

FWS Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER



October 2020

2019 Board of Directors

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Board Business.

Our Next Retirees Reunion. We've been talking for about a year now about our next reunion. We had hoped (and still hope) to have it during the third week in June 2021 in Spearfish, South Dakota in conjunction with the celebration of the Fish and Wildlife Service's 150th Anniversary. The Service was (is) planning a big bash at the D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery and Archives that week and we want to join in those festivities. However, the pandemic is throwing all those plans into question. The Service's plans are currently in limbo.

We, the Board, would like to continue to plan for our reunion that week in Spearfish, whether or not the Service holds a concurrent anniversary celebration. And in fact, we have reserved a large block of rooms to accommodate our retirees. We would develop our own agenda and plan our own activities and field trips, just as we do at most of our retiree reunions. But with the pandemic, we realize that many of our members may be reluctant to travel and risk exposure to the corona virus.

Consequently, we will canvas our entire membership shortly after Christmas to ascertain their interest in attending a reunion at Spearfish in June 2021, in conjunction with the FWS or not. Your response will determine if we proceed with our plans or scrap them for the time being. We realize that no one can accurately predict what the pandemic will look like next spring but simply knowing your willingness to attend with so many unknowns will guide our decisions.

Board Elections. WE WANT YOU! (and your time and ideas). No kidding. The FWS Retirees Association is recruiting eligible members to run for seats on our Board of Directors and WE NEED YOU, and you and you. Every year the terms of three members of our Board expire and we launch a search for candidates to stand for election to fill those seats. We are looking for people who would like to have their say in what your Retirees Association does and how we do it, who think our organization fills a need and provides a service to ex FWS employees, both socially through our national Retiree Reunions and through continued involvement in all things fish and wildlife - people who cherish their former agency's mission and their contributions to it. If you like what we do and what we stand for, help us do it. If you think we need to change, voice your opinions and work with us to make those changes. Sure, we like to have fun and keep in touch with former colleagues. But we are also in a unique position as retired FWS men and women: we have the talent and expertise to continue our endeavors on behalf of fish and wildlife resources. And we have complete freedom as retirees to do it.

The time to get involved is now. Board elections will begin on November 15 and **we must identify qualified candidates for the ballot by late October.** So please, consider putting your name in consideration for one of the three available seats. The only qualifications are that candidates must be dues-paying members in good standing, able to communicate with other Board members electronically, and willing to dedicate a couple of hours each month to help guide this great organization.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for the Board and helping to move us forward, or if you have questions on what that entails, contact any Board member or contact Jim McKeivitt at jimmymac@usamedia.tv. You can also phone him at 530-878-7883

BTW. Are your dues paid up? They must be for you to be eligible to serve on the Board or even just to express your choice for Board members when the time comes to vote! And regardless of the Board elections, many of the good things the Retirees Association is able to do depend on

income from your dues payments. Without them, we are unable to produce our newsletters, run our Association website, and keep you abreast on happenings of concern. And really, is \$25 per year going to break you? Check out the website www.fwsretirees.org for info on how to renew and pay online.

Happenings.

Trump Executive Order Strips Protections for Key Federal Employees. President Donald Trump has issued an executive order that would remove job protections for many federal workers, in a move that unions and other critics denounced as an attempt to politicize the civil service.

The order, signed on October 21st, targets workers that are involved in developing policy. It would reclassify workers "in positions of a confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating character" that are "not normally subject to change as a result of a Presidential transition" into a new category called Schedule F. Under this new schedule, such workers would not have the protections that apply to most federal workers — allowing agencies to hire and fire them more easily and quickly.

The Senior Executive Service, which consists of those serving in high-level positions just below presidential appointees, is exempt from the order, according to an emailed statement from the White House.

Agencies must determine which employees fit the description and reclassify them under the new schedule. They have until the day before the next presidential inauguration to do so. They must also "expeditiously petition" the Federal Labor Relations Authority to remove the positions in question from any bargaining unit, preventing union participation, the order reads.

The White House says the change is needed to "enhance accountability for Federal employees who are responsible for making policy decisions that significantly affect the American people." The order itself says that with the help of the new schedule, agencies can more efficiently weed out "poor performers."

Unions and Democrats were quick to criticize the move as a bid to inject politics into the public sector workforce. The executive order has apparently been under preparation for several years as part of an administration pledge to get rid of the "deep state" being led by alumni of the Heritage Foundation, but was kept secret from most executive branch officials including the Office of Personnel Management.

And on October 26th, the 150,000 member National Treasury Employees Union filed suit in D.C. Federal Court to block the implementation of the executive order, saying the President exceeded his authority to make changes under

existing merit-based rules for how federal workers are chosen for government positions.

An Executive Order on Water Resources. In another executive order issued on October 21st, President Trump wants to create a new, interagency water policy committee, a sub-cabinet level entity, "to improve our country's water resource management." Another of the declared purposes is "reducing duplication across the federal government." While these expressed intentions sounds great, we already have the existing [Water Resources Council](#) with basically the same charge.

Why create a new sub-cabinet when you already have a council made of many of the same heads of departments and agencies? The existing council has statutory powers, including the authority to establish standards for federal water and related land resources projects. The council is also charged with a biennial assessment of the "adequacy of supplies of water necessary to meet...the national interest." Layering on a new organization could have the effect of competing sets of policies and objectives.

One such new policy calls for cutting back on existing coordination among federal agencies. Section 4 of the order calls for a report within 90 days "on coordinating and consolidating" these efforts, which like the EO reducing protections for certain federal employees involved in policy making or advocating, falls just one day before the next Inauguration Day.

There are some other curious provisions in the E.O. There is a demand that agencies develop, within 120 days, recommendations to improve drinking water and flood control. These are worthy goals, but the Trump administration has spent the last four years working against them. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency has consistently proposed changes to regulations that weaken water quality standards for contaminants in drinking water. And this is the same administration that cut Clean Water Act enforcement prosecutions by 70 percent and proposed to cut funding for clean water and drinking water infrastructure projects by 28 percent in fiscal year 2021.

And President Trump revoked requirements developed during the Obama administration to steer new federal projects away from flood risk areas.

Other examples, for fiscal year 2018 the Trump administration proposed to zero out all funding for the \$300 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and proposed a cuts of 90 percent for fiscal years 2019 and 2020. In its budget for fiscal year 2021, however, the administration seems to have awakened to the ecological significance of the Great Lakes, (or recognized their importance in swing states Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania), because it has now proposed \$320 million. In another apparent reversal, the Trump administration is

now proposing to increase funding to \$200 million for the Florida Everglades where he previously had proposed a two-thirds cut. Florida, another swing state.

You don't have to be much of a skeptic to wonder if this urgency is politically motivated, especially in an administration that has spent much of the last four years working against sound water policy that would achieve the expressed goals.

Threat to Migratory Bird Treaty Act Proceeding Despite Court Opinion.

As we previously reported, in December of 2017 the Department of the Interior Solicitor's issued an 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. If implemented, that change in the way the MBTA is enforced would permit the killing of birds in project operations without legal consequences unless the government can prove the killings are intentional, an almost impossible barrier. It also removes any incentive for project developers to take any measures whatsoever to prevent incidental take and has the potential to render this most important piece of wildlife protective legislation absolutely powerless to protect the many species of migratory birds covered by the Act. It's safe to say that **most** migratory bird mortalities are incidental to other purposes (think pesticides, toxic waste pits, power lines, habitat destruction, etc.). Many of these losses are reasonably preventable.

The proposed interpretation was challenged by many organizations and individuals, including retired FWS employees and for many technical as well as practical reasons. Nevertheless, the Fish and Wildlife Service proceeded with the opinion and began preparation of a new rule and EIS to support the rule

On August 11th of this year in a seeming victory for the forces of reason, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York nullified that legal opinion (see <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/court-rejects-trump-administration-s-57819/>). Despite the August 11 court decision, the FWS is continuing to pursue the rule change, which, if implemented, will likely result in further legal challenges. A final Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed rule is being prepared and is planned to be released this fall. Additional information can also be found at <https://www.fws.gov/regulations/mbta/process>.

