

# FWS Retirees Association

## NEWSLETTER



February 2018

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## Oregon Reunion – May 2018.

Planning continues for our next FWS Retirees Reunion to be held on the spectacular Oregon coast the week of May 6, 2018. Our venue is the Chinook Winds Casino and Resort in Lincoln City.



Negotiated room rates are \$99 per night for a Deluxe Room with a single King-sized bed or double queen-sized beds. If you want something bigger, you can get a Junior Suite with a single king and a double queen for \$124/night. Add \$15 for Friday and Saturday stays. All of these rooms have an ocean view & border 6 miles of open beach. For something cheaper, there are compact rooms with a casino view and one queen-sized bed for \$69/night. The hotel allows complimentary RV parking with no hook-up in the parking lot. There is also a full RV park with hook-ups nearby ( <https://loganroadrvpark.com> ).

For guests at Chinook Winds, amenities include a sauna and spa, a heated indoor swimming pool, multiple on-site dining venues, headliner entertainment, and a lush 18-hole golf course just a tee shot from the casino.

**Reservations.** If you think you might be attending this event, we urge you to make your reservations **NOW**. Cancel later if you have to. Planners need a head count to contract for transportation, arrange for meals, etc. Reservations may be made by calling **1-877-423-2241** and

reference group **AR USFW**. The cut-off date for reservations at our guaranteed rate is Friday April 13. After this date, rooms will be based on space and rate available at the time.

**Transportation.** Lincoln City is on the central Oregon coast about a two-hour drive from Portland, the nearest large airport. For those of you who would be flying in, we are investigating the possibility of a motor coach (or two if warranted) to transport you from the airport to Lincoln City and return. Cost would be much less than a rental car. If there is enough interest, we would negotiate special lodging rates with an airport hotel for Sunday night, May 6<sup>th</sup> and bus pick-up at the hotel on Monday morning, May 7<sup>th</sup>. The return departure to the airport hotel would be sometime mid-morning on Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. If you think this is something you would be interested in, please let Jerry Grover know.

**Reunion Registration.** We expect to be able to hold the reunion registration fee to around \$125/person as at past reunions. It all depends on the number of attendees and the financial support we are able to get from others. Your registration fee covers the costs for our speakers, the Icebreaker Social, the Reunion Banquet, tour transportation costs and daily refreshments. We should have a final registration cost figure within a month.

**Agenda.** Our agenda is still a work in progress but our general outline is similar to past reunions.

**Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>** is arrival and registration day. Though some of us may arrive earlier to set things up and others may want to take in some of the local sites, registration will begin at 1 PM.

**Tuesday May 8<sup>th</sup>** – Our reunion program begins, with introductions and opening remarks from Board members, tribal representatives and Region 1 officials. Presentations and panel discussions on pertinent local and state resource issues will follow. Thus far, we have confirmed a presentation on Oregon salmon issues by regional expert Jim Martin and a panel on “Wolves in Oregon” with presenters from various perspectives, similar to what we had in Kalispell. Depending on the number of other topics scheduled, there may be free time available in the afternoon.

Our Icebreaker Social will be held on Tuesday evening.

**Wednesday May 9<sup>th</sup>** is tour day. Tour destinations and logistics are yet to be determined but we may provide tour options both north and south of the Reunion venue. Tours under consideration include a guided excursion to Pacific tidal pools and/or visits to the Hatfield Marine Science Center at Newport, the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area and Yaquina Lighthouse, the Oregon Coast Aquarium, or the Siletz Bay NWR. In addition, there are a great many sites of interest within a short distance from the hotel for those who want to tour on their own. Dinner on your own.

**Thursday May 10<sup>th</sup>** - General Session with presentations from FWS Headquarters on D.C. happenings within the Service and another on legislative issues of interest to all retirees to be given by NARFE (National Association of Active and Retired Federal Employees).

The Reunion Banquet and Silent Auction will be held on Thursday evening and we expect to have an interesting and entertaining after-dinner speaker.

**Friday May 11<sup>th</sup>** – Reunion wrap-up and departure.

## **Fall 2019 Reunion.**

We have not yet begun any serious planning for a Chesapeake Bay Reunion in the fall of 2019 but think that one possibility would be to time it to coincide with the Easton Waterfowl Festival which is usually held in mid fall. However, we also want to avoid any weather problems. Your thoughts?

## **Election of Board Members.**

The ballots are in and the eligible association voters re-elected Bob Streeter and John Cornely to new three year terms on the Board of Directors and chose Deborah Holle and Robin West as new members. Congratulations to all.

Now to introduce our new Board members.

**Deborah Holle** was born and raised in Oklahoma, attended Oklahoma State University and received a BS degree in Zoology and a Masters in Wildlife Conservation studying coyotes on Wichita Mountains NWR. During her career with FWS, she worked on refuges in Georgia and Florida before transferring to Balcones



Canyonlands NWR in Texas. A lot of her refuge work entailed working on endangered species issues. She retired from the Service in 2014. She and her husband Terry Friggel reside in Austin, Texas and are busy being grandparents and volunteering with local organizations. Deborah is working with the local Master Naturalist Group as well as the Friends of Balcones and is on the FWS Heritage Committee.

**Robin West's** career with the Service extended from 1978

to 2014, working in Regions 1, 4, and 7. Most of his career was spent in Alaska where he held positions in Ecological Services, Fisheries, Migratory Birds, and Refuges. At the time of his retirement he was serving in Portland, Oregon as the Chief of Refuges for the Pacific Region. He with his wife Shannon now live on 120 acres of forest land near Rogue River, Oregon, where he enjoys hunting, fishing, wildlife photography, history, and travel. He frequently returns to Alaska to visit their three children and friends.



Say “Hi” to Deborah and Robin when you get the chance and wish them well in their service to the Association.

We extend our thanks to outgoing board members Mamie Parker and Skip Ladd for their service to the Retirees Association and wish them well in their future endeavors. We sincerely hope they will continue to stay active in Association activities.

