

West Virginia University Natural History Museum

Construction of the Wetland Display in Honor of Ronald “Ron” H. Fortney



Ronald H. (Ron) Fortney devoted his entire career to the conservation of West Virginia’s natural heritage and the education of students interested in the natural environment. Ron spent time working at various levels in the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Park System, Salem-Teikyo University, and most recently as a faculty member at West Virginia University (WVU). Ron’s teaching interests lie primarily in Environmental Science and Wetlands Ecology. Ron is an accomplished researcher in environmental science, botany, and wetlands ecology. Ron’s most impressive academic attribute is his ability to bring together diverse groups of people to address important ecological issues. Tragically, Ron was seriously injured in a vehicle accident in February 2004.

WVU is in the process of developing a natural history museum to provide students and the public a chance to view and learn about many Appalachian wildlife species. The upper lobby of Percival Hall on the Evansdale Campus at WVU will be transformed and renovated to create the primary exhibit area of the WVU Natural History Museum. Exhibits based on taxidermied specimens from the Robert Estler Collection will include a pack of hungry wolves standing over a recent kill, an array of bird eggs, a majestic golden eagle, and a wetlands display. The wetland display will feature a beaver pond with myriad ducks, aquatic mammals, amphibians, fish, and reptiles.

In conceptualizing the wetland display, the name Ronald “Ron” H. Fortney, continually came to mind. Ron had numerous interests, but wetlands were truly his passion. To honor Ron’s commitment and dedication to the natural wonders of West Virginia we plan to name the WVU Natural History Museum’s—West Virginia Wetland diorama in his honor. Our goal is to raise \$30,000 to make this exhibit possible. By joining together we will be able to create an enduring legacy to Ron’s commitment and passion of wetlands. To recognize Ron and the group effort, the Davis College Division of Forestry and Natural Resources will dedicate a plaque, “Construction Sponsored by the Friends and Family of Ron Fortney” when the wetland exhibit is unveiled.

To make a pledge of support or for more information please contact Jim Anderson at 304.293.2941 x2445 or Jim.Anderson@mail.wvu.edu.