

# Investing in Trees Means Investing in Future Tree Professionals

Ms. Holly Campbell, Dr. Kim Coder, Dr. Rebecca Abney, & Dr. Jason Gordon

2022 Georgia Tree Council Annual Conference

November 2, 2022



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

Warnell School of Forestry  
& Natural Resources

# COFA Degree Program at UGA Warnell

## *Community Forestry & Arboriculture (COFA)*

### History of the Warnell COFA Program:

- **1986** Warnell Community forestry program started
- **1989** Urban Tree Management Class began at Warnell
- **2003** *Perimeter College-GA State University* movement on faculty hire in community forest management
- **2006** *Griffin Campus of UGA*. Community forestry curriculum
- **2017** *UGA Warnell* Advisory Committee on potential COFA program
- **2019** *UGA Warnell-Athens Campus* community forestry & arboriculture (COFA) program begins



# Support



GEORGIA FORESTRY  
COMMISSION



**BARTLETT  
TREE EXPERTS**

*SCIENTIFIC TREE CARE SINCE 1907*



*Sustaining Georgia's Green Legacy*

# COFA Program (2019-present)

AOE in Natural Resource Management and Sustainability degree:  
<https://warnell.uga.edu/natural-resource-management>

## **4 Faculty Members Support Program**

- Dr. Rebecca Abney, Ms. Holly Campbell, Dr. Kim Coder, Dr. Jason Gordon

## **Courses (required for COFA undergraduate students)**

- Urban Tree Management I (Fall)
- Community Soils and Site Development (Spring)
- COFA Practicum (3 week, Maymester field course)
- Urban Tree Management II (Fall)
- Community Forest Management (Spring)
- COFA Internship

# COFA Program Undergraduate Requirements

- Dendrology
- Field Methods
- Soils and Hydrology
- Economics of Renewable Resources
- Society and Natural Resources
- Ecology of Natural Resources
- Spatial Analysis
- Renewable Resources Policy
- Senior Thesis/ Project
- Electives (e.g., Forest Health)

# Grad Student Projects (2019-2023)

- Tree risk perceptions
- Nature based solutions to PTSD
- Implementation and maintenance of green infrastructure
- Migrant labor
- Biochar in tree vaults
- Urban soil and tree growth



COFA grad student assisting with a community mapping project



Tree risk assessment lab on a city managed tree in Athens, GA with the county Community Forester



Nursery tour of Select Trees Nursery



Tree support system lab with New Urban Forestry in Athens, GA



Pruning lab on a city managed tree in Athens





Tree pest lab with Warnell Dr. Elizabeth McCarty



Chainsaw safety lab with New Urban Forestry in Athens



Large equipment demonstration lab with New Urban Forestry in Athens



Downtown Greenville, SC tree walk with Drew Smith



Tour of Piedmont Park with the Piedmont Park Conservancy



Bartlett Tree Expert lab in Charlotte, NC

# Student Experiences

**“The skills I use in this job are ones I learned in the COFA program...Every class in the COFA curriculum gave me information that I continuously pass on to homeowners, students, and city leaders. As rural forests are converting into urban interfaces, the need for urban and community foresters will only increase. I believe the COFA program is training that responds directly to this future need.”**

*Lea Clark, Community Forester, Georgia Forestry Commission Warnell COFA grad student (graduated)*

**“Community Forestry is a rewarding field that I was never exposed to until I joined Warnell, and I’m so glad to have had the opportunity to join this program. I think it provides an excellent balance between classroom education and field experiences, and the instructors’ passion for the subject makes each day enjoyable.”**

*Shelley Palmer, Warnell undergraduate COFA student*

# Student Experiences

**“I can't express enough how much I appreciate the COFA program at Warnell. The scientific and practical knowledge I acquired throughout my time in the program set a firm foundation for a quick-paced entry and immersion into the industry. I am in a position professionally and personally that I could not have achieved without the guidance and personal investment of the professors and outreach faculty at UGA.”**

*Abbie Judice, Park Arborist & Environmental Coordinator at Moncus Park and Consulting Arborist for New Urban Forestry Warnell COFA grad student (graduated)*

**“Since I changed my major to COFA, I have continuously learned about more and more career paths that excite me. The ability to work with trees in a way that is not just selling them for timber but rather protecting them in our communities is great.”**

*William Knapp, Warnell undergraduate COFA student*

**“I adore COFA because it taught how a community and urban planning focus could be combined with ecology and traditional production forestry knowledge to create cities that are beneficial for humans and trees.”**

*Lassie Stiles, Warnell undergraduate COFA student (graduated)*

# Partnerships - Private & Public



New Urban Forestry



Georgia Forestry Commission



# Partnerships - Private & Public



Bartlett Tree Experts

# Partnerships - Private & Public



Georgia Power

# COFA Future Steps

# Increase Student Recruitment

*(2019 – present)*

## **Graduated**

- 4 Graduates, 2 Undergraduates
- 6 graduating in 2-3 years

## **Future Graduates**

- 6 Graduates in 2-3 years, 2 Undergraduates this fall/spring 2022

We are seeking more students

All graduates have found employment in the industry (private and state)

# We Would Like Your Input – Small Group Exercise

How do we recruit more students into this program  
(undergrad and grad)?

What knowledge do students need entering the workforce?

What skills/ trainings do students need to be better  
prepared for the workforce?

# Thank You!

Holly Campbell

Public Service Assistant

[hollycam@uga.edu](mailto:hollycam@uga.edu)

706-363-0198



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

Warnell School of Forestry  
& Natural Resources



2022 COFA Maymester Class at Bartlett Tree Experts lab in Charlotte, NC

UGA Warnell COFA Program:

<https://warnell.uga.edu/natural-resource-management>