ESF

2025–26 Annual Report

Discovery, Opportunity, and Impact

Student Success · Research and Innovation · Community and Engagement

Submitted to the State University of New York
Reporting period: July 2025 – August 2026



Student Success and Academic Excellence

Research and Innovation

Community, Engagement and Inclusion

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
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Our Mission – "Improve Our World"

ESF's mission is to educate future environmental leaders of all backgrounds, advance knowledge and skills necessary to promote scholarship and stewardship of the natural to designed environments, and act both locally and globally to improve our world.

The SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry is one of the nation's premier colleges focused on the study of the environment, developing renewable technologies, and building a sustainable future.

ESF offers a world-class education among a close-knit community of more than 2,000 scholars with common values and a shared sense of purpose. ESF's tight-knit community is centered alongside Syracuse University in the heart of Central New York and has a system of properties spanning 25,000 acres that broadly represent New York state's rich ecological diversity for scientific study and instruction. To learn more, visit www.esf.edu.



Message from the President



The 2025–26 academic year was one of meaningful progress for the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Across academics, research, engagement and operations, ESF delivered results that matter to New York State and to the world.

Our students continue to prove the value of an ESF education. Ninety-one percent of the Class of 2025 were employed or continuing their education. We enrolled the first Environmental Studies Ph.D. cohort, approved two new graduate certificates, and renewed specialized accreditation for eight programs.

ESF research expenditures reached $26.7 million, supported by 246 active awards. Our faculty published in *Science*, *PNAS* and six Nature Portfolio journals, and their discoveries from possible tool use by a wild wolf to the science behind the "Seneca Drums" drew national attention. The year's largest new award, $3.29 million from the New York State Office of the Attorney General, supports Indigenous knowledge and restoration work. The Center for Sustainable Materials Management also received $3.25 million from the state's Environmental Protection Fund to advance waste reduction and recycling statewide.

Thanks to more than 9,000 donors, The Campaign for SUNY ESF raised a record $43.5 million, and the ESF College Foundation's assets grew to $109 million. ESF also earned a STARS 3.0 Platinum rating, one of only four institutions worldwide and the only SUNY campus at this prestigious level.

We achieved these results while carrying out a multi-year Fiscal Stability Plan and advancing the priorities of our Strategic Plan. I am grateful to our faculty and staff, and I thank Chancellor John B. King Jr., the SUNY Board of Trustees, Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature for their continued investment in ESF's mission to Improve Our World.

Joanne M. Mahoney

Joanne M. Mahoney
President, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Year at a Glance

SUNY ESF had an extremely successful and vibrant 2025–26 academic year. ESF continues to see its graduates either continue their studies in graduate school or postdoctoral studies or find gainful employment immediately upon graduation. ESF's faculty also continues to tackle timely and necessary research in critical areas including harmful algal blooms, air quality, and the bioeconomy. ESF's College Foundation also raised millions of dollars from alumni and supporters that will support scholarship and research for many years ahead. ESF remains highly recognized for its leadership in sustainability and affordability. These are some key data points demonstrating the success of ESF's most recent academic year:

Students

91%
Class of 2025 employed or in graduate school

538
new Syracuse-campus undergraduates, fall 2025

462
degrees awarded at May 2026 Commencement

8
programs earned or renewed specialized accreditation

Research

$26.7M
research expenditures

246
active research awards, 80 of them new

320
scholarly outputs, including 251 journal articles

363
undergraduate and graduate researchers supported

Community and Advancement

$43.5M
raised in The Campaign for SUNY ESF — $3.5M above goal

$109M
ESF College Foundation assets, up 10%

Platinum
STARS 3.0 rating — 1 of 4 worldwide, only SUNY campus

2,991
participants in 121 K-12 and community programs

- **Expanded Graduate Opportunities.** ESF welcomed the inaugural cohort of its Environmental Studies Ph.D. program and launched new graduate certificates in Indigenous Peoples and the Environment and Sustainable Enterprise and the Environment, further strengthening pathways for advanced study and interdisciplinary environmental leadership.
- **Research Recognition and Record-Breaking Support.** ESF faculty and researchers earned publication placements in *Science*, *PNAS*, and six Nature Portfolio journals, underscoring the College's growing research prominence. The year also marked a record period for American chestnut restoration efforts and included ESF's largest new research award of the year, a **$3.29 million** grant supporting Indigenous knowledge and ecological restoration initiatives.
- **Historic Institutional Achievements.** The College completed its most successful fundraising campaign ever, securing a record **$43.5 million** in philanthropic support. ESF also achieved a **STARS 3.0 Platinum** sustainability rating and became the first SUNY institution featured on The College Tour, elevating the College's national visibility and showcasing its distinctive student experience.

