

# FWS Retirees Association NEWSLETTER



Winter (February) 2024

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## 20<sup>th</sup> FWS Retirees Reunion 2023

The 20<sup>th</sup> FWS Retiree's reunion at NCTC was a resounding success according to feedback received from those who attended. It started with the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife which raised \$300 for the work of the Friends of NCTC and ended with presidential historian Douglas Brinkley's captivating talk about conservation from the World War II era up to the 1980s – a time frame including the lives of most FWS retirees.



Paul Tritaik at the Commons below our welcome sign

Monday night Mark Madison and Maureen "Mo" Daugherty hosted a wildlife trivia night at the NCTC lounge which saw high levels of participation. Association Chair Cindy Barry's

team won the competition much to their surprise, but probably due the diversity of their backgrounds (Cindy, Helen, Deborah and Terry).

Tuesday's program opened with a welcome from Chair Cindy Barry followed by updates from Association board members on their areas of responsibility. NCTC Director Steve Chase welcomed the group standing in for the Service Director who was not able to attend due to a scheduling conflict. Steve provided an interesting summary of changes in the Service's training program over the years.

Dan Murphy from the Chesapeake Bay Field Office and Joe McCauley, FWS Retiree who works for the Chesapeake Conservancy gave a program on the Southern Maryland Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge Land Protection Plan highlighting the incredible partnership opportunities to preserve important habitat in this area so close to the nation's capital.

Mark Madison and staff provided attendees a tour of the NCTC campus and facilities including the new location of the archives and library. He also showed some of the amazing artifacts in the archives.

Tuesday evening, we dedicated a memorial bench to Association co-founder and stalwart Jerry Grover. His wife Judy, sister PolliAnne, his eldest son Jeff and family (George, Nicole and Marina) attended. Judy, Jeff and Marina all spoke about Jerry. The Leopold bench will be placed near the bench of other Association co-founder Denny Holland.



Left to right - Steve Parry, Deborah Holle, Mark Madison, Jim Tisdale, and Jessy Jacobs during archive tour

Wednesday, most attendees took one of two field trips. See articles elsewhere in this newsletter. Wednesday evening, we joined the Service Directorate, family members, and others to attend a moving tribute to former FWS Assistant Director for Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Hannibal Bolton which included the Service's honor guard. After dinner, the International Fly-Fishing Film Festival was presented in the auditorium hosted by former Service Director John Turner. One of the films, *Father Nature*, was filmed at the Turner's ranch by his film maker son, Mark. Afterwards, John visited with participants and shared memories of his time with the Service.



ESA Panel Moderator, Gary Frasier shares a chuckle with former FWS Director John Turner.

Thursday morning was devoted to celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. Former Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary Don Barry and Former DOI Solicitor Mike Young regaled us with tales of the early days of the ESA including promulgating the first regulations. The second panel consisted of former FWS Director Turner, former FWS Director Jamie Rappaport Clark, and former FWS Deputy Director Marshall Jones recounting experiences with implementing the Act and their take on its future. NCTC filmed this historic panel discussion and we will post a link on our website when the film is available.

The afternoon session focused on practical information for retirees on frauds and scams presented by Susan LeFew from AARP and federal retiree benefits and legislation by John Hatton of NARFE.

The closing banquet was held in the NCTC dining hall with a program hosted by Cindy Barry. Mark Madison presented the History Award posthumously to John Cornely for his many years of service to the Service Heritage (now History) Committee. Libby Herland remembered John and his accomplishments. Deborah Holle shared a story of our oldest known retiree, 102-year-old Pete Anastasi, who could not attend but was with us in spirit. Deborah had enjoyed speaking with him as he ordered a FWS retiree polo shirt. The banquet was also attended by members of the current Service Directorate and Deputy Directorate who were meeting at NCTC during the same week.



Current FWS Director Martha Williams greeting retirees at the banquet.

The closing program, open to the public, was Presidential Historian Douglas Brinkley speaking on *Silent Spring Revolution*, his latest book. His presentation held everyone's attention even after a long week and long day. He was also amazing in that he'd been on non-stop media interviews before arriving at NCTC due to the recent passing of Rosalynn Carter and Henry Kissinger (just the day before).





Cindy Barry, Mamie Parker and Jamie Rappaport Clark following the Hannibal Bolton memorial.

## Message from the Chair

Happy New Year everyone! I am still riding on a “high” from the recent Retirees Reunion at NCTC. Elsewhere in this newsletter are a great summary of the events and photos. It was a herculean effort by many to actually have this Reunion (you may recall the scheduling snafu that led to us having the Reunion the week after Thanksgiving, and then, a threat of government shutdown). However, the entire staff at NCTC welcomed us with open arms, and were very helpful in every possible way with the planning and execution, living up to their reputation as “the home of the Fish and Wildlife Service.” Suffice it to say, I wish **ALL** our members could attend these Reunions. I realize that isn’t possible...but I heard many folks say, “I wish I had attended more of these!”

### *Late-breaking news:*

We announced that the next 2 Reunions will be: **Spring 2025 in Madison, WI, and Fall 2026 in the Anchorage, AK area.** Board members are working now to reserve dates and locations to give as much advance notice as possible to our members.

We begin each Reunion with a report from each Board member on the accomplishments for the year. Here are some highlights for 2023:

- Update of the Association’s Bylaws
- 27 Friends groups received grants for youth projects (approx. \$30,000)
- New History and Youth grants from FWS approved for 2024
- Several outreach events to promote the FWS Retirees Association
- Survey of the Association’s members to determine if their personal information (name, address, email

address) from our database could be provided to FWS field stations for outreach events

- Sale of polo shirts with FWS Retirees logo
- Website updates
- Newsletters issued for February, May, and September
- Donations from members: \$983 from polo shirt promotion and \$748 from Reunion registration promotion
- Ended 2023 with a general operating account balance of \$21,805

I want to take a second to thank Denise Baker for her tenure on the Board for the past three years, and her role as our secretary. She is a fantastic note-taker and, among her many duties, we relied on her skills to send out the blast emails to our membership. Denise has generously volunteered to support the Association by continuing as the administrator of our Association’s Facebook page. **Thanks, Denise!**

Please contact any of the Board members (email addresses provided above) with your comments and suggestions. Please enjoy this newsletter, and have a great Spring, wherever you are! *Cindy Uptegraft Barry, Chair*

## Treasurer’s Report

**Operating and Reunion Budgets.** The Association budgets regular income and expenses on a calendar year (CY) basis, and we closed our regular operating budget for 2023 with total income of \$12,353.94, which was \$6,153.94 more than we budgeted. Expenses were \$10,134.34 (\$3,934.34 more than budgeted), for net income for the year of \$2,219.60. Regular dues income was \$425 less than what we expected, but lifetime membership income was \$3,000 more than originally budgeted, with the Association picking up eight new Lifetime Members in 2023. Voluntary donations by members were a major additional source of income to supplement regular dues, and those donations were greatly appreciated! We had major savings in expenses due to there being no Board Travel expenses again this year, no Legal and Professional expenses, and expenses in the Office Supplies category were much less than planned. We did exceed expenses in some categories, including in the Special Projects category, mainly for the polo shirts, and in the Miscellaneous category, primarily for purchase of an additional supply of membership pins.

Producing polo shirts for sale to members was a special project we took on during the year. Our income from polo shirt sales was \$2,403.00, and our expenses for producing and mailing them were \$2,514.49, for a total deficit of \$111.49. Making a profit on sale of the polo shirts was not a goal of that project. However, our members were generous in donating over \$900 in donations from the polo shirt promotion.

Reunions are budgeted separately from our regular operating income and expenses, and our goal is always to have income be just enough to cover our expenses. This year’s Reunion at

NCTC was a bit different than those held at other venues. Because NCTC provided the facilities, audiovisual support, and helped in countless other ways, and because lodging and food were covered by attendees paying for their rooms and meals directly to NCTC, we did not need to charge a registration fee. The only income we received from participants was for the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife, which raised a total of \$280.00. That income was in turn donated to the Friends of the NCTC, plus an additional \$20, for a total donation of \$300. The major source of income for the Reunion was a greatly appreciated \$3,000 donation from Ducks Unlimited. Our expenses were primarily for the cost of the bus charter for one of the field trips, printing of the program booklets, and travel reimbursement for one of the Reunion program speakers. Those expenses totaled \$5,744.39, for a net loss of \$2,464.39 on the 2023 Reunion.

The Association has main operating checking and credit card accounts at Jefferson Security Bank (JSB) in Shepherdstown, WV, and a PayPal account for collecting dues and reunion registration income. At the end of 2023 our operating accounts totaled \$21,805.47 compared to \$20,819.03 at the end of 2022, for a net gain of \$986.44. The operating accounts balance was well above our goal of having at least double our estimated yearly expenses (\$6,200 in 2023) in the “bank.”

**Grants Budgets.** The Association receives two grants from the FWS. One of those, the “History Grant,” is used to fund Association activities that help to implement the FWS’s History Committee Strategic Plan. The Association uses that grant funding to pay for travel by Association members who serve on the FWS’s History Committee to attend History Committee meetings; travel by Association members to: conduct oral history interviews; oral history supplies, equipment and transcription services; Association membership database management and FWS History Museum support expenses. Funds from the grant are also used by the Association to issue “mini-grants” to field stations for celebrating station anniversary events.

At the beginning of 2023 there was \$11,327.64 remaining of the \$37,400 received from the FWS in the 2019 amendment to the 2017 History Grant. A total of \$8,894.15 was expended in CY 2023, leaving a \$2,433.49 budget balance. However, a total unexpended grant balance of \$6,035.74 was still being held by the federal government at the end of the grant’s performance period on June 30 last year. The unexpended funds largely resulted from a severe reduction in activities supported by the grant over its five-year performance period due to the COVID-19 pandemic, plus issues related to transition of the Association’s Treasurer and other roles during the first half of 2023. An application was submitted to the FWS last year for a new FY 2024 History Grant, and, the award under that grant was made to the Association on October 1 last year it was funded for \$44,590.00. Of that amount, a total of \$8,894.15 was spent in 2023 on travel by

Association members to attend the History Committee meeting on December 1 and on membership database management expenses.

