

FWS Retirees Association NEWSLETTER



Fall (September) 2024

2024 Board of Directors

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Message from the Chair



Greetings! There's a mystery person (an FWS retiree!) sitting next to me in my photo. For the answer, please see the photo of both of us, later in this newsletter!

News flash...the next Retirees Association Reunion is only 8 months away! Madison, Wisconsin, here we come! The dates of May 12 – 16, 2025, have been reserved with the Hyatt Hotel

and the Monona Terrace Conference Center. The details for registration will be sent in an email to all members shortly. We hope to see you there!

We have begun a new era for our organization. A couple of months ago, we sent an email to all members announcing a change to our Bylaws that adds a new "Associate" membership category. Any retiree can now become a member of our FWS Retirees Association, without having worked for our agency but has an interest in our mission. I have included a separate article on this issue, and the backstory, later in this newsletter.

We have an election coming up this Fall for 3 seats on the Board of Directors for this Association. It takes an active 9-member Board to conduct our many activities, so I hope that we will have some candidates who will want to join the Board! If you want more information, or want to nominate someone, please reach out to any of the current Board members who will provide all the details. Join us!! Our contact information is at the top of this

page. If you want to run, please submit a brief bio and a picture by Oct 25, 2024 to dlynbaker5@gmail.com.

We are looking for an FWS retiree who lives in Region 6 to serve on the FWS History Committee. History Committee members do not need to be members of the Retiree Association. If you are interested or know anyone who is, please reach out to Paul Tritaik or me. It's an active committee comprised of current employees and retirees from all FWS regions.

We are always seeking articles for future newsletters, so please keep in touch! *Cindy Uptegraft Barry*

Business

Retirees Association 22nd Reunion – Madison, WI

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees Association will hold our 22nd Annual Retiree Reunion in Madison, Wisconsin in May, 2025. This will be only the second reunion held in Region 3, so this is a great opportunity for folks in the Midwest to join us again, as well as everyone else around the country. This will also be the first reunion we will be sharing with the FWS Law Enforcement Get Together, the annual reunion of retired FWS special agents and other OLE retirees.

When? Sunday, May 11, 2025 through Friday, May 16, 2025.

Where? Madison, Wisconsin. Lodging has been set aside with Hyatt Place Madison Downtown. Discounted rates of \$159 (king bed)/\$169 (2 queen beds) were negotiated that will include breakfast. Please don't contact the Hyatt now. A link for lodging reservations will be provided in a later email. The main meeting

and banquet space has been reserved at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center.

Schedule	Here is a tentative schedule of possible activities:
Sunday	May 11 (Mother's Day). Board members arrive to set things up, sort raffle and silent auction items.
Monday	May 12. Association members arrive. 85 rooms available. Reunion registration starts in the afternoon at the Hyatt. Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife to be held at a location to be determined. The Ice Breaker Social will be held at the Hyatt.
Tuesday	May 13. Retiree Reunion meeting will be at the Monona Terrace. Registration starts at 8:00 AM. The meeting starts at 9:00 AM with Association, Regional and National FWS presentations. The LE Get Together will meet at the Hyatt. The keynote speaker and History Award presentation will be held at the Monona Terrace meeting room after dinner.
Wednesday & Thursday	May 14 & 15 Field trips to NWR and Necedah and Horicon NWR and Leopold Shack and Farm, and International Crane Foundation.
Thursday	May 15. The History Committee and subcommittees will meet at the Hyatt. Banquet will be held at the Monona Terrace.
Friday	May 16. Departure day. Pack-up and clean-up.

If you think you might attend all or part of the reunion events, please reply to vicechair@fwsretirees.org with the number attending. Please spread the word to ALL retirees, since only members of the Retirees Association will receive this message and we would like to see MANY more new retirees in attendance!

Put the date on your calendar! The closest airport is Dane County Regional Airport (5 miles/15 minutes). The closest major airport is Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport (84 miles/1.5 hours) We will have more specific information on the lodging, registration and schedule later!!

Did you receive our "Save the Date" email blast containing similar information about the Reunion? If not, please contact Jessy Jacobs at jjacobs@fws.retirees.org to let her know you are not receiving our emails.

A New Category of Retiree Association Membership

By Cindy Uptegraft Barry

A couple of months ago, I received an email from Linus Chen, currently working as an attorney in the Department of the Interior's (HQ) Office of the Solicitor. He was interested in gifting a 5-year membership of the FWS Retiree Association at the retirement event to be held for retiring attorney Ben Jesup, and another membership gift for Peg Romanik, who had recently

retired. I was very interested to figure out a way that we could make his generous honor a reality, so I took the issue to the Board of Directors. After much discussion, and vote, we decided to amend our Bylaws to add a new **Associate** membership category to allow any retiree to join, not requiring any former employment by the FWS. Our newly amended Bylaws were emailed to all of our Association members, as any change to our Bylaws requires a 30-day notice to our membership.

Linus notes that he hopes to join the Association in the near future, as he is eligible as a full Sustaining member (as a former FWS employee in the early 2000's), before joining the DOI/SOL for the remainder of his career. Here's "the rest of the story"

The beginning of new FWS Retirees Association Members

by Linus Chen, FWS employee 2000-2005; DOI/SOL 2008-present.

Two new members joined the FWS Retirees Association in August, 2024. What makes these new members notable was that they were never employees of FWS. However, their careers have touched and improved the FWS since working on its behalf for at least the past two decades. These two new Association members are **Benjamin Jesup and Peg Romanik**, now retired from the DOI Solicitor's Office (HQ).



Left to Right: Benjamin Jesup, Larry Mellinger, Pete Raynor & Michael Young

He later counseled the Endangered Species/Ecological Service's (ES) program, working on the legacy of Congress's Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing moratorium and multiple large-scale lawsuits (including the late 1990s, early 2000s, and in mid-2010s). Prior to his retirement in June, 2024, he was the Assistant Solicitor for the Branch of Fish and Wildlife, where those program attorneys worked solely on FWS issues.

Peg Romanik retired in April, 2023. When she retired, she was the Associate Solicitor for the Division of Parks and Wildlife. Peg oversaw Ben's branch, along with the branch that oversaw

National Park Service-related issues at HQ and the Branch of Environmental Restoration. Prior to being Associate Solicitor, Peg was the Regional Solicitor for the northeast region, and also a staff attorney in the Branch of Fish and Wildlife, where she counseled FWS's ES program on the ESA's "section 7 consultations." Before focusing on ES, Peg also worked in the Solicitor's Office Division of General Law for several years.

I was unaware of the FWS Retirees Association and happened to discover it while trying to do a web search for Paul Schmidt, to invite him to Ben's retirement party. I reached out to the current Board Chair, Cindy Barry, about allowing Ben and Peg to become members of the Association, as the current Association Bylaws require members to have been FWS employees. I am now very pleased that these two well-deserving individuals have been honored as the very first **Associate Members** of the FWS Retirees Association.



Peg Romanik

Treasurer's Report

Operating Accounts. Through August 2024 our total operating income was \$3,275.12, which was 54% of our budgeted income through that month compared to 81% for the same period in 2023. Despite that, our net income this year through August was \$2,160.72. Expenses through August were \$1,114.40. Our main (Operations) checking account balance at the end of August was \$22,834.04 with \$19.21 in PayPal.

Grants Accounts

We had \$8,707.27 in the Grants checking account at the end of August.