STUDENTS

Student Success and Academic Excellence

Enrollment and affordability · Academic and basic needs support · Career readiness · New programs

Student retention, persistence, and degree completion remained central to ESF's priorities in 2025–26, aligning with SUNY's systemwide emphasis on student success and outcomes. Through targeted enrollment strategies, expanded financial aid and affordability initiatives, enhanced academic and wellness support services, meaningful student engagement opportunities, and a growing emphasis on career readiness and experiential learning, ESF strengthened the support systems that help students thrive from enrollment through graduation. From improving academic readiness and expanding tutoring access to addressing basic needs, increasing participation in campus life, and connecting students with internships, employers, and applied learning experiences, the College advanced a comprehensive approach to student success designed to promote persistence, retention, timely degree completion, and strong post-graduation outcomes.

Enrollment and Affordability

- **Fall 2025 entering class.** Fall 2025 enrollment data reflect continued recruitment strength and broad student representation across ESF. The Syracuse campus enrolled 383 first-year students and 151 transfer students, including 128 New York residents, 23 students from nine other states, and seven international students, primarily from China. The entering undergraduate class represented 57 New York counties, with approximately 18% of students coming from outside New York State or abroad. The Ranger School enrolled an additional 62 new students. Graduate enrollment included 80 new students and 274 readmitted students, reflecting sustained graduate student engagement and persistence.
- **Targeted recruitment.** Paid digital campaigns (September 2025–June 2026) invested $189,914 to generate **28.7 million impressions, 303,159 clicks and 12,220 conversions**, and ESF became the first SUNY institution featured on *The College Tour* (Amazon Prime Video).
- **Scholarship investment.** The Campaign for SUNY ESF directed **$15.8 million to scholarships** — equal to the total cost of attendance for 593 New York students — and more than 1,400 students received ESF College Foundation scholarships totaling more than $1.7 million in FY 2026.
- **Access and cost.** The state budget enacted in 2026 expanded SUNY Reconnect to ESF, covering tuition, fees, books and supplies for adults ages 25–55 in high-demand associate programs such as The Ranger School's. ESF launched the AwardSpring scholarship platform, and the Mathematics Program's move to Lumen OHM saved students about $120 each.

Academic and Basic Needs Support

- **Beth's Bounty.** The Food Pantry supported 2,389 duplicated students through 1,003 visits during the reporting period, helping address basic needs that can impact student success. The Food Pantry was also awarded a College Hunger Grant Fund grant, further expanding its capacity to support students experiencing food insecurity. Enhancements included a refill station for personal hygiene and household cleaning products, a gluten-free food section, and an academic supplies section, increasing access to essential resources while promoting affordability, sustainability, and student well-being.



- **Student Organizations and Special Interest Groups.** The Office of Student Success & Engagement supported student engagement through 78 registered student organizations and special interest groups. The number of active memberships across student organizations increased from 2,448 to 8,416, demonstrating significant growth in student participation and involvement. Students recorded 16,578 approved service hours, and more than 1,000 students used the Engage platform to participate in organizations such as Mighty Oak Student Assembly (MOSA), ESF Timbersports, Student Environmental Education Coalition (SEEC), Forestry Club, Alpha Phi Omega, and Engineering for a Sustainable Society, fostering leadership, service, and engagement beyond the classroom.
- **Counseling and Wellness Utilization.** The Counseling Center served 310 students and provided 1,808 mental health counseling appointments, while 59 outreach and tabling events reached 5,966 duplicated students with wellness resources and support. Through TimelyCare, 211 students accessed 557 appointments, including 338 mental health visits and 219 medical visits. Student satisfaction with TimelyCare remained high, with an average rating of 4.8 out of 5, and survey responses indicated the service helped meet healthcare needs that might otherwise have gone unmet.
- **Academic Tutoring.** The Academic Success Center strengthened student success and persistence by providing 778 tutoring and academic support appointments to 166 individual students. To expand access and better support student achievement, the Center extended services into Summer 2026 for the first time, creating a year-round academic support model that helps students navigate challenges, maintain academic progress, and persist toward degree completion.
- **Gateway math and academic support.** A new placement system achieved a 97% completion rate, with 335 of 345 incoming students completing the process and 78 students receiving revised placement recommendations to support academic readiness. The newly established Math Center served more than 400 students, expanding access to subject-specific support. In addition, the Writing Resource Center, Public Speaking Lab, and Digital Storytelling Studio provided 749 visits, supporting communication and academic skill development for students across all majors. To further enhance access to academic resources, Moon Library introduced 24/7 building access and launched a redesigned website, improving the availability of research, study, and learning support services.
- **Completion and recognition.** A total of 111 students completed their degrees in December 2025. In May, ESF celebrated 399 bachelor's degree recipients, and 63 graduate degree recipients. ESF's Ranger School also celebrated the graduation of 53 students.