The other grant (“CCA-Youth Grant”) addresses Conservation Career Awareness (CCA) and Youth Programs activities carried out or funded by the Association. Funding is used to directly support career and youth outreach by Association members as well as by mini-grants to FWS field stations through Friends Groups, honoraria for speakers at or leaders of FWS youth outreach events, and contracts with appropriate non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for career and youth outreach projects. At the beginning of CY 2023 there were \$24,287.25 remaining of the \$41,500 in the 2020 CCA/Youth grant amendment funding. A total of \$24,287.00 was expended in 2023 through 27 mini-grants to FWS field stations through Friends Groups across the country to help fund career awareness and youth projects. The \$0.25 remaining unexpended was de-obligated by the FWS following completion of the grant’s performance period September 30.

An application for a new CCA/Youth Grant was submitted, and the FWS approved it with \$41,500 awarded on October 1 last year for activities during FY 2024. A total of \$2,694.39 was expended in late 2023 to support travel to conduct youth outreach activities at the five-day annual meeting of The Wildlife Society.

Funds from both grant programs are held in the Association’s Grants checking account, also at JSB, along with a credit card account for grants-related expenses. Both grant programs are managed from these two accounts. The Grants checking account had a balance of \$12,517.62 at the end of 2023 with \$36,460.95 in available History Grant funding and \$38,805.61 in available CCA/Youth Grant funding remaining in the federal government’s financial management system. The Association Treasurer can draw from those funds as needed and transfer them to our Grants checking account to cover authorized grants-related expenses. *Submitted by Doug Frugé*

## Membership

Five people signed up as life members at the reunion, giving the association a total of 64 life members. We like to thank all our sustaining members who regularly pay their dues as well as new members and life members. This quarter members could pay their dues three ways. They included using the Reunion registration forms, Polo shirt order forms and our normal membership and dues renewal form. This was convenient, but there weren’t places to fill in new or updated information. If you want to ensure that the data base has your correct and updated information, please contact Deborah Holle at [Promote@FWSRetirees.org](mailto:Promote@FWSRetirees.org).

## Sustaining Members

Winter – September, October, November, and December  
Newsletter, 2023

**BAKER**, Denise; Albuquerque, NM; Retired 2018; R2, RO,  
Ecological Services

**BARTLETT**, Mike (Jeannie); Bow, NH; Retired 2008; R5,  
Ecological Services, New England Field Office

**BLOOMER**, Cindy; Parksburg, WA **NEW**

**BRIGHT**, Larry (Karla); Arlington, VA; Retired 2015; R9,  
WO, Ecological Services

**BUTERBAUGH**, Galen (Glenda); Spokane, WA; Retired  
1992; R6, RO, Regional Director

**CASTELLI**, Paul; Egg Harbor City, NJ **NEW**

**COLLINS**, Susan; Martinsburg, WV; Retired 2022; R9,  
NCTC, Facility Operations Property Management Specialist  
**NEW**

**COON**, Nancy (Richard); Palm Beach Gardens, FL; R4, RO,  
Ecological Services **LIFE**

**COTTINGHAM**, David; Washington DC; Retired 2015; R9,  
WO, Office of the Director

**DURHAM**, Megan (Richard Graus); Reston, VA; Retired  
2007, R1, RO, Deputy Assistant Director for External Affairs.  
**LIFE**

**FISHER**, Ron; Ridott, IL; Retired 2019; R3, Refuges &  
Wildlife, Illinois River NWR **NEW**

**FLETCHER**, April (Frank Graves); Tijeras, NM; Retired  
2009; R2, RO, Refuges & Wildlife, Invasive Species

**FLYNN**, Thelma (Thomas); Montrose, WV; Retired 2017; R9,  
NCTC

**GRANTHAM**, Jesse; Southern Pines, NC; Retired 2012;  
R8(Research), Refuges & Wildlife, Coordinator California  
Condor Recovery Program

**GROVER**, Jerry (Judy), Tigard, OR; Retired 1997, R1, RO.  
R1, RO, Fisheries **LIFE**

**GROVER**, Judy (Jerry, Tigard, OR; Retired 1997, R1, RO,  
Regional Directors Office **LIFE**

**HARRISON**, Benjamin (Jean); Portland, OR; Retired 2014;  
R1, RO, Refuges & Wildlife **NEW**

**HARRISON**, Phil; Greeley, CO; Retired 2023; R1, Ecological  
Services, Sacramento, CA Office

**JONES**, Marshall (Cornelia Clay Fulghum); Washington, VA;  
Retired 2007; R9, WO, Directors Office

**HEFFERNAN**, David (Catherine); Littleton, CO; Retired  
2003; R6, R0, Refuges & Wildlife, Deputy Chief

**HERLAND**, Libby (Jim); Pittsfield, MA; Retired 2017; R5,  
Refuges & Wildlife, Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex

**KNAPP**, Bill (Betsy); Smithfield, VA; Retired 2010; R9, WO,  
Science Advisor, Science Applications

**LaMONTAGNE**, Kris (Lisa); Painter, VA; R9, WO, Federal  
Aid & State Programs

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

**LEMARIE**, Dave; Sharpsburg, MD; R1, RO, Refuges &  
Wildlife **NEW**

**MARIE**, Lena (Clarence); Albuquerque, NM; R2, RO,  
Refuges & Wildlife, Realty

**MARTIN**, Patrick (Alice); Louisburg, KS; Retired 2020; R6,  
Refuges & Wildlife, Marais des Cygnes NWR **NEW**

**MOORE**, Craig (Linda); Annandale, VA; R9, NCTC

**MOTIVANS**, Karene; Shepherdstown, WV; R9, NCTC **NEW**

**MOTT**, Seth (Sarah); Herndon, VA; Retired 2018; R9, WO,  
Migratory Birds

**NEAL**, Jim (Mary); Nacogdoches, TX; Retired 2011; R2, RO,  
Migratory Birds

**OGDEN**, Wendell (Ellen), Harpers Ferry, WV; Retired 1993,  
R9, Fisheries, Leetown Fisheries

**OLIVERI**, Robert (Eva); Brandon, MS; Retired 2011; R4,  
Law Enforcement, Jackson, MS; **NEW**

**PETERSON**, Larry; Kalispel, MT; Retired 1995; R7, RO,  
Fisheries

**ROETKER**, Fred (Gail); Lafayette, LA; Retired 2016; R9,  
WO, Migratory Birds, Lafayette, LA **NEW**

**SCHRIEFER**, Kash (Saundra Scare); Lafayette, LA; R4, Law  
Enforcement, Designated Port of New Orleans **NEW**

**SCHWINDT**, Kenneth (Janice); Ft. Collins, CO; Retired  
1999; R2, Refuges & Wildlife, Washita/Optima NWR  
Complex



## Fun Facts & Family Ties

Sometimes you find interesting stories when you are not looking for them. Several months ago, the Retirees Association decided to sell Polo shirts to our membership. While processing an order, I had a payment that did not match an order. I called and found that Pete Anasasi's daughter, Ellen Patterson, sent in the payment for him because he did not have good Internet connections at his retirement facility. I called Pete and we had a very nice chat about his life and career. He agreed to send me more information on his career with FWS.

### Pete's Ducks

Pete told me he is 102 years old and technology was passing him by. I was delighted that we have a member that is 100+ years old and still so vital and engaged in conservation. Plus, his memory is fantastic. I told him about Fun & Interesting Facts submitted by our members we publish in our Newsletters. Pete agreed to provide more information on his career with FWS and his duties with the Duck Stamp for a story. I know you will find it very engaging.

Pete was born in Philadelphia, PA on November 11, 1921. He started his career with the government back at the start of World War II when he joined the Army. He served in North Africa, Texas and Vint Hill Army Intelligence Base in Warrenton, Virginia. He met his wife Betty at a USO dance in Manassas. They were married on June 9, 1945 and celebrated their 78<sup>th</sup> Anniversary last year.

After completing his military service, Pete worked at the Government Printing Office (GPO). Pete was still at GPO when he was asked how to get waterfowl hunters and birders to use a publication (Ducks at a Distance) which was available. He was asked to promote the booklet through GPO mailing lists and other sources. He said he got on it and in a short time over one million copies were sold. This was a huge goal for GPO. The FWS Region 5 Public Affairs Officer picked up on the idea of the booklet and had single size copies printed to use as handouts.

Pete also credits Stewart Udall, Secretary of the Interior in the 1960's, for getting him a job with FWS. He did not elaborate, but said he was interviewed by the FWS Chief of Personnel and the Chief of Printing and Publications. The paperwork was approved and he started his job with the FWS and a two in-grade promotion.