States Sue over NEPA Changes. We reported several times on the Trump administration's weakening of the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, that crucial piece of environmental legislation that requires identification and full consideration of the impacts of federal and federally funded or permitted projects. It also

requires the consideration of alternatives that would reduce or eliminate environmental effects.

The Trump changes would limit the time period allowed for completion of NEPA documents (two years for an EIS and one year for an Environmental Assessment). In addition, the assessment of effects is to be limited to those deemed reasonably foreseeable and close in time to the action. Assessment of cumulative effects is not required and alternatives are to be limited to those deemed economically feasible. **And** assessment of the interactive effects of the proposed project and climate change are **not** to be considered.

The full text of the revisions can be found on the Council on Environmental Quality website www.whitehouse.gov/ceq.

The rules for these changes were finalized in July and immediately several environmental groups filed suit.

And now in late August, a coalition of 21 states has sued the Trump administration Friday for rolling back what they say is a "rule that is, at its heart, the gutting" of America's bedrock environmental law.

The suit from the states, filed in the Northern District of California, offers arguments similar to those put forth by the environmental groups: the Trump administration violated both the Administrative Procedures Act (APA), which lays out the technical process for changing rules, and undermined the very basis of NEPA itself.

The suit was filed by California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

BLM Appointee skirting the Law? We reported on this issue in January. William Pendley has been running the Bureau of Land Management for nearly two years without being approved by Congress. This summer he was nominated for the Director position by the President but that nomination was withdrawn in the face of strenuous opposition. Nevertheless, he continues to serve as Deputy Director, a position that doesn't require Senate confirmation. In that capacity, and in the absence of an approved Director, Pendley has assumed full authority to run the agency.



In December of 2019, a coalition of 91 groups with ties to public lands and their thoughtful conservation, asked Interior Secretary David Bernhardt to remove

Pendley because of his expressed desire to sell off public lands but Bernhardt called them "environmental extremists" and their request "laughable".

After that, the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) sued the administration for illegally allowing Pendley to serve as Director in an acting capacity for longer than the 210 days stipulated by the Federal Vacancies Reform Act. And finally, subsequent to the PEER lawsuit, Montana's governor Steve Bullock also filed suit, again citing Pendley's de-facto acting role for longer than the law allows.

Then, on September 25th, U.S. District Court Judge Brian Morris of Montana ruled Friday that the Trump administration's public lands chief had been illegally been working in his post without being confirmed by the Senate and blocked him from continuing in the position. He also said "any 'function or duty' of the BLM Director that has been performed by Pendley would have no force and effect and must be set aside." He gave attorneys 10 days to list which decisions by Pendley should be impacted.

That should have been the end of it.

Pendley, however, said the judge's decision ordering his ouster "has no impact, no impact whatsoever" on his role within the department. The court ruling has changed little for him as he stays at BLM through his official title as one of the Bureau's two deputy directors. "I'm still here, I'm still running the Bureau," Pendley bragged. "I have always been from day one".

And apparently with the full support of the Department of Interior. Interior Solicitor Dan Jorjani called Morris' ruling "erroneous" and said the department would appeal.

What's at stake? Pendley guided and approved many "Resource Management Plans" directing how federal lands are used and developed, primarily favoring the development of oil and gas resources. These include the scaled-back Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in Utah. He also ended a moratorium on oil and gas leases in California. The decision could also invalidate the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge drilling program and the administrations harmful revisions to the multi-state Sage Grouse Protection Plan.

Update. On October 15th, the same U.S. District Court Judge Brian Morris of Montana blocked the implementation of three BLM Land Use Plans that would have opened most of Montana's federal lands to oil and gas development. In his decision, Morris went on to say "it remains probable that additional actions taken by Pendley should be set aside as unlawful." Will Interior appeal these decisions or will they comply? An appeal would go to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals which, under normal circumstances, would not hear it until January of 2021.

The Grim Realities of Climate Change. Last decade was the hottest ever recorded on Earth.

A report published by the American Meteorological Society and released in August details how 2019 was another year of climate extremes on Earth and added to the

data on global warming. The report was based on contributions from more than 520 scientists from 60 countries including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Centers for Environmental Information. The annual report is often described by meteorologists as the "annual physical of the climate system."

Among the key findings of the [State of the Climate in 2019](#), was that 2019 was among the warmest years on record, that greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are at their highest recorded levels and this decade is the hottest since records began in the mid-1800s.

"Each decade since 1980 has been successively warmer than the preceding decade, with the most recent (2010-2019) being around 0.2°C warmer than the previous (2000-2009)," the report said.

The study also reported other key findings:

- The six warmest years on record have all occurred in the past six years, since 2014.
- 2019 was among the three hottest years since records began in the mid-1800s. Only 2016, and for some datasets 2015, were warmer than 2019.
- Average sea surface temperatures in 2019 was the second highest on record, surpassed only by 2016.
- Sea levels rose to a new record high for the eighth consecutive year.
- Surface air temperatures for the Arctic were the second highest in 120 years of records, trailing only 2016. In the Antarctic, 2019 was the second warmest year for the continent since 1979.
- Glaciers continue to melt at a concerning rate for the 32nd straight year.

The warming influence of the major greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere -- including carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane and nitrous oxide -- was 45% higher than in 1990, the researchers found. Global carbon dioxide concentrations, which represent the bulk of the gases with warming power, rose during 2010 to a record 409.8 parts per million, the study found. That was the "highest in the modern 61-year measurement record as well as the highest ever measured in ice core records dating back as far as 800,000 years," the report said.

Increasing ocean temperatures have continued to reduce sea ice at alarming levels. The extent and magnitude of ice loss over the Greenland ice sheet -- the second biggest in the world -- last year rivaled 2012, the previous year of record ice loss. Scientists found that after months of record temperatures, Greenland's ice sheet lost 197 billion tons of ice - the equivalent of around 80 million Olympic swimming pools in July 2019 alone.

The melting of glaciers and ice sheets, along with warming oceans, account for the trend in rising global sea levels, the report said. In 2019, sea levels rose for the eighth consecutive year and hit a record high for the 27 years since

satellite recordings began, having risen about 3.4 inches in that time above the 1993 average.

Natural 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.

The Great American Outdoors Act. Never underestimate what can get done in an election year. Congress approved and the president signed the Great American Outdoors Act which we reported on in July. Undoubtedly motivated primarily by their desires to improve their re-election chances, congress and the president set aside their differences and got the job done.

The Act fully and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million annually and also provides billions to address maintenance backlogs on the nation's public lands. When Congress originally authorized the LWCF in 1964, they set the funding at \$900 million to come from royalties from offshore oil and gas drilling and is to be used to pay for a host of conservation projects on public lands. However, they have only fully funded it twice — in 1998 and 2001 — and frequently allocated less than half that amount.

The other part of the package provides \$1.9 billion over five years — or \$9.5 billion total — to address deferred maintenance on the nation's public lands. The National Park Service would get 70 percent of those funds, which would come from otherwise unspent revenues generated from energy production in federal waters and lands.

Senator Cory Gardner (R- Colorado) estimates the implementation of the Act's provisions will create 100,000 jobs.

America's Conservation Enhancement Act. On October 1st, the U.S. House of Representatives built off the historic passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, and other conservation victories in the 116th Congress, by passing America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act ([S. 3051](#)), on a voice vote, making this Congress one of the most impactful for sportsmen and women in a lifetime.

The Act, which was led by Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC) Members Senators John Barrasso and Tom Carper and co-sponsored by CSC Leaders Senators Martin Heinrich and John Boozman, passed the Senate unanimously for the second time this Congress exactly two weeks ago. The near-universal support for the ACE Act is in large part due to the efforts of the bipartisan CSC as well as strong support from the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF).