  Student achievement was further recognized at the system level, with Roberto Ortiz Guarneros, an Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) student, receiving the SUNY McConney Award, and Raymond Bailey and Gabrielle "Gabby" Augustin-Orcel earning the prestigious Chancellor's Awards for Student Excellence, SUNY's highest honor for student achievement. These accomplishments reflect ESF's commitment to student success, academic excellence, and leadership development.

Career Readiness and Experiential Learning

91% Class of 2025 career outcomes rate	**$58K** average undergraduate starting salary	**53** DEC summer interns from 10 SUNY campuses	**604** students at Destinations and Degrees — a record

- **Career outcomes.** The Class of 2025 achieved a **91 percent career outcomes rate** (71 percent employed, 20 percent continuing their education); graduates who used Career Services reported starting salaries nearly $8,000 higher.
- **Internships and career events.** Career Services supported 53 internships through SUNY Incremental Funding ($100,000) and 18 Fink Career Development Grants (more than $88,000) and drew a record 604 students and 98 organizations to Destinations and Degrees at the JMA Wireless Dome. ESF administered **53 summer 2026 NYSDEC internships** for students from 10 SUNY campuses, 45 of them from ESF.
- **Career Champions.** The program grew to 145 faculty, staff, alumni and employer champions and earned the 2025 SUNY Career Development Organization Excellence in Employer/Community Collaboration Award.
- **Field and global learning.** Students went to sea on the R/V *Endeavor* with Drs. Leanne Powers and David Kieber; Dr. Karin Limburg taught Climate Change and the Ocean jointly with universities in Norway and Sweden; ESF joined six other SUNY campuses in an internship exchange with the University of Puerto Rico; and 25 students attended the Planet Forward Summit in Washington, D.C.

New Programs and Accreditation

- **New programs.** The first Environmental Studies Ph.D. cohort enrolled; ESF introduced graduate Certificates of Advanced Study in Indigenous Peoples and the Environment and in Sustainable Enterprise and the Environment; and the Environmental Writing Program added four SUNY General Education courses, including Queer Ecology.
- **Flexible study and state training.** The online B.S. in Sustainability Management (36 students) moved into Sustainable Resources Management; online Environmental Studies graduate programs enroll 30+ students; ESF prepared its first Winter Session; and ESF hosted the NYS Forest Rangers' 25th Basic School, including 17 Forest Ranger Academy cadets at The Ranger School in summer 2026.

Accrediting body	Programs	Outcome
Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET	Chemical Engineering; Bioprocess Engineering; Paper Engineering; Environmental Resources Engineering	Newly accredited or re-accredited
Society of American Foresters	Forest Resources Management; Master of Forestry; Forest Ecosystem Science; Natural Resources Management	Re-accredited (two fully, two conditionally)
North American Assn. for Environmental Education	Environmental Education and Interpretation	Newly accredited

- **Teaching innovation.** Dr. Shayan Mirzabeigi was named to the inaugural SUNY AI for the Public Good Fellows and Jean Yang to the inaugural SUNY Sustainability Faculty Fellows. ESF also hosted a national mass timber workshop for construction management faculty.

RESEARCH

Research and Innovation

Discovery · Funding · Partnerships · Students in research

ESF's research expenditures reached **$26.7 million** in FY 2025–26, building on growth from $15 million in 2021 to $22.5 million in 2024. Faculty published in *Science*, *PNAS* and six Nature Portfolio journals — *Nature Communications*, *Nature Geoscience*, *Nature Climate Change*, *Nature Microbiology*, *Communications Earth & Environment* and *npj Urban Sustainability*.

$26.7M
research expenditures, FY 2025–26

246
active awards; 80 new awards established

99
faculty principal investigators on active awards

53
faculty with a new award this year

320
scholarly outputs

251
journal articles (243 peer reviewed)