History Grant. Through August we had spent \$24,739.99 of the \$36,460.95 budgeted for this year for the FY 2024 History Grant. Expenses included travel for a History Committee meeting held in May, database management expenses, oral history transcription software license renewal and completed transcriptions, equipment and supplies for producing oral histories, as well as oral history-related travel. A balance of \$11,720.96 remains to be spent before September 30 this year when the grant expires.

Conservation Career Awareness and Youth Programs (CCA/Youth) grant. There were \$21,700.00 paid from the CCA/Youth grant funds through August. From this grant we paid honoraria to seven presenters at Native youth conferences at NCTC and funded 11 Mini-Grants issued to Friends Groups to support youth outreach projects. Of the \$38,805.61 grant amount budgeted for 2024, a \$17,105.61 balance remains to be spent before September 30 this year when the grant expires.

Other major financial-related activities during the latter part of June through July and August have included reviewing and editing the Association's *Fiscal Policy and Procedures* document, which was last updated in 2019. We have also begun financial planning for the next Retirees Reunion to be held in Madison, WI in May 2025, including making a deposit for event space at the Monona Terrace Convention Center there. *Submitted by Doug Frugé.*

Membership

We would like to thank all our sustaining members who pay their dues each year and welcome our six new members. Members can pay their dues using our normal membership and dues renewal form either on-line with a credit card or pay by mail with a check to Doug Frugé, Treasurer. If you want to ensure that the data base information has your correct and updated information, please contact Deborah Holle at Promote@FWSRetirees.org.

Everyone should have received an email on an amendment to our Bylaws. We were asked if we would allow memberships for recent retirees for the DOI Solicitor's Office. Although not Service employees, these solicitors worked diligently throughout their careers to support the staff, programs and laws which the Service must implement. Over the years, they helped many FWS biologists and administrators unravel and demystify the legalese to keep our mission moving forward. As described elsewhere in this newsletter, our bylaws have been amended to add an Associate Membership category.

Associate membership is available to any person who has retired and demonstrates an interest in the mission of the Association. Upon paying dues and furnishing an email address to the Association, he/she will receive mailing of publications and other information of interest about retiree activities, events and current Service activities and accomplishments. This includes the Retirees Association Newsletter, other periodic news, and

updates on natural resource issues. Associate members are not eligible to vote, hold office or participating in directing the activities and operations of the Association. If an Associate member fails to pay dues annually, he/she will be removed from the membership rolls at the end of the calendar year.

We heartily welcome our two new Associate members!

BADGLEY, Anne (Mark Walker); Portland, OR; 2021; Pacific Region, Solicitors Office and previously with the FWS. **NEW**

CHU, Nancy (Lance Hoboy); Silver Spring, MD; R3, RO, Fisheries.

FINN, Vicki (Kevin); Portland OR; 2024; RO, Science Advisor. **NEW**

JACHOWSKI, Dick (Marty); Bozeman, MT; 2005; US Geological Survey, N. Rocky Mnt. Science Center **NEW**

JACOBSON, Susan (Mark); Rio Rancho, NM; 2020; R2, RO, Ecological Services, Endangered Species.

JESUP, Benjamin (Pam Kroger Jesup); Alexandria, VA; 2024; Solicitors Office, Associate, **NEW**

JEWELL, Sue; Springfield, VA; 2024; R9, HQ; Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation, Branch of Aquatic Invasive Species. **NEW**

KELLY, Sean (Diane); Apple Valley, MN; 2018; R3, RO, Migratory Birds

LADD, Wilbur “Skipp”; Pueblo, CO; 2003 R6, RO, Refuges and Wildlife; NPS Resources Assignment

LOWE, Roy (Laurie); Waldport, OR; 2015; R1, Refuges and Wildlife, Oregon Coast NWR

McCOLLUM, Jim (Ann), Great Falls, MT; 2000; R6, Refuges & Wildlife, Benton Lake NWR

McCUE, Robert (Patricia); Grand Island, NE; 2004; R6, RO, Ecological Services, ARD-ES

NASH, Margorie; Arlington, VA; 2008; HQ, Directors Office

PARISI, Maria; Shepherdstown, WV; R9, NCTC

PATRICK, Lorna (Tim); Independence, KY; 2014; R4, RO, Ecological Services

PISAPIA, Ralph (Linda); Meredith, NH; 2004; R5, RO, Ecological Services

POST, Ann; Berwick, ME; 2017; NCTC, Conservation Library

REICHELT, Herb (Sue Ann); Dunnellon, FL; 1994; R4, RO, Refuges and Wildlife, Aquarium Specialist/Biologist.

ROMANIK, Peg; Solicitors Office, Washington, DC; 2023, Associate, **NEW**

SMITH, Jerome “Jerry” (Elaine); Tyler, Texas; 1994; R9, HQ, Law Enforcement, SAC, International Affairs. **NEW/LIFE**

ZETTER, Beth (Virgil Hockett); North Plains, OR; 2003, R1, RO, Administration, Budget & Finance

Natural Resource Issues

Colorado Anti-Hunting Org’s Signature Effort Passes Muster, Hunting Ban Headed to the Ballot

Earlier this year, anti-hunting groups in Colorado filed a petition to place an initiative on the Colorado ballot this November that would prohibit large cat hunting. This ballot initiative is the result of the Colorado legislature voting down Senate Bill 22-031 (SB22-031), which also aimed to restrict predator management, circumvent the authority of Colorado Parks and Wildlife and erode the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. The deadline for the anti-hunting groups to submit their signatures to qualify for ballot placement was July 5, and the Colorado Secretary of State has since ruled that they have enough valid signatures to put the anti-hunting initiative on the ballot. The Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF) strongly opposes these efforts during the 2022 and 2023 legislative sessions, and is currently working with national and in-state partners to support the campaign against the initiative.



The anti-hunting group running the campaign to place a hunting ban on the ballot in Colorado this November, dropped off their signatures to the Colorado Secretary of State on July 3. The threshold for qualification is approximately 150,000 signatures and the anti-hunting group claimed they submitted 188,000

signatures. The Colorado Secretary of State spent the last few weeks conducting random checks of the submitted signatures and, using a formula, determined that the anti-hunting group's signatures were valid and that they crossed the legal threshold necessary to place the initiative on the ballot in November.

This ballot box biology effort goes against proven, scientific wildlife management and CSF's mission. Their polling shows that Coloradans are split virtually 50/50 on this issue without any education. However, once people are informed about the impact of the proposed ban, and told that Colorado Parks and Wildlife's own scientific research shows that Colorado's mountain lion, bobcat, and lynx populations are "strong, abundant, and not biologically threatened," the polling shifts definitively in favor of rejecting the proposition.

Therefore, the strategy from now until Election Day of the CSF is to educate every single Coloradan, and push back against the false, unscientific, and dangerous narrative being spun by the opposition. *Article provided by Deborah Holle.* See the link below for more information.

<https://congressionalsportsmen.org/news/colorado-anti-hunting-orgs-signature-effort-passes-muster-hunting-ban-headed-to-the-ballot/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=e425c283-4048-41c3-beae-149f9161da16>

Staggering Disease found in Colorado Mountain Lion

In May 2023, a homeowner in Douglas County, CO was astonished to find a partially paralyzed mountain lion taking cover between her basement window well and a spruce tree, dragging itself forward with its front paws. The year-old female couldn't stand up, a phenomenon clear in the video the owner took while safely inside the house.