The Act includes approximately a dozen provisions, including a number of long-standing priorities for CSF, such as:

- Reauthorizing the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) at \$60 million annually for a period of 5 years;
- Prohibiting the EPA from regulating the use of lead fishing tackle for a period of 5 years;
- Establishing a task force within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to combat [Chronic Wasting Disease](#);
- Congressionally authorizing the National Fish Habitat Partnership at \$7.2 million annually for a period of 5 years;
- Reauthorizing the Chesapeake Bay Program starting at \$90 million and increasing to \$92 million over a 5-year period.

The ACE Act builds off of momentum generated earlier this Congress with the passage and enactment of the [Dingell Act](#), the [Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act](#), the [Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act](#), and most recently the historic [Great American Outdoors Act](#).

"Passage of the ACE Act builds upon the already historic accomplishments achieved during the 116th Congress. Collectively, these policies will secure more access to public lands that hunters and anglers use most and benefit our nation's natural resources for generations to come," said CSF President Jeff Crane. "CSF commends CSC leaders for recognizing the priorities of sportsmen and women, the needs of fish and wildlife, and for remaining steadfast in their commitment to passing this legislation."

The ACE Act now heads to the President's desk and CSF is working to ensure this legislation is signed into law.

Oil and Gas Development in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge – The Latest. It seems that we've been reporting on this forever. The Trump administration wants to open up 1.56 million acres of this critical wildlife refuge to oil and gas development. In 2017, a provision in the 2017 Trump tax bill approved by a GOP-controlled Congress opened ANWR to drilling following years of debate over the matter. The provision also required Interior to hold at least two lease sales of at least 400,000 acres each within 10 years, with the first taking place one lease sale by Dec. 22, 2021.

Interior prepared environmental documents to cover the proposed leasing actions and issued Record of Decision on August 17th of this year. They were immediately sued, first by Earthjustice on behalf of the National Audubon Society, Center for Biological Diversity, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Friends of the Earth and shortly thereafter by a coalition of 15 states.

The States of Washington, Massachusetts, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland,

Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Vermont allege that the administration violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, among other federal laws. All contend also that the decision failed to accurately evaluate the environmental impacts of the action on the wildlife of the refuge and also on the indigenous Gwich'in peoples of the area. They further contend that the environmental review process failed to properly determine that the leasing program is compatible with the purposes of the refuge and that the administration did not consider a reasonable range of alternatives — including one that would align with the conservation purposes of the refuge.

Copies of the ROD, the environmental impact statement and other related documents on the proposed leases can be found at <https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/plans-in-development/alaska/coastal-plain-eis>.

Additional information on this issue can be found at <https://www.refugeassociation.org/arctic-national-wildlife-refuge> and

at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/08/17/trump-drilling-arctic-national-wildlife-refuge-alaska/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=27c25d12-7565-4307-8ffd-f785d45062ab>

According to the ROD, the first sale will be held by December 2021, but Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt said that it's possible a sale could be held before the end of this year. However, if the Democratic Party regains control of the Senate and retains control in the House of Representatives the authorization to open the refuge to leasing will likely be overturned. Presidential candidate Joe Biden has committed to permanently protect the refuge from development. An ongoing campaign is also underway by more than 250 environmental and indigenous groups warning energy companies of a backlash if they participate in any Arctic Refuge lease sale. A lobbying campaign that already driven five of the six largest U.S. banks to rule out financing oil development projects in the region. A significant drop in oil prices this year will also likely have a major bearing on interest in lease sales on the refuge.

A Reversal on Pebble Mine? This is another proposed project that we have reported on several times in the recent past. It is widely recognized that the proposed copper-and-gold mine planned near Bristol Bay, Alaska, would likely have significant adverse effects on the aquatic system that supports salmon fisheries important to commercial, recreational and subsistence fishery. Plans include new roads, docks, pipelines and lakes of acidic "tailings" waste on land prone to earthquakes, all in the middle of a delicate ecosystem that opponents believe is too close for comfort

to the spawning streams of Bristol Bay. Discharges from the mine site would directly or indirectly affect 2,825 acres of wetlands, 132.5 acres of open waters and 129.5 miles of streams. Discharges from its transportation corridor would impact another 460 acres of wetlands, 231.7 acres of open waters and 55.5 miles of streams.

The project had been blocked by the Obama administration after scientists from several federal agencies found that the mine would cause "complete loss of" the bay's fish habitat. However, on July 30 of 2019, EPA scientists were informed that their agency has removed their objections to the project, eliminating a major roadblock to its implementation. EPA, under the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act, had veto power to stop the project. And earlier this year, the Army Corps of Engineers produced an environmental impact statement that contended the project would not affect salmon harvests in the area and would not have a significant impact on the salmon population, reversing an Obama-era determination that it would. It also said it was moving ahead with plans to issue the permit.

But now, on August 24, 2020 the Corps of Engineers announced that a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit would not be issued for the Pebble Mine, as currently proposed, because it **would** likely result in significant impacts to the aquatic ecosystem and the fishery. They gave Pebble Mine 90 days to develop a mitigation plan and will reconsider the permit issue following submission of that. The project developers, Northern Dynasty and various partners, have spent nearly 20 years and a billion dollars trying to get the federal permit.

The Corps reversal on the project followed a tweet opposing the project by Donald Trump, Jr, who has fished in the area. There has also been pressure from prominent Trump supporters who also oppose the project. The President, however, has denied that politics is interfering with approval of the project.

And now, in another wrinkle, Northern Dynasty developers were secretly recorded boasting about their ability to influence federal and state officials **and** revealing that they intended to extend their project actions beyond what they publicly indicated in their permit application.

Ron Thiessen, CEO of Northern Dynasty Minerals was recorded saying "I mean we can talk to the chief of staff of the White House any time we want, but you want to be careful with all this because it's all recorded." "You don't want to be seen to be trying to exercise undue influence."

Tom Collier, CEO of American subsidiary Pebble Limited Partnership, boasted of his friendship with Alaska's Republican Governor Mike Dunleavy, saying that he was largest private fundraiser for the governor when he was running for office and it was not unusual for the governor to call him. He then described how Pebble uses Dunleavy as a back channel to the White House to avoid public

scrutiny. CNN revealed last December that Pebble coached Dunleavy on how to lobby the White House.

Although such high rollers have long been assumed to wield their influence in a way not available to common folks, the comments were so embarrassing to Northern Dynasty that they apologized "to all Alaskans" and announced the resignation of Collier, who would have earned a \$12 million bonus if the mine was permitted.

But the biggest backlash came from Alaska's US senators, Republicans Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, portrayed on the tapes as political animals who secretly approve of Pebble Mine but can't say so. "Senator Murkowski, she's very political," Thiessen says in one tape. "She in her heart wants the project to go ahead. She will say things that appeal to sometimes people's emotions but that won't do any damage to the project overall."

Collier also claimed both senators "are just sort of sitting over in a corner and being quiet," embarrassed by their confusion over last month's letter from the Corps of Engineers.

"Let me be clear: I did not misunderstand the Army Corps' recent announcement," Murkowski said in a statement. "I am not 'embarrassed' by my statement on it, and I will not be 'quiet in the corner.' I am dead set on a high bar for large-scale resource development in the Bristol Bay watershed. The reality of this situation is the Pebble project has not met that bar and a permit cannot be issued to it."

Georgia Mine a Threat to Okefenokee NWR. The Fish and Wildlife Service and many environmental organizations continue to raise concerns about proposed mine near the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia. Twin Pines LLC., the mine proponent, initially proposed mining for titanium and zirconium in 1,450 acres in 2019 but withdrew that permit application in February of 2020 and submitted a new application for a permit for a "demonstration mining project in a reduced mining area of approximately 898 acres," hoping not to have to prepare a full blown Environmental Impact Statement. An Army Corps of Engineers official said that "the applicant was adamant that doing the EIS right now was unacceptable for his business, but did not necessarily dispute the fact that one was likely necessary at some point." They offered the "demonstration" project as an alternative.

