

## **Forestry and NREM Departmental History**

The Department of Forestry was formed in 1946 with the first full-time department head (Dr. Glen Durrell) and 3 faculty positions (Dr. Michel Afanasiev, Dr. Nat Walker and Mr. Edward Linn). Enrollment in the department increased through the 1950's and 1960's, reached a plateau in the 1970's, and has decreased since the early 1980's. The Department of Forestry was first accredited by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) in 1971.

Dr. Miller was department head from 1989 to 1999 when he was promoted into the College Administration. Dr. Chuck Tauer served as Interim Head in 1999. Dr. Craig McKinley was hired in 2000 as Department Head. Dr. McKinley is an alumnus of the OSU Forestry program and worked in teaching and extension at Texas A&M University and North Carolina State University. Dr. McKinley was department head until 2004 when he decided to return to an Extension Specialist role. Dr. Tom Hennessey was appointed Interim Head in 2004.

The search for a full-time Department Head was suspended, as there was interest in combining faculty from other departments with forestry faculty to create a new Natural Resources Department. Dr. Fred Guthrey chaired a committee of 11 faculty members from 7 different departments that made a recommendation to Dean Whitson to create a new department. The new Department of Natural Resource Ecology & Management (NREM) was formed on July 1, 2006. The faculty consisted of the entire Department of Forestry, 5 "management-oriented" wildlife and fisheries faculty from the Department of Zoology, 5 rangeland ecology faculty from the Plant and Soil Science Department, and 2 USGS scientists from the Oklahoma Wildlife and Fisheries Cooperative Research Unit. Dr. Hennessey continued as Interim NREM Department Head until July 2007. Dr. Hennessey continued as Interim Department Head until Dr. M. Keith Owens began as the first NREM Department Head on July 31, 2007.

Because of the transition of the Forestry Department into a new department, the SAF granted an extension of accreditation in 2006 and 2007. The department completed a successful SAF accreditation review in 2008.

Dr. Owens became Associate Dean and Director of the OSU Agricultural Experiment Station (OAES) in July 2015. The NREM department had three interim department heads during the 15-month period from January 2015 to March 2016, including Dr. Ed Miller, from January to June 2015, Dr. Dave Engle, from July to December 2015, and Dr. Karen Hickman from January to March 2016. The department conducted a nationwide search for a new department head during 2015, and Dr. Jim Ansley began as NREM Department Head on March 16, 2016. Dr. Ansley was a Regents Professor with Texas A&M University - AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Vernon, Texas where he studied woody plant invasion on rangelands.