Wildlife officers tranquilized the debilitated lion, then euthanized her with a gunshot to the chest to protect brain cells for a necropsy. After a year of studying the animal, researchers are declaring her the first North American case of "staggering disease" in a mountain lion, according to Colorado State University veterinarian and former Colorado Parks and Wildlife pathologist Karen Fox.

The disease, caused by variants of the rustrela virus, makes a virulent attack on muscles and the nervous system and is more frequent in Europe. It was known best in European cats, especially in Sweden, but has now been found to attack mammals including cats, horses and possums.

The CSU-led paper announcing the find, to be published in the "Emerging Infectious Diseases" journal of the Centers for Disease Control, recommends more screening of Colorado mammals exhibiting symptoms. Fox also wants to research mice

or other rodent populations that appear to be reservoirs for the virus.

We really are at the stage where, now that we know what it is, and we have a test for it, we can start looking for it," Fox said in email responses to questions on the study. "We aren't able to comment on how common this might be since we've only had one case, but hopefully we can start to answer that question soon."

"This is the first case of rustrela virus-associated staggering disease that has been identified outside of Europe, so it is the first case identified in North America," said Fox, who collaborated in pinpointing the unusual cause with experts at the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut in Germany. "There have been reports of similar disease syndromes in domestic cats previously in North America but we are not sure whether or not those may have been associated with rustrela virus."



Mountain Lion, USFWS photo

Colorado Parks and Wildlife officials and Fox emphasized that scientists "don't yet know how widespread the virus is in either domestic cats or wildlife populations. In Europe, rustrela virus causes staggering disease in cats, but also has been found in a wide range of other species, including rodents, a donkey and marsupials."

For more information visit

<https://cpw.state.co.us/news/07172024/new-study-finds-first-evidence-staggering-disease-mountain-lion-north-america>
or
<https://www.avma.org/news/staggering-disease-discovered-colorado-mountain-lion>

Wildfire and Northern Spotted Owls in the Pacific Northwest

To understand the risk that changing fire regimes may pose to northern spotted owls, researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey Oregon Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and Pacific Northwest Research Station, USDA National Wildlife Research Center, and the Hoopa Valley Tribe, California, analyzed two long-term datasets. The datasets included over three decades of wildfire frequency and northern spotted owl banding data from 1987 – 2019 and the objective was to determine how past wildfire activity may have influenced spotted owl survival and territory displacement. In addition, the team assessed how changing fire regimes in this region may have affected northern spotted owls.

Wildfire regimes throughout western North America are changing and threatening the long-term persistence of native species. However, the degree and pace of those changes varies from one region to the next, as does a species' ability to cope with those changes. In the frequent-fire forests (forests that burn every 10 – 20 years) of the Pacific Northwest, changing fire regimes are causing concern about the influence the changes may have on critically imperiled northern spotted owl populations ([Franklin et al. 2021](#)).

The northern spotted owl was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1990 (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1990) citing habitat loss due to logging as the main factor contributing to its decline. Since its listing, habitat loss due to logging on public lands has been greatly curtailed, but populations have continued to decline in large part due to the relatively recent invasion of nonnative barred owls into the range of the northern spotted owl, where they outcompete northern spotted owls for territories ([Wiens et al. 2021](#)). Remaining northern spotted owl population strongholds currently exist in these frequent-fire forests of southwestern Oregon and northwestern California; a region that is expected to see increasing large fire activity over the coming decades ([Davis et al. 2017](#)). Should uncharacteristically severe wildfires occur within this remaining population stronghold, the persistence of northern spotted owls could be put at risk.

Because northern spotted owls in this part of their range have evolved with frequent fire as a natural disturbance process, they have developed what ecologists refer to as, 'disturbance-adapted traits' to cope with, and persist through fire. However, if fires begin burning more frequently or severely than they did in the past, they could exceed the adaptive capacity of northern spotted owls and cause negative, population-wide impacts. By combining the two long-term datasets with concepts such as a native species' adaptive capacity, the authors hoped to create a more ecologically informed assessment of changing fire regimes in this part of the owl's geographic range.

“While our results may seem contradictory, we believe they actually reflect the historical mixed-severity fire regime of this region, which is characterized by relatively frequent, mostly lower severity fire with smaller patches of moderate and high severity fire intermixed, punctuated by occasionally more severe, weather-driven fires that would burn up multiple owl territories,” said Jeremy Rockweit, PhD candidate and study lead author.



Because spotted owls in this region have evolved with the mixed-severity fire regime, they likely have adaptations that allow them to persist in this frequent-fire environment provided that patterns of fire frequency and severity are similar to historical conditions under which the owls evolved. “Our results suggest that while we have observed an increase in fire activity over the past three decades in the fire-prone region of our study, this increase appears to have not exceeded the adaptive capacity of northern spotted owl populations at least through 2018, which was the last year of wildfire data we evaluated,” noted Rockweit.

However, the authors urge caution when interpreting their results. Although fire regimes in this region appear to currently be operating within the adaptive capacity of northern spotted owls, contemporary northern spotted owls displaced by fire face a whole suite of additional stressors such as habitat fragmentation and competition with barred owls that historically spotted owls did not have to contend with.

These potential ‘indirect’ effects exacerbated by fire could be severe, but the current study was not able to address those potential impacts. Furthermore, with wildfire activity predicted to continue increasing over the next several decades, it seems probable that the adaptive capacity of northern spotted owls will one day be exceeded. If and when this exceedance happens, it will add yet another stressor to the remaining populations of this critically imperiled species.

The ONB features articles from Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units across the country. Working with key cooperators, including WMI, Units are leading exciting, new fish and wildlife research projects that we believe our readers will appreciate reading about. This article was written by Jeremy Rockweit, jeremy.rockweit@oregonstate.edu, PhD candidate, Oregon State University.

From the Wildlife Management Institute courtesy of Deborah Holle.

Notes From the Field and Other Things

This is the section formerly called “Miscellaneous.” We welcome your contributions on just about anything that may be of interest to FWS Retirees. Just send them to Helen Clough at communications2023@fwsretirees.org.

Video available on the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act

This year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. At the Retirees Association reunion at NCTC, the last morning was devoted to the anniversary. Former Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary Don Barry and Former DOI Solicitor Mike Young regaled the group with tales of the early days of the ESA. Then former FWS Director Turner, former FWS Director Jamie Rappaport Clark, and former FWS Deputy Director Marshall Jones recounted experiences with implementing the act and their take on its future.



ESA at 50 panelists – Left to right Don Barry, Mike Young, John Turner, Jamie Rappaport Clark, Marshall Jones

The sessions were videotaped and the video is now available at the following link.

[Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act \(vbrick.com\)](https://vbrick.com) Note: The video is over 3 hours long but well worth the time.

FWS Establishes Pilot Program for Voluntary Use of Lead-Free Hunting Ammunition on Seven Refuges

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced on July 24 that it will be implementing an incentive-based program on seven national wildlife refuges for hunters who voluntarily use non-lead ammunition for hunting during the Fall 2024 season. The FWS developed the pilot program working with the Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council, a federal advisory committee established by the Secretaries of the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, and state, non-governmental and industry partners.

After responding to proposed regulations to ban the use of lead ammunition on refuges, the HWCC submitted recommendations that federal agencies should instead pursue a non-regulatory, incentive approach to encourage hunters to voluntarily switch from using lead ammunition to using lead-free ammunition. A working group of the Council’s Wildlife Health Subcommittee was established to work with the Service in identifying options.