Federal officials, however, continue to say that the mine may pose environmental risks to the swamp and express doubt over an assessment prepared by the company. Fish and Wildlife Service field supervisor Donald Imm wrote that the mine could harm the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the natural environment due to the location, associated activities, and cumulative effects of similar projects in the area. He went on to say that the impacts are not sufficiently known and whatever is done may be permanent. The 402,000-acre refuge is home to

endangered species including the red-cockaded woodpecker, wood storks, indigo snakes, as well as other wildlife species.

And an assessment in July by an FWS hydrologist identified "errors in conclusions drawn concerning the impact of proposed mining on swamps to the west of the 2020 proposed mining area." This new hydrology assessment from FWS argued that the 2020 proposed project might not be a useful "demonstration" for the 2019 proposal because the 2019 proposal was "ambiguous" regarding the depth of the mining in certain areas.

Environmentalists said that the new FWS comments and assessment at the very least indicate that an environmental impact statement should be prepared.

New Hope for the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. The Lahontan is the largest sub-species of cutthroat trout and the Pyramid Lake (Nevada) strain the largest of these. The world record Lahontan cutthroat is 42 pounds plus and there are anecdotal stories of Lahontan cutthroats up to 60 pounds in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In fact, as the Great Basin area was being settled, there was even a commercial fishery, with harvested fish being shipped to small towns and mining camps throughout the basin. The Pyramid Lake Lahontan fishery was once world renowned, attracting anglers from far and wide. And the fish was a mainstay of the Paiute tribe which depended on them for food and ceremonial purposes.

However, in 1905, Derby Dam was constructed on the Truckee River which feeds into Pyramid Lake, diverting much of the river's flow and blocking access to the Lahontan trout that needed the river for spawning. Numbers dwindled and by 1943, Pyramid Lake's population was extinct, as were the populations of other lakes in the area, notably Walker Lake and Lake Tahoe. There were cutthroat trout from other areas imported to Pyramid Lake to be raised in a hatchery in order to maintain some semblance of a fishery but these were genetically distinct from the original Pyramid Lake Lahontan cutthroat trout.

THEN, in 1979, in a small Utah creek near Pilot Peak close to the Nevada border, a small cutthroat trout was discovered that did not look at all like the local fish. This was ultimately found to be a genetic match to the original Pyramid Lake strain. This Pilot Peak/Pyramid Lake strain is now the fish being used for the reintroduction and propagation of the fishery in Pyramid Lake.

And to aid in the reintroduction and re-establishment of a natural spawning population, U.S. and tribal officials in September of this year celebrated the completion of a \$34 million fish bypass system at Derby Dam that will allow a threatened trout species to return to some of its native spawning grounds for the first time in more than a century.

Construction of the side channel with fish-friendly screens will hopefully enable Lahontan cutthroat trout to make the same 100-mile journey from Pyramid Lake in the Great Basin desert up the Truckee River to Lake Tahoe atop the Sierra, that they did before the dam was built in 1905.



This 2019 photo provided by USFWS shows a Lahontan cutthroat trout recently caught at Pyramid Lake

“This is a great day for conservation,” said Paul Souza, the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who said it wouldn't have been possible without support from the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. “This is an iconic species. This project is going to help get it home,” he said at the ceremony.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation began reconfiguring the dam just a year ago in partnership with the FWS, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and Farmers Conservation Alliance, a nonprofit group that developed the screens. Brenda Burman, head of the bureau, said the project combined the alliance's innovative technology with the service's biological experience and the bureau's engineering and construction expertise.

“And in the background, pushing and making sure this all happened, we had the relentlessness of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe to recover the fish that they hold sacred,” she said.

Tribal Chairman Anthony Sampson said the project is safeguarding a precious resource of the tribe. “We have to be vigilant to protect and restore what God created for us,” Sampson said. “Everything we do has an impact on life — not just plant life, not just animal life, but all lives.”

FWS Withdraws Proposal to List Wolverines under the ESA. In February 2013, the Fish and Wildlife Service formally proposed a rule to list wolverines in the lower 48 states as a distinct population segment to be afforded protections as a “threatened” species. However, on October 13th of this year, FWS formally withdrew that proposal, concluding that factors affecting the species are not as significant as believed at the time of the proposed rule. They base that contention on their analysis of current and future threat factors. They also contend that wolverines in

the lower 48 states do not qualify as a distinct population segment.

There are currently an estimated 300 wolverines living in pockets of Idaho, Montana, Washington, Wyoming, and northeast Oregon. The species abundant snowy habitat to survive.

As might be expected, that announcement was immediately met with a formal notice to file suit by a coalition of environmental groups led by Earthjustice. “With fewer than 300 wolverines left in the contiguous United States, there is no justification for the FWS' decision to deny protection. Listing wolverines as threatened or endangered would trigger new, badly-needed conservation efforts,” Earthjustice said in a release. “Recent scientific information makes clear that wolverines face threats from destruction of their snowy habitat due to climate change. We intend to take action to make sure that the administration's disregard of the real impacts of climate change does not doom the wolverine to extinction in the lower-48 states.

Elephant Poacher Sentenced to Thirty Years in Prison.

In August, a poacher accused of killing up to 500 elephants since 2008 has been sentenced to 30 years behind bars, making him the first ever wildlife trafficker to be convicted in the Criminal Court in the Republic of Congo. He was found guilty in the landmark case on charges including ivory trafficking and the attempted murder of park rangers. “This unprecedented conviction in the criminal court is a major milestone in the protection of wildlife in the Republic of Congo,” said Dr. Emma Stokes, Regional Director of the Wildlife Conservation Center of Central Africa

All environmental crimes were previously tried in civil courts, where the maximum penalty under the wildlife law was five years behind bars

“Today's sentencing sends an extremely strong message that wildlife crime will not be tolerated and will be prosecuted at the highest levels,” Stokes added. “We are confident that today's sentence will serve as a deterrent to would-be criminals that you will serve hard time if you break our wildlife laws and put park rangers and Congo's national security in danger.”

A Wildlife Refuge Under Siege at the Border.

Retiree Marc Epstein alerted to the following issue at the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona which he gleaned from the Mother Jones News. The piece was originally published in the High Country News and is shown here as written:

During the fall of 2019, the Department of Homeland Security began pumping large amounts of water from a southern Arizona aquifer to mix concrete for the Trump administration's border wall. The aquifer is an essential water source for the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, so when the pumping escalated, US Fish and

Wildlife officials watched helplessly as the water levels at several ponds—the main habitat for the endangered fish at this Sonoran Desert refuge—dropped “precipitously.” In what Bill Radke, who has managed the refuge for two decades, called “life support” actions, staff was forced to shut off water to three of the ponds to minimize broader damage. As a result, biologists had to salvage endangered fish from the emptying ponds. It was “like cutting off individual fingers in an attempt to save the hand,” Radke wrote in an email to staff.



Border wall construction infrastructure is seen cutting through the landscape of southern Arizona.

Since its creation in 1982 the 2,300-acre refuge’s sole mission has been to protect the rare species of the Río Yaqui, including endangered fishes like the Yaqui chub and Yaqui topminnow, and other species, such as the tiny San Bernardino springsnail and the endangered Huachuca water umbel, a plant that resembles clumps of tubular grass. Through a series of artesian wells connected to an aquifer, the refuge has kept ponds filled in this fragile valley for nearly 40 years.

