



# CONFLUENCE

## Director's Overflow by Dr. Howard Whiteman

### Director's Outflow: Change is in the Air (and Budget)



Jogging along a country road near my house, I stopped suddenly, staring at the treasure on the side of the road. It takes a lot to stop my run completely—I time myself, even if my times are slower than winter molasses. But I could not pass up a shed antler.

It was only a 3-point, but it was fresh, with ever-so-slightly dried blood on the bases. That buck had dropped his antler on the side of the road the night before, maybe. Like many of us, I love antlers, and would never pass one by.

The antler was not only a fun find, it was another sign of the end of winter and the start of spring. Like the daffodils and spring beauties, the evening calls of peepers and chorus frogs, the new birds arriving every day, the salamanders that are migrating to their breeding ponds, and yes, even some allergies, spring is coming, and it cannot come fast enough.

Every winter, antlers fall. And every spring, new growth emerges between a buck's ears. Like those newly growing antlers, WSI and HBS are ramping up our spring activities, and getting ready for our annual Four Rivers Watershed Sustainability Festival, the details of which you will read more about in this newsletter. We are excited to again join with so many of our partners this year—particularly the Riverlands Alliance, the City of Murray, the Murray State Arboretum, multiple departments and colleges on campus, and so many local and regional organizations and companies that we begin to lose count. We are thankful to all of our partners, and we look forward to reconnecting with all of you this spring.

We are also thankful for all of our other supporters, including many of you reading this newsletter. We hope to reconnect with you this spring, or connect for the first time, at one of the many festival events. Feel free to introduce yourself and chat a while with myself, Dr. Flinn, Gerry Harris, Barb Like, or anyone else that might be there representing WSI or HBS. We look forward to meeting with you, talking about our science, and learning more about your interests.

We are done with the antlers of 2025. Spring is about rebirth, and what better way to celebrate it by reconnecting, so we can all grow together, just like those velvety nubs on a whitetail buck.



## Winter 25/26

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# Featured Student: Megan Causey

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Hi, my name is Megan Causey, and I grew up in Western Kentucky. I'm from Ballard County, but being an outdoor kid who also grew up riding horses, I spent a lot of time in LBL. I came to Murray State in the fall of 2021 as an undergraduate transfer student, already having completed an associate's degree in science. Considering I transferred into the wildlife program essentially halfway through, I didn't have as much time to get involved in research as some of my friends who had been here since their first class, and that was okay! I honestly didn't know that I wanted to do any type of field research until I took wildlife techniques with Dr. Darracq in the fall of 2022, where I learned about the box turtle project and Michelle Weaver's research. After that, I spent the next spring helping Michelle when she needed an extra hand, but I didn't get fully involved until the summer field season.



I spent that summer tracking turtles and floating around the idea of applying to grad school to try and keep the project going. Ultimately, I took the leap, and for the last two years, I have continued to track those same turtles, but where the previous project focused on the short-term movement and health, my part focuses on the long-term effects of turtle racing on movement, habitat selection, and survival of eastern box turtles. I finished collecting my data at the end of the summer, and we made the decision to begin removing the transmitters from the turtles due to the small sample size. It was bittersweet, but exciting to set the ones free that had made it this far! In addition to my research, I started working on the arthropod part of the Greenheart project in the Darracq lab while I was an undergrad as a lab tech, and I continued this into my grad program, so a good portion of my weeks were also spent behind a microscope looking at some pretty cool bugs.



In my free time, I love to read, go to concerts, hang out with my dog, and just get outside and enjoy all the cool things there are to see. A little fun fact, the turtle I'm holding in the picture, his name is Benjiman, is actually the first turtle I tracked in Dr. Darracq's techniques class, and he happened to be the last turtle I got to take the transmitter off of last year!



# Dr. David White

## Former Hancock Biological Station Director, Dr. David White: In Memorium -by Michael B. Flinn

I was incredibly saddened to hear the news about David's passing. He wasn't just a colleague to me; he was a friend and mentor who profoundly shaped my career.

I first met David when he served as the search chair for my job interview at Murray State. I remember being just as nervous to meet him as I was about the prospect of getting my first real job. Like so many in our field, I had spent years flipping through the pages of the "bible" of aquatic macroinvertebrate taxonomy, much of that time focused on the chapter David wrote. To say I was intimidated would be an understatement.