“The Service is committed to providing access to National Wildlife Refuges and also to minimizing the impacts to wildlife from lead exposure,” said FWS Director Martha Williams. “This pilot program and the lessons learned will be critically important in determining our best approach to managing lead use by outdoor recreationists on refuge lands and waters.”

The refuges implementing the pilot program are:

- Patoka River NWR in Indiana – Deer hunting
- Blackwater NWR in Maryland – Deer hunting
- Walkkill River NWR in New Jersey – Hunting for all species
- Pocosin Lakes NWR in North Carolina – Deer hunting
- William L. Finley NWR in Oregon – Elk hunting
- Canaan Valley NWR in West Virginia – Hunting for all species
- Trempealeau NWR in Wisconsin – Deer hunting

The FWS intends to implement a rebate program for hunters who provide proof of purchase for lead-free hunting ammunition. Refuge-specific details will be made available as they are completed, there will also be a monitoring component developed to assess the impacts of the program.

“As a member of the Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council, we appreciate the Fish and Wildlife Service launching a process where hunters can make their own determination as to what type of ammunition they prefer while afield through voluntary, non-regulatory approaches,” said Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation President and CEO Jeff Crane. From Outdoor News Bulletin provided by Deborah Holle.

Fire Suppression on Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska will be tried as a cost-effective measure to combat climate change.

Baked with the around-the-clock summer sunlight and regularly peppered with lightning strikes, the Yukon Flats region in eastern Interior Alaska is regularly set ablaze with fires that are considered part of the natural forest cycle. Standard practice is to let them burn out on their own, unless they threaten people, their homes or other economically valuable property.

That is set to change this summer. At the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, managers are experimenting with a fire plan aimed at protecting the sequestered carbon on the boreal forest floor and in the frozen soil below. In the 8-million-acre refuge, 1.6 million acres are now moved from the “limited” protection category, the lowest priority firefighting priority and usually applied to fires that are merely monitored, to the “modified” category, the next-higher priority.



Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, USFSW Photo

The point of the limited firefighting is to put the brakes on what has been a troubling trend in the world’s boreal forests: a transition from their function as sinks that absorb atmospheric carbon into sources that pump more climate-warming gases into the air.

If carried out, the practice of fighting fires to prevent carbon emissions would be a first not just for Alaska but likely for the world’s boreal forests, said Jimmy Fox, the refuge’s manager. “There’s not been any land manager or land management agency that has made the decision that I’ve made,” Fox said. “It’s deemed a pretty radical idea. It’s controversial.”

Even if it is radical, the plan is also modest. If a wildfire breaks out on any of those newly designated “modified” response areas of the refuge, the plan calls for smokejumpers to be dispatched to try to limit the spread. It will not be the large-scale effort that is typically mounted in areas assigned higher priorities for firefighting, Fox said. Rather than stay as part of a big firefighting army, smokejumpers would be given 72 hours to

contain the fire, and then they would be pulled out to work at higher-priority sites. The plan would be in effect only through early July, depending on the way events unfold, Fox said. The plan, created with the help of Fairbanks-based permafrost expert Torre Jorgensen, emphasizes the areas of the refuge with the most thaw-vulnerable sites: those with yedoma, the term for permafrost that is at least 50% ice. It would have been used last year, Fox said, but there were no applicable refuge fires in 2023.

Fox has been among those pushing for firefighting to prevent carbon releases from the boreal forest, and he admits that he has “a bee in my bonnet for climate change.” The Yukon Flats suppression plan is justified by new scientific findings about boreal wildfires, he said. “There’s more and more research coming out making it so clear that there’s so much at stake here,” he said. *From the Alaska Dispatch* newspaper. See <https://www.woodwellclimate.org/fire-suppression-yukon-flats-national-wildlife-refuge/> for a detailed article on the subject or <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2024/06/05/an-alaska-wildlife-refuge-is-changing-its-wildfire-strategy-to-limit-carbon-emissions/> for the *Alaska Dispatch* newspaper article.

Mini Grant Report

DeSoto and Boyer chute National Wildlife Refuges Fishing Clinics

Money from the grant was used to purchase new fishing reels and lead-free tackle for DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges to be used for youth fishing clinics. Since the reels were purchased, the refuge has hosted several fishing clinics including ones with local schools. The fishing reels allow the refuge to connect youth with the outdoors through the fishing experience. The lead-free tackle also allows us to share the importance of using non-lead for the benefit of our environment.



Youth fishing clinic on the refuge

During the clinics, participants are taught about fishing regulations and creel limits and how these play an important role in preserving fish populations. The park ranger is also a certified Leave No Trace Instructor. These principles are taught, ensuring youth understand how discarded bait containers, fishing line, and other broken fishing tackle impact wildlife on the refuge. Switching to non-lead tackle provides another conservation talking point about the harm of lead in our environment.

The refuge conducted 10 fishing clinics since receiving the grant funds during this grant reporting period. A few clinics had to be cancelled due to environmental concerns including a wildfire on the refuge in April and then flooding in June and July. During the clinics they worked with local schools including Blair, Nebraska for their Outdoor Education days. Around 200 5th grade students from Blair Public Schools came out during a weeklong period to fish on DeSoto Lake along with other activities such as canoeing, kayaking and doing a wetland study. The refuge also conducted a fishing clinic in partnership with Boystown out of Omaha. This organization is a foster-style community for at-risk youth and has a very diverse student base.

The refuge also hosted a few clinics open to the public. The clinics always target youth but are open to people of all ages. In the future, they would like to partner with Nebraska Game and Parks to work with them on hosting fishing clinics at lakes/ponds within the Omaha metro area so it is easier and more available for individuals living in Omaha to participate.

Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge partners with community for pollinator prairie project

Recently, the local community and partners of Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge buzzed about to give the area around the refuge office a new look. A freshly sprouting pollinator prairie now invites visitors to the refuge after the removal of several buildings in the area. In the summer of 2023, refuge staff decided to remove multiple refuge buildings that no longer met station needs or required expensive repairs to be used. Once removed, these buildings left foundational footprints that needed to be reclaimed. Nearby, a 2-acre, smooth brome field sat that also needed to be reclaimed. Smooth brome is an invasive grass species that can grow aggressively and outcompete native species. At that time, these areas only provided a small ecological benefit but held so much potential. Refuge staff saw this as the perfect opportunity to envision the area around the office and Sedge Meadow Classroom as a place to create great pollinator habitat and provide unique educational opportunities.

Staff then approached the Friends of Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (Friends) board to seek funding assistance in acquiring native seeds for a highly diverse, wildflower dominated prairie. They realized the importance of this project and the benefit it would have for the refuge and educational

visits and were happy to dedicate their time, funds and support. This prairie restoration project required several funding sources and partnerships because native seed mixes, especially those with a heavy quantity of wildflower seeds, are expensive. The Friends allocated money from their butterfly garden/pollinator fund to the project. They also applied for and were awarded a mini grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Retirees Association. In addition, the Friends worked with Morrison County Soil and Water Conservation District to help fund the project.



Crane Meadows Project



Young volunteer at Crane Meadows

To start the restoration process, refuge staff first prepped the brome dominated field, by mowing, spraying and disking. Once the area was prepped, they, drilled native grass seed into the

ground. However, the native wildflower seeds were planted using an entirely different method – kids! Four local kids came out to the refuge, under direction of refuge staff, and walked around the 3-acre field scattering wildflower seeds as they went. An emphasis of the USFWS Retirees Association grant the Friends received was to provide youth the opportunity to learn about the outdoors and assist with conservation projects. What better way to teach kids about conservation than to have them participate! Also, with the main restoration site located only 50 yards from the Sedge Meadow Classroom, there will be ample opportunities for educational visits and special events to utilize and learn about prairie plants, pollinators and more. Two other small areas of the refuge received the same pollinator enhancement.