189
graduate researchers supported

174
undergraduate researchers supported

Selected Awards and Gifts

Funder	Project and ESF lead	Amount
NYS Office of the Attorney General	Indigenous knowledge and restoration (Neil Patterson)	$3,290,000
NYS DEC — Environmental Protection Fund	Center for Sustainable Materials Management: statewide waste reduction and recycling (Kathryn Walker)	$3,250,000
Sam and Carol Nappi (gift)	Formulating actionable solutions to protect the Finger Lakes (Dr. Steve Shaw)	$2,000,000
Peter & Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation	American chestnut restoration (Dr. Andrew Newhouse)	$1,500,000
NYS Education Department — STEP	New York State Science and Technology Entry Program (Dr. Valerie Luzadis)	$1,359,430
Clarkson-ESF Center of Excellence	Healthy Water Solutions (Dr. Steve Shaw)	$785,000
NYS DEC	PFAS studies (Douglas Daley, Roxanne Razavi)	$726,000
NIH — NHLBI (K01)	Structural racism, environmental burdens and cardiovascular health, five years (Dr. Eun Kyung Lee)	$670,600
USDA NIFA — McIntire-Stennis	FY 2026 cooperative forestry research program (Dr. David Newman)	$656,703
USDA NIFA	American chestnut field monitoring, dispersal, fitness, and deployment (Dr. Andrew Newhouse)	$637,000
National Science Foundation	Dissolved organic matter photo reactivity (Drs. Leanne Powers, Theodore Dibble, Nicholas Pflug)	$549,999
National Cooperative Highway Research Program	Transportation infrastructure research (Dr. Ellen White, co-PI; $700,000 total award)	$190,000 ESF share
National Endowment for the Arts — Our Town	Becoming Visible: Public Space, Belonging, and the Unhoused (Jean Yang)	$90,000

Sources: Office of Research, departments, ESF newsroom and USAspending.gov. Multi-year awards shown at full value; federal figures from USAspending show amounts obligated to date.

- **Additional support** included NSF RAPID funding for flood-resilience research (Dr. Jamie Shinn), USDA funding for antibiotic-resistance research (Dr. Yaqi You), three USDA Forest Service projects through the Northeastern States Research Cooperative, a DEC climate-smart commodities partnership (Dr. Timothy Volk), and a SUNY AI Platform Award (Drs. Aidan Ackerman and Bahram Salehi).

Research Spotlights

Bringing back the American chestnut

ESF's decades-long effort to restore the American chestnut had a landmark year in research, funding and regulatory progress. Dr. Andrew Newhouse and team published a *Science* paper on genomic approaches to speed chestnut restoration and are monitoring how the engineered trees spread, grow and could be planted out. In August 2026, the blight-tolerant Darling 54 cleared USDA review; EPA and FDA reviews continue. A rare chestnut mining bee — the first confirmed in Central New York — was found in ESF's chestnut orchard, and Chancellor King broke ground on a $5 million greenhouse renovation for the program.

Funding: $1.5 million over three years from the Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation and a $637,000 USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture award for field monitoring.

Indigenous knowledge and restoration

Through the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, ESF brings Indigenous knowledge and Western science together to restore New York's land: restoring native plants through the Indigenous Plant Restoration Fund (Neil Patterson); showing in *PNAS* that Indigenous fire stewardship shaped Great Lakes forests (Robin Wall Kimmerer and colleagues); advancing an Indigenous-led research agenda for culturally important species; restoring culturally significant understory plants in Haudenosaunee homelands (Gregory McGee); and supporting the Center for Braiding Indigenous Knowledges and Science and Eel Camp on the Delaware for Haudenosaunee youth.

Funding: About $5.2 million in active awards, including $3.29 million from the NYS Office of the Attorney General — ESF's largest new award of the year — and $1.142 million from DEC for the Cross-cultural Program.

Healthy lakes for New York

ESF scientists are protecting the lakes New Yorkers drink from, fish in and live beside. At Skaneateles Lake, Syracuse's drinking-water source, Stephen Shaw and partners are tracking phosphorus, monitoring algal blooms by satellite and testing ways to reduce them. ESF teams are tracking PFAS in fish across the state (Roxanne Razavi), measuring it in wastewater and biosolids (Douglas Daley), detecting it with hyperspectral imaging (Lee Newman) and developing cellulose-based filters and portable sensors (Deepak Kumar, Chang Geun Yoo). Researchers also continue fish monitoring for the Onondaga Lake cleanup (Joshua Drew), are developing eDNA early warning for invasive species in Lake Champlain (Richard Ross Shaker, Eddie Bevilacqua) and are investigating the "Seneca Drums" as part of a Cornell-led team (Timothy Morin).

Funding: A $2 million gift from Sam and Carol Nappi; the $785,000 Clarkson-ESF Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions; $726,000 in DEC-funded PFAS studies; and a Lake Champlain Sea Grant award.

Students in research

Undergraduates working with Dr. Brian Leydet ran St. Lawrence County's first mosquito surveillance program with SUNY Potsdam, Clarkson and Cornell, testing more than 6,000 mosquitoes for 10 viruses; West Nile detections triggered public health alerts. ESF's internship partnership with DEC places students in its forest and fish and wildlife programs (Robert Malmsheimer, Jacqueline Frair). Students earned an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship (Wesley B. Burkit), a Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship (Brianna Lounsbury) and a first-place SUNY Chancellor's Distinguished Ph.D. Dissertation Award (Mairui Zhang).

