

FWS Retirees Association NEWSLETTER



Fall (September) 2023

2023 Board of Directors

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Board Business

20th FWS Retirees Reunion 2023

NCTC, Shepherdstown, WV
November 27 – December 1, 2023

Registration Deadline – October 27, 2023

This reunion may be the best ever! Please forward this newsletter to your fellow FWS retirees so they are aware of the opportunity. If they are not members of the Retirees Association, they won't know about the reunion unless you tell them.



Planning continues for the reunion at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) from November 27 to

December 1, 2023 in Shepherdstown, WV. (See the draft program on the next page).

This year there is no general registration fee for attending the Reunion. Attendees who wish to have lodging at NCTC must make their lodging reservations using the registration form at <https://form.jotform.com/232267516523152>. The NCTC has requested that the Retirees Association compile a list of registered attendees and provide it to their lodging office. We will use the information from your registration form to compile that list. When you arrive at NCTC you will check in at their lodging registration desk and pay for your lodging and cafeteria meals at that time. A block of 100 rooms has been set aside for our Reunion on a first come/first served basis, so it is best to register without delay.

The deadline for registering is October 27, 2023.

Lodging and meal plans at NCTC are based on the new GSA rates for fiscal year 2024. The cost for lodging is \$112 per night (per room) and \$69 per day (per person) for meals. Therefore, the daily cost for lodging plus meals for one person is \$181, which will include the cost of the banquet on Thursday evening. Spouses or guests sharing a room with a retiree staying at NCTC will only pay for the meal plan.

While there is no general registration fee for the reunion, there are minor fees for attendees wishing to participate in a couple of Reunion activities. For early arrivals, we will once again host the "Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife" fundraiser on Monday November 27 starting at 3 p.m. with a separate \$15 fee which will be donated to the Friends of NCTC. For questions or additional information about this year's walk on NCTC trails,

contact Association Board member Lew Forman
lew.gorman@yahoo.com.

We are planning for field trips, but the details are still pending at this time. Please look for an email from the Association in the near future for your opportunity to sign up. Fee information will be contained in that email and you will be able to pay that fee at our Reunion registration desk at NCTC.

NCTC will provide special shuttle service for Reunion attendees from Dulles International Airport to NCTC on Monday, November 27 and return to Dulles on Friday, December 1. More information about the shuttle service, schedule and fees is provided on the registration form. We want to make sure that folks travel on Monday and Friday, as we will have a full 3-day agenda, including the Thursday night banquet.

Please plan your travel early and lock in your travel dates, as this is right after Thanksgiving.



20th Retiree Reunion – NCTC Shepherdstown, West Virginia Preliminary Program

Sunday, November 26

Early arrivals for Board Members. Set up for registration.

Monday, November 27 – Travel Day

2:00-6:00 PM – Registration (Entry/Auditorium Building).

2:30 PM – Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife (Entry/Auditorium Building) – NCTC trails.

5:30-7:00 PM – Dinner (Commons Building/Dining Room).

Tuesday, November 28

6:30-8:00 AM – Breakfast (Commons Building/Dining Room).

8:00 AM – Registration (Entry/Auditorium Building).

8:30-11:30 AM – Program (Auditorium) – Welcome to the 2023 Reunion, Board introductions and reports, Regional and National and Local FWS Presentations.

11:30-1:00 PM – Lunch (Commons Building/Dining Room).

1:30 – 4:00 PM – Tour of NCTC and the FWS Archives (Entry/Auditorium Building).

6:00 – 10:00 PM – Social (Roosevelt Room, Commons Building/Lounge) – Dedication of Jerry Grover Bench.

Wednesday, November 29

6:30-8:00 AM – Breakfast (Commons Building/Dining Room).

8:30 AM – 5:00 PM – Field Trips (Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and another to be announced shortly).

5:30-6:30 PM – Dinner (Commons Building/Dining Room).

7:00 PM (Doors open 6:30 PM) – International Fly-Fishing Film Festival with John Turner (Auditorium).

Thursday, November 30

6:30-8:00 AM – Breakfast (Commons Building/Dining Room).

8:30-11:30 AM – Program (Auditorium) – ESA at 50 celebration and discussion.

11:30 AM-1:00 PM – Lunch (Commons Building/Dining Room).

1:30-4:00 PM – Federal Retiree Benefits, Alerts, Tips, Legislative Updates and more.

2:30-4:30 PM – Oral History, Artifacts, and Communications Subcommittee meetings (Instructional East).

5:00-7:00 PM – Reunion Banquet (Commons Building/Dining Room) – History Committee Award.

7:30-9:00 PM – Keynote Speaker – Renowned Historian/Author Douglas Brinkley (Auditorium).

Friday, December 1 – Travel Day

6:30-8:00 AM – Breakfast (Commons Building/Dining Room).

8:00 AM-5:00 PM – History Committee meeting (Instructional East).

Saturday, December 2

Clean-up and pack-up. Late departures for History Committee members

Message from the Chair



Greetings from Cabo San Lucas, Mexico! As I am writing this, I am holding on to one last breath of summer, before plunging into cooler weather. I'll be packing sweaters for the trip to NCTC, Shepherdstown, WV, for our 20th Retirees Reunion, November 27th to December 1st. Please don't wait too long to fill out the registration form that was sent

via email to our members earlier this month. We have reserved a block of 100 rooms at NCTC. You can always find the form, and newest information, on our website: FWSRetirees.org

I want to thank all the board members for their round the clock devotion to making this the best reunion ever! It takes a village to host one of these Reunions. And a huge thanks to **Steve Chase, Mark Madison**, and all the folks at NCTC who will be our hosts. Logistics, program speakers, finances, field trips, hikes, polo shirts, oh my!

In our last newsletter, I encouraged everyone to send in stories and photos from their recent adventures with other FWS retirees. You'll see another travel adventure later in this newsletter. Send them to our newsletter editor, Helen Clough, at the email address provided in this newsletter.

Back story: Thanks to travels with my family when I was a kid, and then many great trips throughout my career, I have visited all 50 states before I was age 42. However, I also kept track of how many state capitals that I have visited, and I only lacked one. (Did you guess that it was Juneau?! So, I decided to take a couple of friends along on an Inside Passage cruise aboard the Royal Princess last month!



FWS retiree, and Retiree Association Board member, **Helen Clough**, met us as our ship docked in Juneau! She gave us a grand tour of the area. Here we are in front of the Mendenhall Glacier. Helen recalls how much the glacier has receded since she grew up here.



My fiftieth state capital city.



My friends Amy Busch, Joan Rogers (Charlie Wooley's sister-in-law!), Helen and me at the Mendenhall Glacier.



One more photo, since I cannot resist - fresh rockfish and fries at the Forbidden Peak Brewery at Auke Bay in Juneau

Please enjoy this newsletter, and I hope you will contribute your stories and photos for future newsletters! I look forward to seeing many of you at NCTC in November!

Cindy Uptegraft Barry, Chair

Nominations Needed for 2024 Board of Directors

Each year, the terms for three of the nine Board members expire and their seats come up for election. We are looking for candidates for the 2024 Board. It's important that we have a good and active Board to keep this Association running, and we need people with new and diverse ideas and viewpoints to step forward. The 2024 elections will be held this fall, with new or re-elected Board members taking their seats in January 2024.

Every dues-paying member gets a chance to run for one of these seats or nominate someone else to run. Once a slate of candidates has been identified, every dues-paying member has the opportunity to vote for the candidates of their choice. This year, terms will expire for Denise Baker, Deborah Holle, and Paul Tritaik. We are grateful to hear that Deborah and Paul may again stand for election to the Board. This is the opportunity for others interested in being active and influential in the Association to throw their hats into the ring. **To be qualified to seek nomination and vote members must be current and paid up with their dues by October 1.**

Ballots with the names and bios of all qualified candidates will be electronically available or mailed to eligible voters by

November 1 to begin voting. Voter returns will be accepted through November 22. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please let us know directly. Or if you know of someone else that you believe would make a good board member, please confirm their interest first before submitting their name for consideration. **Nominations and bios should be sent to Denise Baker at secretary@fwsretirees.org or phone 602-796-0769 by October 20.**

If you're not sure of your membership/due's status, to find out you can go to http://www.fwsretirees.org/Documents/FWS-RetireesPaid_current.pdf. *Sincerely, Denise Baker, Secretary*

Treasurer's Report

Operating Accounts. Through the end of August, our total operating income was \$5,037.44, including \$2,275.00 in regular dues payments and \$1,000 in lifetime memberships. The balance of the income included \$1,762.44 in voluntary donations and payments for FWS Retiree polo shirt orders. Major expenses totaled \$2,725.77, including primarily PayPal transaction fees, software and online services subscription fees, the filing fee for the annual Form 990-EZ report to the Internal Revenue Service for 2022, and printing and mailing the newsletter to members without e-mail. Our operating income less expenses was \$2,311.67, and our operations checking account balance at the end of March totaled \$22,731.09.

