



SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
LAND-GRANT CAMPUS

**APRIL 18-20, 2017**

BATON ROUGE, LA





DIVERSITY IN  
**WILDFIRE**

*Summit*

# Letter from the Chancellor



April 19, 2017

On behalf of the Southern University Land-Grant Campus, we welcome you to the inaugural Diversity in Wildfire Summit in beautiful Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Southern University Land-Grant Campus, which comprises the recently joined Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center and College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences, is committed to ensuring students in agriculture are provided quality education and professional experiences so that they are prepared for success from undergraduate through post-graduate studies as well as their professional careers. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Forest Service have partnered with the Land-Grant Campus to provide meritorious students, with interests in agricultural sciences, a first-hand learning experience in wildfire management, a vital and thriving industry.

As members of the 1890 Land-Grant community we know that your institution plays an integral part in the legacy of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). It is therefore imperative that we continue to educate and provide opportunities to grow and participate in this industry. From farming to forestry and wildfire, our country depends on each of these industry components.

During the Diversity in Wildfire Summit, you will be presented with information from top industry executives on how to develop successful business practices. As you learn and share, we hope you consider this training a valuable, life-long experience that you will forever remember and use to help sustain your community. Thank you for attending.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bobby R. Phillips'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Bobby Phillips, Ph.D.

Southern University Land-Grant Campus



## TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2017

**4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. – Southern University A&M College Tour**

**6:00 p.m. – DINNER** A.O. Williams Hall, Rm. 191

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2017

**8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.** A.O. Williams Hall, Rm 191

### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

**Dr. Bobby R. Phills**, Chancellor-Dean

**Dr. Doze Butler**, Associate Dean

**Dr. Andra Johnson**, Vice Chancellor for Research

**Dr. Dawn Mellion Patin**, Vice Chancellor for Extension and Outreach

**Dr. Calvin Walker**, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research

Diversity in Wildfire Summit Committee

Introduction of 1890 Student Participants

**9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.** A.O. Williams Hall, Rm 191

### **Agencies and Partnership Presentations**

#### **USDA Agencies:**

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Farm Service Agency

Rural Development

Agricultural Marketing Service

Animal, Plant, Health Inspection Service

**Errol Solomon**, Forest Service Liaison

**Allison Johnson**, USDA /1890 Program Liaison

Group Photo

**12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. – LUNCH**

**1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.** A.O. Williams Hall, Rm 191

### **Urban Forestry Presentations**

**Dr. Yadong Qi**, *Prof. and Interim Chair, Department of Urban Forestry and Natural Resources*

Overview of Urban Forestry Education and Research at Southern University Land-Grant Campus

**Dr. Kamran Abdollahi**, *Prof. and Project Director*

Urban Forest Ecosystem Structure and Function in Baton Rouge

### **Special Presentation–Director Kali C. Jones**

Tulane’s Diplomat in Residence, Department of State  
“Careers in Diplomacy”

**2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.**

### **Research Tour and Demonstration**

Bioinstrumentation Lab - A.O. Williams Hall

Air Quality Lab - A.O. Williams Hall

Urban Forestry Labs - Greenhouse Headhouse

GIS Lab - P.B.S. Pinchback Engineering Building

**4:00 p.m. – Return to hotel**

**6:30 p.m. – Land-Grant Campus Blue & Gold Awards & Recognition Banquet**

Smith-Brown Memorial Union

Group Photo



## THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2017

### Morning Session - Presentations

**8:00 a.m.-8:05 a.m. – Opening** A.O. Williams Hall, Rm 191

**8:05-8:35 a.m. – Beatra Wilson**

National Urban and Community Forestry Program Manager

*"The Business of Wildfire: Budget, Accounting, Acquisition and Audit Careers"*

**8:35-9:05 a.m. – Sylvia Staples**

USDA /Forest Service-Regional Recruiter

*"USDA Forest Service 'Work for Nature' Agency of Many Opportunities"*

**9:05-9:35 a.m. – DeQuincy J. Gordon**

USDA Forest Service-Fire Management Specialist

*"1890 Career Opportunities in Fire and Aviation Management with the U.S. Forest Service"*