Artist Robert "Bob" Hines had just completed a waterfowl booklet called "Ducks at a Distance" that illustrated waterfowl in their fall plumage. Pete said it has been copied into at least 4 languages that he knows about. Pete speaks very highly of Bob Hines. They became good friends as Pete worked in the Duck Stamp program setting up the competition to pick a winning duck stamp design. Pete said that the very first duck stamp designs were judged by Regional Directors and officials from

**SLITER**, Joyce; Erie NWR Guy Mills, PA **NEW**

**SMITH**, Frank (Robin); Kenton, DE; Retired 2003; R5, Refuges & Wildlife, Bombay Hook NWR

**SMITH**, Jerome "Jerry" (Elaine); Tyler, TX, Retired 1994; R9/Washington, Office Law Enforcement **LIFE**

**SMITH**, LaVerne (Rick Trois); Anchorage, AK **NEW**

**SMITH**, Randi (David); Spearfish, SD; Retired 2014; R6, Fisheries, DC Booth Historic Natl Fish Hatchery

**TODD**, Cecilia; Annandale, VA

**TRUST**, Kimberly; Worthington, MA; Retired 2020; R1, RO, Refuges & Wildlife **NEW**

**TURNER**, John (Mary Kay); Moose, Wyoming; Retired 1995; R9, WO, Director Fish & Wildlife Service **LIFE**

**VARNEY**, Raymond (Nancy); Windham, ME; Retired 2004; R2, Refuges & Wildlife, Kofa NWR

**WILLIS**, James (Karen), Shepherdstown, WV; Retired 2018; R9, NCTC, Deputy Director-NCTC **NEW**

**ZINNI**, Bill; Ware, MA; Retired 2018; R5, RO, Refuges & Wildlife **NEW**

*Submitted by Deborah Holle*

## New Life Member



**Megan Durham** joined the Service in 1973 after graduating from Washington University in St. Louis. She served in the divisions of Endangered Species, Research, and Public Affairs, editing Research technical reports and Fish and Wildlife News and working with the news media on many controversial issues. She served as Chief of Public Affairs and was often a liaison to the Secretary's Office on communications issues. She retired in 2007 as Deputy Assistant Director for External Affairs. After retiring, she

taught English as a Second Language for 11 years and now teaches Tai Chi. She is married to Richard Graus, a geologist.

wildlife organizations like The Wildlife Society and others working to help preserve Americas natural resources and all life that depend on it, now and in the future.



Pete and his wife celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Director Lynn Greenwalt helped make it a success too as it made the GPO's top list as a best seller—a goal other agencies wanted to reach. Pete listed many people who helped make Ducks at a Distance a success.

Pete cites one example of how he did his best to keep one Director from disaster. The Director was presenting his program at a large meeting but the copies of his presentation didn't get shipped. The contractor was late, but Pete used his contacts at GPO and asked for their help in getting a few copies picked up at the printers. Pete picked them up and hauled copies to the conference in time for the Director to hand them out and make good use of his report as planned. Pete helped save the FWS and the Director embarrassment at the large meeting of conservationists.

Pete felt he had a dream job working for the FWS and spent about 14 years working at the job of a lifetime. He left me with some advice—Do Good and Goodness will follow you home safe and sound. Pete did not mention a retirement date. He did say that being 102 years on the planet slowed up his travel and doing a few things like trout fishing, and being in Utah for another shot at a Pronghorn with 16-inch horns—his last one was a bit short of that. He would have liked to have been at our reunion at NCTC as he likes the place and was there a few times. His last visit was to be on the panel of judges for a Duck Stamp design. He said he enjoyed it because that year he did not have to set up the contest.

Note—all the information in this article was provided by Pete and his daughter Ellen. I changed very little in the write up that Pete provided me. Pete's email moniker is appropriately PetesDucks.

Please keep those Fun Facts, Interesting Stories and other information coming. It is a pleasure for me to present them in the Newsletters.

*Deborah Holle*

## **Wildlife Walks for Lynn Greenwalt**

So many of our retirees/members know former Director Lynn Greenwalt, who was raised on Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge. The Retirees Association started a modest fundraiser to honor him in 2013. The first walk was held in 2013 in Kalispell, Montana. A total of 42 participants (out of the 121 reunion attendees) walked one mile through the peaceful wooded area at Creston National Fish Hatchery along the recently completed outdoor classroom and interpretive trail. Hatchery Manager Mark Maskill and his crew provided a delicious barbeque dinner for all who took part. This event raised \$300 for the hatchery's Friends Group. The Retirees Association charged \$25 per participant, for a total of \$1,050.

The second walk was held in Corpus Christi, Texas in 2015, at the Nueces Wildlife Preserve despite some rain that made for muddy walking. Others birdwatched in comfort from their vehicles. Afterwards, all enjoyed a delicious Texas barbeque at a nearby restaurant and listened to an informative talk from local conservationists. Funds raised went to support the local Friends groups.

One of the more entertaining Walks was one on the Oregon Coast in May, 2018. Folks who walked along the coast were treated to a lovely ocean view. From our dinner tables after the after the walk, we were treated to a wonderful display of whales breaching in the near shore waters. One show-off alone breached over a dozen times as we watched. That year, the Walk raised \$700 for the Friends of Haystack Rock NWR which helped them purchase much needed transmitters for puffin studies.

This past year, 2023, the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife was held at NCTC. It was late November and a little chilly. Despite the chill, the walk was very informative and a rather easy walk for the terrain in West Virginia. Board Member Lew Gorman, III identified many of the plants along the walk. We saw an old cemetery and remains of a rock homesite that were part of a historical site and looked after by NCTC. We had hoped to see a Bald Eagle near the nest, but it was a little late in the season. The walk raised \$300 that was donated to the Friends of NCTC to support their activities.

The Greenwalt Wildlife Walks are also a nice way to raise money for local Friends Groups and for reunion attendees to get out-of-doors and enjoy the local flora and fauna with friends.

*From information submitted by Lew Gorman and Deborah Holle*



## Outdoor Afro honors Mamie Parker

On October 20, 2023 in Oakland, CA, Dr. Mamie Parker was honored for her groundbreaking nature work by Outdoor Afro at the event as the recipient of the 2023 “Lifetime Achievement” honor. The ninth annual fundraiser, Glamp Out, celebrated all that the organization accomplished in 2023 and aspires to achieve in the future. The event raised approximately \$205,000 to support Outdoor Afro’s year-round programs.



Mamie Parker with her award

## Wendi Weber returns to the Northeast Region



Former Deputy Director Wendi Weber has returned to her previous job: Regional Director in the Northeast Region. She spent over 15 years working in the Northeast Region before joining the Director’s Office in 2022. Over the past year as Deputy Director, Weber has provided critical leadership on

the overall development, planning, management, and coordination of strategic goals. In addition, she worked on a host of complex issues, particularly those related to creating a welcoming workplace, environmental justice, and co-stewardship. She has been an outspoken advocate for building a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

In total, Weber has spent over 25 years working for the Service since beginning her career as a biologist in our International Affairs Program. Her collaborative work with Congress, the states, Tribes, and other partners to conserve at-risk species and achieve landscape-level conservation have been hallmarks of her leadership both at headquarters and the region. Weber is from Rochester, N.Y., and has a bachelor’s degree in zoology

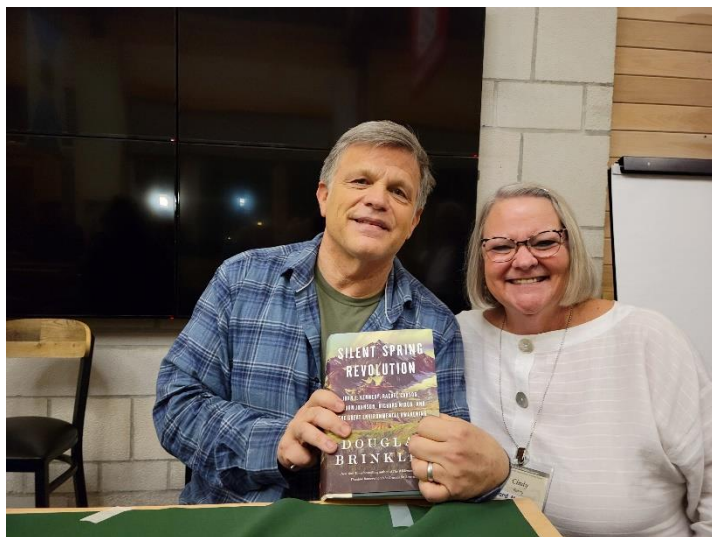
from the University of Rhode Island and a master’s degree in fisheries from the University of Georgia.

Before joining the Service, Weber worked for the states of Florida and Georgia as a field biologist. In 2018, she was awarded the Robert McDowell Award for Conservation Management Excellence, which is the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ highest honor. She also received the Theodore Roosevelt Government Leadership Award in 2019, recognizing her excellence in management of programs and policy implementation.

*From Fish and Wildlife News*

## Douglas Brinkley’s *Silent Spring Revolution*

Our 2023 keynote reunion 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.



Douglas Brinkley and Cindy Barry after he signed her copy of his new book at the reunion.

In *Silent Spring Revolution*, he 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. The book is available from Amazon and other sources.

## A Hike Remembered

One summer day, I was walking on a trail in the White Mountains in northern New Hampshire. As I often did when



hiking with a group, I had slowed my pace and hung back from the others, hoping for more bird movement and bird song, once the main human noise had ceased. Suddenly, I heard white-throated sparrows calling loudly and urgently, and at almost the same moment a snowshoe hare ran past me. It was followed almost immediately by a pursuing short-tailed weasel (ermine) followed by two agitated sparrows, harassing the weasel. It was over in seconds, but I could hear the sparrows in the distance, still calling urgently. And then, the rabbit ran by my feet again, still pursued by the weasel pursued by the sparrows. One more time, the cavalcade circled through the woods, the rabbit again passing almost over my boots. This time, however, the weasel came to a dead stop right at my feet, with the agitated sparrows calling in the bushes nearby. Perhaps my scent or my presence momentarily confused it. Whatever, apparently it was long enough for the weasel to lose its concentration, and the snowshoe hare to lose its pursuer. The weasel ran off, the sparrows quieted down, and I continued my hike. *From Sandy Wilbur*

### Sacred Sites Totem Pole at NCTC Commons

As retirees entered the Commons building, we immediately saw the Sacred Sites Totem Pole. The House of Tears Carvers of the Lummi Nation created the Sacred Sites Totem in 2021 for President Joe Biden and “to raise awareness of Indigenous sacred sites from oil, gas mining, and infrastructure projects.” A delegation from the Carvers, the Native Organizers Alliance, and other partners transported the totem from the Lummi Nation in Washington state to Washington DC on a two-week journey visiting endangered sites along the way



At the end of the journey at an event on the National Mall they presented the totem pole to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland who accepted it on behalf of the President. A subsequent donation agreement conveyed the totem pole to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and designated NCTC as its permanent home. Visitors are welcome to touch, commune with and admire the totem. *From NCTC handout about the totem pole.*

### Retiree Travel

#### Winter in South Africa – It’s Hot!

A group of intrepid FWS retirees, spouses and friends have recently returned from another successful volunteer safari to South Africa. This year’s group consisted of 11 travelers to ChaZen Game Reserve and Pilanesberg National Park. We spent the first week of the adventure trimming overhanging vegetation from game drive trails. These tour routes had become overgrown with hanging tree limbs and encroaching bushes. Did you know that about 95% of the trees and bushes have large thorns? – Or at least it seems that way when you are cutting them back! We cleared three tour loops, so now visitors will not need to dodge thorny limbs and enjoy the amazing wildlife!



