

**Educational Seminar Series Stressing the Importance of Research in Wildlife and Fisheries  
Management**

by

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**Submitted to  
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## **B. Restatement of Professional Enhancement Opportunity**

The importance of research in the sciences is uncontested by most, but undergraduate students surveyed at Tech in the fall of 2013 were unable to link that recognition to their future in a management or conservation career. Conservation of wildlife and fisheries has become an integral part of the profession of wildlife and fisheries management. To stay at the forefront of the research being conducting in Arkansas, we felt a seminar series would add to those attending's understanding and comprehension in all aspects of research. By bringing in speakers from other regions of Arkansas, students and faculty alike would be able view current research and thus increase their understanding of what is happening around the state.

Another aim of this seminar series was to instill an appreciation and enthusiasm about wildlife and fisheries research in students. The series would cover a wide array of subjects in order to expose students to several different aspects of wildlife and fisheries research. Lecturers would also include both wildlife professionals and graduate students in order to expose students to individuals who are at different points on their career paths. Students would also be allowed to interact with lecturers after each seminar which would provide students networking opportunities. Moreover, graduate students would have the opportunity to meet throughout the day with speakers to discuss research; these meet and greets would be especially beneficial to non-thesis students who are required to find a mentor for their 5- week research practical as part of their degree.

This seminar series would also benefit faculty members. Faculty would have the opportunity to network and discuss shared research interests with speakers that could lead to future collaborations. Faculty would also have the prospect of meeting personally with speakers prior to the seminar, during the social, and attending the post-seminar dinner to strengthen professional relations and to create new partnerships with state agencies and other universities.

### **C. Brief Review of the Professional Enhancement**

We requested funding for a spring semester pilot seminar series in fish and wildlife (FW) research at Tech. A committee consisting of 3 graduate students and 1 wildlife and fisheries faculty member were responsible for the organization and implementation of this pilot seminar series. Our vision is to foster an understanding of and appreciation for the importance of research in the fish and wildlife profession and to stimulate future conservation. The long term goal is to create a sustainable and educational seminar series on fish and wildlife research. Our short term goals were to develop a standard operating procedure including a system to hand-off committee roles, determine the average budget per speaker, and maintain an average of 30 participants per seminar. The objectives for the spring 2014 seminar pilot series were to determine a working budget for the series, gain feedback from students, faculty, and the university regarding the desire for such a sustainable series, and market the series successfully. We also booked 8 speakers, established a format for all seminars including meet and greets between speakers and students, and defined an appropriate time and meeting place for the lectures.

### **D. Summary of Experiences**

Of the total \$3245.00 granted from Academic Affairs, the School of Natural Health and Sciences, and the Department of Biological Sciences, we spent \$789.04 for our pilot FW seminar series (Table 1). Most speakers (62%) drove state vehicles to the seminar series and were not reimbursed for travel; no speakers required overnight lodging. The average cost to reimburse the other speakers was  $\$61.04 \pm \$19.88\text{SE}$  ( $\$41.16 - \$100.80$ ). Half of the speakers were able to stay for a post-seminar dinner in which 5 – 7 undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty also attended. The average cost of the meals was  $\$81.85 \pm \$13.32\text{SE}$  ( $\$59.09 - \$117.68$ ) and the per capita cost averaged  $\$12.41 \pm \$1.25\text{SE}$  ( $\$9.85 - \$14.71$ ). Weekly refreshments and

plasticware cost on average  $\$15.71 \pm 3.13SE$  ( $\$9.94 - \$27.85$ ). A 3 x 9 inch ArkaTech advertisement ran for 3 weeks advertising the final 3 seminar speakers. Flyers were also posted around McEver Hall and announcements were made on the Community Calendar for free.

Eight speakers representing 4 universities, 1 federal agency, and 1 state agency and a range of topics including fisheries, wildlife, and habitat comprised the FW seminar series (Table 2). Educational background of these speakers consisted of 4 doctorates, 1 masters, 1 doctoral candidate, and 2 master candidates. On average,  $21 \pm 2 SE$  (13 – 35) students attended the series. Most (62%) of the seminars were held on Thursdays from 5-6PM with a half hour post-seminar social; the other seminars were held on Wednesdays using the same time frame.

## **E. Conclusions**

It appears that we can successfully run a seminar series with 8 speakers for  $<\$1000$ . However, if this seminar series continues, we would like to expand our invitations to speakers from neighboring states which may incur more charges if they cannot drive a state vehicle and require lodging. In this situation and if the budget is limited, we can reserve post-seminar dinners for only out-of-state speakers which would potentially reduce the overall costs. If need be, the ArkaTech advertisement can also be eliminated and we can just market the series via flyers, email, and free public communications (i.e., Community Calendars).

Overall feedback from students and faculty was positive. At least 2 faculty members offered extra credit for students to attend the seminars. The graduate students and undergraduate students involved in organizing the seminar series did an excellent job and wish to continue the series in the next academic year (2014-15). The graduate students who helped write this grant did a superb job at keeping track of paperwork, receipts, and supervising the work of the undergraduate students who helped set up the socials. Although we did not reach our goal of an

average of 30 attendees/speaker, we believe this is due to too many other student and faculty obligations on Thursday nights. If the series were to continue for the next academic year, we would hold it on Wednesday nights using the same format as this pilot series.

**F. Attachments**

Please find attached a summary of the amount requested from each budget, expenses, and remaining balance of each fund (Table 1). Please also find a list of the speakers, their affiliations, and seminar topics (Table 2).

Table 1. Summary of the amount requested from each budget, expenses, and remaining balance of each fund for the FW seminar series, February-April 2014.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Requested Amount</b>	<b>Amount Used</b>	<b>Remaining Balance</b>
<b>Academic Affairs</b>			
Mileage	615.00	183.12	416.88
Lodging	880.00	0.00	880.00
ArkaTech Advertisement	250.00	200.00	50.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>1745.00</i>	<i>383.12</i>	<i>1346.88</i>
<b>NHS Dean Budget</b>			
Speaker Dinner	1000.00	327.39	672.61
<b>BIOS Dept. Budget</b>			
Refreshments	500.00	78.53	421.47

Table 2. Summary of the speakers, their affiliations, and their seminar topics for the FW seminar series, February-April 2014.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Topic</b>
20 February	Casey Cox, MS candidate	University of Central Arkansas	Status of the American eel in Arkansas
27 February	Eliese Ronke, MS candidate	University of Arkansas-Fayetteville	Zero to 200,000 in 2.5 (decades): The History of Reintroduced Temperate-nesting Canada Geese in Arkansas
5 March	Dr. Matthew Moran	Hendrix College	The Ecological Role and Evolutionary Impact of Large Mammals in North American Grasslands
12 March	Tyler Pittman, Ph.D. candidate	University of Arkansas- Fayetteville	Ecological Impacts of Early Growing Season Prescribed Fire on Eastern Wild Turkey in the Ozark Highlands of Arkansas
2 April	Kelly Irwin, MS	Arkansas Game and Fish Commission	Hellbenders in Arkansas
10 April	Dr. Michael Douglas	University of Arkansas –Fayetteville	Be it Neither Fish nor Fowl: Fragmentation in the Anthropocene
17 April	Dr. Steve Lochmann	University of Arkansas- Pine Bluff	Interactions Between Wild and Hatchery Fish: Salmonid Models and Centrarchid Studies
24 April	Dr. Roger Perry	US Forest Service	An Overview of the Effects of Fire on Bats and Bat Habitat