

Georgia Tree Council
Annual Georgia Tree Conference
November 5-7, 2024
Jekyll Island Club Resort
371 Riverview Drive
Jekyll Island, GA 31527



Supporting Urban Forest Resiliency in a Changing World

Tuesday, Nov. 5

3:00 – 6:00 p.m. Conference Check-in **ASPINWALL**

Exhibitor Set-Up **MORGAN CENTER**

4:00 – 6:00 p.m. **Tree Board Roundtable:** *A session for tree boards, arborists, city staff, and others to share successes and challenges with their municipal tree programs, learning solutions and ideas from their peers around the state. Moderated by Seth Hawkins, Georgia Forestry Commission* **PULITZER ROOM**

This session will include a talk, “**Creating and Managing a Tree Endowment for Your Community**” by Philip Smeltzer, Chair, Greenspace Conservation Commission, Madison, GA

Objectives:

- Gain knowledge of a fund goal and how to sustain annual plantings
- Appreciate development approaches to build the fund
- Lessons learned from over 20 years of fund management
- Lessons learned from a new fund and 1-year of recent experience

Wednesday, Nov. 6

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. **Breakfast Buffet and Conference Check-in MORGAN CENTER**

7:00 – 7:30 a.m. **Members’ Yoga with Mel MORGAN CENTER LAWN**
Attendees who are active GTC members may join GTC Outreach Coordinator Mel Sparrow, an RYT-200 yoga instructor, for a half-hour morning yoga session to start your day. Bring your own yoga mat & towel/blanket.

8:00 – 10:00 a.m. **General Session: MORGAN CENTER**

- Welcome from **Robert Seamans**, President, Georgia Tree Council and **Mary Lynne Beckley**, Executive Director

- **Working with the Trees of Jekyll Island** with **Cliff Gawron**, Landscape Director, Jekyll Island.

Cliff has worked in his role for over two decades. His numerous accomplishments include adding hundreds of live oaks to the landscape, restoring the Avenue of Palms, and planting the island first Christmas Tree – a Southern red cedar.

- **Maritime Reforestation at Cannon Point Preserve: Stephanie Knox, Stewardship Director**, St. Simon's Land Trust

Cannon Point Preserve was acquired by the St. Simon's Land Trust (SSLT) and they are working on the only maritime reforestation research in the world. The project involves removing pine beetle-infested and diseased pines and replacing them with live oak seedlings. SSLT works with many different organizations on evaluating the research, monitoring the conservation easement and maintaining the management plans of all their properties.

- **Improving Urban Trees: Fred Raley, Ph.D., CF**
Director - Western Gulf Forest Tree Improvement Program
Tree Improvement Coordinator II – Texas Forest Service

Communities are struggling with hotter and drier climates in general, but in some areas of the United States, atmospheric rivers, arctic blasts and bomb cyclones are putting great stress on trees and people alike. Some tree species are more resilient than others in their range and climate zone adaptability, and it has long been critical for seed to be tagged and seedlings produced from local sources. State and federal nurseries specialize in this work to develop geographic- and climate-adapted trees for reforestation and planting projects. Dr. Raley's work involves producing native seed and diverse tree species for local planting projects that can be replicated across America, including tree seed collection, production, testing, urban seed establishment, and planting in partnership with commercial nurseries, arboreta, and local government using federal grants and other sources.

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Break – Visit with exhibitors

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Breakout sessions (3)

- **RESILIENCY, YES. BUT WHO, WHAT, AND WHERE?**
Morgan Center Mezzanine

George Barker and Rachel Barker, Natural Resource Consulting; **and Dorothy McDaniel**, Executive Director, Trees Columbus

Resiliency of the Urban Forest? Let's examine arborists, urban foresters, and tree advocates. In Columbus, Georgia, a tree ordinance was passed, with extreme opposition, some 25 years ago. Today, the political climate has not changed. It remains to be a fight making sure the ordinance is followed and enforced. Tree supporters in Columbus continue to fight this twenty-five-year battle: that's resiliency. If the "climate" isn't changed and "resiliency" doesn't continue, there will be very few trees to worry about, no matter what happens with the weather.

- **WHY TREES MATTER: EVALUATING TREE HEALTH AND BENEFITS OF UGA CAMPUS TREES**
Federal Reserve / Aldridge Room

Iain Dallas, undergraduate student, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resource, University of Georgia (UGA); **Holly Campbell**, Public Service Associate, UGA Warnell; & **Dr. Dan Johnson**, Associate Professor, Tree Physiology and Forest Ecology, UGA Warnell

During the summer of 2024, the UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources tree physiology lab and outreach program completed a second year of investigating tree health and benefits of ten UGA campus oak trees. The project evaluated water stress, surface temperatures, soil compaction, and iTree benefits.