Gathering on the deck before the worday.

But it was not all work and no play! Work details were only in the mornings, so the afternoon could be spent on such important pursuits such as napping, reading, and just lounging about! We were treated to an afternoon game drive every day and it never disappointed us! ChaZen (where the work was done) has a large variety of antelopes, along with hippos, giraffes, Cape buffalo and too many others to mention here!

To top off the trip we spent three days at Pilanesberg National Park. This national park is one of South Africa’s most visited, being a short drive from Johannesburg. There we stayed in an adjacent private game reserve, Black Rhino. Which enabled us to have the best of both worlds, a private game reserve and national park. Here we had a chance to see elephants (up close



and personal), lions hunting wildebeest (what a treat), cheetahs, rhinos (black and white), and large variety of other wildlife and birds!



There were a lot of branches to remove along the roads.

Everyone had a good time with lots of laughs and stories to tell at home! *Article and photos from Donna Stanek.*

## Future Trips

We are in the process of planning a trip for next March. This next trip would not be a volunteer or work trip but a standard safari to ChaZen Game Reserve and Pilanesberg National Park for five nights each. The dates are March 25 to April 4, 2025. The cost is: \$3950 for double occupancy and \$4900 for single occupancy. This does not include airfare or staff tips.



Wildlife at Pilanesberg National Park

Pilanesberg National Park is one of the most visited in South Africa. The park is home to a large herd of elephants, lions, leopards, cheetahs, giraffes, zebras and a myriad of antelope and other species. The road system makes it very easy to view wildlife and there are several viewing blinds overlooking small

lakes and ponds. We stay at the adjacent private reserve of Black Rhino, giving us access to the park directly from our lodging.

If you are interested in this next trip, just reach out to Donna Stanek, [dstanek0418@hotmail.com](mailto:dstanek0418@hotmail.com) or on FB messenger.

## Natural Resource Issues

### Colorado Grey Wolf Re-Introduction

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has finalized plans to designate Colorado's gray wolf population as a "nonessential-experimental population," loosening restrictions on take traditionally granted to federally listed species. The action will provide Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) with increased management flexibility which is expected to increase the likelihood of overall gray wolf restoration success according to CPW.



Gray Wolf, USFWS photo

In 2020 state residents narrowly voted in favor of Proposition 114 requiring CPW to reintroduce gray wolves to designated areas of western Colorado by the end of 2023. Passage of the proposition was met with concern from wildlife managers, hunters and ranchers. Wildlife managers noted potential difficulties in mitigating human-wildlife conflicts due to the species endangered status. Hunters are concerned that wolves will excessively prey on game species such as deer and elk. Ranchers are concerned with the loss of livestock due to predation and advocated for the experimental population designation.

With the designation as experimental, Colorado state game wardens will be within the law to lethally take wolves that are involved in human-wildlife conflicts or employ non-lethal harassment on wolves preying on livestock and other domestic animals. Ranchers will be able to administer these methods on wolves in the act of preying on their livestock. The Service expedited the designation process at the request of CPW. Colorado began introducing wolves from Oregon in the fall of 2023. *Suggested by Deborah Holle, from various sources and*



media. This topic has had a lot of media coverage in Colorado since the reintroduction began.

## Wolf Politics in Washington State

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Commission denied a petition to initiate rulemaking around wolf-livestock conflict at their meeting on October 28, 2023. Since that decision, petitioners filed an appeal with Governor Jay Inslee requesting that he overturn the Commission's decision by directing WDFW to initiate rulemaking. This exact process played out in 2019 on a similar rulemaking petition by these same wolf protection organizations. Both WDFW and the Commission have stated that these rules will not prove beneficial to wolf recovery in Washington State.

As a member of the WDFW Wolf Advisory Group (WAG), the [Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation](#) (CSF) testified against this petition and supported efforts to protect and maintain current protocols in Washington State through their advisory role. Wolf protection organizations have filed an appeal with the Governor's office trying to influence wolf management for a second time. WDFW biologists and the WDFW have spoken out in opposition to these actions' multiple times since 2019.

On September 15, 2023, a rulemaking petition was filed with the WDFW commission on behalf of eleven wolf protection groups. This petition sought to introduce and codify more restrictive standards relating to the use of lethal and non-lethal methods of addressing wolf conflicts. During the October Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting, WDFW recommended denying the rulemaking petition and the Commission agreed with the department's assessment. However, on Monday November 27, 2023, the petitioners filed an appeal with Governor Jay Inslee's office requesting that he direct WDFW to codify wolf-livestock protocols. The Governor has 45 days to respond to that appeal. *Provided by Deborah Holle. For more information see*

<https://congressionalsportsmen.org/news/anti-sporting-interest-file-appeal-on-wdfw-commissions-denial-of-wolf-rulemaking-petition/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=074bf2ba-bcd5-4a2d-bde8-fa97035cd379>

## More Reunion Stories

### Field Trip to The Freshwater Institute and Antietam National Battlefield

While not nearly as popular as the long Field Trip to the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute and the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, Field Trip was definitely worth the time spent, with the added benefit of not having to sit for hours on a bus and being able to take a break between trip segments for lunch at the NCTC cafeteria.

The four retiree participants were Rowan Gould, Craig Moore, Donna Stanek and Doug Frugé, plus our NCTC van driver Alex Henry.

The first segment of this trip was a visit to The Conservation Fund's Freshwater Institute. The facility, just outside of Shepherdstown, was about a 15-minute ride from NCTC. The Freshwater Institute's mission is "to advance sustainable aquaculture practices that create a robust aquaculture industry, reduce dependence on seafood imports, and ensure high-quality, safe, and nutritious seafood for all." We were given an excellent, approximately 1.5-hour tour of the entire facility by one of the project managers. Most of their work currently is with Atlantic salmon being reared in self-contained aquaculture systems in experimental efforts to improve techniques for water re-use/recirculation in order to minimize the quantity of water needed for operation of commercial aquaculture facilities. Other on-going projects there are focused on nutrition and testing effectiveness of various feeds used in commercial aquaculture.



Circular tank, Freshwater Institute

After return to NCTC for lunch we re-boarded the van and rode to the newly-remodeled Antietam National Battlefield Visitor Center about 5 or so miles northeast of Shepherdstown near Sharpsburg, MD. This battlefield park memorializes the Battle of Antietam and the soldiers who fought and died there. During that battle, which took place over a 12-hour period on September 17, 1862, 23,000 soldiers were reported to be killed, wounded or missing. It was the single bloodiest day in American history. The battle ended the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia's first invasion into Union territory and was instrumental in prompting President Abraham Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

We were met at the visitor center by Justin Mayhue, one of the park's commercial tour guides (and Civil War re-enactor), who provided us with an excellent tour. We began at the viewing deck of the visitor center where we had a panoramic view of the entire battlefield area as Justin gave us a play-by-play overview of the battle. His extensive knowledge of the battle, geography and the Union and Confederate commanders



involved in the engagement was apparent as he explained many details of that day's events there. We then left the visitor center and drove around the battlefield area, stopping at key points where he described specific events that occurred at each spot. We ended our tour back at the visitor center, and after saying good-bye to Justin, we returned to NCTC in plenty of time before the start of other reunion events that evening.



Delaware Monument, Craig Moore photo



90<sup>th</sup> Penn Infantry Monument – Antietam National Battlefield

*By Doug Frugé*

### **Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) Field Trip**

Behind the well-guarded SCBI fence line lay a wildlife adventure. Thirty-six Reunion attendees were able to encounter what few others have had the good fortune to experience. Thanks to former FWS employees and now head animal curator, Paul Marinari, a commercial busload of RA Reunion goers was able to travel past the security guards and behind the chain-link fence.



Burnside Bridge, Craig Moore photo





After an hour and half ride through the West Virginia countryside and south through the Shenandoah Valley, the group arrived at SCBI. The group received an initial briefing where it was learned that Paul was the first director of the USFWS's Black-footed Ferret captive breeding facility in Wyoming. That alone was worth the price of admission. Actually, there was no entry fee.



In one of the many buildings on the complex, a meeting room provided the site for this initial briefing and later for lunch; a pleasant break from the cold weather. We learned about the history of the facility and its current mission. SCBI was originally designed as a horse breeding facility for the US Army in World War I. Now it serves a more peaceful purpose: research on endangered wildlife species with emphasis on breeding and reproduction topics.

The group split into three teams. Smithsonian staff members were assigned to each. With two vans available, two groups were driven to far-flung locations in the 3000+ acre complex which consisted of meadows and Eastern Deciduous Forests to view the large, fenced enclosures where study animals roamed. The third group walked around the Institute's grounds to view more nearby enclosures. How fitting to have Paul show the group the Black-footed Ferret enclosure. These cute weasels were a highlight for this article's author. The discovery and recovery efforts for this species have always intrigued him. Seeing them live for the first time was a real "wow".



One amazing discovery followed after another. Learning about the shyness and habits of the Maned Wolf was fascinating. Another new species for the checklist. Here we see the food provided for the wolves. What wolf doesn't like mice?



