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Hull Springs Farm dedicates new education wing



Photo by Paul Mountjoy

A dedication for the new education wing was held recently at Hull Springs Farm.

BY PAUL MOUNTJOY

Correspondent

Longwood University's brochure on Hull Springs Farm in Westmoreland County suggests the farm is a "living, breathing outdoor classroom for educational events, research and other programs."

One visit to the farm is enough to convince anyone their lives can be enriched by engaging in one of the many programs that will be conducted here as a who's who of Longwood University and Hull Springs Farm appeared at a Thursday dedication of a new wing of education for Longwood University through the Longwood University Foundation.

The owner of Hull Springs Farm was Mary Farley Ames Lee, a 1938 gradu-

ate of Longwood University located in Farmville, which boasts being the third oldest University in the US. She bequeathed Hull Springs Farm to the Longwood University Foundation.

The farm's 663 acres with 8,400 ft. of shoreline has 400 acres of forest habitats, 160 acres of active cropland and 214 acres of wetlands, making the property a microcosm of the finest and widest variety of environmental offerings in the Northern Neck region.

Students at Longwood University's anthropology, biology, ecology, mammalogy, archeology and ornithology departments gain valuable hands-on types of experience and education during extended field trips to the farm and current plans are to host educational

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opportunities for a wide variety of colleges, schools and universities such as William and Mary, VCU, Virginia Tech and more.

Longwood's Hull Springs Farm has partnered with Angler Environmental of Fairfax for researching means of environmental sustainability for low-impact designs to "enhance and sustain our environment through the implementation of good land and water stewardship practices and green design."

Longwood University President W. Taylor Reveley IV states "in the 21st century, business and institutions alike will be mindful of the environment. Hull Springs integrates so much of Longwood's academic mission and its interdisciplinary studies while offering business a way to engage with the university in a beautiful setting where minds are focused on the environment."

Director Sherry Swenson said the ecological and environmental aspects of Hull Springs Farm are important to "pass on to youth" and the farm to be a tool for learning as the farm can handle 70-100 students for extended stays in conference.

Sherry explained that "going green to making green" is the future not only for preserving the wetlands and improving water quality, but for global aspirations as well. The farm will serve as a means for preparing

students for the future in terms of local and global environmental concerns.

Sherry stressed the import of Westmoreland County's new sewer system as a significant contribution for success, but lamented the ongoing issue of lack of IT support in the region which needs to catch up to the 21st century.

Hull Springs Farm is part of wetland mitigation banking, according to Sherry. A wetland mitigation bank is a site where wetlands are restored, created, preserved and enhanced for reasons of providing compensatory mitigation in advance of unavoidable hardships to wetlands and related aquatic resources.

The banking program creates economic incentives for the restoration or enhancement and preservation of wetlands and use techniques of consolidating smaller wetland mitigation into larger systems creating more valuable sites.

The Thursday dedication of the remodeled area of Hull Springs Farm is a testament to investing in the future as the huge, old garage was converted to a conference/classroom structure.

Sherry was in charge of the remodeling, but is three hours away from Hull Springs so she relied heavily on the honesty and expertise of builder David Parker of LRG Construction who did not let her down and did a magnificent job turning the old garage into a cutting edge, comfortable and fully functional multi-purpose room.