Grants Accounts.

History Grant. By the end of June, we had spent all but \$2,433.49 of the \$37,400.00 History Grant (originally issued in 2019) when the Period of Performance for the grant amendment ended. That date marked the termination of the grant, and Board Member and Grants Manager Lew Gorman is working on an application/proposal to the FWS for a new History Grant that we expect will be funded this fall prior to the next FWS History Committee meeting on December 1 at our Reunion at NCTC. Expenses included oral history transcription services, travel for oral history interviews, new digital voice and video recorders, tripods for video recorders, a microphone and audio mixer and supplies for conducting oral history interviews, a new replacement computer, external hard drive, and copy of Microsoft Office Pro 2021 for membership database management. A payment was also issued to the Association's Database Manager.

Conservation Career Awareness and Youth Programs (CCA/Youth) grant. Since our last newsletter we spent \$24,287.00 in the 2020 CCA/Youth grant with only \$0.25 remaining unspent. Expenses included honoraria checks issued for travel to two individuals for participation in the 2023 Tribal Youth Conference at NCTC and Mini-Grant checks issued to

27 Friends Groups for a variety of projects on FWS field stations. An article about the grants and a list of those recipients, field stations and projects can be found near the end of this newsletter. Most of the checks were issued for \$843 each, with one of them for \$869 issued to Friends of Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH) for being the first one to submit a proposal. The Period of Performance for this grant ends September 30. Lew Gorman is also working on an application/proposal for a new grant from the FWS to replace this one as well. At the end of August, we had a total of \$3,010.13 remaining in the Grants checking account.

Other major efforts by the Treasurer in July, August and early September included developing an order form for the Retiree polo shirts and a registration form for the 2023 Reunion.

Submitted by Doug Frugé.

Membership

Congratulations to the 5 New Members we added this quarter. Welcome to the Retirees Association! We also thank the 21 members who renewed for a total of 26 sustaining members. We also had a LIFE MEMBER, Nancy Coon! She renewed just shy of the deadline to be included in this Quarterly Report. Her picture and bio are included in the Newsletter. Way to go Nancy and thank you.

We deeply appreciate all our sustaining members. Having newsletters, reunions, awarding Anniversary Grants to Field Stations, Youth Grants, hearing about travel opportunities with other FWS Retirees, and having a mechanism to keep up with our friends, colleagues and co-workers would not be possible without your financial contributions. Thank you again for your generous support.

Name, spouse/partner, where they live now, year retired, where they worked when they retired.

ANDREWS, Jon (Sue), Sarasota, FL; Retired 2017; Department of the Interior

AULT, Charlie (Joyce); Gold Canyon, AZ; Retired 2008; R2, RO, Refuges & Wildlife, Science Advisor

BURNETT, Andrew (Charlie Roessler); Washington, DC; Retired 2018; R9, NCTC

DOUGLAS, Barbara (Gary Berti); Montrose, WV, Retired 2020; R5, Ecological Services, WV Field Office, **NEW** member

FRUGÉ, Doug (Joyce Forbush), Whitingham, VT; Retired 2017; R6, RO, Fisheries

GIBSON, Paul (Mary Bohman); Ft. Collins, CO; Retired 2023; R9, WO, Information Resources, Asst. Director IRMT; **NEW** member

GRAHAM, Kathleen; Alexandria, VA; Retired 2015; R9 (WO), USDA

GRANNEMANN, Ken (Debbie); Woodridge, VA; Retired 2015; R9, WO, Refuges & Wildlife

HEFFLEY, Cindy; Lewes, DE; Retired 2019; R4, Refuges & Wildlife, Coastal NC Refuges Complex; **NEW** member

LaROCHELLE, Larry; Richmond, VA; Retired 1990; R9, WO, Refuges & Wildlife

LOWE, Roy (Laurie); Waldport, OR; Retired 2015; R1, Refuges & Wildlife, Oregon Coastal NWR Complex

MARCUS, Stuart (Kathy); Liberty, TX; Retired 2019; R2, Refuges & Wildlife, Trinity River NWR

McKENNA, Doug (Yvette); Sandia Park, NM; Retired 2012; R2, RO, Law Enforcement-OLERAC, Albuquerque, NM

MILLER, Christopher (Pamela); Brewster, MA; Retired 1991; R1, RO, Refuges & Wildlife, BioTech, **NEW** member

MITTIGA, Mary, (David Burns); Panama City, FL; Retired 2017; R4, Ecological Services, Panama City Field Office

MUSAUS, Mark (Linda); Newnan, GA, Retired 2012, R4, RO, Refuges & Wildlife, Deputy RD

PALMISANO, Bill (Linda); Shepherdstown, VA; Retired 2015; R8 (CA&NV), RO

SPENCER, Douglas (Janine); Neenah, WI; Retired 2011; R1, Refuges & Wildlife, Willamette Valley NWR, Complex

STEVENS, Patty; Ft. Collins, CO; Retired 2019; R6,RO, Refuges & Wildlife; **NEW** member.

UNDERWOOD, Jeff (Karen); Milton, DE; Retired 2020; R9 WO, Fisheries

WATTERS, Linda (Russ Watters); Milwauki, OR, Retired 2009; R1, RO, Refuges & Wildlife

YAICH, Scott (Dianne); Mountain Home, AR. Retired 2017; R4, RO, Refuges & Wildlife

Submitted by Deborah Holle

NANCY COON (new lifetime member of the Retirees Association) September, 2023

I was born in 1940, in Monmouth, Illinois. My father was a farm tractor and truck mechanic, owning a dealership and service garage in our hometown of Little York, pop 300. It was a short drive to the Mississippi River. My mother was a school teacher and educator. I graduated from Monmouth College in 1958 and then entered graduate school at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Il.

In 1965, I followed Richard to my first job. It was the Illinois State Museum in Springfield as a Laboratory Assistant in Zoology classifying and cataloging specimens. Richard had been hired directly into the FWS as an Animal Damage Control Biologist (Division of Wildlife Services) in Region 3 for the Springfield, Illinois Office. That lasted less than one year due to the military draft. Richard received a draft notice, and we decided he should join the local Navy Reserve Unit to fulfill his obligation. Very shortly, his unit applied to Washington D. C. for a direct commission for Richard. He was accepted as an Ensign in the Medical Service Corps. He was stationed at the U.S. Navy Toxicology Unit (National Naval Medical Center) in Bethesda, Maryland, our next home (1966 to 1969). Our son David was born in 1968 at the Naval Hospital.

I had good fortune in locating a position with the FWS. Having taken the necessary Civil Service Exam for federal work, I made sure my name was on the register for the Maryland and D.C. area. I did not wait long. Dr. Lucille Stickel at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (Patuxent) in Laurel, Maryland called me one day. She asked me to come out for an interview, which I did. I was hired in 1967. Lucille was Leader of the Contaminants Section at Patuxent. At the time I was told there was only a handful of women in the FWS, and even fewer in the research programs. She became my supervisor and was my mentor throughout my career.



Nancy on the left and Annie McLane, technician on the right. they are measuring and recording eggshell thickness, comparing treatment to controls of quail after pesticide treatments (circa 1968).



Left to Right: Dr. Harry Ohlendorf, Assistant Director, Dr. Lucille Stickel, Center Director, and Nancy Coon, Branch Chief, Contaminants Division. They are in the Director's Office. Note the manual typewriter, the black cradle telephone on the desk (circa 1980).



Row 1: Harold J. O'Connor, Director; H. Randolph Perry, Jr., Chief, Endangered Species Research Branch; Nancy C. Coon, Chief, Technical Services Branch; Richard L. Jachowski, Chief, Migratory Birds Research Branch
Row 2: Joseph Nagel, Administrative Officer; Russell J. Hall, Chief, Environmental Contaminants Research Branch; John P. Steaks, Operations Manager; David L. Trauger, Deputy Director

This is a photo of the Patuxent Directorate with the 6 Branch and Office Chiefs, the Director, Harold O'Connor, and Deputy Director, David Trauger. (Nancy was Chief, Branch of Technical Services) (circa 1988).