## **Board Officers.**

Per our by-laws, each year officers for the Association are selected from among our Board members, generally at the first meeting/conference call of the year. At our January 2018 conference call, and with the new members involved, the board unanimously voted to retain for 2018 the same slate of officers we had in 2017, with Bob Streeter as Board Chair, Rowan Gould as Vice-chair, Jim McKeivitt as Secretary/Scribe, and Gail Carmody as Treasurer. However, Gail had announced her intention to relinquish her duties as Treasurer later in the year. Consequently, a new Treasurer will be sought and appointed in the near future.

## **Other Association Happenings.**

**NCTC Grant Programs** – The Association has for several years had two grants from NCTC; a “Heritage” grant to support the ongoing Oral History Program and station anniversary celebrations and a “Youth” grant to assist in the mentoring of youth, mainly by supporting the NCTC Student Conservation Congress. These expired at the end of October 2017 and reports on our fulfillment of the terms of these grants were prepared by Marc Epstein and submitted to NCTC in December.

Two new grants covering the same topics were awarded and are currently in force.

**Use of Discretionary Funds** - The Board has voted to use a portion of our discretionary funds on the following:

- **Scholarship Fund** – The Board has elected to establish an annual \$2000 scholarship fund to be awarded to the family members (children or more likely grandchildren) of dues-paying retirees seeking careers in natural resources

conservation or careers that would contribute significantly to conservation of fish and wildlife resources and their habitats. Ultimately we could/should set up an endowment as we hope to make this an annual contribution.

- ***Aid to FWS Hurricane Victims.*** The Board has also voted to provide up to \$2000 to assist needy FWS employees in Puerto Rico who have suffered severe losses due to the recent hurricanes that hit the island. We are working with Region 4 exploring ways to evaluate prospective recipients and mechanisms to transfer the funds
- ***Camcorders for the Oral History Project.*** \$500 has been set aside for the purchase of camcorders to be used in conducting oral history interviews.
- ***Special Projects on FWS Facilities.*** Funds will be made available to help defray travel costs for volunteer retirees to assist project leaders with special projects on FWS stations. A total of \$1500 has been set aside for work by on up to three projects at station facilities or other project lands. Money to be matched by FWS or others. **A special mailing was sent out to all retirees announcing the availability of the grants for this program and is appended at the end of this newsletter below.**

## Help Us Keep in Touch.

We continue to have problems reaching all of the retirees in our database. We have nearly 2600 retirees in our database; about 1615 with e-mail addresses and over 900 with only house addresses and/or phone numbers. And there are certainly many other retirees out there who are not in our database at all (perhaps because they do not even know the Association exists).

Whenever we have news to provide (newsletters, reunion information, anything that might be of interest to FWS retirees), we attempt to communicate electronically with each retiree in our database who has an e-mail address. A major problem is old or incorrect online contact information. Our e-mails to those retirees always bounce so we have to try to contact them using snail mail or the telephone. The former is expensive and the latter very time consuming.

A more perplexing problem is when we have your correct e-mail addresses but still are unable to make contact. Our e-mails may be going to your spam folders, your mail boxes may be full, or you may have unintentionally hit the "unsubscribe" option at the bottom of our mailings. The problem may also lie with our mass e-mailing services **or** with your internet service provider. Rest assured, we are working hard to get to the root cause(s) of this type of problem. Please bear with as we try to correct this situation.

**The bottom line is this: We are not reaching many FWS retirees, those who are not in our database and others who have incomplete or outdated contact information in our database.** If you are **not** regularly receiving news from the Association or know of someone else who is not receiving our mailings, ***please let us know.*** You may contact Kelle Quist, our database manager ([kquist1@verizon.net](mailto:kquist1@verizon.net)), or any of our board members (contact info on the first page of this newsletter).

Also, if anyone out there has experience with mass mailings of e-mails and/or with mass mailing services and who might be able to assist us with our problems reaching our retired colleagues, please contact Jim McKeivitt or Gail Carmody.

## Resource Issues.

*The Association strives to keep you abreast of fish and wildlife matters of regional or national significance or of importance to the Fish and Wildlife Service. If there are issues you believe we should become more deeply involved in, let us know.*

**Interior Makes Deal for the Izembek Road.** As we reported in our October 2017 Newsletter, the Department of Interior was negotiating a land swap that would enable the construction of a road through a designated wilderness area in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. In early January, it was reported in the Washington Post that local officials from the small Aleutian community of King Cove had reached an agreement with Interior on that proposal.

This has been an issue for decades. The proposed road 12-mile long, one lane gravel road would bisect the refuge in an area of tundra and wetlands that are vital breeding grounds for migrating birds as well as habitat for bears, caribou, and other species. It would be the shortest land connection between King Cove, a community of fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, with the town of Cold Bay, which has a regional airport that can accommodate jet aircraft. King Cove officials claim it is needed to allow winter evacuations of patients in medical emergencies.

However a road is only one of several options to fulfill that purpose. In fact, a far less damaging alternative had already been implemented. In 1998, Congress provided the locals with \$38 million to upgrade their own medical facilities and to purchase a 98-foot state of the art hovercraft to provide a marine link to Cold Bay. That option was very successful, allowing medical transport to Cold Bay in 20 minutes as opposed to two hours by a land route. Yet, it was abandoned by King Cove in hopes that they would ultimately get a road through Izembek.

WHY? The most likely answer is to promote their economic development, not to provide medical transportation. For more detail, see the National Wildlife Refuge Association's post on this issue



(<http://refugeassociation.org/advocacy/refuge-issues/izembek/>)

In a press release, Defenders of Wildlife President and former FWS Director Jamie Rappaport Clark said, "We will not stand by while some of the world's most vital wildlife habitat is ripped from public ownership to satisfy commercial interests. We will challenge this illegal scam in federal court." She continued "If they can pull this off in Alaska, the entire lower 48 is at risk."

**ANWAR in Tax Bill.** The final version of the Republican tax bill, which was signed into law in December included a major blow to environmentalists.

In addition to slashing the corporate tax rate and nixing the mandate that Americans have health insurance, the tax legislation contained language requiring the federal government to open up and lease part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to private companies for oil and gas drilling.