**9:35 a.m.-10:05 a.m. – Mary Anne S. Sayer, Ph.D.**

Research Plant Physiologist

Forest Service-Southern Research Station

*"Is There Fire in Your Crystal Ball? A Forest Scientist's Perspective"*

**10:05 a.m.-10:20 a.m. – BREAK**

**10:20 a.m.-10:50 a.m. – Marc A. Thomas**

Fort Valley State University Director-Field Operations

*"Forestry: Its Importance to My Culture"*

**10:50 a.m.-11:20 a.m. – Rusti Liner**

Certified GIS Specialist

*"Using Hazus-MH for Disaster Inventory and Response Mapping"*

**11:20 a.m.-11:40 am – Jeremy Leday, Donnicha London,  
and Tyrus Georgetown**

Presentations by Thurgood Marshall Foundation Interns, USDA-FS

Group Photo

**12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. - LUNCH**

**Terrance Simien, Grammy Winner,** Louisiana Cultural Presentation

### Afternoon Session - Presentations and Demonstrations

**1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. – Garrett Edgerson**

Southern University Band Media Coordinator

*"The Life of My Drone"*

**2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. – Darryl Lawson**

Alabama A&M University Fire Dawgs Coordinator

*"Fighting Fire With Fire"*

**3:00 - 4:00 p.m. - Demetria Elosiebo**

USDA Forest Service-Aviation Management Specialist

*"The Sky's the Limit: Keys to Success"*

**6:00 p.m. – DINNER** A.O. Williams Hall, Rm. 191

## FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 2017

**6:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m. - BREAKFAST** (provided by hotel)

Prepare for departure

# Speakers



## **Beatra Wilson**

*National Urban and Community Forestry Program Manager  
USDA Forest Service  
Washington, DC*



Beatra Wilson is a National Urban and Community Forestry Program Manager on the Washington Office, State and Private Forestry, Cooperative Forestry Program Staff. She provides program guidance, budget analysis and accountability and strategic communications planning for national and regional Urban & Community Forestry Program Managers. In addition, Beatra co-chairs the Executive Committee of the USDA 1890 Task Force, where she convenes Executive Committee and Task Force Meetings and generates agendas and proposals for executive decisions. In 2016, Beatra was assigned to the White House Council on Environmental Quality as Deputy Associate Director of Forests and Lands, where she represented the Obama Administration's interest in policy, regulatory and congressional activities related to the nation's forests and public lands. Beatra holds a Bachelor's Degree in Urban Forestry from Southern University, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Kennesaw State University.

## **Sylvia Staples**

*USDA /Forest Service-Regional Recruiter*



Sylvia Staples is a District Foresters and Wildland Firefighter. Her experience and expertise lies in working in various environments and ecosystems in resource areas, such as forestry, recreation, heritage, wildlife and fire. Currently on a one-year assignment as a recruiter, Staples has been with the U.S. Forest Service since 2012. Her career in fire has taken her nationwide, from Michigan to California and New Mexico serving on 20-person hand crews, engine crews and working in logistics. She received her Bachelors Degree in Forest Management from Alabama A&M University and Masters Degree in Justice Administration from the University of the Cumberlands. Sylvia is a native of Roanoke, AL and resides in Corbin, KY.

# Speakers



## **DeQuincy J. Gordon**

*Fire Management Specialist  
U.S. Forest Service*



DeQuincy J. Gordon, a native of Winnsboro, La., serves as a Fire Management Specialist with the U.S. Forest Service on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests in Georgia. There, he oversees a number of fire management operations, including prescribed fire plans, analyzing and applying fire management strategies, implementing fire prevention plans and conducting training and outreach activities. DeQuincy also serves as chairman of the Forest Service Multicultural Advisory Committee and was recently selected to participate in the Forest Service National New Leaders Program. He holds a Bachelor's degree in plant and soil science from Southern University A&M College.