Our spirit guide the Red-tailed Hawk led the way to other animals at the Institute/ Our Institute guides fielded question after question, covering topics such as: are cheeta genetics as bottle-necked as we thought, who owns the land around the Institute, how many different species of cranes are you studying, do you manage your forests as well as research species, how many P-horses are there at the Institute, what species of Zebra is that one?



With the wonderful tour completed, the group gathered in the same room where the initial briefing was held. A presentation by Dr. Adrienne Crosier from the Institute's research staff informed the group about a recent wildlife research project. Graciously, Paul provided greeting cards with pictures of the Institute's iconic species for his guests.





Before reboarding the bus on this sunny, cold day and to mark a terrific occasion, it was time for a team photo, courtesy of our bus driver, Joe. Ahh, but the trip wasn't over yet. Another stop was planned. Winchester, VA, located between Front Royal and NCTC, was scheduled for a quick stop. Cruising past Patsy Cline's house, "Crazy" was played over the bus' loud speaker system. Next, an old log structure in the historic center of town marked the site of George Washington's Office during the French and Indian War. There wasn't time to visit since the key stop was at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley.

With only about 40 minutes to spend in the museum, the group was fortunate that a docent, shown here with a blue sweater and white hair, graciously gave us the highlights of the exhibits that left everyone about 15 minutes for self-exploration. Clearly a great location for a repeat visit.

Joe, the bus driver, had the bus positioned at the front door for rapid boarding so we could make it back to NCTC before the witching hour of 445PM, when the bus company's financial penalties started. Due to a huge accident on Interstate 81, we were an hour late, but not due to our error, and not late enough to miss the delicious evening meal at NCTC. A great trip was had by all. Thanks to Paul Tritaik for his assistance with cooler transport and headcounting. We didn't lose a single person!

*By Lew Gorman, Trip Leader; Photos by: Lew Gorman*

### **Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife 2023**

The National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) was the site of the 2023 USFWS Retirees Association's (RA) Reunion. Traditionally, the reunion kicks off its first event with the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife. A hike in a nearby natural area is organized by the RA with participants contributing \$15 to support a nearby FWS facility's friends' group. This year the hike's location was easy to organize with so many trails already laid out and marked at NCTC.



A route, actually the blue and orange trails [in the photo here Lew Gorman shows the route of the hike], was selected to take hikers through meadows, past the Bald Eagle's nest and historic barn, then over a stream and into the woods. The woods provided a bit of shelter from the breeze on a cold November day in West Virginia. Although the deciduous trees had dropped their leaves, many trees could still be identified. This was especially fun for those not all that familiar with the eastern deciduous forest species.



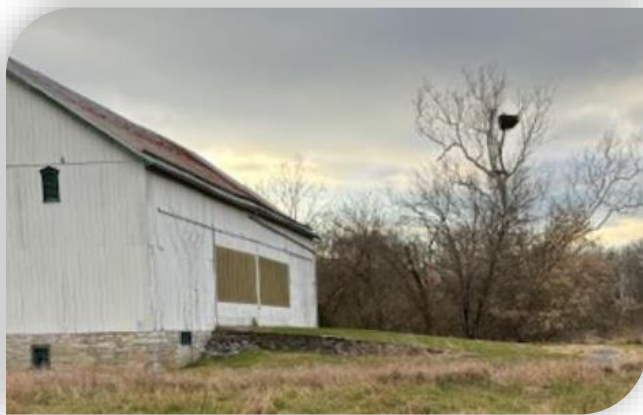
The funds raised through the effort were donated to the NCTC Friends' Group. Below is Lew Gorman, Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife Coordinator, presenting Ellen Murphy, NCTC Friends Group President, with a check for \$300.



The check presentation followed a meeting with Ellen to discuss how the funds could support their outreach effort to schools where they present conservation education sessions, particularly focused on the Bald Eagle. An education kit with reproduction bird skulls, and talons is currently not available. The Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife funds will be instrumental in developing the outreach kit. Follow up discussions with the friend's group will also focus on how to use the skulls and related items to enlighten and connect students to nature.

*Submitted by: Lew Gorman III; Photos by: Denise Baker and Peggy Jessee*

Walkers discovered the remains of what seemed to be an 18<sup>th</sup> century house. We later learned that an archeological dig was planned for the site. Nearby, the hardy group of 12 then happened upon an abandoned family cemetery, also not on the NCTC trail map. After about two miles and two hours, the temperature-braving crew returned to the NCTC Reception center with tales of discovery; both natural and archeological.





## Special Reunion Field Trip

Newsletter editor Helen Clough was treated to a special reunion field trip by former colleagues Bill Zinni and Rick Jorgensen. Rick and Bill had been instrumental in the establishment of the Canaan Valley Refuge. They knew a new refuge manager had recently arrived so wanted to share important background information with him and introduce him to key supporters in the local area. They asked me to accompany them on their journey so a wonderful day in West Virginia was had. Living off the road system in Southeast Alaska, a long car ride is always a treat, especially when I don't have to drive. The scenery was spectacular and as we arrived in the area, it definitely felt like Alaska, 13 degrees and snow on the ground. We were warmly greeted by the refuge staff and had a great meeting with new manager, Robert Frank. We then met with some key community leaders who extended warm hospitality to us. I could see the incredible friendships Bill and Rick had forged in the years they had worked on the project and how much the area and the people mean to them.



Left to right, Bill Zinni, Helen Clough, Rick Jorgensen at White Grass cross country ski Area in Canaan Valley

## 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](mailto:communications2023@fwsretirees.org).*

## Retirees Association Presents Boy Scout 2023 National Jamboree Conservation Trail Plaque

January 11, 2024 at the National Conservation Training Center marked the time and location for the presentation of the Boy Scouts of America's 2023 National Jamboree Conservation Area plaque to the Director of NCTC, Steve Chase. Lew Gorman, representing the Retirees Association Board of Directors, officially presented the plaque to Steve who is a veteran Boy Scout and BSA Order of the Arrow, Brotherhood awardee



The occasion served to illustrate NCTC's commitment to Youth Conservation and to the FWS Retirees Association's commitment to and active support of the FWS youth conservation mission. his teamwork of USFWS active and retiree components reached about 5000 Scouts and Scouters at the Jamboree's Conservation Area. An outreach success indeed!



Also in attendance at the ceremony were Mark Madison, and 2023 National Jamboree FWS Conservation Area staff, Randy Robinson, FWS National Scouting Coordinator, and FWS Volunteer, Peggy Jessee. [seen in the photo]  
by: Lew Gorman III



## Passing of Colleagues

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

### **Andrew Shawhan Burnett "Drew" "Andy" (October 4, 1961 - October 11, 2023)**

Andrew died peacefully at his home in NW Washington, DC from the complications of pancreatic cancer, with his husband of 25 years, Charlie Roessler at his side. Besides his husband he is survived by brother David Burnett and wife Connie of Gilbert AZ, brother Kelly Burnett and wife Michelle of Lantana, TX; also nieces and nephew Shaunna Schultz of Brevard NC, Elise Roark of Maricopa, AZ, Matthew Burnett of Temple, TX and Kayla Burnett of Hermitage, TN.

Andrew was born and raised in Phoenix, AZ and earned a diploma from Arcadia High School, Phoenix, AZ in 1979, a BA in biology from Lawrence University, Appleton, WI in 1983 and an MS in Forestry from Duke University, Durham, NC in 1985.

After university Drew began a 32 year career in environmental education with the U.S. Government, first volunteering in the US Peace Corps in Paraguay, then working for the U.S. Peace Corps in Washington DC and Chile. He returned to Washington, DC in 1998 and worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before retiring in 2018.

In retirement he continued to dabble in his field by working part time for North American Association for Environmental Education as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Drew also volunteered at Fallingwater in Mill Run, PA as a landscape guide.

He loved his retirement and enjoyed numerous road trips, musical events and social events with Charlie as well as tending to the property of the mountain retreat, Rockbottom, in Garrett County, MD.

He deeply loved his family and friends, and enriched the lives of all who knew him through his humor and joy in living. Drew will be deeply missed by literally hundreds of people. From *The Washington Post* October 15, 2023.

### **David Campbell (1954-2023)**



David (Dave) Campbell died unexpectedly from natural causes at his home in Stanley, New Mexico, on July 20, 2023. Although Dave passed far too soon, he lived a full and diverse life. Dave's native state was West Virginia, a fact he always shared with pride.

He was a veteran of the Vietnam War, and after his discharge he served a tour of duty as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines. Following those years abroad Dave obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science and Policy at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, in 1987 and a Master of Science degree in the Field Naturalist Program at the University of Vermont in Burlington in 1993.

Dave first put his education to work as the Director of Conservation Programs with the Nature Conservancy of Tennessee from 1994 to 2001. In 2001 he returned to the Pacific Northwest as the Endangered Species Section Lead for Snohomish County, Washington, where he was employed until 2005. Dave began his long and successful career with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2005, where he served initially as the San Juan Recovery Program Coordinator and later as the Branch Chief of the Large River Recovery and Restoration Program in the New Mexico Ecological Services field Office.

Dave retired from the Service in 2020 at the height of the Covid pandemic, and he devoted the next several years to improving his home and property at the base of the San Pedro mountains in Stanley, New Mexico. Dave was an active and valued member of his community and a devoted friend and neighbor. Dave also became a licensed bird bander, and he contributed to a long-term study of Cooper's Hawks in Albuquerque, co-authoring scientific papers and presentations at several scientific meetings. In retirement Dave surrounded himself with a menagerie of animals that he cared deeply about. He was a Master Falconer, and he practiced that sport in and around his property with a pair of Harris's Hawks. But Dave's closest companion the past few years was his rescue dog, Molly, who was never far from his side.

Dave lived a life of public service, and he made substantial contributions to fish, wildlife, and ecosystem conservation efforts. But more than that, as a friend, neighbor, and conscientious citizen, he made the world around him a better place. Dave is deeply missed by all who knew him.