That portion of the bill was sponsored by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), who has fought for expanded drilling in her home state for years. It states that Secretary of the Interior must offer for lease at least two pieces of land in the next ten years, each at least 400,000 acres area-wide. The bill also directs the Interior Secretary to issue "any rights-of-way or easements across the Coastal Plain for exploration, development, production, or transportation" and authorizes the use of 2,000 surface acres of federal land in the Coastal Plain to be covered by production and support facilities, including airstrips.

The first lease sale must be conducted within four years and the second within seven years after enactment. Consequently, development would likely be several years away, assuming there is enough industry interest in the area for drilling. Permits and other actions would require extensive environmental review, which opponents could sue to stop from moving forward and likely will.

**Pebble Mine Update.** We reported on this massive mine proposal in the Bristol Bay watershed in the Aleutians in our October 2017 newsletter. We later learned that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt ordered his staff to reverse the clean water safeguards that would provide some protection to the watershed and its incredibly valuable salmon fishery within hours after meeting with the CEO of the mining company, Pebble Limited Partnership.

However, he now seems to have backed off on this stance (after receiving a lot of flak from both republican and democrat officials). In a surprise move in late January, EPA announced it is withdrawing plans to suspend environmental protections for the area. Pruitt stated, "It is my judgment at this time that any mining projects in the region likely pose a risk to the abundant natural resources that exist there. Until we know the full extent of that risk, those natural resources and world-class fisheries deserve

the utmost protection." EPA will continue to take public comment on the mine, and its announcement means the plan to withdraw the environmental protections is on hold while the EPA "receives more information on the potential mine's impact on the region's world-class fisheries and natural resources." Although still alive, EPA now indicates that any project proposal "must clear a high bar, because EPA believes the risk to Bristol Bay may be unacceptable."

**Offshore Drilling.** In early January, Interior Ryan Zinke announced a plan to open virtually all of America's coast to wide scale oil drilling. The program he proposes would issue the largest number of lease sales in U.S. history and would open 90 percent of the outer continental shelf to drilling. In contrast, about 98 percent of the OCS is now off-limits to drilling. The draft proposed five-year program includes 47 potential lease sales in 25 of the 26 planning areas – 19 sales off the coast of Alaska, 7 in the Pacific Region, 12 in the Gulf of Mexico, and 9 in the Atlantic Region.

Release of the draft program is an early step in a multi-year process to develop a final National Outer Continental Shelf Program for 2019-2024. Before the program is finalized, the public will have opportunity to provide input. However, the administration appears bent on increasing the number of offshore oil leases issued citing energy independence as an overriding concern. Meanwhile the current 2017-2022 Five Year Program will continue to be implemented until the new National OCS Program is approved.

Also, less than a week after Zinke's initial announcement, and after meeting with Florida's Governor Rick Scott, an early Trump supporter, Zinke announced that Florida would be exempted from the lease plan. This news prompted the governors of several other coastal states to indicate that they too would seek to be exempted from the proposed plan. It remains to be seen what, if any, other states will receive an exemption.

**Continued Assault on Red Wolf Recovery Efforts.** We have reported several times in past issues on the efforts by the Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure the survival and recovery of the iconic red wolf (*Canis rufus*) in the wild. This uniquely American species, once widespread over the eastern and southeastern U.S., are now limited to less than 2 million acres in northeastern North Carolina. It is the world's most endangered canid but is absolutely recoverable.

Once extinct in the wild, the existing population of the species, supported by the release of captive-bred wolves, is a political lightning rod in North Carolina, with several influential landowners opposing its recovery because of perceived threats to game species and concern that its presence would affect their land use options. Nevertheless, there is nearly overwhelming popular public support among

North Carolinians for the wolf's recovery, including in the five counties where they currently exist in the wild. Nearly all the public comments submitted to the FWS this past summer in response to a proposal to develop a revised rule under the Endangered Species Act to revise protections for the species.

And all that would be required for recovery, according to a Wildlife Management Institute report, is to re-establish two additional wildlife populations in suitable habitat somewhere in the southeastern U.S., something obviously attainable.

The wild population of red wolves today is fewer than 50 individuals in the five-county North Carolina area, down from over 220 less than ten years ago (there are nearly 200 other red wolves in captive breeding situations). Illegal shootings and the failure to enforce protections are the main cause of the decline. In addition, FWS funding for that protection has been hard to come by due to political pressures.

And now, tucked into a November 2017 Senate report accompanying a DOI funding bill is a requirement for the FWS to "end the Red Wolf recovery program and declare the Red Wolf extinct. "Senate Republicans are trying to hammer a final nail in the coffin of the struggling red wolf recovery program," said Perrin de Jong, attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity.

**New Opinion on the Incidental Take of Migratory Birds.** On December 22, 2017, the Department of the Interior unveiled a new Solicitor's opinion that the "incidental" take of migratory birds in an otherwise lawful action does not constitute a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, reversing an earlier opinion issued under the Obama administration. This opinion means that now only the purposeful killing or take of migratory birds is illegal. It provides no incentive for project developers to take any measures whatsoever to prevent the incidental mortality of migratory birds caused by their actions. While the earlier opinion probably went too far (allowing fines or prosecution for the unintended killing of even a single bird), this opinion goes too far in the other direction.

To put this all in perspective, power lines are estimated to kill 175 million birds each year, communication towers 50 million, oil waste pits one million and wind farms over 500 thousand. Many of these losses are reasonably preventable.

**ESA Listing for Yellowstone Bison?** On January 31, a federal judge directed the Fish and Wildlife Service to revisit a decision the agency made in 2015 not to provide protections to Yellowstone bison under the Endangered Species Act. The park's population of bison number around 5000 individuals in two herds and each year many are slaughtered during migration outside park boundaries by hunters and also by state and federal agencies in an effort to keep their numbers down to about 3000 individuals.

Others are captured and translocated. This is done primarily to satisfy local ranchers who fear that the bison will transmit brucellosis to their cattle, although transmission between bison and cattle has never been documented.