Friends of Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge Archery for All Project

Friends of Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge were awarded a grant from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees to purchase archery equipment to provide local youth and their families with the opportunity practicing a new skill. Through the Archery for All Project. Trempealeau Refuge was able to offer an archery class/program at no cost.

Through the archery program the participants learned about the refuge system and Trempealeau Refuge. They also learned the 11 steps to archery success and safety and sportsmanship. On Friday, June 14, 2024, the refuge and Genoa National Fish Hatchery and Great River Road Interpretive Center offered the first of many archery programs at the refuge.

The purchase of the archery equipment has also helped as an opportunity to be able to partner with other USFWS programs to work together. During the Family Archery Program, the refuge had 9 youth participating in the program and 5 adults accompanying the youth. Local new3s Channel 8 from La Crosse, WI also attended the event to include it on their evening news.

Additionally with the offering of the family archery program, they hope participants learn a skill needed to become a successful hunter. They also hope to teach respect for wildlife, an appreciation of the outdoors and the importance of being an ethical hunter. They feel the skills archery can provide are beneficial for both physical and mental health. Through the practice of archery participants may developing things like patience, focus, self-control and realizing the need for practice and developing the physical skills involved. They hope to recruit mentors from the Retirees Association and surrounding communities as they continue the program

Passing of Colleagues

If you are aware of the passing of any retired or active FWS employees, including those who left the Service before retirement, please let us know so we can pass that information on to our readers. If you can provide us with links to online obituaries, that would be most helpful, and should be sent to [Helen Clough at communications2023@fwsretirees.org](mailto:Helen.Clough@communications2023@fwsretirees.org).

Thomas "Tom" Lee Bennett (March 8, 1950 – August 8, 2024)



Thomas "Tom" Lee Bennett, 74, of Cary, NC, shuffled off this mortal coil on August 8, 2024, after a brief but valiant battle with cancer, at home with his family nearby. Born on March 8, 1950, in Oakland, California, Tom was the son of Loring "Bud" and Virginia Bennett (née Vlasnik), who gave him both a sharp mind and an even sharper

sense of humor, which he carried with him all the days of his life. Though he traveled a lot as a child and lived in many places due to his father's job as an accountant with Shell Oil, he was a multi-generation California native and followed the Bennett tradition of graduating from U.C. Berkeley in 1972.

Tom was a man of stories, mostly his own, and mostly from his years as a federal game warden and undercover agent with U.S. Fish & Wildlife, a job he loved to work, and a job he loved to talk about. He followed in his grandfather's footsteps, but made it his own. Tom started his career as a Wildlife Officer for the California Fish and Game Department. In 1976, he joined the National Marine Fisheries Service, Law Enforcement in California. In 1977, he transferred to the USFWS as a Special Agent, working mainly along the East Coast. Tom was a Special Agent assigned to the Raleigh, NC, field office.

Tom's management and supervision of Operation Rawhide, a multi-state, multi-agency, multi-year covert investigation into the multi-million-dollar illegal black market fur industry was highly acclaimed. It was the first such major undercover operation in that area and set an example for future investigations. Tom ended his career in North Carolina as the Resident Agent in Charge of the State. He loved to spin yarns about his days in the field-yarns that were always entertaining, if not entirely verifiable. If you ever found yourself next to him with a cigar in one hand and a glass of whiskey in the other, you knew you were in for a story, and the truth was optional.

But Tom was more than just a storyteller; he was a fighter. A man with a powerful sense of justice, Tom stood up for the people and causes he believed in, never backing down when it came to doing what he felt was right. Whether it was protecting wildlife in his role as a game warden, standing up for the local equestrian community through his work with the North Carolina

Horse Council, or having to be physically restrained from getting into a fight with the opposing team's coach during his (first-grade) son's baseball game when he felt unfair tactics were being used, Tom's commitment was unwavering. He fought with everything he had, driven by a deep sense of fairness, one small (or large) battle at a time.

He married Linda Hindes Bennett, the one true love of his life, in 1978, and together they spent over 45 years navigating the ups and downs of life, always finding their way back to each other at the end of the day. They raised two children, Joe and Meagan, who grew up knowing their father as a man of loyalty, love, and sarcasm.

Tom's heart swelled in ways he never expected when his grandchildren, Charlie, George, and Emma, came into his life. Following his grandfather, Joe Vlasnik, once again, he took the proudest title he would ever wear and became 'Boppa'. He embraced the role with a full heart, finding unprecedented joy and purpose in every moment he spent with them. He adored them so completely that the rest of the family wondered if they were looking at the same man—a man who, up until then, had been a bit more rough around the edges.

Tom was a man of the land, too. He owned and operated Chapel Ridge Farm in Apex, NC, with his wife Linda, for 36 years. A place where he was head of stall cleaning and horse transporter extraordinaire, positions he held with honor. Tom didn't have a natural affinity for horses, but he did have one for his wife and daughter, and so he threw himself into the farm life with the same commitment he gave to all the things he loved, selflessly sacrificing countless hours so that the people he loved could live out their passions. He was also a fixture on the North Carolina Horse Council, where his presence was as solid as his handshake.

Tom is survived by his wife Linda; children Joe Bennett (Becca) and Meagan Bennett; grandchildren George, Charlie, and Emma Bennett; sister Lori Strickland (Bob); brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law Keith and Laurie Trammel, Chuck and Carol Hindes, and Janet Hindes; and nieces and nephews Molly, Mayra, Katie, Craig, Catie, Lisa, Billy, Julie, Sam, Maggie, and Sean. He was preceded in death by his parents, Bud and Virginia Bennett, his sister and brother-in-law Kate and Tom Loughran, and brother-in-law Bud Hindes. *Prepared by Paul Tritaik with help from Jerry Smith.*

Willard “Bill” Cole

On June 28th, 2024, Willard “Bill” Cole, a longtime participant and steadfast supporter of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, passed away. Bill was a legend in the realm of fisheries management and science, who was dedicated to the protection, restoration, and conservation of fisheries resources and their habitats along the Atlantic coast. Having been a state, university, and federal fishery manager and scientist over his 40-year career, Bill had a vast institutional knowledge of the Commission, the managed species, and the people around the table making management decisions. Bill not only shared what

he knew with new employees, but more importantly who he knew and where they stood on certain key issues. For many staff, he was the first point of introduction to our commissioners and federal partner representatives.

Bill spent the majority of his career with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), where he served in different capacities and numerous offices from North Carolina, to New York, DC, Texas, and New Mexico. In each place he left an indelible mark – serving on review teams for the first Everglades study; developing the Navigable Waters Handbook; protecting riverine, wetland, and coastal habitats in Long Island Sound, the Hudson River and St. Lawrence Seaway; and establishing what ultimately would become the USFWS South Atlantic Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. While with the South Atlantic Office, he worked closely with the State of North Carolina to restore anadromous fishery resources throughout the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, once the site of the largest commercial American shad and river herring fisheries on the East Coast. Bill understood early on that management of fishery resources in North Carolina required participation in regional fishery management institutions as well.

