

MURRAY FIFE BUELL
1906-1975

Murray F. Buell died July 2, 1975 while on a field trip in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. He had recently assumed the leadership of a natural resource study, and at the time of his death was actively engaged in activities that delighted him throughout his lifetime: working with students, studying vegetation, and advancing the cause of conservation.

Murray Buell's influence on ecology was deep, constant and long sustained. This quiet, patient scholar was reared in a liberal New England family, and studied at the Loomis School, Cornell University, and the University of Minnesota. After studying under W. S. Cooper, he started his professional career at North Carolina State University in 1935. There he began his notable work on the paleoecology of bogs, plant succession, and tension zones between vegetation types. In 1947, he moved to Rutgers University where he eventually became Professor of Botany and Director of the William L. Hutcheson Forest. He devoted great effort in setting aside this forest and in making it into a major ecological study area and one of the best studied woods in North America. Well before it was fashionable, he initiated important studies linking ecology to land-use management. Two decades ago he and his students studied the impact of people on park ecosystems, investigated the ecology of power line right of ways and the use of fire on forest and hydrologic management. He also made intensive studies of the structure and dynamics of vegetation in and around New Jersey, and now the State is among the best known ecological regions in North America. Among his last works is the book *Vegetation of New Jersey* coauthored with Beryl Robichaud.

After his retirement from Rutgers in 1971 he served as a visiting professor of ecology at Yale, the University of Minnesota, Georgia, Arizona, California—Davis, California—Santa Barbara, Montana and Colorado State.

Perhaps Murray Buell's greatest impact on ecology was achieved as a teacher. A gentle and thoughtful man, he was considerate of his students, yet demanding of excellence. His influence on undergraduates resulted in a steady stream of students flowing to graduate schools, while the ecology program he initiated at Rutgers attracted scores of students from throughout North America. In Murray Buell they found a stimulating teacher concerned not only about the study of ecology, but about them as individuals. His life touched many hundreds of North American ecologists through the Rutgers Ecology Seminar that he initiated and sponsored. In the many summers he taught at the University of Minnesota's Lake Itasca Biological Station, he recognized exceptionally promising young students. Often the fortunate person was hired as an assistant, transported across the country in his car, fed chicken dinners and given a thorough introduction to life as a field ecologist. A summer at Itasca was the beginning for at least a half dozen current full professors of Ecology. Murray Buell's relationship with his students did not end with the award of a diploma. He actively followed their careers, acted as a sounding board for ideas and decisions, and provided wise counsel when asked.

No recounting of Murray Buell's career could be complete without mention of his wife, Dr. Helen Foot Buell. Murray and Helen Buell worked as a team and between them maintained a lively and inquisitive interest in all things around them. Many of us were fortunate to pass through their sphere of interest.

Murray Buell labored long and hard for the Ecological Society of America. He served as Associate Editor of *Ecology* and *Ecological Monographs*, Secretary, Vice President and as President in 1961-62. At the time of his death he was Chairman of the ESA Awards Committee. Less obvious, but nonetheless important, was his contribution to the drafting of the new constitution and bylaws of the ESA and his contribution to the early development of the Institute of Ecology. For his multifaceted contributions to ecology, Murray F. Buell was named Eminent Ecologist by the Society in 1971.

The loss of this scholar is great, but there is some satisfaction in knowing that Murray Buell died while fully active and in pursuit of the things he loved.

F. Herbert Bormann
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