Richard was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1969 after 3 years, reaching Lieutenant grade. Being on military furlough from the FWS, he was placed as a District Supervisor, Animal Damage Control, at the Sandusky, Ohio Field Station.

I followed him again as the trailing spouse. However, Dr. Stickel was able to relocate me to Patuxent's Animal Depredations Research Station in Sandusky. We spent just 2

years there. We moved to State College, Pennsylvania in 1971 for Richard to begin a Ph.D. program at the Pennsylvania Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit.

We spent 4 years in State College, 1971 – 1975. Our second child, Christine, was born in 1971. It was necessary for me to terminate work with FWS. I found a position with the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. Dr. Stickel called me again as Richard was completing his doctoral work. She told me later that she was keeping track of me. I was hired back into the contaminants program at Patuxent.

Richard was the trailing spouse this time. He contacted Dr. Fant Martin, Director the Migratory Bird and Habitat Research Laboratory located on the Patuxent campus where he was hired as a Wildlife Research Biologist. We were at Patuxent from 1975 to 1990.

All told, I authored or co-authored 13 published research papers dealing with the effects of pesticides and of crude oil on various wildlife species. I became the Center's Pollution Coordinator. Later I was chosen to head the new Section of Information Management and later became Branch Chief of Technical Services providing assistance for Center-wide research. I became a member of the Center's Directorate. During this time, I completed the Upper-Level Management Development Program in Washington D.C.

We stayed at Patuxent until a reorganization uprooted my position in 1990. The Stickels had retired and left Patuxent in 1982, and there were a few Acting Directors and several reorganizations. Our son and daughter were in college at the time, and we decided to look toward the Regional Offices for positions for us. I was hired before Richard. I became the Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services (Fish and Wildlife Enhancement) in R-4, Atlanta, Georgia. I worked for Tom Olds, the Assistant Regional Director. The Regional Director was Jim Pulliam.

Richard was the trailing spouse again and was hired after a few phone calls between Dick Smith, Acting Service Director, and the Atlanta Regional Office. There was an opening in the Office of Realty and later in the Migratory Bird Program, both under Harold Benson, Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife. We left Maryland and moved to Marietta, Georgia in 1990. I successfully made the adjustment to an operational manager.

I retired in 1995 and Richard retired in 1997. Richard and I now live in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.



Richard and Nancy Coon at Glacier National Park. The occasion was the Retirees Reunion in 2013 at Kalispell, MT.

FWS Retirees Association's Outreach at the Boy Scouts National Jamboree

Be prepared. That's the Boy Scout motto. Our Retiree's Association was prepared and committed to make the USFWS successful at the BSA National Jamboree in July this summer in it outreach mission to youth and conservation. Multiple conservation-focused agencies operate exhibit stations along the Conservation Trail at the BSA national camp, Summit Bechtel Reserve near Beckley, WV.



Lew Gorman, the RA Board member for Youth and Outreach, designed the FWS station, with its 4 key elements.

1. National Wildlife Refuge map where Scouts pinned their hometown and were challenged to find the nearest refuge, a place where conservation projects could be performed



These activities kept thousands of Scouts and Scouters (adults) engaged and educated.

2. An endangered species game with prizes (shown below)
3. A non-listed species identification with prizes



The Association's role was critical, not only for developing the activities, but also for staffing. Only three people ran the entire station for the week-long Jamboree. Lew recruited a FWS Volunteer, Peggy Jessee, (seen here), and along with himself helped the full-time FWS Scouting Coordinator, Randy Robinson, staffed all the exhibits to a steady stream of Scouts. With no other active duty FWS staff, the efforts of the Association proved the importance of FWS retirees and FWS Volunteers to help support the Service's mission.

and FWS Volunteers to help support the Service's mission.

4. Suitcase for Survival discovery activity



For its contributions to the BSA National Jamboree's Conservation Trail, the Service received this plaque

Because of the important role our Association played, the FWS Scouting Coordinator, Randy Robinson, graciously request that Lew accept the plaque on behalf of the Service. The picture below shows the awards ceremony with Mike Huneke, Conservation Trail Chairman, and BSA national Conservation Advisor, Brian Gray presenting the plaque to Lew. The plaque will be formally presented to both the USFWS Director and the NCTC Director at the Association Reunion Awards Ceremony in December of this year, clearly illustrating the Association's commitment to and active support of the FWS conservation mission.



Please consider volunteering for another such national event. The next BSA National Jamboree is scheduled for 2027, and the next BSA National Order of the Arrow Conference is to be held July 2024 at the University of Colorado in Boulder. If you are interest in participating in all or part of these types of events, please contact Lew.gorman@yahoo.com for more information.

Fun Facts & Family Ties

Obviously, this is one of my favorite sections. Our colleagues share humorous moments, interesting facts about their jobs or field stations, and sometimes embarrassing stories that make us laugh. Laughter brings our friends and co-workers together. It really helps when you send me Fun Facts too. I can keep it anonymous if you wish, but putting a name with a story is always nice.

Net Gun by Ron Reynolds

I first heard about Net Guns in the early 1980's and even had personal experience with a "commercial" gun. I never dreamed they would become so useful. Ron Reynolds and I were in graduate school together at Oklahoma State University in the Oklahoma Coop Wildlife Unit. Ron got a job in Migratory Birds and I got one in Refuges after graduation. We reconnected when one of my co-workers at St. Marks wanted

to go on a waterfowl banding assignment in Canada. That is when I learned about net guns and how they were used to catch Mallard hens. This is what Ron said about the net gun.

Ron's Account

I did not invent the net gun, Charie Shaifer and Larry Meckeln from the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Jamestown, ND. designed and built the early models. I was working at the Center that summer and consulted with them on the design and suggested some modifications. That was in 1977. The biologist at NPWRC never used the guns much in the field. They named it the "Super Gun". Later, in 1979, I was at Patuxent, I got involved in some field work in Minnesota that focused on capturing and marking mallard hens in the Spring. I took the NPWRC design and made some modifications to improve its reliability and safety. The capture technique was very successful for capturing individual hens paired up during the breeding season. Then, during the Spring periods 1981-85, myself and another Mig. Bird biologist led a field study in prairie of Canada (Stabilized Regulations Study).

I built about a dozen of the "perfected" 🤖 models for use by our crews in Canada. The net guns I built and used were made using retriever launchers mounted on a pipe attached to a crossbow stock. They were powered by .22 caliber blank cartridges, one in each barrel of each launcher. The firing mechanism was designed so they all fired simultaneously. My personal total number of mallard hens captured (one at a time) was about 1,000 (net gun world record) during those studies.

After our studies were complete, I received many requests to loan Super Guns out for other projects. During our studies in Canada, we had a couple of close calls that could have resulted in severe injury or death to field crew members. Due to the training required, and safety issues with the guns, I was reluctant to loan them out, but was under a lot of pressure to do so. Therefore, I destroyed all the guns except one or two. One remained in Canada, and the other (my personal unit), I sent to the National Conservation Training Center, in West Virginia.



Commercially made net gun

There are now commercially made net guns that are much safer, though probably not more effective. I must admit, using the gun was a lot of fun.

Ron

Deborah adds

While I was at National Key Deer Refuge a graduate student wanted to use a net gun to capture and mark some endangered Key Deer. I had heard from Ron that they were a little dangerous. I was concerned for the safety of the graduate student and of course the deer. The net gun that the graduate student had appeared to be a commercial gun. I asked him if the net would hurt the deer, he said no. I responded “OK, you run and I’m going to shoot you and see if it hurts.” His eyes got big, but to his credit, he gave me the gun. Lucky for me I had the good sense to smile and say just kidding.

After many successful captures of Key Deer he came to the office to tell me he missed but the net was entangled on the deer. Several of staff including myself went out to find the deer before someone saw it. The office did receive a call about a deer caught in a soccer net or something (which did happen several years later). I told the caller we were aware of it and were trying to locate the deer. We called them back when we found it completely unharmed and removed the net.