As such, he became involved with both the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Commission, as the Southeast Regional Director's designee for both institutions. He served in that capacity continuously for 19 years. Upon Bill's retirement from USFWS, he served as the North Carolina Governor's Appointee to the ASMFC from 2008-2015. In 2015, Bill received the Commission's most prestigious award - the Captain David H. Hart Award -- for his longstanding contributions to fisheries management, science, and data collection. Along with several colleagues, Bill conceived the Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise off North Carolina and Virginia. The Cruise was designed to tag striped bass in a mixed stock of migratory fish wintering off the North Carolina Outer Banks and southern Virginia as a part of the Commission's Atlantic migratory striped bass management program. The Cruise is one of the longest time series of any such coastal tagging program, as well as one of the most successful federal, state, and academic partnerships. Bill served as Chief Scientist on all but two of the cruises during an 18-year period. Over the years tagging of additional ASMFC- and Council-managed species has been added the Cruise protocol, providing even more valuable data for fisheries management.

Bill was a charter member of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Operations Committee and an ardent supporter of ACCSP since its inception; he worked tirelessly with federal and state partners to advance the program toward its mission. years. Bill characterized himself as a “bio-politician,” whose contributions to the management of US East Coast fisheries goes well beyond his many notable accomplishments. Bill was a true friend and mentor to many in the fisheries management community.

Bill was preceded in death by his wife Faye, only two weeks earlier. Both had suffered from COPD. Faye served as the very

first Administrative Assistant at the Cooperative Fisheries Unit at North Carolina State University.

John Riley Eadie (May 13, 1937-August 24, 2024)



John Riley Eadie, born May 3, 1937 in Brunswick, Georgia to Blanche Smith Eadie and John Douglas Eadie, passed away Saturday, August 24, 2024. Memorial service will be 2 PM Thursday, August 29, 2024 at Carmichael Funeral Home in Marietta.

John grew up on refuges as his father was Laborer Patrolman for Cape Romain NWR, Santee

NWR, Reelfoot NWR, Okefenokee NWR, and then a Game Management Agent in Maryville Tennessee. John graduated from Maryville High School in Maryville, Tennessee in 1955. He attended the University of Tennessee from 1955-1957, and attended and graduated from the University of Georgia School of Forestry with a BS in Forest Management in 1959 and with a Masters of Wildlife Management in 1961.

John's professional career (all with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Department of the Interior) include: 1961-1962 Assistant Manager, Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge, Hollandale Mississippi; 1962-1963 Assistant and Acting Refuge Manager, Santee National Wildlife Refuge, Summerton, SC; 1963- Department of Interior Management Training Program Washington, D.C.; 1964-1968- first manager at the new Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Eufaula, Alabama; 1968-1970- Refuge Manager, South Florida National Wildlife Refuges which included Loxahatchee NWR, Hobe Sound NWR, NWR's of the Florida Keys, J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel, Florida and several satellite island refuges of the west coast of Florida; 1970-1972- Wilderness and Law Enforcement Planner, Atlanta, Georgia regional office; (while in Atlanta, Regional Office developed the first Nationwide Law Enforcement Training Program for Refuge Law Enforcement Officers); 1972-1983- Refuge Manager, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Waycross, Georgia; 1982-1986- Deputy Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System, Washington D.C.; 1986-1992- Assistant Regional Director with responsibility for all NWR's and Wetland Management Districts in the Midwestern States. While serving as Assistant Regional Director, John Eadie promoted and expanded the existing Private Lands Program which served to develop and restore waterfowl management projects on private lands; served from 1992-1994 as Deputy Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 10 southeastern states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. John retired on November 4, 1994 (ending grade GM-15). John was particularly fond of his time at Okefenokee NWR as he remembered his father working there and hoping he would too someday.

John had many accomplishments in his illustrious career. He developed the first Supervisor's training for Fish and Wildlife Service supervisors and the first Refuge Officer training by working with the Division of Law Enforcement and Game Management Agents for which he received a special award from his supervisor and mentor, Larry Givens. John's recognition went beyond the Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1989, he was granted the Department of the Interior's Meritorious Service Award.

John lived on Lake Oconee and in Del Webb Community, Greensboro, Georgia. In September 2017 he moved to Sterling Estates Senior Citizens Development in Marietta, Georgia with his wife of 65 years Marian Kay Llewellyn Eadie. He sang with the Walker Church Choir including Chancel Choir-singing solos and with a gospel quartet.

John was preceded in death by his daughter-in-law Beth Webb Eadie, and is survived by his wife Marian Kay Llewellyn Eadie, son and daughter-in-law John Duggan Eadie and Beth Woolfolk Eadie of San Antonio, Texas; daughter and son-in-law Carolyn Eadie Davis and Mike Davis of Acworth, Georgia; four grandchildren-Matt, Jake, Patrick, and Kara; two great granddaughters Carly Ann and Adalyn Joy; one great grandson Luke Duggan Eadie; and granddaughter-in-law Holly Ann.

He is also preceded in death by his sister Nancy Eadie Rezner and family of Fairhope, Alabama, and brothers Dexter Eadie of Warner Robins, Georgia and Woody Eadie of Atlanta, Georgia. Lastly, he is survived by his precious pups Riley and Polly, and his cat Millie. *Prepared by Paul Tritaik*

Scott R. Eckhart

Scott R. Eckhart passed away recently. He worked in Regions 1, 3, and 5 and in the Washington Office. A more complete obituary will be published in a future newsletter.

Layne L. Hamilton (January 16, 1958-July 31, 2024)



Layne L. Hamilton was born on January 16, 1958 in Fort Pierce, Florida to Louis and Audrey Hamilton. She attended Fort Pierce High School, then Indian River State College. She received her bachelor's degree in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Florida and her master's degree in Wildlife Management from

Louisiana State University.

Layne began her career in 1980 as a Wildlife Management Specialist for the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission in the Everglades Wildlife Management Area near Ft. Lauderdale, FL. She started with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1986 as a Refuge Management Trainee at Mississippi

Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Gautier, MS. From there she served as Assistant Refuge Manager at Catahoula NWR in Rhinehart, LA (1987-1990); Refuge Manager at Pinckney Island NWR, Hilton Head, SC (1990-1993); Deputy Refuge Manager at J.N. "Ding Darling" NWR, Sanibel, FL (1993-2002); Wildlife Refuge Manager at Southwest Florida Gulf Coast Refuges - Florida Panther NWR & Ten Thousand Islands NWR (2002-2009); and Wildlife Refuge Manager at Merritt Island NWR, Titusville, FL. for 14 years until her retirement in 2021 after 37 years of service.

Layne was a leader in advancing solutions to address conservation challenges. Layne developed an Interagency Florida Panther Response Plan that details how agencies respond to panther-human interactions and depredations, that is still used today. Layne was also instrumental in transforming the impoundment management at J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR to include more water control structures along Wildlife Drive and improve accessibility. She helped create and expand the annual Exotic Species Workshop for Southwest Florida to coordinate control efforts and greatly improved the FWS fire program in South Florida. Layne impressed a lot of people in HR and CGS in the Atlanta Regional Office while on a detail assignment. At Merritt Island NWR, she deftly handled high profile and controversial issues.

Layne was smart, tough, kind, hardworking and fun. She enjoyed the outdoors, especially canoeing and camping. Layne continued to serve after retirement. She was elected to the Board of Directors of the FWS Retirees Association in January, 2023, but had to resign after five months into her term because of health issues.

