



Mountain Lake Echoes

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

Produced by the University of Virginia's Mountain Lake Biological Station mlbs.org

UVA Field Stations to Collaborate



by MLBS Staff

The pandemic has separated many of us for too long. However, it has also inspired us to reach out more intentionally to some important neighbors. In the last six months, Mountain Lake has worked to reconnect with its two sister UVA field stations – Blandy Experimental Farm and the Virginia Coast Reserve (VCR).



Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce, VA

Blandy Experimental Farm is housed in the Department of Environmental Sciences, and is located two hours north of Charlottesville near Winchester, Virginia. Programs at Blandy focus on public outreach and faculty-driven research. They have an impressive K-12 public school program and are home to the [State Arboretum of Virginia](#).

The VCR is also housed in the Department of Environmental Sciences and is located on the ocean side of Virginia's eastern shore in Oyster. The VCR's primary mission is to host the department's NSF-funded [Virginia Coast Reserve Long-Term Ecological Research \(VCR LTER\) program](#). They also support a variety of other research and public programs.



Virginia Coast Reserve, Cape Charles, VA

Mountain Lake's strengths are in research and Summer Session courses. We are very different stations and we believe that, together, our differences are our strength. The VCR and MLBS have been working independently with the University's [Office of Organizational Excellence](#) to conduct some basic strategic

planning. We hope to also identify initiatives we could accomplish together by bringing our unique strengths to the table. Our goals are two-pronged: to share experience and expertise with one another, and to explore joint programs none of us could launch alone. One such idea is a nature center drawing on a statewide or regional network of research and field stations. We will be reaching out to stakeholders and friends of the station for inspiration, input, and support as we move through this process. Stay tuned as our ideas begin to take shape!



Mountain Lake Biological Station, Pembroke, VA

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Upcoming Events

Dining Hall Open
May 22-August 6

REU Program
May 23-July 29

Summer 2022 Courses
Session I: May 23-June 10
Session II: June 20-July 8
Session III: July 18-August 5

Summer Seminar Series
Lewis Hall Auditorium
Tuesdays and Thursdays
8 p.m.

Evolutionary Biology Graduate Student Workshop
June 12-19

ArtLab
June 26-July 9

July 4th Festivities

View our [web calendar](#) for up-to-date announcements.

From the Director News & Notes

The quiet season at MLBS is always a time to take stock of things and prepare for the coming spring and summer. A couple of years of COVID-19 precautions and restrictions (remember 2019 when that number made more sense?) have taken their toll on research programs and the Station core activities, and we are looking forward to a 2022 season that moves us back to full strength. We anticipate full-size classes and REU program, and have already heard from a number of new researchers that are planning visits this year. ArtLab is scheduled to be back with a full cadre of artists sharing their perspectives on the mountain and the activities there. Finally, registration is currently open for the Evolutionary Biology Graduate Student Workshop happening in June.

Much of our energy this quiet season has been directed at a renewed connection with the University's Facilities Management (FM) team that maintains and manages the physical infrastructure at the Station. The most noticeable change to users will be a new face in the Station Facilities Superintendent post, as Tom Mc Namara left the position this winter to pursue other directions. We are grateful for Tom's past service and the many things he did to keep the Station running. The search for a new superintendent is currently underway, so if you know anyone with the skills and personality to serve in this role, please send them our way. This person will have skilled support from teams at the University but will need to be based in the Blacksburg/Pembroke area as it is a 12-month position.

As part of the conversations surrounding filling the Station Facilities Superintendent position, FM leadership has visited the Station several times with an eye toward some of the accumulating deferred maintenance projects in cottages and lab buildings. A number of our cottages have settled (literally) into disrepair during the pandemic that makes them uninhabitable, and we are fast at work to get them back online before high season. In addition to the basic maintenance, it looks like we are finally on track to have a key and lock system installed for dorms and residences. We are also looking at repurposing and remodeling the old computer lab in the Wilbur lab building. Stay tuned for big improvements!



Butch Brodie

We are Hiring at the Station

MLBS is currently hiring for both permanent and temporary positions. Apply now to work with a great community of people at this historic field station on beautiful Salt Pond Mountain!

Station Facilities Superintendent

This is a full-time, year-round position responsible for maintaining buildings, grounds, infrastructure, and equipment by performing regular inspections, routine maintenance, and repair/replacement tasks.



Assistant to the Station Manager

We are looking for two full-time, summer seasonal assistants to support all aspects of Station operation. These positions will report to the Station Manager.



Register to attend the Evolutionary Biology Graduate Student Workshop

June 12-19, 2022

This six-day workshop on evolutionary biology is geared toward early career graduate students (Masters or PhD students in their first or second year). It focuses on thinking deeply about the evolutionary questions that most excite participants. The workshop is modeled off of the Evolutionary Biology Workshop in Guarda, Switzerland initiated by Stephen C. Stearns in 1988.

