

Forest Branchlines

Division of Forestry & Natural Resources ■ Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry & Consumer Sciences

Winter 2007, Volume XV

IMAGE TREE GRANTS 5K

The Division of Forestry and Natural Resources has received a gift of \$5000 from Image Tree Corporation, a new firm that opened its corporate headquarters in Morgantown last year. The Division is grateful to receive this gift, which will be used to continue research opportunities with Image Tree and help in the development of innovative techniques in hardwood species classification using remote sensing techniques.

Image Tree uses specialized aerial photography and complex software to map, analyze and inventory the type and number of trees in forested acreage. These new methods result in significant reductions in cost and time over traditional methods and have a higher rate of accuracy.

Joe McNeel, Director of the Division of Forestry and Natural Resources, said that the developing relationship between Image Tree and the Division will further the Division's commitment to providing students with quality educational experiences both in and out of the classroom. "Our faculty conscientiously makes every effort to integrate teaching and research in the classroom, providing opportunities to develop skills in critical thinking, oral and written communication, creative problem solving, and the use of cutting-edge technology," McNeel said. "Image Tree's decision to expand its relationship with the Division is a very flattering example of our success in building relationships with public and private entities that benefit our students, promote essential research in natural resource management, and support economic development in the state and region."

Image Tree is off to a very promising start. The firm now employs more than 17 full-time workers and several paid interns. According to Dr.

Michael Strager, a newly hired Assistant Professor in the Davis College Division of Resources Management, "Thirteen students from DFNR already have been hired for internships at Image Tree, and faculty are developing research collaborations." More such opportunities are expected in the future.

Image Tree is also working closely with the WVU Natural Resource Analysis Center, a multi-disciplinary research and teaching facility in the Davis College that provides research, teaching and service in environmental and natural resource issues with a geo-spatial context.



Dr. John Brooks (WVU DFNR), Jeff Simcoe (Director of Production, Image Tree), Mark Redlus (CEO, Image Tree), Dr. Joseph McNeel, (Director, WVU DFNR), Dr. Michael Strager (WVU DRM).