Under normal circumstances, a significant construction project like a border wall would be required to go through an extensive environmental review process as dictated by the National Environmental Policy Act. The Department of Homeland Security says it operates under the spirit of NEPA and solicits public comment. But with environmental laws — including NEPA, the Endangered Species Act and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act—waived for the border wall, the refuge lacks any legal protection, either for itself or the endangered species in its care. So wildlife officials have tried to work with the department, sending hydrological studies and providing recommendations about how to reduce water use near the refuge—information that the Department Homeland Security has repeatedly claimed it takes into consideration. But as emails recently obtained by High Country News show, Homeland Security consistently ignored the expertise of Radke and his team. The emails, which were sent from August 2019 to January 2020, chronicle months

of upheaval at the refuge and dysfunctional communication between Fish and Wildlife and Homeland Security. During crucial moments, Homeland Security kept wildlife agency staff in the dark as land managers and hydrologists worked to anticipate damages.

“What we are seeing in these FOIA documents confirms a pattern with CBP and DHS that goes back 15 years,” said Randy Serraglio, Southwest conservation advocate with the Center for Biological Diversity.

Matthew Dyman, a US Customs and Border Protection spokesman, stated that “DHS and CBP have and continue to coordinate weekly, and more frequently on an as needed basis, to answer questions concerning new border wall construction projects and to address environmental concerns from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.”

Nevertheless, documents confirm that border wall construction caused groundwater levels to plummet and harmed endangered fish at the refuge. Bill Radke called the water withdrawals for the border wall “the current greatest threat to endangered species in the southwest region.”

Miscellaneous.

Membership. We want to give a special **Shout Out** to all the new members who have joined our organization as sustaining members over the past 2 years as well as to those members that have kept their memberships current and renewed this year. The FWS Retirees Association has nearly 3000 names in our membership database of retirees. Most are “general” members, those who pay no dues but who enjoy the privilege of attending our frequent reunions, maintaining contacts with former colleagues, and keeping up to date on FWS and fish and wildlife resource issues through our website and newsletters.

Others, however, have elected to become “sustaining” members who pay dues that enable the Association to continue our efforts on behalf of all FWS retirees. Without them, we could not survive as a viable entity.

Regrettably, despite their importance to the Association, we have failed to adequately recognize them and their contribution. Commencing with this issue of the FWS Retirees Newsletter and continuing, we intend to correct that failure on our part. We will begin publishing the names of sustaining members in this and future editions of the newsletter.

The following is a list of those sustaining members who have joined us over the past couple of years.

- Delores Aldinger of St. Paul, Minnesota who retired out of Region 3 Admin/CGS
- Doug Aloisi from Viroqua who retired from Genoa NFH
- Rebecca Binick fro Sparta, Wisconsin who worked at the Upper Mississippi River NWR

- Michael Blohm from Marinetta, Wisconsin who retired from the Marquette Fisheries Biological Station
- James and Tammy Bredy of Cody, Wyoming who worked in R-9, Migratory Birds
- Cat Brown of Portland, Oregon from the Oregon F&W ES office
- Drew and (Charlie Roessler) Burnette of Washington, D.C. from NCTC
- Kevin and Crystal Cobble of Las Cruces, New Mexico who retired from the Bosque del Apache NWR
- Jeffery Ellis of Molalla, Oregon who retired from Eagle Creek NFH
- Larisa Ford of Corpus Christi, Texas who worked at the Mariana Islands NWR Complex
- Juliana and Michael Hernandez-Friske of Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota who retired from R-3 Law Enforcement
- Laurel and Stephen of Westminster, Vermont who retired out of Patuxent Research Refuge
- Thomas Harvey of Orangevale, California who retired from R-2 Refuge Operations
- Jim Hudgins of Dewitt, Michigan who retired from the Michigan Private Lands Office
- Susan and Henry Jung from Clackamas, Oregon who worked in R-1 Administration
- Ted Koch of Garden Valley, Idaho who retired out of the Albuquerque ES office
- Jim Kraus of Parrish, Florida who last worked at Hakalau Forest NWR in Hawaii
- Dale Lambert (and Marsh Hamley) of Portland, Oregon who worked at NCTC and Refuges
- Gail Laney (and Reid Wilson) of Raleigh, North Carolina who retired from ES in R-4
- Stuart Marcus of Liberty, Texas who retired from the Trinity River NWR
- Brad McKinney of Custer, South Dakota who retired from Crescent Lake NWR
- Holliday and Shotsie Obrecht from Morresville, North Carolina who retired from Patuxent Research Refuge
- Mike (and Joanna) Phillips from Emmett, Idaho who retired from the National Interagency Fire Center
- Ralph Pisapia from Meredith, New Hampshire who retired from R-5 ES
- Arnold Rakes from Reidsville, North Carolina who worked at Edenton NFH
- Mendel and Kristin Stewart of Carlsbad, California who retired from the Carlsbad F&W ES office

- James Stockie of Beaumont, Texas who retired from the Chenier Plains NWR
- Stephen and Debra Traxler of Vero Beach, Florida who worked at the South Florida ES office
- Al Trout of North Ogden, Utah who retired from the Bear Lake NWR

We also would like to mention our newest Life Members, Karla Kramer and Lew Gorman (numbers 45 and 46 respectively). These will join the other Life Members who will have their names engraved on a plaque at NCTC.

Urge Congress to Reform WEP, GPO, and our COLA.
We've said it before and we'll say it again! An election year is our best opportunity to right these wrongs and let your representatives in D.C. know that you, their constituents, expect them to take on these issues in your behalf.

The Windfall Elimination Provision (**WEP**) kicks in when the retiree has an entitlement to both Social Security and a federal Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). It reduces the retirees Social Security benefit to less than half of what they would otherwise be entitled. The **GPO** (Government Pension Offset) reduces the amount the pensioner is eligible to receive for unearned social security benefits (e.g. spousal benefits) by two thirds the amount of their federal pension, very often resulting in no benefit at all. These reductions were imposed during the Reagan presidency.

For years, bi-partisan bills to correct these injustices have languished in both the House and the Senate but have languished in committee. **Demand Action Now!** Bills that need to be passed include H.R. 141/S.521 which would repeal both the GPO and the WEP. Alternatively, H.R. 3934 would reform the WEP for affected individuals by providing a \$100 monthly rebate on their social security benefit and \$50 for an affected spouse; and H.R.4540 would reform the WEP for affected individuals by providing a \$150 monthly rebate on their social security benefit. Both H.R. 3934 and H.R. 4540 would bring relief to more than 1.8 million Social Security beneficiaries. And both change the WEP calculation moving forward.

Follow the attached link to see a more detailed analysis of the issue and the introduced legislation that was prepared by NARFE (The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association).

<https://www.narfe.org/pdf/Issue%20Brief%20-%20WEP%20and%20GPO%20Combined.pdf>

We're tired of Congress's inaction . **Tell them to Pass WEP and GPO Reform Legislation This Year if they want your vote.**

The **COLA** issue is another that needs to be corrected and now is an opportune to get it done, what with congressmen

worried about their re-election chances. CSRS pension payment and Social Security benefit adjustments are tied to the Consumer Price Index for Wage Earners (CPI-W) which measures the living costs for goods and services used by working people. CSRS retirees and Social Security beneficiaries are receiving a 1.6% COLA this year. As you probably well know, this will do little to help the millions of federal retirees to cope with increased costs in their retirement, particularly their health care costs and in this current pandemic. But retirees and seniors in general spend much more on health-care related items. These costs are measured much more accurately by the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E). On average the CPI-E is 0.3% more than the CPI-W. There is bi-partisan legislation now in Congress - H.R. 1553: The Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2019 - to address this situation by requiring the federal government to use the CPI-E in calculating the cost of living adjustments for retirement benefits instead of the CPI-W. Let your representative hear from you on this if you want it to be heard and to pass.