Funding: $80,000 from SUNY's Summer Undergraduate Research Program for summer 2026, alongside ESF College Foundation summer research fellowships and DEC-supported internships.

Publications and Recognition

ESF researcher(s)	Finding	Journal
Hyatt Green	SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater tracks community spread	*Science*
Andrew Newhouse and team	Genomic approaches to speed American chestnut restoration	*Science*
Robin Wall Kimmerer and colleagues	Indigenous fire stewardship shaped Great Lakes forests	*PNAS*
José-Luis Giner	Sea sponges among Earth's first animals	*PNAS*
Theodore Endreny	Tree canopy halves urban heat across nearly 9,000 cities	*Nature Communications*
Stephen Stehman	A shift from human-directed to undirected wildland disturbances in the U.S.	*Nature Geoscience*
Michael Mikulewicz	Moving beyond projects to achieve transformative climate adaptation	*Nature Climate Change*

Research in the Public Eye

- **A wolf that uses tools?** Dr. Kyle Artelle and partners in Haíłzaqv Nation territory documented a wild wolf pulling up a crab trap — potential evidence of the first tool use by wild wolves — covered by *Science*, *The New York Times*, *National Geographic*, CNN and others.
- **The "Seneca Drums."** Dr. Tim Morin's work explaining booms on Seneca Lake as methane eruptions was featured in *The New York Times*.
- **Arctic caribou.** Dr. Elie Gurarie's maps showed the Bathurst herd falling from 400,000 to fewer than 4,000 animals in 30 years.

Faculty and Student Honors

Honoree	Recognition
Drs. Deepak Kumar, Colin Beier and John Drake; Ruth Owens	SUNY Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities, Faculty Service, Teaching and Librarianship
Dr. John Stella	ESF Exemplary Researcher
Dr. Deepak Kumar	2026 Young Engineer of the Year, Northeast Agricultural and Biological Engineering Conference
Dr. Mark Driscoll	Randall S. Caswell Award (CIRMS)
Dr. Theresa Selfa	Rural Sociological Society 2026 Award for Excellence in Research
Prof. Matthew Potteiger	American Society of Landscape Architects 2025 Community Service Honor Award
Dr. Shayan Mirzabeigi; Jean Yang	Inaugural SUNY AI for the Public Good and Sustainability Faculty Fellows
Wesley B. Burkit; Brianna Lounsbury; Mairui Zhang	NSF Graduate Research Fellowship; Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship; SUNY Chancellor's Distinguished Ph.D. Dissertation Award (first place)

Partnerships and Innovation

- **Innovation.** Dr. Wendong Tao filed a patent application for recovering phosphate from wastewater.
- **Forests and climate.** Dr. Andrew Vander Yacht led ESF's Fire-Net: Adirondack Fire Futures initiative, and the College launched the New York Forest Carbon Map with the Open Space Institute.
- **State partnerships.** ESF advanced statewide sustainability, preservation, and public health initiatives through the work of the Center for Sustainable Materials Management, the Center for Cultural Landscape Preservation, and Dr. Jaime Mirowsky's I-81 air-monitoring research.

ENGAGEMENT

Community, Engagement and Inclusion

Pathways for New Yorkers · Inclusion · Sustainability · Visibility · Campus life

Pathways for New Yorkers

121 K-12 outreach programs	**2,991** participants (2,405 youth)	**~770** students in ESF in the High School	**~3,000** college credits earned by high school students

- **K-12 and community partners.** K-12 Outreach worked with 38 partners — including Syracuse City School District schools, public libraries, the MOST, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, YWCA and NYSDEC — and hosted seven public events. ESF hosted the CNY Youth Climate Summit (200+ students), the NYS Science Congress for the first time (about 150 science-fair winners) and ESF in the High School Environmental Summit.
- **Timbuctoo Climate Science and Careers Summer Institute.** Chancellor King opened the third annual institute for **144 New York City high school students** (48 in the Adirondacks, 96 in Brooklyn), and state support rose to $1.675 million in the 2026 enacted budget.
- **Explore Engineering and STEM pathways.** The inaugural Explore Engineering program, supported by the Syracuse Pulp & Paper Foundation, engaged **35 rising high school seniors** in August 2026. Dr. Valerie Luzadis leads a $1.4 million NYSED STEP grant supporting STEM pathways for students in grades 7–12.

Inclusion and Accessibility

- **Leadership and access.** Seth A. Thompson joined ESF as Chief Diversity Officer in August 2025. The “Countdown to Compliance” initiative held spring 2026 sessions on accessible course design, supported by a $10,000 SUNY EIT Accessibility Grant; building trades installed tactile ADA walkway pads; and acoustic barriers now protect privacy at the Counseling Center.
- **Indigenous partnerships.** The Center for Native Peoples and the Environment co-hosted an Onondaga Creek Watershed environmental justice listening session with NYSDEC, the City of Syracuse and community partners, and continued state support of $1.142 million.