Hopefully, Retirees attending this year’s reunion at NCTC in November can see Ron’s original net gun on a cross bow in the museum’s collection. *Deborah Holle*

Douglas Brinkley’s new book *Silent Spring Revolution*



Our keynote speaker, *New York Times* bestselling author and acclaimed presidential historian Douglas Brinkley chronicles the rise of environmental activism during the Long Sixties (1960-1973), telling the story of an indomitable generation that saved the natural world under the leadership of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon.

With the detonation of the Trinity explosion in the New Mexico desert in 1945, the United States took control of Earth’s destiny for the first time. After the Truman administration dropped atomic bombs on Japan to end World War II, a grim new epoch had arrived. During the early Cold War years, the federal government routinely detonated nuclear devices in the Nevada desert and the Marshall Islands. Not only was nuclear fallout a public health menace, but entire ecosystems were contaminated with radioactive materials. During the 1950s, an unprecedented postwar economic boom took hold, with America becoming the world’s leading

hyperindustrial and military giant. But with this historic prosperity came a heavy cost: oceans began to die, wilderness vanished, the insecticide DDT poisoned ecosystems, wildlife perished, and chronic smog blighted major cities.

In *Silent Spring Revolution*, Douglas Brinkley pays tribute to those who combated the mauling of the natural world in the Long Sixties: Rachel Carson (a marine biologist and author), David Brower (director of the Sierra Club), Barry Commoner (an environmental justice advocate), Coretta Scott King (an antinuclear activist), Stewart Udall (the Secretary of the Interior), William O. Douglas (Supreme Court justice), Cesar Chavez (a labor organizer), and other crusaders are profiled with verve and insight.

Carson’s book *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, depicted how detrimental DDT was to living creatures. The exposé launched an ecological revolution that inspired such landmark legislation as the Wilderness Act (1964), the Clean Air Acts (1963 and 1970), and the Endangered Species Acts (1966, 1969, and 1973). In intimate detail, Brinkley extrapolates on such epic events as the Donora (Pennsylvania) smog incident, John F. Kennedy’s Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Great Lakes preservation, the Santa Barbara oil spill, and the first Earth Day. *The book is available from Amazon and other sources.*

Albuquerque Retirees Annual Luncheon

On Wednesday, September 13th, the local FWS retirees enjoyed its semi-annual luncheon. We had formerly dined at a local Village Inn restaurant but due to the excessive noise in there – which we caused– I decided to find a restaurant with a quiet outdoor patio. Turns out the El Pinto Restaurant and Salsa Factory in far north Albuquerque fit the bill. They are the largest restaurant in New Mexico with lots of patio space outside under many large oak trees and far away from what little traffic there is in that area.



This time, Marlene and I emailed our normal invitations, and especially focused on inviting several retirees who are very hard of hearing. They couldn’t understand conversations among all the background noise in the Village Inn so had quit attending. This

time, attendance jumped from our normal 6-10 to 17 retirees. Our oldest attendee was a still fit 96-year-old Wayne Gueswel, retired from Refuges. After lunch, I queried the attendees and all agreed that we should continue meeting here. Our next luncheon will be on the second Wednesday in April at El Pinto. *Provided by Pete Stine*

Natural Resource Issues

The Association believes it is important that we keep our readers informed on what we think may be the most important or highest profile fish and wildlife matters of regional or national significance, especially those of major importance to the FWS. While we have no illusions of being comprehensive in selection of articles, we believe those of most interest or significance for fish and wildlife conservation in the United States should be brought to our members' attention. Please note that we also try to keep our website updated with more expansive information on important fish and wildlife issues. Please visit the website at www.fwsretirees.org

Montana Climate Lawsuit

A group of young people in Montana won a landmark lawsuit recently when a judge ruled that the state's failure to consider climate change when approving fossil fuel projects was unconstitutional. The decision in the suit, *Held v. Montana*, coming during a summer of record heat and deadly wildfires is a victory in the expanding fight against government support for oil, gas and coal, the burning of which has rapidly warmed the planet.

As fires rage in the West, fueled by fossil fuel pollution, today's ruling in Montana is a game-changer that marks a turning point in this generation's efforts to save the planet from the devastating effects of human-caused climate chaos," said Julia Olson, the founder of Our Children's Trust, a legal nonprofit group that brought the case on behalf of the young people. "This is a huge win for Montana, for youth, for democracy, and for our climate. More rulings like this will certainly come."

The ruling means that Montana, a major coal and gas producing state that gets one-third of its energy by burning coal, must consider climate change when deciding whether to approve or renew fossil fuel projects.

The Montana attorney general's office said the state would appeal, which would send the case to the state Supreme Court. "This ruling is absurd, but not surprising from a judge who let the plaintiffs' attorneys put on a weeklong taxpayer-funded publicity stunt that was supposed to be a trial," Emily Flower, a spokeswoman for the attorney general, Austin Knudsen, said in a statement. "Montanans can't be blamed for changing the climate."

"This was climate science on trial, and what the court has found as a matter of fact is that the science is right," Mr. Burger said. "Emissions contribute to climate change, climate harms are real, people can experience climate harms individually, and every ton of greenhouse gas emissions matters. These are important factual findings, and other courts in the U.S. and around the world will look to this decision."

The Montana case revolved around language in the state Constitution that guarantees residents "the right to a clean and healthful environment," and stipulates that the state and individuals are responsible for maintaining and improving the environment "for present and future generations." A handful of other states have similar guarantees, and young people in Hawaii, Utah and Virginia have filed lawsuits that are slowly winding their way through courts. A federal case brought by young people, which had been stalled for years, is once again moving, heading toward a June trial in Oregon. The Montana case, brought by plaintiffs ranging in age from 5 to 22, was the first of its kind to go to trial in the United States. While the state contended that Montana's emissions are minuscule when considered against the rest of the globe's, the plaintiffs argued that the state must do more to consider how emissions are contributing to droughts, wildfires and other growing risks to a state that cherishes a pristine outdoors.

Since 2011, state law has prevented officials from weighing "actual or potential impacts that are regional, national, or global in nature" when conducting environmental reviews of large projects. In May, while the case was pending, the Legislature updated the law to be even more explicit, blocking the state from "an evaluation of greenhouse gas emissions and corresponding impacts to the climate in the state or beyond the state's borders" when deciding whether to approve new projects.

Montana has 5,000 gas wells, 4,000 oil wells, four oil refineries and six coal mines. The state is a "major emitter of greenhouse gas emissions in the world, in absolute terms, in per person terms, and historically," Judge Kathy Seeley of Montana District Court wrote. Adding up the amount of fossil fuels extracted, burned, processed and exported by the state, the court found that Montana is responsible for as much carbon dioxide as produced by Argentina, the Netherlands or Pakistan.

In her ruling, the judge found that the state's emissions "have been proven to be a substantial factor" in affecting the climate. Laws that limited the ability of regulators to consider climate effects were unconstitutional, she ruled.

She added that Montanans "have a fundamental constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment, which includes climate as part of the environmental life-support system."

The trial in June included testimony from climate scientists who detailed how increases in greenhouse gas emissions as a result of human activity were already causing health and

environmental damage, and how those effects were likely to accelerate unless action was taken.

Many of the young plaintiffs testified about effects they had witnessed — extreme weather events that threaten family ranching, warmed rivers and streams that harm fish, wildfire smoke that worsens asthma and disruptions to nature that interfere with Indigenous traditions. They also spoke of the toll on their mental health, and the anguish they felt as they considered a future dimmed by environmental collapse.

The government, which was given one week to present its defense, rested after just one day and did not call its main expert witness, surprising many legal experts.

While Montana has a long history of mining and oil, gas and coal interests carry sway in Helena, the state also has deep environmental traditions. In 1972, when Montana adopted a new Constitution, a provision was included to say that the state should “maintain and improve a clean and healthful environment in Montana for present and future generations.”
Abstracted from an article in the New York Times
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/14/us/montana-youth-climate-ruling.html>

Arctic Refuge Leases Canceled

The U.S. Interior Department recently canceled seven oil and gas leases in Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge that were part of a sale held in the waning days of the Trump administration, arguing the sale was legally flawed.



Coastal Plain with Brooks Range in the background (USFWS photo)

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said with her decision to cancel the remaining leases “no one will have rights to drill for oil in one of the most sensitive landscapes on earth.” However, a 2017 law mandates another lease sale by late 2024. Administration officials said they intend to comply with the law. Two other leases that were issued as part of the first-of-its-kind sale for the refuge in January 2021 were previously

given up by the small companies that held them amid legal wrangling and uncertainty over the drilling program.