FUN FACTS CHALLENGE. These Fun Facts may be easily disputed by other programs in the Service, especially our Fisheries program, National Fish Hatcheries, Patuxent Research Center, the Forensic Lab and other programs, offices, and branches. Hopefully we'll see more in the future but these three were featured on Mike Rowe's TV show, America's Dirtiest Jobs which originally aired on the Discovery Channel. They weren't all done by Service employees, one was done by Service Volunteers, which are considered employees. The three jobs featured were:

1. Vomit Island Workers, 8/14/2007, filmed at West Sister Island NWR (Ottawa NWR). Refuge volunteers surveyed a rookery. Many long-legged birds like herons that nest in rookeries, vomit as a defense mechanism when they are on the nest.
2. Wild Goose Chase, 8-28-2007, filmed at Yukon-Delta NWR. Staff performed cloacal swabs to test for H5N1 Avian influenza testing.
3. Wetland Warrior, 10-26/2010, Loxahatchee NWR. Program showed how a crew removed melaleuca (non-native invasive plant) from the refuge with a chemical and also performed a prescribed burn to removed smaller melaleuca plants from the refuge.

If you haven't already sent a dirty job to us, please feel free to do it now. We doubt that Human Services will use it in their recruiting efforts, but I know Mark Madison at NCTC, our Historian will cherish it. Dirty jobs are part of our heritage and make great stories and memories. Please submit your Fun Facts to miamibig99@AOL.com Thanks, Deborah Holle, Austin, Texas.

Deborah and NCTC are still collecting FUN FACTS OR INTERESTING FACTS for the 150th Sesquicentennial

Anniversary for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in 2021. She provided the following:

While we have all seen the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management thanked in the credits for major films, I can't remember National Wildlife Refuges being credited. However, sometimes refuge employees remember. Sometimes Refuges are credited a little "sideways" as the in the movie "Gator". Fortunately, I contacted John Eadie, one of the former Managers of Okefenokee NWR. He was a treasure trove of Interesting Facts I hope you will enjoy.

Who can forget that iconic image of the classic brown and white Refuge entrance sign with a blue goose for the Okefenokee Swamp peeping over the police cars at the beginning of the 1976 movie *Gator*. Along with the Cobia boat with a blue goose decal, albeit no Service emblem, emblazoned on its side with a state police officer racing through the swamp while Jerry Reed sang the opening song *Gator* with lyrics about the dangers of the Okefenokee Swamp.

The movie starred Burt Reynolds, as the roguish moonshine runner Gator McKlusky along with Jerry Reed and Lauren Hutton. After seeing the refuge sign and blue goose logo on the boat, I searched on "Google" looking at movie facts of where the movie was filmed and it listed Savannah and Tybee Island in George, but I think those were the town and upland sites. Fortunately, I asked John Eadie, one of the former Refuge Managers of Okefenokee NWR, and he told me *Gator* was filmed at nearby Banks Lake before it became a refuge. The staff at "Oke" installed refuge boundary signs around Banks Lake in 1980 when the lake was leased from The Nature Conservancy by the Service.

John left "Oke" in 1983 before the Service bought Banks Lake in 1985 and it became part of the NWR System. John knew all about filming on refuges because he knew about two previous films, *Swamp Water* and *Lure of the Wilderness* that were actually filmed at Okefenokee NWR. *Swamp Water* was made in 1941 and was Directed by Jean Renoir, his first American film. Mr. Renoir left France just prior to WWII. It starred Walter Brennan, Dana Andrews, Anne Baxter, and John Carradine. John was about 13 and living with his family at the Folkston entrance to the swamp and saw one of the movies, *Lure of the Wilderness*, being filmed. This movie, filmed in 1952, is a remake of the movie, *Swamp Water*. Walter Brennan has a smaller version of his leading role in the earlier film along with Jeffery Hunter and Jean Peters. Tom Tully (trainer of Lassie) was a technical advisor of some kind on the film, probably for Ben's (Jeff Hunter) dog, Careless.

John went on to add additional information that NCTC is interested in gathering, I nick-named it, the Tie that Binds. This is what John graciously added to his story for me when I asked him expand of his knowledge of the films at "Oke"-

-I am a brat of refuges. My Dad worked as a patrolman on Cape Romain NWR, Santee NWR, Reelfoot NWR and finally Okefenokee NWR. My first memory of refuges was when I was 6 years old at Cape Romain in 1943. My Dad was transferred to Okefenokee NWR from Reelfoot NWR in 1949 when I was 12. My entire family including me, my Mother, my Dad, my brother and sister lived at Camp Cornelia (the east side-Folkston entrance of Okefenokee). We lived in a government owned log house constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corp. The house had two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and a basement. I spent a lot of my time in the swamp (alone) fishing and catching. I was in a canoe oblivious to the alligators all around me. They never threatened me and guess I ignored them. It was a wonderful time for me. Then in 1953, my Dad was offered a job as a Game Management Agent (now Special Agent) and we moved to Maryville, Tennessee. I was 16 and a junior in high school. BTW I had my first date with my wife Kay when she was two weeks from her 14th birthday. She is now 80 and I am 82--a long time of being together. After I graduated from Maryville High School, I spent a year at the University of Tennessee and then moved on to the University of Georgia where I received a BS in Forestry and a Masters in Wildlife Management. I went to work for the Service in 1961 and spent a couple of years (or as little less) at Yazoo NWR. I retired in 1994 after serving as Deputy Regional Director for Region 4 for a couple of years. John and Kay moved back to Greensboro, Georgia after he retired. Submitted by John Eadie, former Manager of Okefenokee NWR.

If you have an interesting story, Fun Fact, or a Family Tie, please send it me, Deborah Holle at miamibig99@aol.com.

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.

David Ray Anderson (1942 - 2020). David. Anderson was born on December 13, 1942 in Norton, Kansas, and passed away on February 1, 2020 after a two-year battle with leukemia and Parkinson's disease. He was raised in Denver, Colorado by his parents, Charles R. and Leta M.



Anderson, and attended Colorado State University where he received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Wildlife Biology. He earned his PhD at the University of Maryland where he specialized in theoretical ecology.

During his career he spent nine years at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland and nine years as leader of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit and Professor in the Wildlife Science Department at

Utah State University. He returned to Colorado State University in 1984 where he was professor in the Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology and Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit Leader for the Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey until his retirement in 2003. He was promoted to Senior Scientist by the U.S. Geological Survey, the highest organizational honor that an agency scientist can attain. He remained active in the Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology after his retirement.

He received over a dozen professional awards, including the Aldo Leopold Memorial Award, Special Achievement awards from The Wildlife Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and four "Publication of the Year" awards from The Wildlife Society. His numerous publications have been cited over 100,000 times by other scientists.

David was instrumental in transforming the discipline of wildlife ecology and management with his important contributions to statistical inference, decision making, and the very conduct of science. He was also an exceptional mentor, and his former students now populate universities, government agencies, and nongovernmental conservation organizations worldwide.

David was an adventure traveler who liked to visit out-of-the-way places, including Madagascar, Galapagos Islands, the Amazon, the Taj Mahal in India, Altun Ha in Belize, Chichen Itza in the Yucatan, Iran (to view wild Ibex), the Tia Sophia in Istanbul, Kenya (wildlife viewing), Masada in Israel, Giza in Egypt, New Zealand, China (to see Qin Dynasty terra cotta warriors), New Guinea (to view Aboriginal ceremonies), and the Northern Territories in Australia.

In addition to his travels and academic interests, David was a car enthusiast. He was an active member of the British Motoring Club in Northern Colorado and a regular attendee at the informal weekly "Car Lunch" in Fort Collins. At various times he owned two E-Type Jaguars and his prized 1979 LP400S Lamborghini Countach.

David is survived by his daughters, Tamara and Adrienne of Louisville and Denver, his brother Duane and his wife Carol, and their daughter, Diana, of Evergreen, and by his many friends and professional colleagues.

Because of the pandemic, it was decided to delay the Celebration of his Life for the foreseeable future. More information about David's career and interests is available online at <https://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/anderson/>.

Faber Earl Bland, Jr. (1943 – 2020). Faber Bland of Brimley, Michigan, passed away on August 23, 2020, at the age of 77.