In an effort to stop the slaughter, several groups petitioned for ESA protection. When that was denied, they sued the government, citing a study that claimed that the two herds were genetically distinct from one another and should be managed separately. Since managers believe a viable herd should contain not less than 3000 individuals to ensure survival, they contended that keeping the total Yellowstone population at or near 3000 animals was insufficient. The FWS disagreed but the judge ruled that they were too hasty in rejecting the contention that the herds were distinct. He ordered them to re-evaluate the science before making a final decision. That process will take several months at a minimum and is not expected to influence this year's capture and slaughter program

**Lynx De-listing.** On January 11, 2018, the Fish and Wildlife Service, in a surprise reversal of opinion, released a final status review of Canada lynx populations stating that the species no longer requires protection under provisions of the Endangered Species Act - the species is currently listed as "threatened." An earlier December 2016 draft status review concluded that increased protections under ESA would be required. The final review cites the addition of conservation measures for the species in U.S. Forest Service management plans for the Rocky Mountain region and voluntary conservation easements on 2.5 million acres of private lands in Maine as rationale for the change. FWS will now begin the process of formally de-listing the species under the ESA.

Canada lynx were originally listed as a threatened species in 2000, primarily due to uncertainty of its continued survival in the wild due to climate change, logging, trapping, and loss of habitat. FWS currently recognizes six distinct geographic population segments for the lynx: northern Maine; northern Minnesota; northwest Montana/southeast Idaho; Washington; the Yellowstone area; and western Colorado. Population estimates for those segments are: northern Maine – 1000 individuals; northern Minnesota – 100-300; northwest Montana/southeast Idaho – 300; Washington – 54; Yellowstone – none sighted in the past five years; and western Colorado – 100 individuals

In the draft species review, FWS indicated that, while it would be likely that resident lynx would persist in most of the five geographic segments that currently support them through the year 2050, it was very unlikely they would persist until the year 2100 and that they would more likely be extirpated from two to three of the five segments by that time.

In the final status report, FWS concluded that the species would be likely to persist in **all** five of the segments that currently support them through the year 2025 and in **most** of those segments through the year 2050, albeit at reduced population levels. They state that, although predictions through the end of the century are uncertain, they could possibly be extirpated from some of the segments by that time.

## **Miscellaneous.**

**Proposed Interior Reorganization.** Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke launched an unprecedented effort in early January to undertake the largest reorganization in the department's 168-year history, moving to shift tens of thousands of workers to new locations and change the way the federal government manages more than 500 million acres of land and water across the country. The department has 70,000 employees.

Zinke's proposal would divide the United States into 13 regions and centralize Interior authority within those regions. The regions would be defined by watersheds and geographic basins. In addition, Zinke wants to move the headquarters of major bureaus within Interior, such as the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Reclamation.

As part of the reorganization, Zinke brought 150 Senior Executive Service staffers to D.C. to explain his proposal and to discuss ways to streamline the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service and other key agencies and to identify cities other than Washington, Denver and Albuquerque where thousands of employees could be relocated "closer to the field." He called the conference-like gathering at Interior a giant first step, "a very important meeting" where employees in field offices had "an opportunity to talk to me personally. I think most people were really enthusiastic."

In a January 10th interview with The Washington Post, Zinke said reorganization is one of his highest priorities.

"If you look at the way we're presently organized, all the bureaus under Interior have different regions . . . and are not aligned geographically," Zinke said. For example, a single stream with trout and salmon can fall under the view of five separate agencies, one for each fish, another for a dam downstream and yet another to manage the water, and each generate reports that often conflict. "There's not a lot of opportunity to work as a team."

Zinke's proposal would require congressional authorization and he said the administration plans to negotiate the reorganization in the upcoming budget approval process.

Former interior secretary Sally Jewell was one of several people with knowledge of the department who expressed doubt that such a sweeping reorganization can work.

"I'm skeptical about the reorganization and its ability to serve the public more effectively," Jewell said in an interview Wednesday. "Interior has a broad and diverse mission." In the interview, she said: "Just trying to look at a map and saying we're going to take Interior and organize it this way may be inconsistent with the mission of Interior." Citing Zinke's statement at a budget hearing in June at which he said he wanted to cut Interior by at least 4,000 full-time employees, Jewell said "most people view this not as an attempt to streamline but an attempt to downsize" Interior's workforce,

Any attempt to undertake a broad overhaul of Interior is likely to encounter some level of congressional opposition. Several Democratic senators expressed initial skepticism about the plan and all in Congress will be concerned about the potential loss of jobs within their specific districts.

"This proposal is concerning because it appears to eliminate the Navajo Regional Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs," said Senator Martin Heinrich of New Mexico. "A change of this magnitude should only come after extensive, meaningful government-to-government consultation with the affected tribes. On its face, this looks more like a dismantling than a reorganization."

However, many congressional Republicans have embraced the idea of moving large divisions of Interior out the nation's capital. Colorado GOP Senator Cory Gardner and Representative Scott Tipton introduced companion bills in May that would relocate BLM's headquarters to any one of a dozen Western states, though the legislation has yet to pass.

Katie Schoettler, deputy press secretary for House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop, R-Utah, said in an email that the panel's staffers "remain engaged with the department" on the topic of reorganization. "Once more detailed plans are made available, the committee will be evaluating if statutory changes are necessary to achieve its objectives and improve accountability, effectiveness and transparency in the service the agency provides to the public," she said.

Environmentalists, who have fought with Zinke on a number of fronts since he first took office, expressed skepticism at the idea of such a radical change in the department's structure.

"A regional approach to managing Interior might indeed make sense, but the jury is out on this reorganization," Sharon Buccino, senior director for lands at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in an email. "Virtually everything Secretary Zinke has done to date has been to advance fossil fuel interests - above the stewardship of our

public lands, preservation of wildlife and protection of clean air and water."

**Call for Articles: *Conservation History Journal*.** NCTC is calling for stories—from employees, partners, and retirees—for the third issue of *Conservation History Journal*, first published in 2008 and again in 2010. The theme for this issue is the role of hunters, anglers, and other sportsmen in the American conservation movement. We welcome your stories, photos, historical research, or anecdotes about enjoying our USFWS fish and wildlife resources. Share your passion for fishing or hunting and how it connects to conservation at your field site or beyond. Your personal reflections are often our best hidden histories.