## **Mary Anne S. Sayer, Ph.D.**

*Research Plant Physiologist  
Forest Service  
Southern Research Station*



Mary Anne Sayer is a plant physiologist with the U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station. After receiving a B.S. in Biology from South Dakota State University and a M.S. in forestry from the University of Minnesota, she earned her Ph.D. in forestry from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She has written or co-authored more than 70 scientific publications on the ecophysiology of loblolly pine production, longleaf pine regeneration, and the long-term impact of frequent fire on soil physical properties and longleaf pine vigor in the western Gulf region. Presently, she is a member of the research work unit, "Restoring and Managing Longleaf Pine Ecosystems," where she studies how interaction between the crown and root system of longleaf pine maintains tree health and vigor, and ensures adaptation to soil and climate conditions.

# Speakers



## **Marc A. Thomas**

*Director-Field Operations and Ag Marketing Specialist  
Cooperative Extension Program  
Fort Valley State University*



Marc A. Thomas has extensive experience in educational programming for agriculture and forestry. As field operations and ag marketing specialist at Fort Valley State University, he supervises county extension agents for the County Operation Unit. A native of Morris, Georgia, Thomas also serves as the Project Director for the Landowners Initiative for Forestry Education Project (LIFE), which increases outreach, awareness and technical assistance to

minority and limited resource farmers/landowners in the areas of sustainable natural resource practices and effective estate planning. Thomas has a Bachelor's degree from Fort Valley State University in Agricultural Economics and a Master's degree from Southern Illinois University (SIU) at Carbondale in Forestry.

## **Rusti Liner**

*Certified GIS Specialist*



Rusti Liner has been a GIS professional since 1994 and holds a Master of Science degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. Rusti served as the Chair for the Louisiana Geographic Information Systems Council this past year and as vice-chair the year before. She has participated in multiple disaster deployments across the country including the 2004 Hurricanes in Florida, Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Isaac and most recently the March and August floodings in Louisiana. During the BP

Oil Spill, she served as a volunteer animal transport chauffeur, carrying injured and contaminated wildlife to treatment facilities. Ms. Liner has presented at the ESRI International User's Conference as well as the Natural Emergency Management Summit.



# Speakers



## **Garrett Edgeron**

*Media Director Southern University Marching Band*



Garrett Edgeron is the Media Director of the Southern University Marching Band, in which he oversees all media aspects involving the Human Jukebox. He is a Spring 2013 graduate of Southern University and A&M College where he obtained his degree in Computer Science.

## **Daryl Lawson**

*Alabama A&M University Project Forester  
U.S. Forest Service Sole Source Contractor*



Daryl Lawson is a Project Forester and U.S. Forest Service Sole Source Contractor. He has 36 years experience in wildland fire and prescribed burning. Lawson teaches Timber Management and Forest Fire Ecology courses at Alabama A&M University where he is also coordinator for the Fire Dawgs, a hands-on and live fire wildland training program led by students. He is a graduate of Alabama A&M University.

# Speakers



## **Captain Demetria Elosiebo**

*USDA Forest Service-Aviation Management Specialist*



Captain Demetria Elosiebo, medical evacuation pilot, District of Columbia Army National Guard currently flies the KingAir 90 (BE9L) and King Air 200GT for the United States Forest Service. She is a graduate of Initial Entry Rotary Wing Flight School XXI at Fort Rucker, AL. Also a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University's Aerospace College in 2002, Elosiebo has been assigned to the 130th Airlift Wing in Charleston, West Virginia and served as Diplomatic Clearance Specialist for

the 618 Air & Space Operation serving the Air Mobility Command. There, she secured departure, overflight and landing permissions for armed and unarmed military, commercial and contract aircraft through foreign U.S. Embassies.

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Tennessee State University  
Tuskegee University  
University of Arkansas Pine Bluff  
University of Maryland Eastern Shore  
Virginia State University  
West Virginia State University

### **Diversity in Wildfire Summit Program Committee:**

Allison Johnson  
Errol Solomon  
Joyce Peralta  
Kamran Abdollahi  
Yadong Qi

Southern University Land Grant Campus Technology and Communications Team  
KQ Communications

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