Registration Deadline: May 27, 2022
Limited to 16 participants.
 Cost: \$510.00



Public Interpretive Trail Progress

Construction of the Station's new public interpretive trail is well underway! The ADA-accessible pathway is installed, the parking area is finished, and a deer enclosure that will house a native plant garden is constructed. Signage, seating, and other finishing touches will be completed later this year.



Support MLBS

You can support the programs at Mountain Lake Biological Station by donating online. All donations are tax-deductible. [Click to give.](#)

ArtLab 2022

This year's ArtLab Lucile Walton Fellow will be Sharon Horvath. Horvath is Professor and Chair of Painting and Drawing at Purchase College, SUNY. You can read more about Sharon on her website at www.sharonhorvath.com.

Five other nationally recruited Artists-in-Residence and six UVA art students will join Horvath at MLBS June 26 - July 9.

Statement from the Artist

I have taken many journeys, drawing and collecting new images while on the move; in India, Thailand, Italy, The Netherlands, Cape Cod, and the Catskill Mountains. My drawings and notations fertilize new paintings in my studio upon return. The comings and goings, the remixing of new aggregates enrich my imagination. My art work has always had psychological resonance that evokes subjective worlds, but recently I've become focused on the physical world and the complex patterns we humans discover and create there.

My new work, created during the Pandemic, has shifted to include human-made materials from my immediate environment. I want to explore presences and spaces that open doors from the present into the past and future. My recent paintings are like artifacts that combine paint, plastic and magazine pictures. My work has expanded to include multi-dimensional installations on tabletops and in containers, utilizing discarded plastic packaging. I aim to use every drop

of paint, preventing micro plastics from going down the drain into the water system. I use plastic packaging and containers as painting palettes, evaporate unused paint and "paint water" from washing brushes, and use the dried "fossils" with other elements.

At ArtLab, I imagine having time to learn and make drawings about micro-organisms, substances and processes, too small or transitory to see, or ecosystems, too expansive in time or space for us to experience directly. Contemporary life has become so very complicated and entangled. My process embodies and grapples with this reality.



He Fell Into a Wild Fox Body for Five Hundred Lifetimes
pigment, polymer, photo collage on paper mounted on canvas, 50" x 88", 2022

New! Field Behavioral Ecology Course

by Ahva Potticary (University of Georgia)



Ahva Potticary
Postdoctoral Researcher
University of Georgia
<https://ahvapotticary.weebly.com/>

Under the ground, between the trees, up in the air - creatures are scuttling, digging, flying, fighting, going about their daily lives and dramas. Underlying all of this diversity of activity and life, there are common behavioral, ecological, and evolutionary principles. In this course, we will tune into the natural summertime show at Mountain Lake Biological Station to ask the question: why do organisms behave the way that they do?!

We will take advantage of the amazing diversity at MLBS to learn about the principles of behavior across a wide variety of species, including birds, insects, mammals, reptiles,

and amphibians. Sometimes biology requires that we read and think deeply; other times you must turn it over, look a little closer, skulk around at night, and then shake some dirt out of your boots at the end. To this end, we will combine deep reading and short lectures with a hands-on approach to learn about behavior in an evolutionary context. We will use observation and experimentation to investigate the function, development, and evolution of behavior across taxa. Students will gain experience with field and laboratory techniques used in animal behavior research, including capture and examination of insects, amphibians, small mammals, and other wildlife near MLBS. Students will develop an understanding of the scientific process as applied to behavior research, how behavior evolves, and why we see the behavioral patterns that we do.





2022 Summer Courses 3 Credits

Summer Session I

Field Biology of Fishes

May 23-June 10

David Neely, Tennessee Aquarium

MLBS sits on the Eastern Continental Divide providing an incredible diversity of freshwater habitats. Proficiency in ichthyology will be developed through field trips and lab work. Themes include: fish identification; patterns and drivers of diversity; interactions on individual, population, community, and ecosystem levels; evolution; and influences of human activities. Students will design and conduct a research project and present at a class symposium.

Summer Session II

Field Herpetology

June 20-July 8

Christian Cox, Florida International University

We will focus on the ecology and evolution of reptiles and amphibians, leveraging their diversity in the southeastern U.S. In both the field and laboratory, we will study 1) evolutionary relationships among reptiles and amphibians, 2) key evolutionary innovations that characterize each major lineage, 3) reptile and amphibian systems in ecological and evolutionary research, and 4) location and identification of reptiles and amphibians.



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Summer Session III

Field Behavioral Ecology

July 18-August 5

Ahva Potticary, University of Georgia

This course will illustrate principles of behavior and provide experience with methods used in animal behavior research. The main goals of this course include a) developing an understanding of the scientific process as applied to behavior research, b) how behavior evolves and why we see the behavioral patterns that we do, and c) learning how to conduct research in wild populations. Each student will keep a field notebook, and the class will work collaboratively to develop and carry out a research project.