Send your intent-to-submit email to [maria\\_parisi@fws.gov](mailto:maria_parisi@fws.gov) by March 5, and text (500-1500 words) with 1 to 4 high quality photos for consideration, to [maria\\_parisi@fws.gov](mailto:maria_parisi@fws.gov) by April 1. Questions? Contact Maria via email or at 304.876.7728.

**Sandhill Crane Birding Expedition.** Association Board Chair Bob Streeeter has arranged a birding tour of the San Luis Valley in Colorado for March 19<sup>th</sup> through the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The focus will be on Sandhill cranes, various waterfowl, raptors, and other species. **A complete announcement is attached at the end of this newsletter.**

## Life in Retirement

The following article will also be printed in the next edition of the *Fish and Wildlife News*. If you have an idea for an article you would like to submit, contact Association Secretary/Scribe. We would like to make this a regular feature of both publications.

**Retirement can be busy...and exciting.** If you think that retirement means you have to slow down and give up on all the activities that passionately defined your work career, think again. Just check out the post-retirement life of Matt Perry.

Matt had enjoyed a 40 plus year wildlife career that began as a temporary GS-7 biologist at Lake Woodruff NWR in Florida and ended as a research stalwart with USGS at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland, using telemetry to track canvasbacks and sea ducks. When he turned in his papers in 2011, still a young man at 70 years of age, he wasn't quite ready to stop working on all things wildlife. In fact, what he ended up doing was to ditch all the mundane duties that careers almost always entail and spend the bulk of his time on the enjoyable, exciting, and interesting parts. He found a way to pick the cherries and leave the pits. Same man, same interests, but a lot more freedom ...and fun.

Matt, a native of Rhode Island and a navy veteran, spent his career on waterfowl and wetlands and when he retired from Patuxent, he maintained a desk there (and still does). For three years after his retirement, he worked on projects of

his own choosing involving waterfowl and wetlands, but free from bureaucratic entanglements. He took up a project



*The Grande Mariner in Belize*

tracking long-tailed ducks (oldsquaws) in Manitoba and another on a private ranch in Argentina, the later funded by the billionaire landowner from the U.S. Matt also continued what can only be described as an avocation traveling about the world birdwatching and leading tours of exotic places. Since 1999, Matt has traveled as a leader of groups to Iceland, the Galapagos, Peru, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Tobago (twice), Puerto Rico, Cuba, Churchill on Hudson Bay in Canada, and South Africa. He just returned from a 12-day trip to Belize and Guatemala with a group that included several other FWS retirees. The group lived a board a shallow-draft ship (the Grande Mariner) and visited several cays for snorkeling along coral reefs. The ship also ventured up the Rio Dulce River, where they spent their days exploring and communing with the tremendous diversity of wildlife that Belize and Guatemala have to offer.

And just to add some variety to his life, Matt will travel to New Brunswick, Canada this coming July for ten days aboard the same ship to explore other natural areas including breeding grounds of puffins.



*Matt with new-found friend in Bolivia*

Not all of Matt's overseas ventures are eco-tours. He also spends time in Japan for something more personal. As his name might suggest, Matt is a descendent of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, a great-great-great uncle, who is widely acclaimed as the American naval officer who first ended Japan's policy of isolation from the western world and



*Matt & Japanese officials at Perry Memorial in Japan*

opened that country to commerce with the United States in 1854. Matt periodically visits Japan to participate in a cultural exchange at the Japan-American Grassroots Summit which celebrates the friendship that has developed between the two countries. The Summit has been held alternately in the U.S. and Japan for the past 28 years and Matt has participated nine times and made many Japanese friends. He lectures on these trips and at other invited



conferences in Japan about his relative who is very well-known there.

In case you think Matt hasn't been busy enough with all that, Matt has found time to serve on the Retirees Association's Board of Directors for six years and is a member of the FWS Heritage Committee. He also serves on the Board of the Friends of Patuxent and writes extensively about the history of the Patuxent National Wildlife Research Center. He recently completed a 255-page book on the history of that facility (<https://pubs.er.usgs/publication/cir1422>).

In his spare time, he enjoys writing on the family history, gardening, taking part in the local Christmas Bird Counts and some occasional hunting with his sons. He and his wife, Georgia, live in Mitchellville, Maryland, just a short jaunt from Patuxent. Together, they work to restore and maintain the Perry family home in Rhode Island which was built in 1793. And Georgia sometimes accompanies him on his travels, including on two trips to Belize and another to Scotland.

Another example of where retirement hasn't diminished one's interest in and ability to enjoy our natural world.

## ***Passing of Colleagues***

*If you are aware of the passing of any retired FWS employee, including those who left the Service because of organizational or late career changes, please let us know so that we can pass that information on to our readers.*

**Melvin D. Anderson (1925 - 2010).** Melvin Anderson died on December 8, 2010, at Sturdy Memorial Hospital in Attleboro, Massachusetts. He was the husband of Mildred L. (Whitcomb) Anderson: they were married for more than 60 years.

Melvin was a bio-technician for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in North Attleboro for many years before retiring in the late 1980s.

Mr. Anderson was a graduate of Northeastern University, Class of 1950, with a bachelor's degree in accounting and business. He was also a U.S. Navy veteran serving during World War II.

**William C. (Bill) Ashe (1929 - 2017).** Bill Ashe died on December 14, 2017 at his residence in Harvard, Massachusetts at the age of 88. Bill was a long-time member of the Fish and Wildlife Service, a former Deputy regional Director in Region 5 and the father of former FWS Director Dan Ashe. No obituary was available in time for inclusion in this newsletter.