Faber was born on August 22, 1943, in Morrilton, Arkansas, the son of the late Faber Bland Sr. and Ethel (Gatewood) Bland. He graduated from high school in

Conway, Arkansas and continued his education at University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, earning his bachelor's degree in Fishery Biology. Faber served his country in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam era and later in the Seabee Reserves.

He started his professional career working for the Arkansas Department of Fish and Game as a Fishery Biologist. He later joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as Fishery Biologist in the Ecological Services Field Office in Laguna Niguel, California before moving on to positions with the Service involving more hands-on work in fisheries in Minnesota, Lower Michigan, Oregon, and finally Brimley, Michigan where he retired. Faber enjoyed crossword puzzles, playing golf, and being outdoors.

Faber is survived by his wife: Laura Jean (Hettinger) Bland, whom he married on April 23, 1983, in Reno, Nevada; three children: Erik (Crystal Davenport) Bland of Atlanta, Georgia, Matt Bland of Brimley, Michigan, and Kelsey (Paul) Roehm of Grand Rapids, Michigan; two sisters: Ruby Bland and Annie (Eldridge) Fears both of Little Rock, Arkansas; and a brother: Robert (Charlene) Bland of Conway, Arkansas.

A private family funeral service for Faber was held at the C.S. Mulder Funeral Home in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

William Greenwald (1943 – 2020). Bill Greenwald passed away suddenly at Fairview Southdale Hospital in Edina, Minnesota on October 4, 2020 after a brief illness.



Bill was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on April 10, 1943 and graduated from Menomonee Falls High School in 1961. Then he served four years in the U.S. Air Force in Germany as a decoding specialist and was honorably discharged in 1968. He went on to complete a civil engineering degree in 1972 at the

University of Wisconsin and then worked for the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Fort Snelling in Minneapolis. He retired from the Service in 1995. Bill was an outgoing generous person who found joy in helping friends and enjoyed golf, wood working, photography, classical music, his Porsche, and civil war history. Preceded in death by his father Edmund, mother Louise, and sister Susan. Survived by brother Guy, niece Gaye Greenwald, sister Delome and many close friends.

Bill will be interred at the Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Charlie J. Johnston (1934 – 2020). Charlie J. Johnston died at home in Helper, Utah at the age of 86 on July 22, 2020.

Charlie was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, to Dorothy Konopacki and Charles Dennis Johnston on March 7 1934. He learned to hunt and fish from his uncles and father. He also began his love of reading and book collecting and always had his dog close to him. He served in the



U.S. Army on the DMZ during the Korean war

Charlie lived a full life, following his passions for dogs, the outdoors, art, books and reading, museums, fly-fishing, and of course friends. After using the G.I. Bill to graduate from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, he was hired as an assistant curator of exhibits, at the Science Museum of Minnesota, later rising to chief curator. Part of his work included digging for dinosaurs and fossil turtles in the badlands of Montana's Hell Creek where one summer a boulder knocked him off a cliff. The fall left him with many broken bones, five months in hospitals, and a permanent limp – but also a passion for exploration, wild country, and the West.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recruited him when a Missouri River gold rush steamboat (*Bertrand*) was discovered deep under a cornfield on Desoto Bend National Wildlife Refuge between Iowa and Nebraska. He served as the chief interpretive specialist on the FWS's National Planning Team that took him across the continent from Great Swamp Refuge in New Jersey to Wichita Mountains Refuge in Oklahoma, the National Elk Refuge in Jackson Hole, and to Alaska and Hawaii.

During this time he also developed his own art shows and started a publishing company. But museums were in his blood. He returned to the Science Museum's nature center to develop natural history exhibits and teach children and adults art in nature, journal-keeping, fly-fishing, canoeing, and camping.

He retired in 1995 to enjoy many more lives: artist; daily fly-fisherman; grouse, woodcock and pronghorn hunter; and book collector. Thanks to the match-making of his daughter Patty, he reconnected with a former co-worker Elaine Rhode and started a 16-year adventure between Utah-Oregon-Alaska that put many miles on their car and hiking boots. He was an Artist-in-Residence on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon in 2007.

Charlie was preceded in death by his parents, aunts and uncles, his dearly-missed daughter Jane Ellen, ex-wife Patricia McDonald, and his partner in crime and collecting Bernie Fashingbauer.

He is survived by his wife Elaine Rhode; his daughters Pat Johnston (Kevin Matthews) of Dexter, Oregon, and Mary Susan Oleson (David Oleson) of Nashville, Tennessee; son Chuck (Kelly) of Boston, Massachusetts; and sister Joyce Nentl (Brad Wallace) of Hudson, Wisconsin. He also

leaves grandsons (Damon Gnojek, Captain Dylan Gnojek, and Sam and Ethan Johnston), nephews (John Nentl and Steven Yee), and great-nephew Charlie Nentl. And he will be missed by his 'brother' and best friend Tom Anderson (Nancy Conger) of North Branch, Minnesota.

Charlie requested no services. His ashes will be scattered in wild country at a later date. You have an opportunity to enjoy Charlie's company one more time – when the USU-Eastern Prehistoric Museum in Price reopens. Go upstairs to the center gallery to browse his 70-year retrospective exhibit "Turning Life into Art" that includes paintings, sculptures, collections, and stories from his life.

Also you may go to www.fausettmortuary.com to sign an online guestbook and share memories.

Richard A. Malecki (1947 – 2020). Richard Malecki, former head of the New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Cornell University, died on October 14 while fishing at his favorite spot, Elk Lake in Montrose, Pennsylvania. He was 73 years of age.

Rich had developed a passion for boat building in recent years, and he was fishing in the wooden rowboat that he had built himself. He had caught two beautiful perch and, except for his unfortunate demise, it appeared he was having a wonderful day. Over the past year, Rich had been dealing with lymphoma, lung cancer and a failing heart. He was an avid outdoorsman, and he frequently told his wife that he really hoped that when he died it would be while doing something he enjoyed like hunting, fishing, cutting wood or driving his tractor. The woodshed was full, the tractor was in the shop, and he had yet to prepare for deer season or obtain his waterfowl license. If fate was going to intervene that day, it seemed that fishing was the only option.

Born in Utica, New York, Rich was the son of the late Edwin and Helen (Wolak) Malecki. Rich held an Associate degree in math and science from Mohawk Valley Community College, a BS degree in wildlife management from Cornell University, a Master's degree in wildlife ecology and a doctorate in wildlife science from the University of Missouri. Rich had an illustrious career as a wildlife biologist working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Rich specialized in conducting research programs for waterfowl and wetlands. He made significant contributions to our knowledge about the biology and management of Canada geese, mallards, tundra swans and other assorted species. He valued all the great friends he made while collaborating with fellow biologists around the world, many of whom shared memorable hunting experiences and innumerable laughs with Rich over the years. He loved working with graduate students and had a profound impact on the careers of many. He met his second wife, Susan, when he hired her to deal with a massive data set from a multi-agency research project involving

thousands of marked Canada geese. She also is a wildlife biologist and the two worked side by side on research projects for over 30 years. When applying for the job she fudged her resume and really did not have the required computer experience. However, she is a quick study and has been fixing the never-ending and highly annoying but amusing computer issues of the man affectionately nicknamed by a colleague as the cybernetic Neanderthal. Rich retired in 2017.

Rich wished to be cremated and have his ashes spread in a marsh that had fond memories for him and reflected his love of the outdoors. This location is known only to his wife, who is probably the only duck researcher who becomes a clumsy oaf when wearing waders. She is just *thrilled* about his request and is certain Rich will be laughing when once again he makes her trudge into a marsh. If you want to know the general area, you will have to buy her a beer and tell her your favorite Rich story. If you buy her two, she will give you the gps coordinates and a complimentary souvenir from the box of leftover goose neck collars, recovered leg bands and defunct radio transmitters.