Sustainability Leadership

Platinum STARS 3.0 — 1 of 4 worldwide	**56%** campus waste diversion, up from 29% in 2018	**212,224** kWh saved through nine energy projects	**1,000** trees funded by student-led Ecosia searches

- **National recognition.** ESF earned STARS 3.0 Platinum — the only SUNY campus at that level — and was a 2025 Sustainable Campus Index Top Performer in five of 13 impact areas, tied for No. 2 in Curriculum and in Investment & Finance. Director of Sustainability Sue Fassler received a SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Professional Service.

Visibility and Recognition

- **Rankings.** The Princeton Review named ESF to The Best 391 Colleges, ranking the college No. 4 nationally for environmentally conscious students and No. 6 in "Green Matters," reinforcing ESF's standing as a leader in sustainability-focused higher education.
- **Media and storytelling.** ESF research and expertise reached national and international audiences through coverage in *The New York Times*, *Science*, *National Geographic*, CNN and *CBS Sunday Morning*; ESF became the first SUNY institution featured on *The College Tour*, expanding its visibility among prospective students nationwide. Further elevating ESF's storytelling impact, the Digital Storytelling Studio's *Funky Foodies* podcast earned two Webby nominations, including a People's Voice nomination, recognizing excellence in digital media and public engagement.
- **Signature events and leadership.** The Dale Travis Lecture Series drew 270+ attendees; the Sol Feinstone Environmental Award honored Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh and Phil Bousquet; former DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos received an honorary degree; SUNY Chancellor's Awards were presented to Dr. Colin Beier, Dr. John Drake, Sue Fassler, Dr. Deepak Kumar, Ruth Owens, and Megan Thurston; and Steven T. Noble, Jessica Ottney Mahar, and Dr. Peter E. Smith joined the ESF Board of Trustees.

Campus Life and Community Service

- **National champions.** ESF Athletics continued its national dominance as the men's and women's cross-country teams captured their fifth consecutive USCAA national championships, with the women earning a perfect team score, a first in USCAA history. The women's track and field team also secured the USCAA national championship, further demonstrating ESF's sustained excellence in competition and student-athlete achievement.
- **Traditions and service.** ESF strengthened its culture of service, leadership and sustainability through initiatives that connected students with the broader community. New students began their ESF experience with a Saturday of Service, the timbersports team hosted the Northeast Collegiate Lumberjack Conclave, Oakie's Green Team advanced campus sustainability efforts by making Ecosia the default search engine, Climate Justice students partnered with six community organizations, and the College Bookstore supported local food security through charitable contributions to the Food Bank of Central New York.
- **Community partnerships.** ESF faculty, staff, and students expanded the College's impact through community-engaged scholarship and outreach. Write Out Syracuse delivered 60 creative writing workshops and secured a $34,900 Central New York Community Foundation grant; Professor Matthew Potteiger's Syracuse Urban Food Forest Project earned national recognition from the American Society of Landscape Architects; and ESF staff developed the first live exhibit of the rare Chittenango ovate amber snail at Ithaca's Museum of the Earth, advancing public education and conservation awareness.

STEWARDSHIP

Operations and Advancement

Fiscal stewardship · Capital projects · Technology · The Campaign for SUNY ESF · Alumni relations

Operations and Fiscal Stewardship

ESF remains focused on aligning revenues and expenditures to support the College's long-term financial sustainability. As part of its budget stabilization strategy, ESF implemented a Voluntary Separation Program in August 2025, with the ESF College Foundation investing more than $1.4 million in incentives that are expected to generate approximately $2.5 million in recurring annual salary savings. The College also introduced a fee for students who choose to enroll in Syracuse University courses, reducing institutional costs by nearly $2 million annually. Alongside these initiatives, ESF is pursuing opportunities to strengthen revenue generation through enrollment growth, strategic partnerships, philanthropy, and expanded academic offerings.

- **Facilities and energy.** ESF invested in campus infrastructure through dozens of critical maintenance and renewal projects while advancing sustainability goals. Nine energy-efficiency projects reduced electricity consumption by 212,224 kWh and natural gas use by 527.9 MMBtu, generating nearly $28,000 in annual utility savings.