**Edgar Preston Bailey (1937 - 2018).** Ed Bailey passed away peacefully in his sleep on January 14, 2018, in Homer, Alaska, after a protracted debilitating illness. Ed was born to an exploring American geologist in Sumatra on July 10, 1937 and grew up in southern California. Birds and biology



were his passions. After earning his undergraduate degree in biology at the University of Redlands, he then pursued a master's degree in wildlife biology at Utah State University. Newly married, he took a position with the National Park Service and did stints in Capulin Mountain Volcano National Monument, Cumberland Gap National Historic Park, and Death Valley National Park. Wanting more biological work, he transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and went to Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge and then Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge. It was at Fish Springs that his son, Lorne, was born. In 1969, he and the family moved to the remote Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Cold Bay, Alaska. During his stay in Cold Bay, he and his wife parted ways. In 1973, Ed transferred to the Regional Office in Anchorage. It was there that he met Nina Faust, soon to be his wife and frequent work partner.

These were exciting times in Alaska with discussions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and plans for new refuges and monuments all over Alaska. He was part of the planning team for the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge now located in Homer Alaska and became the first biologist for this refuge in 1981. He worked to remove foxes that decimated the seabird populations there, leaving the islands biologically impoverished. He retired from the Service in 1995.

Ed was a devoted conservation activist and worked on many important issues with the Service and with various conservation groups over the years. Some of his efforts included trying to end the practice of bear baiting and aerial wolf hunting in Alaska, protecting the resources of Kachemak Bay from oil and gas related activities, and fighting against a coalbed methane oil and gas lease in Homer, to just mention a few. He also served on the Kachemak Bay State Park Advisory Board and co-founded Kachemak Crane Watch with Nina.

In 2004, the Alaska Conservation Foundation honored him with the Celia Hunter Award for Outstanding Volunteer Contributions; in 2014, the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust selected him for their Land at Heart Award honoring his contributions to conservations on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula. In retirement, Ed wanted to start his own wildlife preserve so he bought as many contiguous lands as were available to piece together a wildlife corridor that is managed as a



preserve for all wildlife, and especially for Sandhill cranes. Today that 650-acre private preserve is known as Inspiration Ridge Preserve, and in the near future it will officially become a preserve actively run by the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies. This will be a lasting legacy of Ed's conservation efforts, a cause he has worked for all his adult life.

Ed is survived by his partner and wife of 45 years, Nina Faust; and his son, Lorne Bailey. In lieu of flowers, please send donations in his memory to the Alaska Conservation Foundation, Inspiration Ridge Preserve Maintenance and Operation Fund, 911 West 8th Avenue, Suite 300, Anchorage, AK 99501.

**James R.A. Beebe.** Jim Beebe died on January 20, 2018 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Jim worked for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and was an engineering technician in the Division of Engineering in the Albuquerque Regional Office where he did the design, layout and construction drawings for many of new facilities at many FWS field stations. He retired with more than 30 years of service. A quiet but very likeable guy that everyone respected and enjoyed.

Jim had many talents. He liked rebuilding car engines, and making furniture. His entertainment was reading, walking, hiking, and helping neighbors and family.

He is survived by his wife, Stella Garcia; stepdaughter, Pamela Ruiz; four step-grandchildren, Bryanna, Cameron, Amaraya and Christien; sister, Katharine Beebe; and brother, Geoffrey Beebe. A funeral service was held on February 3rd, 2018, in Albuquerque. The family would appreciate donations in his name to the Animal Humane Society.

**Herbert Bayless Bell (1937 – 2017).** Herb Bell passed away on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at the age of 79, one day short of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was a native of Greenville, Tennessee and a long-time resident of Louisiana.

Originally employed by the Tennessee Fish and Game Department, his first USFWS assignment was at Great Swamp NWR in New Jersey. In 1972, he transferred to Rhode Island as the first refuge manager for the five refuges located along the southern coast of Rhode Island and Connecticut (Sachuest Point, Ninigret, Trustom Pond, Block Island, and Salt Meadows). Some years later, Herb took on the position of Refuge Manager at Hillside NWR in Mississippi.

At one time, Herb was an avid hunter and fisherman. He especially enjoyed his yearly trek to Canada to participate in bird counts and to identify various species of birds. After a tragic motorcycle accident, he lost his left leg and then joined the Amputee Coalition Support Group. He was also a past member of the Girl Scouts Organization. Herb is survived by his wife of 53 years, Carolyn; his son, Timothy

Bell (Kyong Ok Han); his daughter, Nerissa Ida Bell Montgomery (Eric); grandchildren, Melissa Shawna Bell; Timothy S. Bell, Jr. and Jamie Hana Bell and Abigail Mackenzie Montgomery; his sister, Evelyn Carter; numerous nieces, nephews and cousins; and super special friends, Bruce and Pam Fletcher of Deming, and Carl Floyd. He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Genevieve Bell; his brother, Edward Bell and his infant twin.

Visitation was held at Henning Memorial United Methodist Church in Sulphur, Louisiana, and inurnment followed immediately after on the grounds of the church. Family and friends may sign the online guestbook or leave a personal note to the family at [www.greenoaksfunerals.com](http://www.greenoaksfunerals.com).

**Paul Francis Irrthum (1931 – 2017).** Paul Irrthum, age 86, of Farmington, Minnesota, died Tuesday, November 21, 2017 at the Regina Senior Living Community in Hastings.



Paul was born on September 20, 1931 in Hampton Township, grew up in the area, and attended and graduated from Randolph High School in 1948 at the age of 16. He worked various jobs in the Cannon Falls area; hauling milk, construction work, etc. He then was drafted into the US Army and was sent to serve our country in Korea on his 21st birthday. Following his discharge from military service, Paul returned to this area and worked at various jobs and attending vocational technical college in Inver Hills. On October 26, 1957, Paul was united in marriage to Sara Perron in Mendota. They were married for over sixty years. He farmed and worked many years as a heavy equipment operator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Paul and Sara were members of St. Mathias Catholic Church in Hampton. He loved the outdoors, tinkering in his shop, his family and friends, and most of all, loved his grandkids. Survivors include his wife Sara; children Daniel (Jennifer) Irrthum and Carol (Mike) Hopkins; grandchildren Terryn Kocemba, John Hopkins, Dani Hopkins, Stacy Buchanan, and Josh Andersen; four great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, four brothers, and two sisters.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Mathias Catholic Church in Hampton, with interment in the St. Pius V Cemetery in Cannon Falls, with military honors accorded. Memorials are preferred to St. Mathias Catholic Church.

