



Cahaba River/Lake Purdy Watershed Education, Research and Outreach Initiative

Background

- The Birmingham Water Works Board (BWWB) owns 9,000 forested acres surrounding two lakes and provides clean drinking water for over 600,000 residents.
- Alabama A&M University (AAMU) has a U.S. Forest Service Center of Excellence (COE) in Forestry and an Environmental Protection Agency COE in Watershed Management.
- This U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station (SRS) initiative works with both COEs to integrate student coursework with active forest and watershed management, interact with the Birmingham community, and provide background data for research projects in a rare ecosystem.

Activities

Since 2011, yearly field trips have been conducted that integrate students enrolled in six different classes

- Students experience interactions between multiple forestry disciplines

Student employees (~60) have performed real-life forestry tasks

- Created fully functional Geographic Information System (GIS) database of land base
- Inventoried and marked several tracts for timber sale
- Evaluated logging operations

Student interns continue to work during semester

- Includes three high school students

AAMU faculty and staff have increased involvement with Young Water Ambassadors

- ~100 top Birmingham high school students each year
- Field tour at BWWB project site
- Campus visits

Results/Outcomes

- Student-led work groups greatly increasing peer learning
- Five student-led timber sales totaling \$245,000 for BWWB
- Letter of Commendation from BWWB
- MOU with Alabama State Parks for wildland fire assistance with student-based FireDawgs
- Graduate of first season selected for SRS Scientist Recruitment Initiative
- Forestry program enrollment rapidly growing

Contacts

Andy Scott, Ph.D.
U.S. Forest Service
Southern Research Station
andyscott@fs.fed.us
256-372-4540

Kenneth Ward, Ph.D.
Station Coordinator, AAMU
Forest, Ecology and
Wildlife Program
kenneth.ward@aamu.edu
256-372-8287

Daryl Lawson, RF
Forester, BWWB
Project Coordinator
daryllawson1958@gmail.com
256-372-4249