Layne was preceded in death by her parents and her beloved husband Jim Goodwin. *Prepared by Paul Tritaik with help from Kevin Godsea and Ernest Clarke*

David Hudak



David C. Hudak, 83, of Bloomington passed away on Monday, August 26, 2024 at his home with his family by his side. Dave graduated from Ashland High School, Ashland, Ohio in 1958 and was a proud member of the FFA. Dave graduated from THE Ohio State University in 1965 (finally) after being on academic probation for five quarters, yet somehow left in the upper 18% of his class (miracles can still

happen) majoring in Wildlife Management. College was interrupted for one year of active military duty due to the Berlin Crisis.

Dave was hired soon after graduation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at the Lebanon, Ohio Field Office where he stayed for 12 years. The highlight of that tour of duty

was being the USFWS representative on a multi-biological team that studied the biotic attributes of Little Beaver Creek and a large segment of the Little Miami River for potential inclusion in the national system of Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers. The U.S. Congress approved our favorable recommendation for inclusion of both.

Ultimately, Dave was asked to go to Indiana to locate a site for a new USFWS office to deal with fish and wildlife issues in that State. Dave chose Bloomington, a Big 10 town (Indiana University). The family moved there in 1978. Dave spent the next 20 years supervising that station and its rotation of highly educated and dedicated staff, until retiring in 1998. Some of the highlights of that tour of duty included: Restoration of thousands of acres of wetlands, prairies and forests. Oversight of numerous cases involving damages to fish and wildlife and their habitats by polluters resulting in several millions of dollars of mitigation penalties. One case was a \$1.3 million settlement involving polychlorinated biphenols (pcbs) in the Bloomington, IN area.

Oversaw endangered species projects including a national settlement with the mid-western coal industry to protect federally threatened copper belly water snake habitat that necessitated Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt coming to Kentucky for a multi-state meeting to oversee a satisfactory settlement for both sides.

Assisted the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife developing a "hacking" (reintroduction) program for the bald eagle (federally endangered at that time.)

Oversaw preparation of a biological report that was the basis to stop a U.S. Representative's attempt to use the Wabash River as a coal barge canal from the Ohio River to Lake Erie, the last segment to the lake a proposed dug ditch.

Submitted the original paperwork and plans required for U.S. Congressional approval for the establishment of the Patoka River National Refuge and the Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge, both in southern Indiana. Lead the effort to establish a proposed Kankakee River National Wildlife Refuge in northern Indiana.

Recognized as one of the founders of Goose Pond in southern Indiana, now an approximate 8,000 acre nationally- recognized bird use and conservation area.

Restored wetlands on the property of Jim Davis, creator of Garfield, the internationally recognized obnoxious, lasagna-eating feline of comic strip fame. Subsequently, Jim did a public Service TV announcement extolling the value of wetlands and the need to protect them. A huge spinoff of the TV exposure resulted in the inclusion of the message in Weekly Reader (remember way back when?) which reached approximately 1,000,000 first graders.

Chaired Indiana's Biodiversity Initiative for four years.

One of the founders of the Sycamore Land Trust, saving natural areas, green space, and farmland. Lead land acquisition effort for

the first ten years of establishment.

Upon retirement in 1998, Dave had amassed 35 conservation awards: including receiving a letter of congratulations from Hillary and President Bill Clinton. Dave's career has been chronicled in the U.S. Congressional Record by U.S. Representative Tim Roemer. Named a "Distinguished Hoosier" by Indiana Governor Frank O'Bannon. After an electrofishing trip in a creek near his elementary school, one young lad in the class sent a note saying he was going to be a welder and would teach Dave how to weld. That one hung on office wall for a long time. Dave received a note from Jim Davis wishing him "good luck" and that he would "miss him." True to form, Garfield bade him "good riddance." Can't win 'em all Dave was one of those lucky people who spent a career doing what he loved, working with highly motivated people as dedicated as he was.

Biggest regret. Being a "slacker" in high school decades before the word became famous in the American lexicon, never even remotely applying whatever academic and athletic potential he had, and he regretted it to this day. Wished a thousand times he could do high school over.

Dave and his wife are proud parents of Molly and Dan, two hard-working, honest, productive citizens. Grandson Ben, twenty, loves sports, especially basketball and football, and is expected to top out at 6'7". He is survived by his wife, Mary Kathryn Hudak of Bloomington; two children, Molly Philips husband Mark of Wichita, KS; Dan Hudak and Mary Ann of Bloomington; his grandson Ben Philips of Wichita, KS; and many nieces and nephews. Dave was preceded in death by his parents Charles B. and Rose Mary Hudak and his brother Charles A. Hudak.

Joseph Peter Mazzoni (January 29, 1937 - August 17, 2024)



Joe Mazzoni passed away unexpectedly on the morning of August 17, 2024, at his home in Rancho Murieta, California. Joe was born on January 29, 1937 to Dagmar Florence (Peterson) and James Mazzoni.

Joe graduated from high school in Healdsburg, CA. During his time in high school, he met Nancy Rosa who became his wife for over 50 years. Joe and Nancy married in Healdsburg and then moved to

Corvallis, OR where Joe attended Oregon State University and majored in Wildlife Management.

Joe was hired by the Department of Interior and was assigned to the Fish & Wildlife Service. Joe worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service from June 1957 through January 1997. He served as the Refuge Manager at the National Bison Range from May, 1965 to December 1968. Joe was hired as the Refuge

Manager at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Manager in 1971 and was highly regarded for his handling of controversial issues. In 1981, Joe received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society for his work at Malheur NWR.

Joe also served as Deputy Refuge Supervisor for Alaska and then Assistant Regional Director for Refuges and Wildlife in Region 2 before retiring after serving nearly 40 years.

After his retirement, in 1998, Joe and Nancy moved to Rancho Murieta, CA. Joe had an immediate impact on the Rancho Murieta community. He became a member of the local Kiwanis and soon was elected Vice President. Then Joe served as President 2003-2004. During his term, Joe started several community activities: Kids Fishing Day, Casino Corral, Blues & Brews, the expansion of Stonehouse Park, the opening of Consumes School and brought Music Mike to the area. Joe also started a committee to provide dictionaries to 3rd graders in two community schools.

Joe also remained active in serving conservation causes, including volunteering to remove invasive trees from Midway Island in the Pacific Ocean, serving on the National Wildlife Refuge Association Board of Directors as a regional representative for CA/NV, and helping the Trumpeter Swan Society.

Joe had a strong faith as a Christian and was a member of the Catholic Church. His faith was evident in the way he lived his life. Joe loved his career, family, bocce ball, golf and friends. He was loved by many and will be sorely missed.

Joe is survived by three daughters: Cindy Heinz, Liz & Tom Hanacek, Chris & Ty Bacon and daughter-in-law Wendy Mazzoni. Grandchildren: Nick Heinz, Cara Heinz, Thomas Hanacek, Giovanni Mazzoni, Dominic Mazzoni, Matthew Hanacek, Ali Heinz, Gabriella Mazzoni & Jake Montgomery. Great-grandchildren; Desiree Free, Cameron Heinz & Caiden Heinz.

Prepared by Paul Tritaik with help from Robin West, Jim Kurth, and Geoff Haskett

Roger Milo Monson (July 22, 1937-June 8, 2024)



Roger Milo Monson, 86 passed away peacefully at his home on Saturday, June 8, 2024. Born on July 22, 1937, in Webster, SD, to Peter and Inga (Kleven) Monson, Roger lived a life marked by dedication, love, and a sunny disposition that endeared him to everyone he met.

