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Pacific Southwest Research Station, Albany, CA 94710

Institute of Forest Genetics Marks 75th Year

The Station's renowned Institute of Forest Genetics, at Placerville, Calif, will celebrate its 75th anniversary on August 1. The celebration will start at 2:30 pm., with presentations, followed by a poster session and open house at 3:30, and dinner from 6 to 9 pm. Reservations can be made with Chris Nelson or Cindy Collins at (530) 622-1225. The Western Forest Genetics Association, which will be meeting in Davis July 30-Aug. 2, has scheduled a field trip to the IFG on August 1.

The precursor of the IFG, the privately-owned Eddy Tree Breeding Station and Arboretum, was founded in December 1925 by Seattle lumberman James G. Eddy. Therefore, the Breeding Station predates the California Forest Experiment Station (now Pacific Southwest Research Station) by 6 months. James Eddy incorporated his Breeding Station as a non-profit organization and renamed it as the Institute of Forest Genetics on April 26, 1932. And on Aug. 23, 1935, the Eddy family deeded the IFG to the California Station.

The 75th anniversary celebration was scheduled for this year to allow for a major refurbishing of the Eddy Arboretum at the IFG. This work was done under a FS Conservation Education Grant that Chris Nelson, of the IFG staff, received, in addition to matching funds and contributions from the Eddy family.

In their first 75 years, IFG scientists have earned a wide reputation for their advances in forest genetics research. They developed techniques for crossing pines that led to the production of the first controlled hybridization of pines. They established innovative practices that are widely used for forest tree improvement. They produced the first hybrid of Monterey pine and knobcone pine that grows rapidly and is drought-hardy and frost-resistant. They produced the first hybrid of pitch pine and loblolly pine. They revised the pine taxonomy based on species crossability. They pioneered research on insect resistance in pines, and conducted research on disease resistance.

IFG scientists pioneered work on the biochemistry of the turpentines of pines and helped clarify the genetic relationships among the genus *Pinus*. They demonstrated the existence of altitudinal and geographic races in tree species. They pioneered work in single-gene inheritance in trees, using the technique of electrophoresis to separate enzymes. They identified sugar pine resistance to white pine blister rust, which led to the development of resistant lines in sugar pine. They designed nursery lifting windows that account for seasonal activity in root growth capacity. They achieved the first genetic transformation of a forest tree. And more recently, they have been applying genomic approaches to understand wood properties by studying networks of interacting genes to identify and understand the functions of proteins—the products of genes.

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New Project and Team Leaders Announced

Three new Project Leaders and a new Team Leader were announced recently at PSW. They include:

Michael J. Arbaugh will serve as Project Leader—Air Pollution/Global Climate Change Research, from June 13, 2001 to Sept. 30, 2003. The unit is located at the Forest Fire Laboratory, Riverside, where Mike is a statistician-turned-ecologist. He earned a B.S. degree in biology and M.S. degree in statistics at the University of California at Riverside; and a doctorate in forest biology at Colorado State University. He worked for 2 years as a statistician at UC Riverside's Department of Entomology, and then joined PSW in 1986, the first 8 years as statistician and then since 1995 as an ecologist, at Riverside. In his research, Mike is applying air pollution sampling systems to characterize the spatial patterns of air pollution and its effects on vegetation in mountainous areas, and developing and applying strategic fuels emissions models.

Claire S. Kinlaw, a research molecular geneticist, has assumed a 1-year appointment, effective June 15 as Project Leader—Institute of Forest Genetics, at Davis. A native of Dillon, Mont., Claire earned a B.A. degree in chemistry at the University of Virginia, and doctorate in biochemistry at Rice University. She did post-doctoral research at the University of California at Berkeley, and at PSW until she joined the Station staff in 1987. Her research specialty is genomic science—the sequencing of anonymous gene sequences to identify gene functions and design gene markers, and studying non-gene-coding sequences in conifer genomes.

