White Squirrel

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VFTH

For years WKU has gone nuts for white squirrels. So much so that merchandise and even a mascot have resulted from the obsession.

Amy Bingham has more on the furry phenomenon in this week’s View from the Hill.

Bowling Green Kentucky is listed as a city with lots of white squirrel sightings. The campus of Western Kentucky University seems to be a virtual playground for the somewhat unique animals and the school is taking full advantage of it.

If you visit WKU’s campus, chances are there will be a sighting.

 “That was one of the first things they told us on our tour, you’ll see white squirrels running around. “

The balcony at the renovated Craig Administration Building is a popular spot.

 “I think it’s because of the landscaping. Lots of bushes for them to hide under.”

The reason may have more to do with the constant supply of nuts.

 “I think they’ve gotten used to when they hear that door open they think well there will be nuts out here pretty soon.”

University Attorney and nature enthusiast Deborah Wilkins actually has a recurring on-line order of nuts.

 “That started as a joke really. I saw them on the deck outside my office.

I had an old bag of peanuts and I put that out there, the office staff and I really enjoy watching them eat these nuts.”

The white squirrel is so popular it now serves as the mascot for the student alumni ambassador program.

 “We’ve always wanted to do some type of mascot and why not do the white squirrel? It’s perfect. It’s all over WKU’s campus. People love the white squirrel.”

Wally the White Squirrel made his debut at the 2014 homecoming parade.

 “He always brings a smile to the kids faces, they want to take pictures. It’s a really good time when he can get out.”

 “Obviously Big red is always number one in our hearts but Wally is right there with him.”

And since 2009, the WKU store has gotten in on the white squirrel phenomenon.

 “Probably our biggest sellers are the caps, the baseball hats with the little white squirrel on top.”

T-shirts, sweatshirts, water bottles…a white squirrel is even helping to market the store’s technology center.

 “We gave some little hipster nerd glasses to the squirrels face and made him our little logo for the savvy squirrel.”

you don’t have to go too far to see one of WKU’s savvy squirrels up close.

 “They’re easy to spot of course cause they’re so bright….it’s fun.”

Wilkins considers biology professor Albert Meijer an expert on white squirrels…he says they are like red heads in the human population. Their genetics make them white. The ones here are not albino.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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