

2025 Field Season Round-Up



THE HEE UPDATE

<http://HEEForestStudy.org>

Kat Shay, Project Coordinator | koshay@purdue.edu

Overstory Vegetation Sampling

The crew has been hard at work this field season—they finished all the Yellowwood State Forest plots and are in the last unit of Morgan Monroe State Forest now. The crew has contended with frequent storms and extreme heat, but have maintained a positive attitude and high quality of work. This year we added a regeneration component to our vegetation data collection, utilizing the same grid as overstory.

HEE Crew: Daniel (IU), Anna (IU), JP (Purdue), Max (Purdue), Collin (Purdue), Cassandra, Garin (IU), Afiqah (SIU)

Breeding Bird Surveys

Breeding bird surveys were completed this field season, despite the weather doing its best to thwart our plans! Rae, our Field Coordinator, and the crew battled frequent morning rain and inclement weather.

HEE Crew: Anna (IU), Hannah (UW Madison), Rae

Nightjars / ARUs

Southern Illinois University's nightjars crew has also been hard at work this field season! Led by PhD student Haley, they've been deploying ARU's all across the HEE and conducting point count surveys.

Crew: Haley, Phoenix, Afiqah

Bats

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has been extremely busy, led by PI Dr. O'Keefe, PhD student Zeke and recently-graduated MS student Josie. They've been monitoring roost trees, mist-netting, and conducting radio-telemetry surveys.

Here's a link to a [fun article](#) about some of the work the bat crew got up to this summer!

Crew: Zeke, Josie, Alyse, Hannah

Digital Forestry

During leaf off this winter we began backpack and UAV LiDAR mapping the inaugural HEE Unit 3 for our long-term project with Digital Forestry at Purdue.



This tree was struck by lightning—it's just outside of the Bridgehouse!



Botany News

We're excited to share that Megan Crecelius, Forest Ecologist with the Division of Forestry and member of the HEE Executive Committee, has been working with Richard Hull at IU and Nathanael Pilla at Midwest Biological Survey to begin planning a Floristic Quality Analysis at the HEE. This will be a comprehensive, multi-year project. We look forward to working with Richard and Nathanael and learning more about the species present across the HEE.

HEE Proposal Request

We will begin the process of compiling the HEE budget for 2026-2028 soon, so be advised that we will send out project proposal requests in the next few weeks. Proposals should incorporate pre-treatment and post-treatment plans. We are interested in various taxa, as well as proposals regarding the impacts of prescribed fire. Current projects will be given some priority but we are also looking to add new projects.

As a reminder, harvests are planned for winter 2028-29. Harvests will occur in the uneven-age units (throughout the matrix outside of the existing patch cuts) and either shelterwood or clearcut in the burned areas of the even-aged units.

If you have any preliminary questions, please reach out to Mike Saunders (msaunder@purdue.edu).

Out and About: HEE Outreach

Rae and Kat have presented at several outreach events and talks since our last newsletter. One unexpected favorite was an [interview with Hoosier Ag Radio](#)—give it a listen or a read, we got some great feedback on it. A big thank you to Liz Jackson for setting it up and coaching Kat through radio interview etiquette. Kat has also presented on Fire Ecology and History at a few different places, including the Outdoor Talks series sponsored by the Hoosier National Forest and the Bedford Parks Department, the Four Rivers Forestry Committee, NRCS-Purdue FNR Extension Prescribed Fire training, and the Monroe County Master Naturalist Certification class. Rae and Kat also presented to the White Oaks Initiative Regional Meeting at Yellowwood State Forest and the DNR Forest Preserves meeting. We'd like to thank all our partners for continuing to give us opportunities to talk about the HEE and the research topics we care so deeply about.

We're currently working on some one-pagers to highlight some of the work that the HEE's done over nearly 20 years. Our first topics: bats and prescribed fire! Stay tuned for those and more.