Alaska political leaders have long pushed to allow oil and gas drilling on the refuge’s 1.5 million acre coastal plain, an area seen as sacred to the Indigenous Gwich’in because it is where caribou they rely on migrate and come to give birth. The state’s congressional delegation in 2017 succeeded in getting language added to a federal tax law that called for the U.S. government to hold two lease sales in the region by late 2024.

President Joe Biden, after taking office, issued an executive order calling for a temporary moratorium on activities related to the leasing program and for the Interior secretary to review the program. Haaland later in 2021 ordered a new environmental review after concluding there were “multiple legal deficiencies” underlying the Trump-era leasing program. Haaland halted activities related to the leasing program pending the new analysis.

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, a state corporation that won seven leases in the 2021 sale, sued over the moratorium but a federal judge recently found the delay by Interior to conduct a new review was not unreasonable.

The corporation obtained the seven leases to preserve drilling rights in case oil companies did not come forward. Major oil companies sat out the sale, held after prominent banks had announced that they would not finance Arctic oil and gas projects.

The coastal plain, which lies along the Beaufort Sea on Alaska’s northeastern edge, is marked by hills, rivers and small lakes and tundra. Migratory birds and caribou pass through the plain, which provides important polar bear habitat and is home to other wildlife, including muskox.

From Juneau Daily Empire and Anchorage Daily News.

Former Officials and Academics Urge Secretary Haaland to protect Izembek Refuge.

Located near the tip of the Alaska Peninsula in southwest Alaska, the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge—more than 95% of which is Wilderness—is a remote stretch of land where a quarter-million migratory birds congregate each fall and where massive brown bears lumber through streams during peak summer salmon runs. Nearly 7,000 caribou make an annual trek into the Izembek Wilderness to overwinter, and hundreds of sea otters swim with their young in the Izembek Lagoon, occasionally in the vicinity of migrating orcas, gray whales, and minke whales.

This summer, over 20 top former officials from the Department of the Interior and presidential administrations going back to the Carter administration wrote to Interior

Secretary Deb Haaland to criticize the Biden administration for its renewed effort to push forward with a land exchange to potentially authorize a road through the Izembek Wilderness.



Pacific Black Brant at Izembek Refuge (USFWS)

“We are troubled by the Department’s renewed effort to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to potentially authorize a road in the Izembek Refuge. The Department’s Notice of Intent continues to suggest that the Secretary of the Interior has the authority to trade away congressionally designated wilderness to allow roads or other development projects. This action continues to put the integrity of ANILCA, subsistence rights, and all of Alaska’s conservation lands at risk. Proceeding in this way could be used as a blueprint for future secretaries to exchange some of our wildest, most ecologically intact lands to allow development and industrialization, eviscerating one of our nation’s proudest legislative conservation and environmental justice achievements.... We recognize your interest in being responsive to the concerns of the King Cove community, and we are certain there are paths forward that do not undermine ANILCA and the values it sets forth. We respectfully request the Department to pursue alternative non-road options that would accommodate the present and future needs of all peoples that rely on the subsistence use and conservation values of the Refuge.”

And more recently, a group of over 35 current and emeritus professors of environmental law wrote to Secretary Haaland to let the Biden administration know:

“Executing a land exchange, pursuant to Section 1302(h) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, for purposes of building a road through Congressionally designated Wilderness in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, is contrary to the clear wording of the law and its legislative history. Moreover, it would jeopardize the protection of over 150 million acres of national public lands. In short, we contend that such an exchange would be both illegal and unwise....Accordingly, we respectfully urge you not to pursue a harmful and illegal land exchange for the purpose of building a road through Congressionally designated

Wilderness in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. Moreover, as the Corps of Engineers and others have identified, there are many less damaging alternatives to a road to meet your goals.” *From Wilderness Watch.*

Rising Seas Push Out Specialized Rat Species in Florida Keys

As sea levels continue to rise, silver rice rats (a federal listed endangered species) may run out of habitat. The rat has shifted its range upslope as sea level has risen but this strategy won’t help them keep up with habitat loss in the long run. Rice rats live only at low elevations right near or below sea level in dwarf mangrove environments. Mostly nocturnal, they forage during low tides. The FWS collected some movement data after collaring the endangered rats in 2004. Since then, Hurricane Irma made landfall in the Keys in 2017 and sea levels have been rising.

Paul Taillie currently an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill led a study published in *Biodiversity and Conservation* looking at the 2004 data and collecting more recent location data on the species to see how sea level rise may have affected them. Taillie and his team used locations from radio collars to establish the upper and lower elevation range limits for the species and to determine if these have shifted over time. They found that while the rats did shift their range, there was a substantial amount of habitat loss as they moved upward between 2004 and 2021. There is less habitat as one moves upslope. Then Taillie and his team projected sea level rise and found drastic habitat loss for the species as sea level rise increases.

Taillie indicated that is bad news for the silver rise rat. There are some potential ways to assist the species. One possibility is controlling black rats (which have broader habitat and may compete with them) or reintroducing the species on the mainland where they may do better. Loss of habitat may also make the species more vulnerable to the Burmese Python. The challenges the silver rice rat face point to those confronted by other island species. As sea levels continue to rise, may endemic island species will face extinction. *Information provided by Deborah Holle from Outdoor Ness Bulletin of the Wildlife Management Institute.*

Removal of two dams on the lower Saranac River marks milestone for Atlantic salmon restoration in Lake Champlain basin

Two dams that stand between Atlantic salmon and upstream spawning habitat on the Saranac River are coming down, the culmination of years of collaboration among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Trout Unlimited and other public-private partners. The removal of the Indian Rapids and Fredenburgh Falls dams advances a conservation goal more than three

decades in the making: reestablishing salmon runs in the largest tributary on the New York side of Lake Champlain.

Once the Indian Rapids and Fredenburgh Falls dams are gone, only the first obstacle on the river — the Imperial Mills Dam — will stand between Atlantic salmon and upstream habitat that has been inaccessible since 1786, when the first dam was constructed across the lower Saranac River. Lower Saranac Hydro Partners, now owned by Patriot Hydro, installed a fish ladder at the Treadwell Mills Dam — a hydro-power facility upstream from the Indian Rapids and Fredenburgh Falls dams— as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process for generating electricity at the site in 1990. Lower Saranac Hydro also entered into a settlement agreement to remove the Indian Rapids and Fredenburgh Falls dams.



Fredenburgh Falls



Indian Rapids Dam

However, the hydroelectric development proposed at Imperial Mills Dam, the first barrier on the Saranac River, and its required fish ladder, were never constructed. The lack of fish passage at Imperial Mills resulted in an agreement to delay the removal of the dams and eventually turn off the fish ladder at Treadwell Mills. So far, salmon have never been able to use the ladder at Treadwell Mills because of the three barriers downstream. But that's about to change.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has taken over the task of installing a fish ladder at the Imperial Mills Dam. The fish ladder is slated for completion by fall of 2026. Patriot Hydro is currently pursuing a FERC relicensing of their hydroelectric project at the Treadwell Mills Dam. The time is right to complete the efforts that were started over 30 years ago.

The Service reached out to Patriot Hydro and New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG), which owns the Indian Rapids Dam, to see the original agreement to remove the Indian Rapids and Fredenburgh dams come to fruition. Together, partners negotiated a collaborative approach to proactively fund and carry out the removals that met the requirement of the FERC license in a cost-effective and timely manner. The Service offered to fund engineering, permitting and construction-phase services for the removals and asked that Patriot Hydro and NYSEG cover construction costs.

Funding to support the project flowed from multiple streams: \$536,000 from Patriot Hydro, \$175,000 from the Service, \$65,000 from NYSEG, and \$370,000 from the Lake Champlain Basin Program through their new Aquatic Organism Passage Implementation Fund made possible by Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding.

Now, after years of planning and coordination, the dams are coming down, and Atlantic salmon will soon be able to access 13 miles of spawning habitat on the river's mainstem, and another 18 miles on tributaries, for the first time since around the time of the American Revolution.