**Phyllis Conant (February 24, 1934 - November 6, 2023)**



She was born in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine. Phyllis was preceded in death by her husband of 61 years, Richard Conant in 2015; her parents; and her two older brothers. She is survived by a special niece, Brenda Tripp of Poland, ME; and several other nieces and nephews. She is also survived by very special friends of over 30 years, Dave and Estella Lemcke and also Becky

Clevenger in the last week of her life.

Phyllis served in the US Air Force and was a Lifetime Member of the DAV Auxiliary, Chapter 29, Belen, NM. She and her husband were also very involved with the 4-H for many years. Phyllis worked for the Corps of Engineers then transferred to the US Fish and Wildlife Service where she retired from.

*From Pete Stine*, Phyllis worked in Contracting and General Services (CGS) in the Albuquerque Regional Office for many years. From the first time we spoke, I could tell she was from “out of town” with her Maine accent. I found her to be very cheerful and helpful whenever I needed something in CGS. Later, she joined us at our semi-annual FWS Retirees luncheon held in Albuquerque. She, her husband Dick and my wife and I were gardeners and I was especially indebted to Phyllis for telling us about a small family-owned nursery near them that sold individual 2-inch pots containing an impressive variety of tomatoes and other vegetable plants for 25 cents apiece. We will miss her

**John Edgar Cornely, Ph.D. (March 26, 1946 – October 13, 2023)**



John Edgar Cornely, 77, of Larkspur, CO passed away on October 13, 2023 after a long battle with cancer. John was born on March 26, 1946 in Beloit, KS, the oldest of 4 children of Dr. John Forrest Cornely and Margret Nan Storer. During his childhood, the “small town” Doctor’s family moved from Beloit to Aberdeen, SD and then back to Osborn, KS, where he worked on his grandfather’s farm and developed

his love for prairie landscapes. He graduated from Osborne High School (1964), excelling in basketball, track, and American Legion baseball. In 1968, he earned a B.A. in Biology from Hastings State College.

From 1969-72, John served in the U.S. Air Force as an Electronics Officer. Following military service, he attended Texas Tech University from 1973-75, where he earned an M.S. in Zoology, studying the ecology of woodrats. During 1976-80, he attended Northern Arizona University and earned a Ph.D. in Zoology, researching the ecology of coyotes in and around Joshua Tree National Monument.

John began his Service career in 1978 as a Supervisory Wildlife Biologist at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in OR, where he was responsible for the biological monitoring programs for waterfowl, sandhill cranes, waterbirds, shorebirds, raptors, and their habitats. His duties at the refuge included overseeing the establishment of a restoration flock of Trumpeter Swans. These biological investigations resulted in numerous scientific publications which directly influenced migratory bird management practices both on and off refuge lands.

In 1981, John transferred to the Western Oregon Refuge Complex at Finley National Wildlife Refuge, where he assumed the lead regional responsibility for the monitoring and management of Dusky Canada geese in the Willamette Valley, the lower Columbia River, and the Oregon Coast. He co-authored an annotated bibliography on Dusky Canada geese in 1992, documenting essentially all the information available on that species up to that time.

In 1988, John transferred to Denver, CO, accepting the position of Regional Migratory Bird Coordinator in the Service’s Mountain and Prairie Region, where he led the Regional migratory bird program through significant growth, including the addition of nongame migratory bird responsibilities and the transfer of migratory bird permits from the Division of Law Enforcement. John was instrumental in the development of concept and implementation plans for four North American Waterfowl Management Plan Joint Ventures (Prairie Pothole, Rainwater Basin, Playa Lakes, Intermountain West) and served as technical representative or board member on several of them. He represented the Regional Office in the development and implementation of cooperative migratory bird management programs in the Pacific and Central Flyways. John also served a leadership role in the implementation of the management plan for the Rocky Mountain Population of Trumpeter Swans and the restoration of the High Plains Flock of Trumpeter Swans in South Dakota and Nebraska.

John was strongly dedicated to preserving the Service’s rich historical record and institutional memory of its employees and was an active member of the Service’s Heritage Committee until his death. He worked with the National Conservation Training Center staff to record oral histories with dozens of retired employees, and worked tirelessly to videotape individuals who helped develop and implement initial phases of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, so that their wisdom and experiences would be available to future employees.



He co-developed regional training workshops where federal and state biologists learned about the mission of the Migratory Bird Program, and where they received hands-on experience with monitoring activities used in their management. John served a major role in the development of a training course, Migratory Bird Conservation – A Trust Responsibility, and served as an instructor. That training course has educated people in many federal agencies on the history, mission, and accomplishments of migratory bird management. John also worked internationally, sharing the practices and experiences of North American migratory bird management with natural resource professionals in China during 1996 and 2000, and in Russia during 2001.

John's career with the Service was characterized by his long-term contributions in all areas of migratory bird management. His leadership abilities, combined with his extensive knowledge of the biology and ecology of numerous species of wildlife, and his commitment to ensuring that management and policy decisions consider the best biological and scientific information available, have been invaluable to the Service's Migratory Bird Program regionally, nationally, and internationally. John's leadership contributed significantly to our collective ability to manage migratory birds and preserve this valuable natural resource and the history of their management for future generations. For his distinguished career and his dedicated service, he was granted the Meritorious Service Award of the Department of the Interior. After 28 years of service, John retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2007.

Although he retired from the Service, John never stopped working for wildlife conservation. In 2007, John became the Executive Director of The Trumpeter Swan Society and stepped down from that position in 2013 to become the Senior Conservation Advisor for the Society from 2014-23. Also, during 2014-23, John served as Chairperson of the Oral History Committee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees Association; he was a lifetime member and was elected as a Board Member of the FWS Retirees Association during 2016-21. During 2020-23, John served as Emeritus Member on the Board of Directors for the National Wildlife Refuge Association. In 2012, John served as a judge in the prestigious Federal Duck Stamp Contest.

During John's career he authored and co-authored 41 scientific publications, the last of which was a treatise on the mammals of Malheur NWR, which he completed shortly before his death. Indeed, Dr. Cornely left a powerful legacy in wildlife conservation.

On the personal side, John had a passion for "Muscle Cars" and during his college days owned a Chevelle, a Thunderbird, a GTO and a Corvette. His favorite - the Corvette! John loved watching all sports, but especially minor and major league baseball games. John and son Sean attended major league baseball games in almost every major league baseball stadium

in the U.S. and Canada. He also enjoyed hockey and attended many Colorado Avalanche games.

John loved beer! He particularly liked full-flavored dark varieties of craft-brewed beers. He especially liked beers with strong hops flavors and learned to brew some of his favorite kinds. Wherever he travelled, he sampled local brews and often brought home souvenir glasses, amassing a large collection that he displayed at home. John also enjoyed ethnic foods and would seek out restaurants that offered unique traditional cuisine.

Over the years, John enjoyed spending time outdoors – hiking, birding, hunting, fishing and always observing nature. He particularly enjoyed spring turkey hunting and fishing for crappies and walleyes in his beloved Kansas. Over the years, he owned two Lund fishing boats and liked spending time on the water with friends. For 21 years, John participated in the Harvey Nelson Memorial Fishing Trip in Ontario, Canada, where he fished, shared stories, and enjoyed drinks with current and retired colleagues from the Fish and Wildlife Service and their associated family and friends.

John is survived by his beloved wife of 52 years (married August 1971), Beatrice (Bea); two children, Erin and Sean (Taniya); three grandchildren (Cassidy, Cameron, and Adriana); brothers Charles and Gary and sister Kathy; and stepmother, Janice (Jan).

### **“Pat” Foulk (November 9, 1945 – November 27, 2023)**



Margaret Patricia "Pat" Louise Rankin Foulk, 78, died November 27 at home surrounded by her loving family and caretakers. She was born November 9, 1945, in Urbana, Illinois, the daughter of Tom Rankin and Cassie (Calhoun) Rankin.

Pat graduated from Warrenton High in the Class of 1963. She later received a bachelor's degree from American University and a master's from USC, which she did while working full time and raising two children. She married Donald G. Foulk in 1967, and they lived in Falls Church and Reston, Virginia, later moving to Mission Viejo, California, before finally settling in Orangevale, California. They celebrated 56 years of marriage last April.

Pat worked for the U.S. Army and the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C., then for the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service Ecological Services Office in Sacramento, California. There Pat was the first to hold a public relations position in FWS field office. In that position she handled numerous political hot environmental issues facing the Service in California from listing species under the Endangered Species Act to dealing with highly controversial waters issues. She handled each and every one with a professional approach and communicated to the public important facts about each. Pat's personality, background and knowledge help her explain complicated issues in understandable terms. Her humor and shy smile helped those in the office better understand the need to be out front communicating with the public. She was a wonderful asset to the Service and helped improve the Service's image with the public and other agencies. She was dearly missed after she retired.

After retiring, she became interested in genealogy and devoted herself to the Daughters of the American Revolution starting in 2013, holding various chapter and state positions, including Regent from 2016-2018.

She was predeceased by her parents. Surviving in addition to her husband are her older son, Donald G. Foulk, Jr., of Orangevale, her younger son, Darren P. Foulk, and his wife, Tyra Taylor-Foulk, of Sherman Oaks, California, her younger brother, Robert "Bobby" Rankin, and his wife, Carol Rankin, and many nephews and nieces.

## Greg Gerlich (1961-2023)



In August 2023, the Mountain Prairie Region suffered an unexpected and profound loss with the sudden passing of beloved Fish and Aquatic Conservation Assistant Regional Director Greg Gerlich. The news of his passing shocked the region and has left a mark on the many people who knew him.

Known and loved around the Regional Office and throughout the FAC Program, Mr. Gerlich was one of those special people who touches the hearts of everyone around him. His pandemic baking shows will forever be fondly remembered as one of the bright spots during a dark time, and his great big smile and laugh always managed to light up any room.

