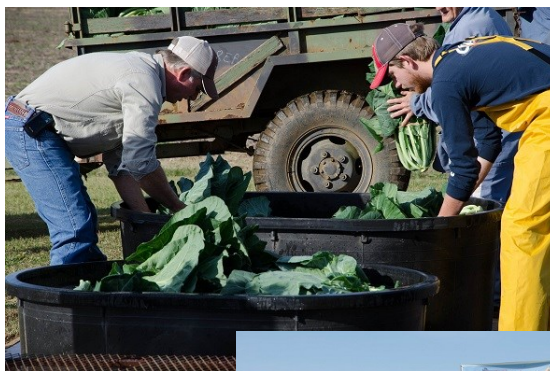
**G**ulf Coast Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises is the newly established small farms headquarters located at the WFREC. After a very successful Spring field day, where over 80 were in attendance, the team of county extension faculty and WFREC faculty and staff turn their attention to fall vegetable crops. With the emergence of farmers markets in the area and the need for year around local produce, the team has started to work on a demonstration of several vegetables that can be grown in the area. Carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, turnips, and lettuce are just a few of the crops that will be grown for the demonstration. Crops will be grown in traditional field production as well as high tunnel production. Be on the lookout for the upcoming field day whose date is to be announced.



## Growing Crops for Farm-to-City Week

The University of Florida—West Florida Research and Education Center, Bay Area Food Bank, and the Milton Community Center will join forces to celebrate National Farm to City Week November 22-28, 2013. Farm to City Week is a national effort with the goal to bring about a better understanding between rural and urban people by increasing their knowledge and appreciation for agriculture. To promote agriculture and increase awareness about the importance of agriculture to consumers and the general public, we will distribute food (some locally grown) to 400 pre-qualified families in need. This food will provide these families with a healthy meal this Thanksgiving holiday. (You can view photos of the current years' crops on our Facebook page: University of Florida IFAS West Florida Research and Education Center.)

The photo in the sidebar shows the 2013 Farm-to-City crops in the seedling stage in the greenhouse with Greg Kimmons, our farm manager, who watches over the crops very closely. Photos below are from 2012 Farm to City Week.



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