Capital project	Status (2025–26)	Investment
Jahn Laboratory chiller replacement	Completed November 2025	$3,389,475
Jahn Laboratory building management system (86,000 sq. ft.)	New controls in operation	$3,340,675
Goodnow Mountain Fire Tower restoration (Newcomb)	Completed October 2025	$511,000
Campus wayfinding, Phase 2 (34 exterior signs)	Completed June 2026	$311,300
Lafayette Road greenhouse renovation (American chestnut)	Groundbreaking April 2026	$5,000,000
Bray Hall elevator and restrooms; Baker Laboratory classrooms; Thousand Islands Biological Station	Under construction	—

- **Technology.** ESF modernized learning and administrative systems by renovating four classrooms, replacing all classroom computers, and upgrading wireless infrastructure across every campus location. The College also launched AwardSpring, Ellucian Experience, and Argos X, implemented new cybersecurity and IT governance policies, and achieved its fastest help desk resolution time in six years while supporting a record 7,539 service requests.
- **Environmental Protection Fund Support.** State support through New York's Environmental Protection Fund continued to strengthen ESF's distinctive mission, providing critical resources for workforce development, research, student support, and the stewardship of facilities, forests, and natural resources that serve both the College and communities across New York State.

State investment secured in the 2026 enacted budget	Amount
Center for Sustainable Materials Management (Environmental Protection Fund)	$3,250,000
Timbuctoo Climate Science and Careers Institute (up $425,000)	$1,675,000
Climate and Applied Forest Research Institute	$1,500,000
Center for Native Peoples and the Environment	$1,142,000
Adirondack Interpretive Center	$500,000
Total (plus support for mass timber initiatives and campus infrastructure)	**$8,067,000**

- **Student housing.** ESF advanced planning for future campus growth by issuing a request for information (RFI) for potential student housing and complementary campus amenities on approximately 1.6 acres adjacent to Centennial Hall, exploring opportunities to enhance the student experience and support enrollment goals.
- **Sustainable forest products.** ESF's Adirondack and Heiberg forest properties continued to demonstrate sustainable forest management in practice. In 2025, Adirondack properties produced approximately 1,578 MBF of sawlogs and 13,063 tons of pulpwood and chips, while Heiberg Memorial Forest generated 146 MBF of sawlogs, 303 Christmas trees, and 633 gallons of maple syrup. All harvests remained within annual allowable cut levels, ensuring long-term forest health and productivity.

Advancement and Alumni Relations

$43.5M
campaign total — the most in ESF history

9,058
donors; 60% ESF alumni

~$9.5M
FY 2026 cash donations, up 58%

$109M
Foundation assets, up from $99M

- **The Campaign for SUNY ESF**. Philanthropic support continued to accelerate ESF's strategic priorities. Less than a year after its public launch, The Campaign for SUNY ESF surpassed its $40 million goal by $3.5 million, directing $24.3 million to academic programs and research across 78 initiatives, $15.8 million to scholarships, and $1.5 million to facilities and student experiences. In FY 2026, the ESF College Foundation provided more than $6 million in direct support, helping expand access, reduce financial barriers, advance research and innovation, and strengthen the student experience across the College.
- **Alumni and donor relations.** ESF strengthened connections with alumni and supporters through a robust program of engagement and stewardship. Alumni Relations welcomed more than 200 alumni to on- and off-campus events, while donor stewardship efforts highlighted the impact of philanthropy through program reports, special events, and multimedia storytelling that connected donors with the students, faculty, and programs their support makes possible.

A Statewide Footprint: Regional Campuses and Field Stations

ESF's campuses and properties span about 25,000 acres across New York State, representing a wide range of forest, freshwater, and upland ecosystems that serve as living laboratories for education, research, and stewardship. These lands serve as outdoor classrooms and research sites that support experiential learning, scientific discovery, and collaboration with public, private, and nonprofit partners. Across the state, ESF's forests, field stations, and instructional properties contribute to environmental stewardship, workforce preparation, and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Site	2025–26 highlights
The Ranger School (Wanakena)	53 graduates; hosted 17 NYS Forest Ranger Academy cadets; student-designed arboretum gateway arch and navigation kiosks; unsafe cribbed docks replaced with floating docks under DEC and APA permits; flooring abatement; SUNY Reconnect eligibility.
Newcomb Campus (AEC and AIC)	Restored 1922 Goodnow Mountain Fire Tower reopened ($511,000); 1.5 miles of road improvements; Huntington Lodge repairs; $500,000 in state support for the Adirondack Interpretive Center.
Cranberry Lake Biological Station	Dining hall and classroom exterior restoration, marina-house porch, a new bathroom, a refitted student transport boat, new laundry equipment and mattresses, and about 30 hazard trees removed.
Heiberg Memorial Forest (Tully)	146 MBF of sawlogs, 303 Christmas trees and 633 gallons of maple syrup (2025); Maple Weekend; Northern Hardwoods Conference field tours.
Pack Demonstration Forest (Warrensburg)	National Wild Turkey Federation grant for prescribed fire and firebreaks with the Student Association of Fire Ecology.
Lafayette Road Experiment Station	Groundbreaking by Chancellor King for a $5 million greenhouse renovation for American chestnut research.