- **EQUITABLE CANOPY, PLANTING PRIORITIES, AND TECHNOLOGY**
Pulitzer Room

Rachel Ormseth, Account Executive, PlanIT Geo, ISA Certified Arborist

The equitable distribution of trees throughout cities ensures that all residents have access to the multitude of benefits created by urban forests. Tree canopy assessments allow cities to understand their canopy distribution and precisely identify areas with low tree canopy and high planting potential. As our ability to measure urban trees and canopy evolves, so too must the strategies and benchmarks we use to guide urban forest management.

This presentation will demonstrate how cities and nonprofits can apply canopy data to maximize ecosystem benefits where they are needed most, develop citywide benchmarks, monitor canopy trends, and inform management plans. Topics will include a review of modern canopy assessment technology and analysis tools and how those tools support inclusive urban forest management through plans, projects, and policies.

11:30 a.m. – Noon

BREAK – Visit with exhibitors

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Excellence in Urban Forestry Awards Luncheon (plated luncheon) **MORGAN CENTER**

Special Guest: **Tim Lowrimore**, Director, Georgia Forestry Commission

1:30 – 2:00 p.m.

BREAK - Visit with exhibitors

2:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Tour of Jekyll Island Trees and St. Simon’s Island’s Cannon Point Preserve (bus tour: 1 hour round trip drive time to and from Cannon Point Preserve) Descriptions on page 1. **MEET ON FRONT TERRACE OF JEKYLL CLUB**

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Reception with Silent Auction
Enjoy food and drink with your fellow attendees. Proceeds from the silent auction benefit GTC’s statewide programs and services.
ASPINWALL / PULITZER / CONNECTING VERANDA

Thursday, Nov. 7

7:00 – 8:00 a.m.

Breakfast Buffet

MORGAN CENTER

7:00 – 7:30 a.m.

Members’ Yoga with Mel **MORGAN CENTER LAWN**
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8:00 – 10 a.m.

GENERAL SESSION

MORGAN CENTER

- **Introducing Effingham Georgia Green: Rita Elliott**

EGG is a consortium of policy makers, small business owners, environmentalists, and educators educating and advocating for a greener Effingham County where nature thrives along with people

- **Soil Biology and its Applications for Trees with Christopher F. Johnson, Ph.D., Tree Conservation**

Specialist and Technical Advisor for the Mid-Atlantic region for the Davey Institute

Chris will share his expertise in soil, water, and root zone management as it applies to trees.

- **The Development of Biochar to Improve the Rehabilitation of Impaired Soils with Kelby Fite, Ph.D.,** V.P. of Research, Bartlett Tree Experts

Biochar is a carbon-rich material made from biomass that improves soil fertility, moisture retention and carbon sequestration. We'll learn how trees can benefit from biochar.

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.

BREAK – Visit with exhibitors

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS (3)

- **THE NEW CANCELLATIONS: HOMEOWNER INSURANCE AND TREES – Kay Evanovich, Arborist, City of Decatur**
Morgan Center Mezzanine

Kay will discuss new developments regarding insurance companies dropping homeowner policies due to tree concerns.

- **TREES AND WATER: A PANEL DISCUSSION**
Federal Reserve / Aldridge Room

Representatives from **the Altamaha Riverkeeper**, a grassroots organization dedicated to the protection, defense and restoration of Georgia's biggest river—the Altamaha—and its tributaries; **One Hundred Miles**, a coastal nonprofit working to protect and preserve Georgia's coast through advocacy, education, and citizen engagement; and Ashby Worley of the **Nature Conservancy** will discuss trees and water quality; trees and aquatic ecosystems; saltwater intrusion; water quality and coastal development, and more.

- **TREES AND WILDFIRE IN URBAN-SUBURBAN AREAS**
Pulitzer Room

Holly Campbell, Public Service Assistant, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia

By following a few simple guidelines, communities can significantly decrease the likelihood of substantial destructive impacts from wildfires and community members and tree care professionals can play an important role.

11:30 a.m.– Noon

BREAK – Visit with exhibitors

Noon – 12:30 p.m.

LUNCH

MORGAN CENTER

12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

GENERAL SESSION

MORGAN CENTER

Don't Look Behind You – Seawater Is Gaining on Your Trees!

Dr. Kim Coder, Professor of Tree Biology and Health Care (retired), University Hill Fellow for Distinguished Public Service and Outreach, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia, Athens

Sea-level rise, advancing storm surges, and increased tidal flooding are bringing major tree health and mortality problems to a community near you. Trees within 50 miles of the ocean edge are being impacted by saltwater intrusion and inundation, whether creeping below freshwater in rivers, salting well water, or through flooding events. Barrier island trees and mainland coastal tree sites are being – and will continue to be – permanently changed for the worse by sea-level increases. This talk will discuss saltwater contents, sea level changes, and treatments for saltwater damaged trees and sites.

Adjourn