Read more at <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2023-08/removal-two-dams-lower-saranac-river-marks-milestone-atlantic-salmon>

Notes From the Field and Other Things

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

Adventure Travel with FWS Retirees

As we emerge from our COVID cocoons and get back out into the world, we would like to tell you of a couple of FWS Retirees travel opportunities. Many of us have wanted to journey on a safari to Africa. Today’s safaris are not of the *Out of Africa* mold – but are still filled with adventure and fantastic wildlife viewing. Both trips are booked with Africa Through Your Lens, a company that has been hosting FWS Retirees in South Africa for over 10 years.

ChaZen Volunteer Safari/Pilanesburg National ParkDates: Depart US January 22 and return February 2, 2024Price: \$2,750 plus airfare to Johannesburg Includes: all lodging, in-country transportation, meals, wine/beer with lunch and dinner, entry fees and tips. If you want to do some good with your travel time and dollars, plus enjoy a wonderful safari experience, this is the trip for you! Since 2011, FWS retirees have participated in this do-good adventure. Volunteer work is at ChaZen Game Reserve (a private reserve owned by our hosts the Viljoens).

Past projects have included habitat restoration, relocating wildlife, assisting in the breeding programs, trail maintenance, and general repairs. The workday is usually in the mornings with the afternoons spent in free time before a late afternoon game drive and sundowner. The last few days of this volunteer experience is spent in the Pilanesburg National Park area north of Johannesburg. Here we should see elephants, hippos, and possibly a leopard!

If you are interested the trip, contact Donna Stanek at dstanek0418@hotmail.com or give her a call at: 505-917-2023.

Contributed by Donna Stanek.

Hiking Italy

Cinque Terre and Hill-Top Towns of Tuscany for 16 days in April 2023. Denise Baker, Nancy Gloman, Mary Mahaffy, and John Grettenberger worked together in the Olympia Ecological Services Office, Washington during the 1990s. I believe we logged about 45 miles of hiking!



Nancy Gloman, Denise Baker, Mary Mahaffy, John Grettenberger at Piazza di Santa Maria Novella, Florence



View of Vernazza, Cinque Terre from mountain side hike.



John, Mary, Nancy, Denise at Siena



Riomaggiore, Cinque Terre



Denise, Mary, Nancy Arno River, Florence

Passing of Colleagues

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

Hannibal Bolton (4/20/1949 – 9/10/2023)



Hannibal Bolton passed away on September 10 in Herndon, Virginia. Hannibal was a 45-year veteran of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a Lifetime Member of the Association of Retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Employees.

Hannibal grew up on a small cotton and soybean farm in the Mississippi Delta near

Crawfordsville, Arkansas, part of a family of 7 boys and 5 girls. After attending segregated schools and graduating from McNeil High School in 1967, Hannibal became the first and only member of his family to graduate from college, in 1971, when he received a bachelor's degree in agriculture from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and went on to earn a master's degree from UAPB in Fisheries Management.

In 1972, Hannibal joined the Fish and Wildlife Service, gathering and assessing data on fisheries and water quality in Southern Indiana as a Fisheries Field Technician. Hannibal quickly earned leadership positions including: Assistant Project Leader, Native American Fisheries Program (1974-1981); Project Leader, Fisheries Program, Upper Mississippi



Tuscany countryside



Gelato every day

Wildlife and Fish Refuge (1981-1991); Division Chief and Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Fisheries, Region 3 (1991-1995); Division Chief, Fish & Wildlife Management and Habitat Restoration (1995-2008); Assistant Director, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (2008-2016); and Director's Liaison for Diversity Recruitment and Retention (2016-2017). While Hannibal served as the Deputy Assistant Regional Director for the Fisheries Program in the Great Lakes Big Rivers Region, he was responsible for policy development and implementation involving fish management conservation activities, as well as tribal and hatchery issues, within eight states and seventeen field stations.

As Chief of the Division of Fish & Wildlife Management and Habitat Restoration within the Services' National Programs Offices, Hannibal expanded the Partners for the Fish and Wildlife and Coastal Programs, established the Services' the Aquatic Invasive Species Program and National Fish Passage Program, and helped found and launch the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. While serving as the Assistant Director for the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program in Washington, DC, Hannibal was charged with the administration and oversight of federal grant programs, including the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs, State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, and the Coastal Impact Assistance Program. Before retiring in 2017, Hannibal led the agency's Diversity Retention and Recruitment efforts. It was the culmination of a lifetime spent mentoring and developing young people.

During his career, Hannibal received dozens of awards and recognition, including his induction into the Fisheries Management Hall of Fame in 2003 by the [American Fisheries Society](#). In 2017, Hannibal received the Emmeline Moore Prize from American Fisheries Society for his career contributions to diversity in the field of fisheries, his proven track record of leadership in fisheries management, his passionate command, understanding, enunciation of and commitment to the principles and objectives of diversity, and his inspirational leadership that has made the profession of fisheries management a calling for hundreds of men and women. From the start of his career in the Service,

Hannibal directed his energy to opening the doors of opportunity in the field of fisheries to African American and Native American youth. Hannibal recruited a generation of African American professionals to leadership positions in the FWS. As president of the endowment fund for UAPB and adviser for the Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries, he recruited dozens of African American students into private, state and federal fisheries programs. Perhaps no man or woman in the history of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did more to break down barriers to minority employment and open the Service to generations of minority youth than Hannibal Bolton.

Douglas Austen, executive director of the AFS, said "Hannibal was a role model in this effort because he rose to a high and very visible level in a key federal agency," Austen said. "People respected him for his competency, professionalism, engaging personality and ability to show others of any background that they can be successful, make significant contributions, have a meaningful career and live a fulfilling life as a fisheries professional."

Former FWS Director Dan Ashe recalled Hannibal's career in the agency. "For nearly 45 years, he has embodied what it means to be an exceptional public servant – leading by example and devoting himself to nurturing and developing others. Through his leadership in the national ranks of his college fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi, as a member of the UAPB Board of Trustees and on the Board of Directors at Northland College, and through the American Fisheries Society, Hannibal has been a mentor to scores of young men and women. It's truly remarkable how much time he has devoted to helping them become leaders in fisheries management and in so many other professions."

One of the conservation professionals that Hannibal mentored to become a leader was former FWS Regional Director Mamie Parker, who fondly remembered his impact on her and other's career. "Hannibal recruited me as a teenage college intern. What a mentor, trailblazer, black pioneer conservationist. His labor is finished but his works live on."

Hannibal was predeceased by his parents, Sarah and Chester Bolton. Hannibal is survived by his wife, Verlee Pickett Bolton, who was his college sweetheart and married to for over 50 years. He is also survived by their two daughters, Angela Bolton Salas and Sarah Bolton Braswell, as well as three grandchildren.

Written by Paul Tritaik with contributions from Mamie Parker, Dan Ashe, and the American Fisheries Society.

David Campbell



David Campbell, Branch Chief Large River Recovery and Restoration Programs, in the Southwest Ecological Services Field Office passed away Thursday July 20, 2023 from some type of cardiac event.

Additional information will be provided in a future newsletter if it becomes available

Charles Robert Danner, Jr. (12/22/1943 – 8/19/2023)



Charles Robert Danner Jr. (Chuck), 79, died from leukemia. He is survived by his wife Barbara Thompson Danner of Buford, GA, formerly of Columbus.

Born in Peoria, IL, Chuck attended high school in Plainfield, IN, where he was an Eagle Scout and graduated in 1962. He graduated from

Purdue University and earned a master's degree at The Ohio State University, then worked for Indiana Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife in Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, GA in land acquisition.

He enjoyed photography, fishing, and bird-carving. He rescued and cared for scores of cats. He was a member of Grace Episcopal Church in Gainesville, where he served on several committees, taught at Mikell Folk School, and hosted movie nights for many years.

He is also survived by a brother Dennis Danner (Evelyn) of Roanoke, VA, daughters Michele Byers (Phil) of Port Charlotte, FL and Melanie Graham (Mike) of Suwanee, GA, and four grandchildren: Brittany Guerrero (Eric), Lindsay Vannerson (Drew), and Brodie and Molly Graham. He was preceded in death by his parents Charles Robert and Opal Danner and his first wife Sharon Danner.