**Charles L. (Chuck) Mullins (1942 – 2017).** Chuck

Mullins passed through the threshold of this life into a new life of peace on November 26, 2017, finally released from the tribulations of Parkinson's Disease and dementia with Lewy bodies.



Chuck was born into a military family in Tallahassee, Florida on June 13, 1942. Chuck's father was killed in an airplane crash on his way back to his duty station in Kansas when Chuck was only two. A few years went by and Chuck had a new father, again a military person. The family lived throughout the U.S. and also Japan. He graduated from high school in 1960 in Fayetteville, North Carolina where his stepfather was serving with the 101st Airborne Division. Chuck went on to earn a B.S. degree in political science and history from Austin Peay State University in Clarksville Tennessee after which he joined the U.S. Air Force where he served four years, including time in Vietnam. After he returned from Vietnam, he was assigned to Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis, New Mexico where he met his true love Charlotte Kenyon. They wed in June of 1971.

When his military obligation were completed, he separated as a captain, and he and his bride moved to Seattle, Washington where pursued his degree in Fisheries Biology at the University of Washington, which he completed in 1975. While in Seattle, Chuck had the opportunity to work for the National Marine Fisheries Service and troll the open seas as an American observer on Japanese and Russian fishing vessels. He also worked as a game warden for the State of Washington and was employed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who transferred him to Albuquerque New Mexico. Soon after he joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Albuquerque Ecological Services Field Office as a biologist.

In the mid-1980s, his desire to improve habitat lead him to the Albuquerque Regional Office to join the newly established Riparian Habitat Analysis Group. He traveled throughout Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona and New Mexico researching planting techniques and protecting and improving riparian habitat, the most valuable wildlife habitat in the Southwest. Then, hearing about a new FWS program called Partners for Fish and Wildlife, he was one of the first to sign on for that program in New Mexico. He remained in Albuquerque working to protect and improve wildlife habitats until retirement.

Sadly, in 2003 just as he was looking at retirement, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, likely due to being contaminated by the chemical Agent Orange during his

time in Vietnam. Along with Parkinson's came dementia with Lewy bodies and Macular Degeneration.

Chuck's funeral was held on December 6<sup>th</sup> in Albuquerque.

**Kent N. Olson (1928 – 2017).** As many of you may be aware, retired FWS biologist Kent Olson recently passed away shortly before his 90th birthday.

After service in the U.S. Army, Kent spent the majority of his adult life championing wildlife and wild places. As a field biologist Kent spent much of his career from 1958 to 1990 helping to preserve prairie wetlands of the Midwest, being introduced to refuge works as a trainee at Crab Orchard NWR and the Mark Twain NWR in Illinois. His later work in the Small Wetlands Program in South Dakota helped create many of the productive waterfowl production areas we see today. He also worked in the Denver Regional Office before his retirement.

It is however, Kent's other passion, drawing cartoons that teach a conservation ethic, that many people recognize. For over 50 years his prolific illustrations appeared throughout the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, state game and fish publications and local newspapers. From "Greenbacks to Greenheads" illustrating the contribution to wildlife by hunters, to farming issues and teaching generations of Americans about National Wildlife Refuges featuring a cartoon entitled "A Place to Call Home," Kent's work reminds us that wildlife and wild places are a priceless heritage. He will be remembered in the same light as Ding Darling and Bob Hines as the Service's greatest artists. His cartoons, short stories and carvings can be seen at [www.paddyomallard.com](http://www.paddyomallard.com).

*The "Last Cartoon" shown above was drawn by Kent over a decade ago.*

Kent is survived by his loving wife Doris and her family. A celebration of Kent's life was held on January 4, 2018 at the Grace Point Community Church in Littleton, Colorado.

**Barbara Rose.** We have learned that Barbara Rose who had worked in Realty in the Albuquerque Regional Office passed away at an unknown date. No other details are available.



**Spencer Harold Smith (1923 – 2017).** Former Fish and Wildlife Service Director Spencer Smith died at his Carmichael, California home on October 30, 2017 at the age of 94. Spencer helped lead the Service from 1968 to 1973, first as Deputy Director, then as Acting Director, and finally as Director from 1970 to 1973. This was a transitional period for the agency during which we were provided greater responsibility for the implementation of new and stronger environmental laws passed to protect the nation's fish and wildlife resources in the face of development pressures.



Spencer Smith was born in Liberty, Texas in 1923 and raised in the Hull-Daisetta, Texas, area, an oil and gas producing region located amidst extensive marshes. It was during these early years in Texas that Spencer learned to love the outdoors and the fish and wildlife that the area supported. According to his son, Larry, Spencer would often cut classes at the Hull-Daisetta High School to go off hunting waterfowl. (He also apparently had a reputation as somewhat of a terror on the local gravel roads, driving fast and slinging as many rocks off the road as possible going around every curve. People would pull off the road and wait until he and his brothers passed.) It was also at the Hull-Daisetta High School that Spencer began dating classmate Mildred (Midge) Morgan; the couple married in 1942.

Spencer was a veteran of World War II, having served in the U.S. Navy from 1940 to 1946 with tours in several western states as well as in the South Pacific.

After the war, Spencer attended Oregon State University and graduated with a B.S. in Fisheries in 1948. After graduation, he joined the Service as a fisheries biologist in Atlanta but left after less than a year to take a position with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks where he helped to develop their inland fisheries program. He returned to the Service in 1955 as a fisheries biologist in the Division of River Basins Studies in Vicksburg, Mississippi. It was there that Spencer learned first-hand the short shrift that fish and wildlife resources received in the planning of water resource development projects. After two years in Vicksburg, Spencer was promoted to the position of Regional Supervisor for River Basin Studies in Atlanta and later to Assistant Regional Director for Operations.

In 1968, Spencer moved to Washington, D.C., first to serve as FWS Assistant Director and then as Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish Wildlife and Parks, and then to return to serve as Deputy Director of the

Fish and Wildlife Service. Soon thereafter he was made Acting Director and was subsequently sworn as the Director by Interior Secretary Rogers Morton in 1972. He served in that capacity until July 1973, working closely with then Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel Reed.