Roger was baptized and confirmed at Fron Lutheran Church. He graduated from Roslyn High School in 1955 and proudly served in the U.S. Navy from 1955 to 1958. After his military service,

he returned to Aberdeen, SD, where he attended business school. On February 21, 1960, Roger married Sharon (Larsen) at Groton's First English (Emanuel) Lutheran Church.

Roger built a fulfilling career with the U.S. Government Department of Interior, working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His work took him and his family to Aberdeen, Denver, Albuquerque, Atlanta, and then back to Albuquerque, where he retired in 1993.

An avid woodworker, Roger spent many joyful hours crafting pieces that reflected his skill and creativity. His sunny disposition and kind heart left a lasting impression on all who knew him.

Roger is survived by his loving wife, Sharon; his son Brian (Kristina) Monson of Carmel, IN; four cherished grandchildren, Birgitta (Daniel Waschow) Monson of Mequon, WI; Karena Monson of Carmel, IN; Joaquin and Rico Mora of Columbus, GA; his sister, Orlean Lardy of Milbank, SD; and step-grandson Nicholas (Isha) Mora of Anaheim Hills, CA.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his beloved daughter Lynette (Juan) Mora, and his two brothers, Percival and Elwood Monson.

Roger's family and friends will remember him for his warm smile, his dedication to his craft, and his unwavering love for his family. His legacy of kindness and creativity will continue to inspire all who knew him. Pete Stine added, *"I first met Roger Monson when I transferred to the Albuquerque regional office in 1984. He was the Region 2 Safety Officer. Everyone that knew him found him to be very kind, soft-spoken and a friend to all. He will be missed!"*

Richard St. Pierre

Richard St. Pierre (Newport, Pennsylvania), whose life came to an end on June 19, 2024 at the age of 79, leaving behind cherished memories. *If more information becomes available, we will publish a more complete obituary in a future newsletter.*

Fun Facts & Family Ties

Some of you may know that Fun Facts was the idea of Mark Madison, FWS Historian and his staff. Employees sent them to Mark by the dozens. Most were about the FWS. The Retirees Newsletter Fun Facts deal with the experiences of the people—YOU. Deborah Holle. Send your submissions to me at promote@fwsretirees.org

Request for Information about David L Olsen

I received this note from board member Conrad Fjetland, a frequent contributor to this section.

I am working on a story regarding one of our fellow employees and am finding some details about his life and career difficult to find. His name is David L. Olsen. I know he was in Washington

D.C. from at least 1975 through at least 1980, But I don't know when he retired or if he has passed, and I don't know exactly what his position was in Refuges in Washington. Unfortunately, his name is common and searching through hundreds of on-line sources did not turn anything up. I also know he was the leader of the first whooping crane recovery team and produced the first recovery plan in 1980. Also, I believe he was a refuge manager in the Hawaiian Islands before coming to Washington. Anyone who can help fill in the details about Dave, his career, and his family, please email me at conradfjetland2@gmail.com.

Retiree Travel



FWS retiree Cindy Uptegraft Barry celebrated her 70th birthday with her two sons, Kyle and Creighton, posing in front of the Mendenhall Glacier, Juneau, Alaska, with FWS retiree and local resident, Helen Clough.

Portland Area Retirees Gather

On July 18, 2024, Bill and Deanna Shake gathered a few Portland, Oregon, FWS retirees for a luncheon.



From left, Bill Shake (38 years with FWS), Bob Fields (37 years with FWS) and Marv Plenert (34 years with FWS). A combined service of 109 years!



From left, Cindy Barry (retired 2018) and Robyn Thorson (retired 2022)



Deanna and Bill Shake



From left: Nancy Meyer (Bill, her FWS husband, passed away 4 years ago), their daughter Cindy, and June Fields.



Judy Grover

Counting Waterfowl – Test Your Skills

For those of you who went to the Reunion last fall at NCTC may remember Trivia Night in the bar. It was fun and Dr. Mark Madison had some great questions. I wanted to do a game in our Fun and Interesting Facts Section. But it was harder than I thought and I asked Sandy Wilbur, retired from R1, Portland for help. Sandy suggested I try something similar. There are two pictures of Snow Geese (mostly). Sandy gives a short description of how waterfowl was counted before we had all the technology that is available today. Please give it a try and see how close you come. The answers are on the last page of the newsletter. Please keep sending in your Fun and Interesting Facts. *Thank you, Deborah Holle with special assistance from Sandy Wilbur.*

Working on national wildlife refuges has always involved counting birds. Granted that results are always estimates, not exact counts. Those of us who have done it regularly can get pretty good at our estimates of both numbers and species.

After participating for several winters in aerial surveys of the Sacramento Valley, I thought I was pretty good. My skills got tested one day when I stopped in to chat with John Chatin, who was our Pacific Flyway rep at that time. John had spent all morning, looking at aerial photos of geese, putting a pin prick in every individual bird to get an actual (or near actual) count of the number of snow geese in a flock. (This was high tech in the 1960s.) He tossed one of the photos across the desk to me, and asked how many geese I thought were in the photo. I said “20,000.” He looked stunned. After pin-pricking the photo all morning, he had come to that conclusion. He asked how I knew, I said (jokingly, of course) that snow geese were always found in flocks of 20,000. In reality, I had seen enough snow geese from the air that I had a pretty good immediate “feel” for what I was looking at.

The two photos below, one of dark geese and one of white geese, are presented to test your “feel” for the numbers in each picture. As reality, it isn’t a fair test but, just as you fairly quickly get a feel for whether you’re seeing 20, 50 or 100 starlings on a telephone line, you’ll probably know right off if you’re seeing 50, 500, or 500 geese. Give it a shot.



Snow Geese



White-fronts

Look at the very end of this newsletter for the answers

Are You up to Date on Your Dues?

The Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees Association depends primarily on dues and income generated at our reunions to maintain its operations. We receive no funding from the federal government or outside sources of funding for the day-to-day activities of keeping the organization functioning. Please help keep your Retirees Association going and active by paying your dues each year. If you're not sure whether you've paid your dues yet for this year or not, click on [Membership List and Dues Status](#) to find out.

This Newsletter was compiled by Newsletter Editor Helen Clough with contributions from other Board, Association members and others. If you have information or would like to contribute articles that would be of interest to Association members for inclusion in future newsletters, please contact Helen at communications2023@fwsretirees.org.

Also, be sure to visit our website for more up-to-date information at www.fwsretirees.org

**FWS Retirees Luncheon
Albuquerque, NM
September 11, 2024**



Attendance (starting on left side of table front to back & then around back to front): Frank Graves & April Fletcher, Sue & Jerry Burton, Marlene & Pete Stine, Sylvia Biscamp & Jim Hubert, Wayne Gueswel, Joe & Sally Spier, Dom Ciccone, Dean Watkins (peeking), Carlotta Ortiz, Anna Marie Castellano (back of head), Jeff & Yvonne Haskins & Vicki Fox (18 total).

Waterfowl Counting Answers:

I estimated numbers two ways: (1) by dividing the photos into a grid, counting the individuals in selected cells, then extrapolating to the total number of cells; and (2) actually pin-pricking, but I used to pen-mark every individual I could identify. The results were similar: about 500 snow geese, and about 650 white-fronts (700 if you counted the birds in sight, still on the ground). Thanks for playing!

Sandy Wilbur
Gresham, OR