Greg Gerlich (1961-2023)



Greg Gerlich, Mountain Prairie Regional Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) ARD in Denver passed away in August. Regional Director Matt Hogan said, "As a valued member of our regional leadership team and caring leader of FAC, this is a profound loss and our sympathies are with his family, friends and those that worked with him closely. Greg remains a loved member of our Fish and Wildlife

Family, a life-long conservationist that dedicated his life and work to fish and wildlife conservation. Greg served for nearly 8 years as our FAC ARD after a 21-year career with Colorado Parks and Wildlife. His legacy will be remembered beyond his professional accomplishments. He is remembered for his warmth, kindness, and positive attitude and working alongside him was an honor and pleasure. We will miss his compassion for others and of course, his baking demonstrations during our

annual holiday celebrations. Greg is survived by his wife Donna, daughter Kaleigh and son Grayson." *Additional information will be provided in a future newsletter if it becomes available.*

William "Bill" Herke (11/27/1929 – 9/29/2022)



William "Bill" Herke, a lifelong naturalist, fisheries scientist, and mentor to many students, died at his Baton Rouge home on Thursday, Sept. 29, 2022. Born Nov. 27, 1929, on a farm in Iowa during the Great Depression, Herke was an avid hunter and fisherman, as well as a long-time member of both the American Fisheries Society and the Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

In 1950, Herke enlisted in the Air Force where he served as a medical lab technician until 1954. He graduated with a B.S. and then an M.S. in fisheries from Iowa State University. In 1963 he became the acting leader of the newly created Louisiana Cooperative Fishery Research Unit at Louisiana State University. In 1971, he completed his Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Use of natural, and semi-impounded, Louisiana tidal marshes as nurseries for fishes and crustaceans." He served for more than thirty years at LSU as an adjunct professor and as assistant leader of LSU's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. During his career, Herke carefully guided many graduate students and published more than 60 professional papers, mostly on the importance of coastal wetlands as fisheries nursery habitat, and the effects that ubiquitous water management control structures were having on those fisheries. His dedication to Louisiana's fisheries and wetland conservation was recognized with the 1987 Governor's Award for Conservation. In 2001, he was honored with the Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association's Arthur Van Pelt Award for Lifetime Conservation Achievement. He was also a 2021 inductee into the Hall of Fame for LSU's School of Renewable Natural Resources. *Information provided by Doug Fruge who noted that while Dr. Herke retired from USGS, he was FWS prior to the mid-1990s.*

Nancy Lynn Howell-Streeter (9/1/1950 – 8/26/2023)



Nancy L. Howell-Streeter succumbed physically but not emotionally, to her courageous six-year long battle with breast cancer at her home in Shepherdstown, West Virginia at 2:30 AM on Saturday, August 26, 2023, in the presence of her husband and son. She was a

native of Arlington, Virginia where she was born to Carol and Charles Howell on September 17, 1950.

She earned a Bachelor of Science degree at East Carolina University, a Master of Arts degree at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and graduated from the FBI National Academy (where she met her husband). One of the first female law enforcement National Park Rangers, she came up through the ranks in her 20-year career which included undercover work deterring poaching and major criminal activity on National Park lands.

She continued her love of protecting the environment and wildlife by accepting a promotion to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Again, she excelled in her work of employee safety education, protection of the environment and wildlife, and environmental education for adults and children, retiring as a Branch Chief.

Upon retiring she found time to improve her budding wood carving skills to the level of juried award-winning woodcarvings. Her favorites being woodcarvings of the wildlife she had spent her life protecting and whimsical Santas. She also became a proficient golfer promoting the sport and eager to teach her family, friends, and sister beginner golfers. She was famous among her golfing peers for reminding them to have fun and “it’s only a game,” as well as her colorful language when a golf ball ignored her wishes.

As a volunteer she served as a firefighter/EMT (Saltire, NY) a girls’ recreational softball coach, basic boat operation instructor to the Berkeley County Sheriff’s Office, and a board member of the Cress Creek Ladies Golf Association and Friends of the National Conservation Training Center. Over the years she was a rescue pet-mom to 11 German Shepherds and 4 cats.

She is survived by her loving husband of 35 years John W. Streeter Jr. Their children: John W. Streeter III and wife Renée Streeter, Jo-Ann Cohen and husband Eric Cohen, and Deborah A. Myers and husband Ron Myers. Their grandchildren: Dakota Cohen, Sami Lukasiewicz and husband Matt Lukasiewicz, William Myers and wife Jessica Myers, Jonathan Streeter and wife Dani Streeter, Stephanie Streeter and partner Clay Shealy, Kaileigh Myers-Twele and husband Stephen Twele, Brooke Williams, and husband Kevin Williams. Their great-grandchildren: Cecelia R. Streeter, Scarlett E. Twele, Blake M. Williams and Emilia C. Williams. Her brother: Charles Howell and wife Judy Roylance. Her nephews: Ben Mack, wife Mary Lynn Mack and great-niece Anna Mack, Jonathan Mack and wife Gretchen Mack. Cousins: Susie Bossert, Carol Sue Kostik, Peter Kostik and husband Bruce Rieder, Janice Smith and husband Mac Smith. She was preceded in death by her parents and cousin Jonathan Kostik.

Eugene (Gene or Buzzy) Peltola, Jr.



Eugene (Gene or Buzzy) Peltola, Jr. age 57, died in a plane crash in northern Alaska on September 14, 2023. While most recently known as the husband of Alaska’s sole member of Congress, Mary, Buzzy had a 34-year career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

He graduated from UAF in 1984 with a B.S. in Wildlife Management. He worked on numerous refuges as a pilot-biologist, assistant refuge manager and then Law Enforcement Zone Office in Fairbanks for the northern refuges. In 2005 he became FWS’ first Alaska Native project leader overseeing the 29-million-acre Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge in Bethel, his family’s home. While at Yukon Delta, Gene also completed Harvard University’s Executive Education training program.

From Yukon Delta, Gene served as FWS Alaska Region Assistant Regional Director of the Office of Subsistence Management. In 2018 he left the Service to the Fish and Wildlife Service to become Alaska Regional Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs where he worked until retirement in 2022.

Among other roles, he served as vice mayor and council member for the city of Bethel between 2010 and 2012 and sat on various Alaska Native village corporation boards. After retiring in 2022 from his work for federal agencies, Peltola co-founded Alaska Carbon Solutions, a consulting firm focused on carbon sequestration.

A statement from Representative Peltola’s chief of staff, Anton McParland, described Buzzy Peltola as “one of those people that was obnoxiously good at everything. He had a delightful sense of humor that lightened the darkest moments. He was definitely the cook in the family. And family was most important to him. He was completely devoted to his parents, kids, siblings, extended family, and friends.” Gene is survived by his wife Mary and numerous family members.

Averill Thayer



Averill Thayer passed away Friday, May 26, in Fairbanks, Alaska at age 97. Averill was independent and quiet. He valued family, solitude and being outdoors.

He and his sisters Janice, Joan and Virginia grew up in Oregon and Idaho, always on the move as their father chased work during the Depression. A lifelong hiker,

canoeist, bicyclist, figure skater and skier, Averill learned to ski and mush dogs in the Sun Valley area. He left high school to serve with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific during World War II and sent money home to help support his family. He commented more than once that there were parallels between today's political climate and what he observed at the beginning of the Second World War, and it worried him.

After the war, he attended the University of Idaho on the GI Bill, enjoying climbing and skiing in the nearby mountains. Summers, he worked in Glacier National Park and in Alaska, helping build Eielson Air Force base.

Averill then moved to Alaska to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He had fond memories of working on Kalgin Island, living in a tent furnished with the ever-useful wooden Blazo Box.

Averill met and married his wife June in Anchorage in 1952. They had many adventures together, living on the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers and watching Alaska become the 49th state. In Kenai in 1964, Averill's navy experience on a rolling ship came in handy as he was the only family member who remained standing during the magnitude 9.2 Good Friday Earthquake. On the family's next trip to Anchorage, they had to wait until low tide on Cook Inlet, because the highway along Turnagain Arm had sunk and was flooded at high tide.

He supported the goals and endeavors of his wife; daughters Jill, Kate and Mary; and his five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren and was proud of them all. By example, he taught his family to value education and reading, to be safety conscious, to see another person's point of view, and to feel at home outdoors. A man of few words, when he spoke, he made them count with thoughtful insights, encouragement and wonderful wry humor. He was a humble man who didn't talk much about himself, and his family often heard stories for the first time when others wrote about him in books such as *Coming into the Country* by John McPhee.