We asked Mr. Gerlich's colleagues to share the words that come to mind when they think of him. One word rose above all others when his friends and colleagues paused to reflect — "warm." "Warm." "Kind." "Thoughtful." "Empathetic." "Witty." "Supportive." "Genuine." "Gentle." "Sincere." "Compassionate." "Open." "Caring." "Provider." "Humble." "Resilient." "Welcoming." "Legendary." "Lover of the outdoors." "One of a kind."

Mr. Gerlich was the embodiment of public service. A life-long conservationist and leader, he dedicated much of his life to fish and wildlife, serving honorably for 21 years with Colorado Parks and Wildlife before coming to the Service as the Assistant Regional Director for the Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program. Mr. Gerlich spent eight years with

The Service, and we are grateful for the time we had with such a beautiful, compassionate person. But Mr. Gerlich's work in conservation was only a fraction of who he was. Mr. Gerlich was a loving father and husband, a staunch Metallica fan, king of houseplants and gardening, an avid angler, a dedicated friend, role model, and so much more. He will always be remembered for his warmth, kindness, and compassion for others.

Mr. Gerlich is survived by wife Donna, daughter Kaleigh and son Grayson. Mr. Gerlich's USFWS family shares in their loss, extending our heartfelt condolences as well as our fondest memories. May he forever live in our memories and continue to bring light to the lives of those he's touched.

*"Fall reminds me to seek solace in wild places. Packing, camping, fishing, hunting, bird watching, and enjoying the cool, crisp air and hoping for a good snowpack to prepare for next year. Take some time to experience the art of escape with family and friends. Step away from teleworking, collecting data, analyzing data, attending conference calls, and other work-related activities for even a few minutes but better yet for several days. Let the changing season colors, migrating birds, garden harvests, camp cooking, shoreline wave ripples, falling leaves, and full moons open your mind and build new memories. Stay active and engaged in life. Let your spirit ride on the thermal updrafts of hope. Obtain self-awareness, guidance, and clarity on positive paths moving forward. You are in charge of you. That gift brings a smile. Be strong, safe, and healthy this fall."* —GREG GERLICH

Obituary written by Mikela Oles and Christina Stone, Office of Communications, Mountain-Prairie Region.

## David William Gustafson

David William Gustafson, age 84, of Burnsville, MN passed away peacefully at Fairview Ridges Hospital on January 21, 2024. David was a retired contracting officer in Contracting and General Services in the Region 3 Regional Office. He was preceded in death by his wife, Marion (Burski) Gustafson in 2017. David is survived by brother-in-law, Harvey Burski and his wife, Judy, of Proctor; their son, Paul Burski, his wife, Nola and daughter, McKenzie of Lakeville; and daughter, Suzanne Spry, her husband, Richard, and their son, Derek, and daughter, Jenna, of San Antonio, TX.



**Francis Eugene Hester (July 7, 1931 – January 15, 2024)**



Dr. F. Eugene Hester, (92), passed away peacefully at his home on Monday, January 15, 2024. Dr. Hester is survived by his wife, Katherine Hester of 68 years.

F. Eugene Hester, the son of the late Dr. Joseph Robert Hester and Susie Finch Hester, was born July 7, 1931 in Wendell, NC. He attended Wendell Elementary and High Schools,

Wake Forest University, N.C. State University (B.S. 1954; MS 1956) and Auburn University (Ph.D. 1959). In 1955 he married Katherine Sherron of Wendell.

In 1959 he joined the Zoology faculty at N.C. State University. In 1963 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established a Cooperative Research Unit there and Dr. Hester was selected as its first leader. In this position he taught zoology, fish and wildlife courses, and advised students. He conducted fishery and waterfowl research and directed the research programs for degrees of graduate students.

Dr. Hester was widely recognized as an outstanding research administrator, and in 1971 was promoted to Chief of Fishery Research and two year later Associate Director of Research, and then in 1991 he became Deputy Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, D.C. He also was Acting Director of the Service twice for extended periods while political appointees were selected and confirmed.

In 1987 he was named Associate Director of the National Park Service, and later was Deputy Director of the National Biological Service. He received the Interior Department's highest award, the Distinguished Service Award, and was awarded the Senior Executive Service rank of Distinguished Executive presented by President Reagan at the White House, and the Meritorious Executive Rank by President Clinton. He also twice received the Interior Department's EEO award.

Dr. Hester retired from the Interior Department in 1996 after 33 years of service. He subsequently was a consultant to several Washington-based organizations. He was an accomplished writer and photographer where he combined his knowledge of wildlife resources and photography. His photographs appeared in *Life*, *National Wildlife*, *Field and Stream*, *Sports Afield*, *Wildlife in North Carolina*, *Virginia Wildlife*, *Ducks Unlimited* and more than fifty other magazines.

In 2015 he was inducted into the North Carolina Wildlife Federation Conservation Hall of Fame for his work in natural resources and was twice recognized as an outstanding alumnus

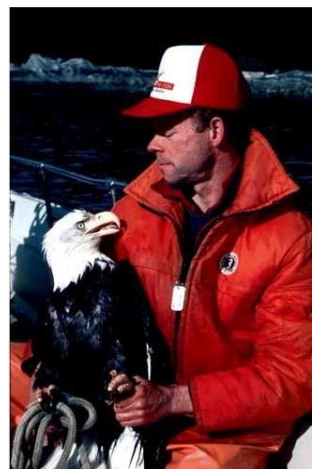
for his accomplishments by NC State University.

Through his research and management studies, he became nationally known as an authority on wood ducks and co-authored with Jack Dermid the book *The World of the Wood Duck*, plus several magazine articles. He also authored two additional books: *Wood Duck Adventures*, and a children's book called *My Friend Hootie*. The award winning Hootie book tells of his relationship with a wild barred owl that lasted more than ten years in which he and the owl trained each other. The owl finds him in the swamp and comes for a fish thrown to her. Dr. Hester has taken over 300 adults and children to visit Hootie in the swamp. He is also known for inventing the Hester-Dendy water sampling device now used by several states to determine water quality.

After retiring from the Interior Department in Washington, D.C. he and his wife Katherine remained in Northern Virginia and later moved to Wendell, North Carolina.

In addition to his wife, Dr. Hester is survived by his sons, Thomas Robert Hester (Crystal) of Denver, NC., and Jason F. Hester (Donna) of Bracey, VA; five grandchildren, Heather Baczynski (Kevin), Alyssa Hopkins (Matthew), Thomas Jason Hester, Taylor Allen, and Chelsea Odham (Cory); two great-grandsons, Noah and Cole Odham; and one great-grandson, (Baczynski) due June 2024. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers and sisters, as well as his son, Gene Hester III.

**Michael “Jake” Jacobson (December 5, 1946 – November 15, 2023)**



Michael (Jake) Jacobson passed away of November 15, 2023 at the age of 76 in Juneau, Alaska. Jake was born December 5, 1946 to Gordon and Ellen Jacobsen in Eugene, Oregon. Jake grew up in Eugene and graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in Wildlife Management in 1969. He came north to Alaska with friend Mike Bethers in 1970 inspired by 'his' song North to Alaska by Johnny Horton.

Mike worked seasonal jobs in Bristol Bay and in southeast Alaska until 1975, when he was hired by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assist with the response to the new Alaska oil development. He later became an Assistant Refuge Manager for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

Mike was the first USFWS employee to be stationed at the village of Kaktovik. He and his wife Cynthia Wentworth quickly established friendships with many village residents. He traveled and camped with local people during their hunting, fishing and food gathering in the Refuge. In 1982, Cynthia and Mike published a major report, including many photos, which established an important record of Kaktovik residents use of land and wildlife in the Refuge.

In 1984, Mike became the bald eagle specialist for Alaska and was stationed in Juneau. Mike located and protected several thousands of nests, a feat to be proud of. Alaska at the time had a healthy population of bald eagles. Consequently, other states, where the bald eagle was endangered, looked to Alaska as a source of eagles to repopulate their lands. Mike was responsible for the Alaskan end of the bald eagle translocation projects. Several hundreds of bald eaglets were removed from Alaskan nests and translocated to New York, Missouri, North Carolina, Indiana and Tennessee. On June 28, 2007 the bald eagle was removed from endangered and threatened status. This rapid recovery of our national bird was in large part due to the efforts of Mike and others before and after him.

Mike retired in 2008, living two lives, summers in Juneau and winters in his family home in Eugene. He was an avid sports fan, especially basketball, football and track. He was well liked and thought of by those who knew him. He had an unrushed, deliberate approach to life which sometimes could be frustrating to others in our quick paced modern life. His wide grin, keen observations on life and generous laugh will be missed by many.

Mike is survived by his sister Bonnie and husband, Robert, by his niece, Deborah Kramer of Vista, California along with two nephews, Nicholas and Alexander Kramer also of Vista and his many friends.

## **Ronald “Ron” Wayne Kokel (September 9, 1964 -2 October 5, 2023)**



Ronald (Ron) Wayne Kokel, 59, of Seabrook, SC, passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, October 5, 2023, while doing what he loved - bird hunting in the autumn woods of northern Minnesota with his cherished dogs and friends. Ron was born September 9, 1964, in Waco, TX, but spent most of his childhood in McKinney, TX. He graduated in 1987 from Texas A&M University,

receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, followed by a Master of Science degree in Wildlife and Fisheries from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in

1991. On June 22, 1991, Ron married the love of his life, Deidra (Dee) Lea Bird, in Hopewell County, VA.

His career started with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, but in 1994 Ron assumed the Regulations Specialist position in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Division of Migratory Bird Management in Arlington, VA, the same year he was diagnosed with lymphoma. Courageously overcoming this cancer, Ron remained in this position until retirement in 2019.

During his tenure, Ron established himself as an expert in developing Federal Register documents and other materials and was most closely associated with the annual regulation’s development process allowing the hunting of migratory game birds. He was widely known throughout the Service and the Flyways as a respected source of information on regulations and other migratory bird treaty matters at the state, national, and international level.