This was a time of great change for the Fish and Wildlife Service being the heyday of the environmental movement. It was during the years that Spencer was in D.C. that the first Earth Day was celebrated and the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act were passed and the Endangered Species was being legislated. At the same time, court decisions reinforced the authority of the Service to influence projects throughout the nation that would affect fish and wildlife resources. It was also during this period that vast tracts of lands in Alaska became available for addition to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

And the Service responded. Under Spencer, it adopted a management by objectives approach and converted the organization from a functional administrative system to a program management system. Line authority was given to Regional Directors with the charge to integrate all FWS activities to benefit the full range of fish and wildlife resources. The Service went on a hiring binge bringing in dozens of new biologists in each region to work in the environmental arena and the Division of River Basin Studies became the present day Division of Ecological Services. The Division of Research was re-aligned and the Office of Biological Services established to develop biological information necessary to support the environmental mission. New field offices were opened and new National Wildlife Refuges established. The Service's budget expanded accordingly, growing from \$140 million in 1969 to over \$500 million in 1974.

Spencer served as Director until July 1973 and after that as Western Field Coordinator in Denver, Colorado. He retired from the Service in January 1980 but remained active. He served as an advisor to the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis in Austria and as an advisor to the Governor of New Mexico on the programs of their Department of Game and Fish.

During his lengthy career, Spencer amassed many kudos and awards including the Department's Meritorious and Distinguished Service Awards, praise in the Congressional Record, and a distinguished graduate award from Oregon State University.

After his death in California, Spencer was accorded an honor guard and was interred on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in the Guedry Cemetery at Batson in his home state of Texas. He was pre-deceased by his wife, Midge, who passed in June of 2017 and is survived by son, Lawrence (Larry) Smith and granddaughters Phoebe and Katherine Smith.

**Fred Vincent.** We have learned that Fred Vincent passed away in June 2017 in Sun River, Oregon after suffering a stroke. No obituary for Fred has been found but the following information about his FWS career has been provided by Jerry Grover.

Fred came to the Portland Regional Office from Alaska where he was a biologist-pilot to the Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries and took the position as Deputy ARD for Fisheries in Portland. He later moved over to a Division Manager in the re-organization that established a

California/Nevada/Klamath Basin Operations Office. He retired from FWS in the fall of 1987. At his retirement, his then boss, Wally Steucke, said, "It's hard to feel sorry for a guy who takes a pay cut in retirement but roars off in a Porsche to a new house in Bend's Sun River." Fred and wife Betty were instrumental in starting and supporting the little theater group in Sun River.





January 4, 2018

## SERVICE STATION SPECIAL PROJECT

The Retirees Association has established a small grant program to support Retirees' volunteer work at Service Stations (NWR's, NFH's, Field Stations, etc.). The intent is to stimulate Retirees to work with one of their favorite stations to identify small project needs and apply for a grant to help the Retiree(s) volunteer at the station to complete the identified project. The station could be one near to where the Retiree(s) lives or where the Retiree would like to travel to and volunteer, maybe as a winter activity. The project could be anything needed at the station, including but not limited to surveys, construction, education, interpretation, special maintenance, etc.

The following criteria will be used to select and fund proposed projects:

- The project must have the support of the Station Project Leader
- The Retiree(s) must commit to volunteering to complete the project
- Total request from the Association should not exceed \$1,000.00
- Matching funds or in-kind contributions (i.e.: Friends Groups, local businesses, etc.)
- Project funds cannot be used to defray travel costs for the Retiree(s)
- Project should be completed within 1 year from the grant award
- Proposed reports and documentation of project completion
- (OTHER?)

Projects must be proposed for funding by August 1 and the awards will be made annually on September 1, after selection by a committee established by the Association Board. Up to four projects will be funded each year.

Applications should contain the following information:

- Name and complete contact information of the Retiree(s) applicant
- Station name, location, and Project Leader name and contact information
- Project name, brief description of the proposed work, and proposed time-frame
- Signatures of Retiree applicant and Station Manager
- Amount of funding requested
- Budget
- Description of amount and kind of matching contributions
- Proposed project documentation and completion report
- (OTHER?)

**Sandhill Crane Tour**  
**JOIN IN ON SOME SPRING 2018 BIRDING FUN!**  
**COLORADO SAN LUIS VALLEY SANDHILL CRANE EXPEDITION**  
**MARCH 19-23, 2018**

**Monday, March 19:** Travel on your own to Alamosa, CO

(Drive, or fly and drive from Denver, Colorado Springs, or Albuquerque, or from regional airports in Pueblo or Alamosa). Dinner and orientation, 5:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, March 20:** Sunrise & late evening Sandhill Crane, waterfowl and raptor viewing. Guided tours of Alamosa and Monte Vista.

**Wednesday, March 21:** Sunrise and late evening Sandhill Crane, waterfowl and raptor viewing. Guided Tours of Baca NWR and overview of Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area.

**Thursday, March 22:** Early morning and late evening Sandhill Crane, waterfowl and raptor viewing. Sand Dunes NP or Penitente Cyn Native American & Spanish history tour. Optional tours or shopping in Alamosa.

**Friday, March 23:** Travel

Because there are so many fun and interesting sites in or near the San Luis Valley, travel to and from the Valley is best done on your own. There are no costs for the tours but food and lodging reservations will be personal responsibilities.

A list of possible side activities and tours will be provided to participants prior to the date. You might “google” the “Annual Monte Vista Crane Festival,” March 9-11, to get an idea of that event. Because Refuge staff are very busy with the festival, we opted for the later March date for our expedition.

Weather can always be a factor, but the daytime temperatures average in the 50’s and in the 20’s at night. Snow is always possible but likely it will be dry & sunny. Layers are the best clothing choices.

Please contact us ASAP if you are interested in joining this FWS Retirees fun event and learning more details.

Bob Streater [rgstreeter@gmail.com](mailto:rgstreeter@gmail.com) 970-222-0383

Skip Ladd [laddskip45@comcast.net](mailto:laddskip45@comcast.net) 719-561-8313