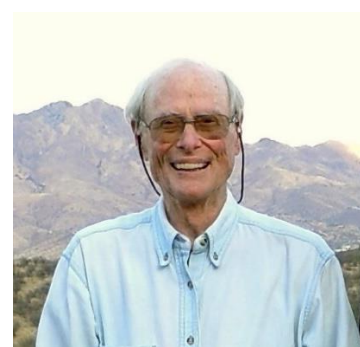
Rich overcame numerous health challenges during his lifetime, and firmly believed the only reason he lived as long as he did was because science and medical research always came up with innovative treatments just in the nick of time to keep him around. He survived Hodgkin's lymphoma when in his early twenties because the doctor that was treating him suggested he try a recently developed treatment called chemotherapy.

Rich is survived by his second wife of 27 years, Susan Sheaffer; his son Stephen Malecki from his first wife Cathy (Wood) Malecki; and his three siblings Robert Malecki, Ronald Malecki and his wife Joan, and Sharon Malecki. In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Rich can be made to the Lymphoma Research Foundation (lymphoma.org). Don't forget to save a few bucks, though, so someday you can buy Sue all those beers. A celebration of life will be deferred until next year when people finally can get together, share Malecki stories and raise a glass.

R. Kahler Martinson (1934 – 2020). Kahler Martinson passed away on August 17, 2020 at the age of 85.

Kahler was born on October 18, 1934 and raised in Ortonville, Minnesota. He loved hunting and fishing with his dad. His passion for the out of doors and wildlife led to a Bachelor of Science degree in

wildlife management and zoology from South Dakota State



College and a Master's in wildlife management from the University of Missouri.

After employment at Division of Wildlife in Ohio from 1960 to 1962 and North Dakota's Game and Fish Department from 1962 to 1964, he joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Positions with the Service included research on waterfowl at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland and administrative positions in the Washington, D.C. office. In 1973, he was appointed Regional Director of USFWS in Portland, Oregon. As RD in Region 1, Kahler was involved in many controversial resource issues and invariably stood up for the resource and for his troops in the field.

Kahler and his wife Donna loved the Portland area, and when he was ordered to transfer to Albuquerque because of his tough stance on certain politically sensitive issues, they declined. Kahler then worked for the Columbia River Fisheries Council and for the Washington Department of Fisheries, returning to USFWS shortly before retirement. During his career Kahler produced several publications including numerous articles on waterfowl and sections on 16 waterfowl species for the Birds of Oregon that were edited by Dave Marshall.

Kahler and Donna had two children, Maria and Ronald. While Kahler pursued his favorite hobby, hunting ducks, Donna enjoyed trail riding and showing her mare. Daughter Maria and her husband Coleman Cobb lived near Kahler and Donna, and the grandparents doted on their twin grandchildren, Natasha and Alexander. Donna died in 2008 after 45 years of marriage.

Kahler is survived by his daughter Maria and her husband Coleman, his son Ronald Martinson, his grandchildren Natasha and Alexander Cobb, and his birding partner, Linda Craig. Burial will be at Skyline Memorial Gardens in Portland. The family requests that memorial gifts be given to Portland Audubon or to Earthjustice.

Leon Irwin Rhodes (1942 – 2020). Leon Rhodes of Erwin, Tennessee said goodbye to his family and friends on February 29, 2020 at the age of 77. Leon was a native of

West Alexandria, Ohio, the son of Lawrence Irvin Rhodes and Leona Belle Bailey Rhodes. During his life he lived in Scottsdale, Arizona, as well as Cambridge, Maryland where he met his loving wife, Jan, and had their first daughter, Letha.



The couple then moved to Paris, Tennessee where they had their second daughter, Lila. The family also lived in DeLand, Florida before moving to Flag Pond, Tennessee to enjoy their retirement years in the home they built on their mountain farm.

Leon was a graduate of Arizona State University with a BS Degree in Wildlife Biology. He retired from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service after thirty-three years of service during which he worked at five different National Wildlife Refuges throughout his career. He was the Manager of Lake Woodruff Wildlife Refuge in DeLand, Florida.

He was a member of Ninth Street Baptist Church where he served as a Deacon. He was also a member of The Laughter Society. He enjoyed woodworking, farming as a hobby, Pinewood Derby racing and spending time with his grandchildren.

He leaves behind to cherish his memory, his loving and devoted wife of fifty-two years, Janice Gail Guinn Rhodes; two daughters: Letha Guinn Paulk (Dr. Darrell) of Anniston, Alabama and Lila Dawn Womack (Scott) of Marietta, Georgia; one brother, Larry Allen Rhodes (Joy) of Santa Fe, Tennessee; and two sisters: Lora Elizabeth Hylton of Greenville, North Carolina and Lana Jean Smith (Steve) of Corydon, Indiana. He is also survived by his eleven grandchildren: Brayden Thomas Paulk, Benjamin Levi Paulk, Samuel Deane Womack, Sadie Grace Womack, Jessica Lee Womack, Kayla Shea Womack, Isaiah Thomas Womack, Bryan Michael Womack, Kaydin, Kaysin, and Lilly. Over the years, he was also a loving grandfather to eighteen foster grand-children and several nieces and nephews.

Committal for Leon was held at the Evergreen Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in memory of Leon to: Ninth Street Baptist Church, 310 Ninth Street, Erwin, Tennessee, 37650. Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with the Rhodes family through the interactive Book of Memories at www.ledfordfuneralhomes.com.

Grady Wilbert Towns, PhD (1936 – 2020). Grady Towns

passed peacefully in his sleep at his Denver, Colorado home on September 9, 2020. Born on October 15, 1936, to Viola Dessie Banks and Bennie Towns, Grady graduated from Langston Junior/Senior High School in Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1956 where he washed windows and waited tables to help support his mother and siblings. He went on to receive a B.S. degree (Biology)



with honors from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (formerly Arkansas AM&N); and an M.S. degree (Biology) and a PhD (Ecology) from the University of Utah. He credited his success and remained grateful to the AM&N educators at that Historically Black College and University,

who imparted the life skills of toughness, spirituality, focus, and endurance.

A veteran of the United States Army, he worked on classified projects at Utah's Dugway Proving Ground. He spent his 30-year federal career with the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as one of few Black natural resource scientists. As an ecologist, he assessed environmental impacts of large controversial projects - often negotiating with private landowners and State and Federal regulators, international government representatives, military officers, and elected officials.

Motivated by the segregation barriers he overcame in his life, he strongly supported laws and programs to reduce systemic racism and obstacles to the empowerment of African Americans and others. He helped to expand opportunities and encouraged Black students to consider scientific careers, to be prepared and open to career opportunities in unfamiliar places, and to use their education and skills to "do good."

Grady loved the West, skiing, camping, hiking, and golf. He served as President and Membership Chair of the 500-member Slippers-n-Slider's Ski Club that is committed to introducing Blacks to winter sports; he also nominated

Charles Smith, the first Black person to be inducted into the prestigious Colorado Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame. Grady also worked on Presidential campaigns, and refurbished computers for inner-city families. He was a member of Second Baptist Church in Boulder, Colorado, but was most recently associated with Our Faith Baptist Church.

Grady was predeceased by his parents and his brother James Towns. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Eleanor Saunders Towns; a daughter, Erika Wyrick Klafehn; and son Brandon Scott Towns; grandsons, Adrian Joseph Towns and Miles Xavier Klafehn; granddaughter, Isabel Alyssa Towns; sister, Berniece Towns Frenche; and cousins, Shirley Dismuke, Ervin Jones, MD, Geneva Buggs Brown, Bertha (John) Sims, Helen Buggs Singleton, William Murray and Deserine Lawson, Rutha Buggs Jones, Thelma Banks Green, and Vernestine Banks Thompson. He will also be missed by a host of nieces, nephews, and friends.

A celebratory memorial event will be held when COVID permits.

This Newsletter was prepared by Board member Jim McKeivitt (jimmymac@usamedia.tv). If you have information that would be of interest to our readers, please contact Jim.

Also, be sure to visit our website for some more current happenings at www.fwsretirees.org .