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CREATING CONNECTIONS



Friends and neighbors,

It's been my honor to serve as interim director of the W.K. Kellogg Biological Station over the past year.

Recently, we welcomed our new director, Bryan Foster. He joins us from the University of Kansas, where he served as director of the KU Field Station. But Dr. Foster is no stranger to our field station, as he received his Ph.D from KBS. We're excited to welcome back Dr. Foster.



BRYAN FOSTER

This past year has been rich with excellent research, education and outreach activities at the Station, many of which extended far beyond the lands that we know as KBS. Read more in this report about some of these initiatives, including the Farm Resilience Project, listening sessions with agriculture professionals, and outreach visits to local K-12 classrooms.

The fine work of KBS students, staff and faculty hasn't gone unnoticed this year. Dr. Phil Robertson was elected to the National Academy of Sciences, staff member Sarah Reimer received the prestigious Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award from Michigan State University, and research assistant Kevin Kahmark won the inaugural Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center's Mentoring Award. These are only a few examples; the excellence of the KBS community was recognized time and time again.

Also this past year, we hosted MSU President Kevin Guskiewicz for two visits, unveiled a new mural at the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, and launched the new KBS GALS (Girls on outdoor Adventures for Leadership and Science) program.

If you took a walk at the Bird Sanctuary this year, enjoyed a high tea at the Manor House, attended a field day hosted by one of our long-term research programs, or made a donation, we thank you for your support of KBS.



JEFF CONNER

With gratitude,
Jeff Conner
Past Interim Director

EXTENDING OUR REACH

Impacts of KBS programs felt on farms, in classrooms



Our mission of research, education and outreach challenges us to move our studies of ecology and sustainable agriculture beyond the borders of the labs and fields of KBS. This year, KBS research reached the fields of local farms, classrooms in nearby school districts and community events.

MISTRIPS

MISTRIPS is the Michigan arm of a multi-state initiative that aims to increase the adoption of prairie strips—a conservation practice that strategically places native prairie plantings into agricultural landscapes. MISTRIPS is led by the KBS Long-Term Ecological Research program, or LTER.

MISTRIPS farms serve as sites for on-farm research by LTER scientists who collaborate with farmers to test ideas about plant community assembly, soil health, and best restoration practices.

The program's impact now reaches beyond original expectations, creating a regional collaborative network of farmers, conservation districts, MSU Extension educators, teachers, artists, and local Tribes.

FARM RESILIENCE PROJECT

A newly funded project led by Dr. Christine Sprunger seeks to understand how extreme weather events impact crop yields, soil health, greenhouse gases, and the economic well-being of farmers.

In fall 2024, the Farm Resilience Project enrolled 91 farmers and sampled soil on 187 fields across 39 counties. Farmers received a comprehensive soil health report, which contributed to state efforts toward creating a soil health database.

In 2025, a subset of 25 farmers were selected to further participate in the two-year study. These participants collected soil and greenhouse gas samples, and networked with



other farmers, commodity groups, and researchers. Those involved in the project hope these collaborations will generate new ideas for the next version of the KBS Long-Term Agroecosystem Research—LTAR—Aspirational Cropping System experiment, which is set to be updated in 2026.

LISTENING SESSIONS WITH AG PROFESSIONALS

To better connect KBS LTER and LTAR research to its relevant audiences, Christine Charles, member Extension educator at KBS, along with partners at KBS and MSU, turned to professionals who work closely with farmers every day: MSU Extension and Michigan Conservation Districts.

Together, the KBS LTER, KBS LTAR, and MSU Extension hosted a series of listening sessions to bring together these groups to learn about the needs and challenges farmers face in adopting conservation agriculture.

The initial conversations piqued considerable interest, and the project resulted in a report that hopes to inspire future research and outreach efforts.

K-12 CLASSROOM VISITS

At Gull Lake Community Schools, students at multiple grade levels have engaged with current research, using their natural curiosity to explore scientific concepts and developing skills that are valuable in and out of the classroom.

High school students were able to take biology classes structured around studying the monkey flower, working with MSU and KBS faculty to engage with dynamic research projects.

At the middle school, students benefit from their teachers' participation in KBS K-12 Partnership programs. With the help of that professional development, science education for these students is hands-on and immersive in current research.



