



HSF Speakers Series

Please join us for the final talk of the Old Dominion Electric Cooperative-sponsored speakers series for this academic year. Dr. Ken Fortino will discuss the “Development of the Longwood Environmental Observatory (LEO) at Hull Springs” on Friday, April 13 at 2 p.m.

Dr. Fortino is an assistant professor of biology at Longwood University. He earned a PhD in Environmental Science from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2010 and has been at Longwood since 2012. His research investigates how small man-made ponds affect organic matter decomposition. Dr. Fortino has been the administrator of the LEO project since 2016.

LEO is a network of environmental sensors that collect high frequency environmental data for use by researchers, educators, and the public. It was built and is maintained largely by Longwood students, giving them practical experience in hardware construction and data processing and analysis. The real promise of LEO lies in the

use of the abundant data that it generates. Dr. Fortino will share the LEO project at Hull Springs history and discuss ways it can be used by researchers, teachers, and the community, with an emphasis on the power of public data in supporting citizen science and scientific literacy.

Seating is limited, so please pre-register by [clicking the link here](#).



Facilities Study

One of the most encouraging achievements this past year was the completion of a facilities feasibility study by Train Architects. The study examined current conditions of existing facilities at Hull Springs, and, in concert with the University’s master plan, Place Matters, projects future space needs to accommodate more students for longer stays.

The firm conducted a series of information-gathering sessions with the Hull Springs Leadership Team, made up of faculty, staff, students



Dr. Kenneth Fortino

and supporters. Members of the faculty noted that with the increase in research projects conducted at Hull Springs, lab facilities are needed. Currently, most research samples must be transported back to the Farmville campus for analysis. On-site analysis could generate further research ventures and provide additional opportunities for partnerships with local (K-12) schools and grant funding.

During the facilities evaluation, it was determined that issues with the Camp House had become unsafe and, sadly, it was closed. Because students have long identified the

site as the “heart” of Hull Springs, the study suggests replacing it with a similar structure on its existing foundation. Other proposed additions for the camp area include a multi-purpose dining facility, student/faculty housing, lab and teaching spaces, and outdoor showers.

An interim solution for the loss of beds caused by closing the Camp House includes adding bunk beds to the Yellow and Big Houses. These changes are scheduled to take place in early June.



Ms. Kerri Cushman, professor of Foundations, Book Arts, conducted an ART217 class at Hull Springs the weekend of March 23-25. Here a student makes use of the property’s plentiful natural resources.



LUCEE

The third Longwood University Camp for Environmental Exploration (LUCEE) will be held July 16-19 and July 23-26 this year. Using project-based learning, Longwood students will work side-by-side with certified Westmoreland County Public School teachers in leading rising 4th-6th graders through the investigative day camp.



Thank You!

We owe a great deal of gratitude to the faithful members of the HSF Stakeholders, who have met tirelessly for several years, guiding us through state and local perspectives. From grant writing to LUCEE participation, from bluebird trails to new camp sites, these dedicated volunteers have graciously enhanced the environmental education offerings at Hull Springs. Many of our programs are planned, manned and made successful through their efforts, and we thank you.

With so many sensational things happening at Hull Springs, our team is planning a number of events to include our supporters in the growing anticipation. We will begin unveiling the facilities feasibility study at events in the coming months to hear your thoughts and include you in this transformative endeavor.

Again, a sincere thanks for so generously sharing your time, talents, and kind donations with Hull Springs!

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