As a pilot and Fish and Wildlife Service agent, Averill flew over large stretches of remote Alaska counting animals and birds, working with trappers and hunters, and occasionally searching for lost planes. He worked out of Anchorage, McGrath, Fort Yukon and the Kenai Peninsula. In 1969, he was appointed the first refuge manager of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, moving to Fairbanks and serving in that role until 1982. During one flight in the Arctic, the engine of the government-owned Beaver came apart in midair. He prepared his passengers - conservationists Celia Hunter and Margaret Murie - and safely landed the floatplane on the tundra.

A strong advocate for the principles of the national wildlife refuge system, Averill supported scientific research and encouraged people to visit the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge while minimizing their impact so that those who followed would have the same experience. He opposed a misguided plan to erect igloo-shaped lodges in the refuge for use by wealthy

hunters and instead emphasized that the land was open to all citizens.

As a writer and photographer, Thayer informed both the public and policy makers about the refuge. Alaska magazine published his tale of a solo trip down the Sheenjek and Porcupine Rivers.

In his navy Bible, Averill taped a clipping of life goals. For example: Never break your word. Never show off your greater knowledge. Never act superior to others. Keep from finding fault. Don't talk more than others. Anyone who knew Averill knows that he kept those goals that he valued as a 17-year-old sailor.

Averill was an inspiration in how to walk into your twilight years, accepting and adapting to the changes that age brings while continuing to pursue both longtime and new interests. In recent years, he followed the research on phytonocides, substances emitted by trees, as scientists proved what he had always known: that being near trees is good for human health.

Fran Mauer shared, Ave's noble character and great experience as a pilot and officer in the Fish and Wildlife Service served as an exemplary model for many of us who worked with him. As the first manager of the Arctic National Wildlife Range (later to become "Refuge"), Ave understood the importance of protecting it in its original condition. The Refuge remains wild and free to this day largely because of his careful leadership at the beginning. The strong support for the Arctic Refuge by citizens throughout the country and beyond that we know today, was nurtured from the beginning by this remarkable but low-key person, Averill Thayer.

Jay Francis Watson (8/4/1943 – 5/30/2023)



Jay died peacefully at home after 25 years courageously battling a brain tumor. Despite multiple surgeries, treatments, and challenges to his vision, hearing and walking, he completed a 35-year career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and enjoyed an active retirement.

Jay's parents, Chick and Fran, raised him and brother Jim at an idyllic time on the San Francisco Bay Peninsula. They explored the hills and ponds, fished, camped and observed birds and wildlife. This exposure led Jay to Oregon State University for a BS in wildlife management and University of Massachusetts where he received the first PhD awarded in Fisheries.

He also met the love of his life and best friend, Mary Ann, at UMass. They married in December 1967 in Forty Fort, Pa.

After a year at Cornell University as Director of the Cayuga Lake Fishway, and the birth of his daughter, Courtenay, Jay joined the USFWS in Sacramento where his second daughter, Kelley was born. Six weeks later he moved to Fisheries Research in Washington, D.C. His final post, in 1975, was the Portland Regional Office, where he held numerous positions. In every endeavor, Jay was respected for his professionalism, dedication to the mission, sense of humor, positive outlook, cooperative spirit, work ethic, calm demeanor and accomplishments.

After retiring in 2006, he and Mary Ann enjoyed travel, hiking, cycling, sailing, watching soccer, basketball and cross country meets, and time on Hood Canal, Wash., with friends and family. In Beaverton, he developed a guide to the Fanno Creek watershed, taught youth outdoor classes through Tualatin Riverkeepers and volunteered at Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge. One of his greatest joys was exposing his grandsons and family friends to the outdoors, birding, observing wildlife and plants, and nature journaling. He spent many hours with friends at science book club, Science Pub, boat building and carpentry projects, and doing burger and beer research.

Jay is survived by his wife; daughters, Kelley Watson and Courtenay Chamberlin (Jeff); grandsons, Owen and Asa; and brother, Jim.

Association Awards 27 Youth Conservation Mini-Grants

With time running out to expend the available grant funds received from the Service, the Association embarked on an ambitious effort to get all the funds possible out to Friends Groups before the grant ended on September 30th of this year. One of the keys to success was the development of a working relationship with the Service's Friends Group Coordinator at Headquarters, a process that started in November 2022 at the National Outreach and Interpretive Workshop held at NCTC. It was there that Lew Gorman, Association Board Member for Youth and Outreach met Linda Schnee, National Friends Group Coordinator.

Marketing the Association's Mini-grant program directly to Regional Friends Group Coordinators proved a wise move to quickly and effectively contact the folks who are putting on programs that connect youth and families to nature on refuges and hatcheries.

The announcement was sent in May with a deadline at the end of June. Almost 30 proposals were received with nearly every one meeting the requirements of the program. We awarded 27

projects with over \$800 each, often making the difference between a Friends Group being able to hold a program or not. The Association spent all but 25 cents of allocated grant funds. We felt really good about that. Huge credit is due to Association Treasurer Doug Fruge' for ensuring that all the numbers were correct, that we awarded as much funding as possible, and all the checks were sent immediately. Thank you emails and letters flooded in. We're in the process of applying for more Youth Conservation funds for FY 2024 to continue the effort.



The picture shows one of the activities and expenditures from the program. Kayaks were purchased for Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in Illinois to support their outdoor program for years to come and positively impacting untold numbers of youth.

A list of all the grants is on the following page of this newsletter.

Submitted by: Lew Gorman III, FWS RA Board Member for Grants and Outreach

Below is a list of all the awardees and the title of their project.

Friends Group	Project	FWS Field Station
Big Oaks Conservation Society	Junior Wildlife Manager Program	Big Oaks NWR
Booth Society, Inc.	Youth Workbook	D.C. Booth Historic NFH
Friends of Alaska NWRs	Anchorage youth to attend Shorebird Festival	Alaska Maritime NWR
Friends of Crane Meadows NWR	Crane Meadows Pollinator Enhancement Areas	Crane Meadows NWR
Friends of the Berkshire NFH	Demonstration & Education Derby Participants	Berkshire NFH
Friends of Boyer Chute & DeSoto NWRs	DeSoto & Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges Fishing Clinics	Boyer Chute & DeSoto NWRs
Friends of Crab Orchard Refuge	Becoming an Outdoors Family	Crab Orchard NWR
Friends of the Forsythe	Atlantic City Urban Refuge Program	Edwin B. Forsythe NWR
Friends of the Great Plains Nature Center	Linking Students to Nature: Water Quality Education Program	Great Plains Nature Center
Friends of the Front Range Wildlife Refuges	May the fourth be with us	Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR
Friends of Hackmatack NWR	Engaging Local Youth with Conservation and Friends of Hackmatack NWR	Hackmatack NWR
Friends of Heinz Refuge	Philly Nature Kids	John Heinz Refuge at Tinicum
Evelyn Goldberg Briggs Memorial Library	Story Trail	Iron River NFH
Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi WPA	Friends of Maga Ta-Hohpi Waterfowl Production Area youth events materials and supplies	Huron WMD
Friends of Mammoth Springs NFH	First Outdoor Survival Camp	Mammoth Springs NFH
Friends of Mashpee NWF	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Youth Camp	Mashpee NWR
Friends of Northwest Hatcheries	Angling for Equity	Puget Sound/Olympic
Friends of Northwest Hatcheries	Winthrop Kids Fishing Day	Winthrop NFH
Friends of Pendilis Creek Hatchery	Youth Culture and Career Day Camp Partnership: Becoming Good Ancestors	Seney NWR & Pendilis Creek NFH
Friends of Prairie Wetlands Learning Center	Prairie Wetlands Up Close	Prairie Wetlands Learning Center
Friends of Rachel Carson NWR	Connections Trailer	Rachel Carson NWR
Friends of Rice Lake NWR	Geocaching as part of Youth Outdoor Activities Group	Rice Lake NWR
Friends of Trempealeau NWR	Archery for All	Trempealeau NWR
Friends of Trinity River NWR	Campfire Cooking	Trinity River NWR
International Wildlife Refuge Alliance	2023 DR/WR Community Youth Partnership Program	Detroit River International
Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends	Refuge Buddies	Minnesota Valley NWR
Muscatatuck Wildlife Society	Hayden School Field Trip Funding	Muscatatuck

Are You up to Date on Your Dues?

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

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

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



Hope to see you at NCTC at the 20th Retirees Reunion!!