However, from that first interview to our very last conversation, David was exactly the same: down-to-earth, easy to talk to, and possessing a dry sense of humor that I always appreciated. I was always amazed at how David could distill a complex issue down to its simplest terms, and just as impressed that he was always right; by definition, a sage.

David's accolades are far too numerous to list, but the respect he earned from his peers, field station directors, and the wider scientific community transcends his career. His legacy is found not only in his scientific contributions, but in the way he treated others, and the connections he made with everyone who visited Hancock Biological Station.

David White. Obituary <https://www.imesfh.com/obituaries/Dr-David-Sanford-White?obId=46779167>

Please join us on the afternoon of May 8 th , from 3pm to 5pm for a gathering to celebrate David's life. Scan the QR code below to RSVP. We are also collecting stories and pictures about David. Please visit [link](#) or scan the qr code below for more information. Send hard copies of pictures to Hancock Biological Station, 561 Emma Drive, Murray, KY 42071 by April 20th so we can compile them and share with David's family and relatives.



# Snow storm of 2026

January 24 - February 9



Snow and Ice storm kept most of us working remote. Clay Thompson, HBS Field Technician, and resident grad students helped to clear and keep up the storm the best they could. Photo credit to Dr. JB Moon, Clay Thompson and Cord Lemons.



# Wildlife Society Annual Meeting

## Diseases Workshop



Students, Staff and Faculty joined Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resource professionals to showcase current methods for assessing wildlife disease. Necropsies included a variety of organisms from reptiles, deer, foxes, and turkeys. Students learned to identify signs of disease from different organs and tissues of animals and learned about current threats to our wildlife populations.



# Upcoming Events

Most activities listed are open to public participation and volunteers are appreciated. Please contact us if you would like to be emailed or notified of upcoming events.

## April 4th



Wild Game Supper (formerly known as Beast Feast) will be April 5th in Chestnut Park from 5 - 7pm. Come join us for a variety of dishes prepared by The Wildlife Society (TWS) and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) members.

## April 23rd



The 2nd annual Maggie Morgan Award Science Cafe will be at The Big Apple on April 23rd at 6:00 pm with guest speaker Bradly Robbins speaking about the Feral Hog Management in LBL. Followed by question and answer session.

## April 15th



Watershed Studies Institute will host its 16th Annual Research Symposium on April 15th in the Barkley room of the Curris Center. WSI Student Research grant recipients will give short presentations of their projects.

## April 23th



Biodiversity Art Competition will be displayed in the Biology building Atrium for viewing starting April 10th. Art Award reception will be Thursday April 23rd starting at 5pm. Contest and reception.

## April 16<sup>th</sup> & 18th



Cinema International and WSI join together to present Rachel Carson will be shown in Faculty Hall Room 208, at 7:00pm.

## April 22nd



Earth Day Celebration on April 22nd from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM on the quad at Murray State. This event is designed to engage college students in eco-friendly activities and raise awareness about sustainability.

## April 25th



Family Day has joined with the Doran Arboretum to create a new Earth Day Celebration on April 26th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Arboretum. There will be learning stations that include "Goats at work", water models, gardening clubs, tree giveaway and more. Pizza lunch will be available for purchase and benefiting The Wildlife Society (TWS).

# EXPLORE *Giving*

**DONATIONS HELP US IN MANY WAYS! YOUR SUPPORT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS IN THE FORM OF SCHOLARSHIPS AND RESEARCH SUPPLIES. YOUR DONATIONS HELP FUND PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE: UPDATING LABS, RENOVATING STUDENT AND GUEST HOUSING, AND PROVIDING FUNDS FOR ITEMS NOT COVERED BY GRANTS. LISTED BELOW ARE PROJECTS WE ARE WORKING ON.**

- \*Monitoring Kentucky Lake Water Quality every 16 days
- \*Native and invasive fish tracking on lake and streams
- \*eDNA research
- \*Backpack electric fishing stream surveys
- \*Threatened species tagging and population estimate
- \*Shad population age studies
- \*Methane emissions from Cypress Trees
- \*Golden mouse habitat research
- \*Monitoring Armadillo burrows
- \*Toad monitoring and tagging
- \*Native Beetle surveys
- \*Ecology, Herpetology and Wildlife management classes

For a list of Current Needs click QR code:



## CONTACT US

📍 561 Emma Drive, Murray, KY

☎ 270-809-2272

🌐 [murraystate.edu/hbs](http://murraystate.edu/hbs)