Younger students also had the opportunity to explore scientific inquiry and the natural world with KBS staff and graduate students. Using their outdoor classroom, fourth-grade students honed their observational skills by studying found objects like leaves, seed pods and even bones.

EXCELLENCE, RECOGNIZED

Accolades abound for KBS faculty, staff and students



Join us in congratulating the KBS faculty, staff and students who garnered awards during the 2024-25 fiscal year. Just a few of many awardees are listed here. Scan the QR code to see the full list.

ABIGAIL CATTERMOLE, First Place in the University Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum, Category CANR: Integrative and Organismal Biology, MSU Office of Undergraduate Research | 2025

KARA HAAS, Graduate Student Award for Community Engagement Scholarship, MSU Office of University Outreach and Engagement | 2025

DR. NICK HADDAD, Junior Faculty Mentoring Award, MSU College of Natural Science | 2024

KEVIN KAHMARK, Mentorship Award, Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center | 2024



KAHMARK

BRAD OSBORN, MSU Infrastructure Planning and Facilities Employee of the Quarter | 2024

DAVID PAVLIK, Emerging Conservationist Award, Indianapolis Prize Program; Indianapolis Zoo | 2024

SARAH REIMER, Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award, Michigan State University | 2025



REIMER

DR. PHIL ROBERTSON, Election to the National Academy of Sciences | 2025

KIRSTEN SALONGA, Robert E. Yager Exemplary Teaching Award, National Science Teaching Association | 2024

DR. LIZ SCHULTHEIS, T.H. Huxley Award, Society for the Study of Evolution | 2025



SALONGA

BY THE NUMBERS

Together, we reached more than 30K people in 2024-25

ENGAGEMENT



Total people served
Bird Sanctuary: 17,697
Manor House & Conference Center: 8,500
LTER & LTAR: 3,855

STUDENT SUPPORT



Total students receiving funds
Undergrad: 33 (\$110,848)
Grad: 28 (\$61,250)

GIVING



Total number of donors for fiscal year
151 (\$423,455)
Give Green Day
\$3,975 for GALS program & Bird Sanctuary renovations



The inaugural Spartan Bus Tour concluded with a stop at KBS in October 2024. MSU President Kevin Guskiewicz and many other members of the MSU community gathered at the KBS LTAR site to hear from KBS faculty and staff about some of the important work being done here.

“This last stop here at the Kellogg Biological Station was amazing... I want to come back tomorrow.”
~ MSU President Guskiewicz



In summer 2025, KBS launched its first-ever Girls on outdoor Adventure for Leadership and Science trip. The KBS program is part of a larger network of GALS programs.

GALS immerses students in the world of STEM careers. They meet with scientists, park rangers and other professionals. They hear about different routes one can take to obtain a career in science, learning that there is no one path to becoming a scientist.



The hillside near the Leslie E. Tassel Upland Gamebird Exhibit has undergone a beautiful and functional makeover, with the installation of a mural and a native planting reminiscent of an oak savanna habitat.

The restoration plot was supported by the Wildflower Association of Michigan, Michigan DNR, and the KBS grounds crew.

The mural was created by former KBS graduate student Stephanie Clark.



THANK YOU

For your generosity to KBS in 2024-25

The KBS fiscal year ran from July 2024 through June 2025.

Some contributions to KBS are made in memory or in honor of people whose lives have made lasting impacts. Those gifts have been recognized in this list.

In memory of:

1. Linda Beppler Scothorn
2. Patricia "Pati" Czinder

In honor of:

3. Jeff Conner
4. Sarah Czinder
5. David Dvorak

We make every effort to ensure all donors are recognized in our annual report. If you believe your name has been omitted, please contact our Development Office at (269) 671-2444.

\$10,000 and above

Maria and Douglas Bayer
Patricia Chipman
H. Wilson Cunningham and Jane Carstairs
David G. Dvorak, M.D. and Karol Peterson
3, 4, 5
Ronald Gross and Adelaide Camillo
Anonymous

\$5,000 to \$9,999

James Fett and Therese Sprunger

\$1,000 to \$4,999

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John and Ann Gallagher
Margaret Hall
Anita Johnson
James Larson
Stephen and Caroline Robbins
William and Virginia Schultz
Robert Scothorn
Kathi Scothorn-Campbell 1
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Diane Kuuttila
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Jamie Wiersema

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