Danny C. Lee, Science Integration Team Leader—Sierra Nevada Framework Unit, in Sacramento and then a scientist with the Timber/Wildlife Research Unit, at Arcata, has been named Project Leader of the Arcata unit. His 2-year appointment was effective March 13. Although born in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Danny grew up in Tennessee. He attended the U.S. Naval Academy, and later earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in ecology at the University of Tennessee; an M.S. degree in statistics at Louisiana State University; and a doctorate in wildlife and fisheries science at Texas A&M University. He worked as a research fellow for Resources for the Future, and then in 1991 joined the FS's Rocky Mountain Station as research biologist, before transferring to PSW.

Carl N. Skinner became Team Leader—Disturbance Processes Research, at Redding, on June 18. Carl was born in Pasadena, received an A.A. degree at Shasta Community College, a B.A. degree in history at the University of California at Berkeley, a teaching credential and an M.A. degree in geography at Chico State University. Before joining PSW in 1988, Carl worked on National Forests in northern California in fire management positions. He became a geographer at PSW in 1996.

The IFG is the oldest facility for forest genetic research in the world. Its founder, James Eddy was convinced that the supply of lumber could be maintained only by improving forest growth, and he planned to do so by applying the then new science of genetics. After much study and consultations with plant breeders, he chose a site in Placerville, in northern California, because its climate and soils were suitable for the growth of many tree species. Among those he consulted was the renowned plant breeder, Luther Burbank, on how to establish and operate a forest tree breeding station. In spring 1925, Lloyd Austin was hired as director, and given the job of establishing the Eddy Tree Breeding Station. He cleared the site of fruit orchards and started the first conifer plantings, and within a few years, the first pine hybrids were bred.

In the ensuing 75 years, the IFG has acquired an international reputation as a center of forest genetics research, especially in the areas of conservation and molecular genetics. It continues to attract scientists and other visitors from all over the world. In the last decade, these visitors have been from Asia, Australia, Central America, and Europe. For the August 1 anniversary celebration, visitors from Australia, Bulgaria, and Korea are planning to return to the IFG.

The name "Institute of Forest Genetics," which traditionally referred to the PSW forest genetics research unit's field facility at Placerville, Calif., has been applied to both the unit itself and the field facility for the past several years. Unit headquarters, formerly at Albany, are now at Davis, Calif. The unit scientific staff is, thus, dispersed at three sites: Albany, Davis, and Placerville.

Thrift Savings Open Season Closes July 31

The Thrift Savings Plan open season or open enrollment period that started on May 15 closes on July 31. Three major changes have been made in the program: a 1 percent increase in the maximum amount of contributions enrollees can contribute to their Federal retirement program; the addition of two new investment funds; and newly qualified employees may participate in the program immediately, rather than go through a waiting period.

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New to PSW

It was the call of the water that beckoned. And it was Susan S. P. Lam, the Station's new contracting officer, who answered that call. The amenities of the San Francisco Bay Area, including its water, attracted her to apply for a position with PSW. She reported for work on June 4, after having spent 13 years with the U.S. Veterans Administration.

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Susan received her early schooling there, earned a B.S. degree in public administration (1994) at the University of Hawaii, at West Oahu; and an M.B.A. (1996) at Chaminade University, in Honolulu.

She started her government career in 1987. From then until 1996, she worked as a medical clerk and later secretary in the VA Regional Office, in Honolulu. After completing training in contracting in 1996 at the VA Medical Center in Tucson, Ariz., she became a contract specialist in Dallas, remaining there until she shifted to PSW.

Her initial observations about the Station are that it is "different" from her previous workplaces, and it is very much "family oriented." Susan lives in El Sobrante, on the East Bay, and her hobbies include golfing, arts and crafts, and traveling.

Change in NFFE Representative Announced

George Durst has resigned as union representative at the Station. George, who is located at Riverside, has been a union steward for the past 7 years, and acting president of Local Chapter 2066, National Federation of Federal Employees, for the past year. Pending election of a Chapter president, Bill McCutcheon, of the Forest Products Laboratory, at Madison, Wisc., will handle union matters at PSW. He is vice president for research and development in the NFFE Forest Service Council. At PSW, Chapter 2066 represents employees in non-supervisory technical, administrative, clerical, and wage-grade categories.

Laudenslayer is Fresno Director's Representative

Bill Laudenslayer, wildlife research biologist at the Station's Forestry Sciences Laboratory, at Fresno, is the new Director's Representative at that field site. He will serve first contact for external affairs matters, and coordinate site administration.