Academic Department and Program Highlights

Chemistry

- New NSF awards to Drs. Powers, Dibble and Pflug ($549,999) and to Dr. Maresca; Dr. Mark Driscoll received the Randall S. Caswell Award; Dr. Lee Newman is detecting PFAS with hyperspectral imaging; Chem Day at the NYS Fair drew 1,000+ visitors; undergraduates co-authored and led published research.

Chemical Engineering

- ABET re-accredited all three undergraduate programs; Dr. Deepak Kumar received a SUNY Chancellor's Award and the 2026 NABEC Young Engineer of the Year Award; Drs. Kumar and Chang Geun Yoo are developing cellulose-based filters and sensors for PFAS.

Environmental Biology

- Dr. Kyle Artelle's wolf research drew worldwide coverage; Dr. Hyatt Green published in *Science*; the American Chestnut Research & Restoration Project had a landmark year; Dr. Brian Leydet's mosquito surveillance became a model for proposed legislation.

Environmental Resources Engineering

- USDA-funded antibiotic resistance research (Drs. Yaqi You, Wendong Tao and Christine Georgakakos); a patent application for phosphate recovery (Dr. Tao); Dr. Theodore Endreny in *Nature Communications*; Skaneateles Lake research (Dr. Stephen Shaw); Seneca Drums research (Dr. Tim Morin).

Environmental Studies

- First Ph.D. cohort; two new Certificates of Advanced Study; NAAEE accreditation for Environmental Education and Interpretation; online graduate enrollment of 30+; NIH, NYSED STEP and NSF RAPID awards; Dr. Theresa Selfa received the Rural Sociological Society's 2026 Excellence in Research Award.

Landscape Architecture

- Prof. Matthew Potteiger received ASLA's 2025 Community Service Honor Award; new NCHRP (Dr. Ellen White), NEA Our Town (Jean Yang) and SUNY AI Platform (Dr. Aidan Ackerman) awards; two National Park Service reports from the Center for Cultural Landscape Preservation.

Sustainable Resources Management

- SAF re-accredited four programs; 53 DEC summer internships administered; the online B.S. in Sustainability Management joined the department; Dr. John Stella named Exemplary Researcher; CAFRI launched the NY Forest Carbon Map.

Environmental Writing Program

- More than 80 sections for 1,293 students; four new General Education courses; 76 minors; 749 Digital Storytelling Studio visits; Write Out Syracuse's 60+ community workshops.

Mathematics Program

- 780+ students and 2,831 credit hours; Lumen OHM savings of about $120 per student; 97 percent placement completion; a Math Center serving 400+ students; institutional recognition for accessibility.

The Ranger School

- 53 graduates; host to the NYS Forest Ranger Academy; facilities staff built a student-designed arboretum arch, new floating docks and trail bridges from reclaimed lumber, and student-built navigation kiosks.

Events, Gatherings, and Conferences

638	~32,000	19	108
Events hosted	Estimated attendance across events	Conferences held	Student-led events

Attendance is an estimate: ESF does not track attendance at every event, so the figure assumes a median of about 50 attendees across 638 events (31,900).

- **Signature campus events.** Orientation Week, Earth Week, and Commencement in May 2026 anchored the campus calendar, welcoming new students, celebrating the environment and honoring the year's graduates.
- **Conferences and professional gatherings.** ESF hosted 19 conferences, including the New York State Arborists annual conference, the SUNY University Faculty Senate conference, the American Malacological Society annual conference and leadership training for the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services.
- **Research and community summits.** ESF convened the Skaneateles Lake Research and Management Summit, the Energy in the 21st Century Symposium, the Clarkson-ESF Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions conference and the CNY Youth Climate Summit, which drew more than 200 students.
- **Student-led events.** Students organized and led 108 of the year's 638 events.



Sources and Acknowledgments

- **Sources:** 2025–26 unit submissions (Office of Research, Enrollment Management, Marketing, Advancement, Career Services, Facilities and Capital Projects, IT, K-12 Outreach, Forest Properties, The Ranger School, academic departments, writing and mathematics programs); ESF newsroom; ESF Esploro portal; NSF Award Search; USAspending.gov; ESF Fiscal Stability Plan FAQ.
- **Reporting period:** fall 2025 through summer 2026 (July 1, 2025–August 31, 2026). Financial and research figures are for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2026, as reported by the Office of Research and the ESF College Foundation.

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Artificial intelligence (AI) was used to assist with the creation of the initial draft of this report. Multiple levels of review and revision were completed by ESF administration to create the final report.