Ron’s behind-the-scenes work throughout his years as a regulations specialist contributed to the development and successful implementation of many key migratory bird policies and programs. These included Adaptive Harvest Management, regulated subsistence harvest in Alaska, cormorant management, light goose population control, and non-toxic shot alternatives, among others. He was also the lead author of the Service’s Environmental Impact Statement on the control of resident Canada geese that has guided management of those birds nationwide for nearly 20 years.

Ron was considered a miracle-worker in navigating the complex, challenging and often-changing approval process for final rules and regulations and other documents. His persistent determination in securing necessary signatures along the way always ensured that they would be published on time. Often, he was the point person in the Division for responding to congressional inquiries about various issues or just assisting the public in better understanding migratory birds.

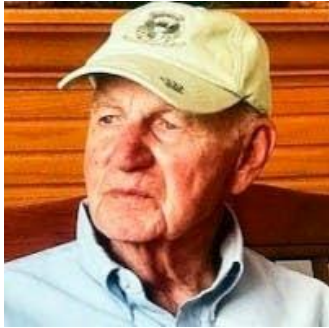
Ron had a passion for double-barreled shotguns, English setters, and fine bourbon. He was a true outdoorsman who loved being in the woods each fall with his dogs and friends, hunting ruffed grouse and American woodcock across Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. He was heavily involved with the Boy Scouts and was very proud that both his sons achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. He always had a book or magazine in his hand and loved reading about history, hunting, and wildlife conservation.

Following their move to Seabrook, SC, Ron and Deidra devoted their time to fishing, crabbing, and exploring the coast in their boat, or sitting on the back porch taking in the beauty of the South Carolina saltmarsh. Cross Community Church in Beaufort, SC, became their new church home. Ron had a way of making everyone feel welcome, and his infectious laugh will be sorely missed.



Ron is survived by his beloved wife of 32 years, Deidra, and two amazing sons, Cameron B. Kokel and Conner L. Kokel and daughter-in-law Lisa; his two sisters Robin Vestal (Scott) and Rebecca Thibodaux; mother-in-law Laura Bird; sister-in-law Melodie James (Byron); brothers-in-law Darren Bird (Coya) and Drayton Bird (Hope); and 12 loving nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Roy and Linda Kokel, and father-in-law Carl Bird.

### **Joseph “Joe” Kotok (April 14, 1934 – November 30, 2023)**



His love for his family was his greatest treasure. Joe was born in Manor, PA, on April 14, 1934 to the late Peter Kotok and Julia Kutcha Kotok. Joe married Henrietta (Retta) Kilar on June 30, 1956, at St. Bernadette's Church, Masury, OH. As a graduate of Jeanette, PA high school, Joe enlisted in the United States Air Force.

Being honorably discharged, Joe enrolled in college and graduated from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor with a degree in Wildlife Management. While in college, Joe was employed with the U.S. Post Office and worked highway construction to provide for his family. After graduating, Joe launched his career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His passion for the environment and natural resources flourished.

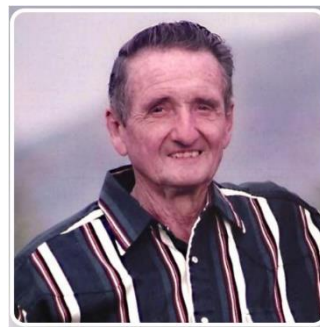
His first job was at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in WI. Further opportunities advanced his career within the National Wildlife Refuge system with positions including the Upper Mississippi NWR in WI and Ottawa NWR in OH (Job Corp). He thrived throughout his 25 years as Manager of Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge in Northwestern Minnesota.

During his tenure, Joe received many accolades for his dedicated service, culminating with the Department of the Interior Meritorious Service Award presented by the Secretary of Interior. Joe generously opened his heart and home to colleagues and friends throughout the years celebrating special events at the Agassiz and Thief River Falls homes. Throughout his career, Joe's motto was to leave this Earth a little bit better for future generations.

He was an avid outdoorsman with a passion for hunting, fishing, blueberry picking and travel. Joe's summer home in Morson, Ontario was his slice of heaven while here on earth where he put his heart and soul into restoring its historic beauty. The lakefront property stopped many people by boat to admire the pristine landscape. Our family always joked that Dad could hear the grass grow. Joe's legacy will live on with the memories made with family and friends during the 46 years of cabin ownership.

Joe was a member of the Elks Club, the Disabled American Veterans Association and National Wildlife Refuge Association. He was a member of St. Bernards parish in Thief River Falls, MN. Moving closer to family, Retta and Joe became affiliated with St. Michael's Catholic Parish in Farmington, MN. Joe was the last surviving sibling of 11 children: Peter Kotok, Paul Kotok, Johnny (Betty) Kotok, Mike (Sophie) Kotok, Walt (Sandy) Kendall, Nick (Barb) Kendall, Mary (Dan) DeNezza, Nellie Beal, Helen (Don) Stang and Anne Playfair. Joe is survived by wife, Retta Kotok; children Lawrence (Susan) Kotok, Eden Prairie, MN. Janice (Bob) Krauth, Owatonna, MN. Lori (Tom) Anderson, Brooklyn Park, MN. Marie (Jay) Lackmann, Farmington, MN. Grandchildren; Jack Kotok, Samantha Lackmann, Amanda Lackmann, Simon Kotok, Bennett Kotok and Joseph Lackmann. Step-Granddaughter; Christine (David) Bruneau and 11 step great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

### **Richard “Dick” Morgan (February 11, 1935 – September. 6, 2023)**



Richard Lee Morgan was born in Nephi, Utah to Clark and Marjorie Morgan. He was the second of four children, a brother JC, a sister MarJean, and an afterthought brother, Kirk. He lived in Nephi throughout his youth and teenage years. He fished, hunted, ran wild with friends and cousins, worked at his dad's

grocery store, and even outran an angry neighborhood mom. After school, Dick signed up for the U.S. Army where he drove tanks in Bad Kissingen Germany. Two years later with an honorable discharge he surprised his family by hitchhiking home without telling them he was coming.

His next adventure was college. He attended Utah State University to study wildlife biology. While at USU he met his wife (Marti), loaded his boots up with small creamer cups and swaggered out of restaurants, played wild pranks with friends, and even joined the square dance club. However, he didn't want anyone to know he was in the square dance club, so he told everyone his name was Ron Hones. He is in the USU yearbook as Ron Hones. His college summers were filled with adventure. He worked one summer in Yellowstone and three summers in Alaska.

Dick and Marti started their married life in Dillingham, AK, a small town only accessible by prop plane. He spent his days counting fish and having crazy encounters with wildlife. They stayed in Dillingham for 18 months and then moved to Montana. When they left Alaska, they had two little girls; Kelly and Kathleen and a walrus tusk which Dick gave to Marti for their first wedding anniversary. Karen and Kristen were both born and joined the family while in Montana. They then took off to Oregon where Reba, the last of their five girls

was born. There were two more moves; Arizona and New Mexico before they retired to Utah. He was an active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He bore his testimony by the way he lived and by the way he carried out his various church callings.

Dick always loved hunting and fishing. He had many adventures with both activities. Highlights include coming face-to-face with a five-foot rattlesnake; falling through the ice while ice fishing not once, but twice; a once-in-a-lifetime buffalo hunt; fly-fishing up Nephi river and catching over 30 fish in one fishing trip (the number went up every time he told this story); hiding behind a horse to sneak up on an elk to take a picture; killing a rattlesnake in a campground; using dynamite to harvest fish and then taking the fish to a restaurant and asking them to cook the fish (which the restaurant then sold as the day's special); and taking a bobcat for a joyride.

Dick worked for the Department of the Interior as a fish and wildlife biologist for his entire career. He loved being outdoors and working with nature. His true outdoor love was Yellowstone National Park. After retirement Dick and Marti spent 14 years working and living in Yellowstone from March – October. During those years they traveled to Yuma, AZ in the winter months to recruit snowbirds to work with them in Yellowstone. Even after they quit working in Yellowstone it was still an annual trip.

He loved spending time with his girls, his hunting dogs, and especially with his 11 grandchildren. Favorite grandpa time activities included hunting, camping, fishing, excursions to Yellowstone, sledding (grandpa pulling grandkids around in a sled), introducing the California grandsons to ice fishing, camping at Palisades, going to the Ute Stampede, the dinosaur museum in Vernal, yard work with two and three year-olds, hiking, walks up the canyon, teaching about nature, collecting soda tabs, dumpster diving looking for recyclable cans, making a bird house hotel, playing card games, grandpa out-hiking Rusty on hunting trips up Log Canyon, watching the Onion Days Parade, and getting locked out of cars together.

In his later years, Dick enjoyed taking long walks through Payson, collecting metal to recycle, drinking Pepsi, eating frosted oatmeal cookies, and picking up garbage in Centennial Park. He lived a life of quiet service. His example lives on in the lives of his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. They inherited his spirit of adventure, his sense of humor, his zest for life, his wild ways, and his love of country and family.

He is preceded in death by his parents; Clark and Marjorie Morgan, a brother; JC, his sister; MarJean, and two daughters; Kelly Morgan and Karen Morgan. He is survived by his wife; Marti Morgan, three daughters Kathleen Schramm (Rod), Kristen Morgan, and Reba Morgan, 11 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

## Richard “Dick” Nelson

Rick Nelson, long time project leader at the La Crosse Fish Health Center passed away on November 14, 2023 at the age of 81. *If additional information becomes available, we will publish it in a future newsletter.*

## Lawrence C. “Larry” Wills (July 19, 1923 - November 13, 2023)



Lawrence C. “Larry” Wills, 100, of Grants Pass, passed away at Cascades of Grants Pass on November 13, 2023. Larry was born on July 19, 1923, to Ward and Minnie Wills in Plevna, Montana. Larry moved to the City of Rogue River when he was 12 years old and graduated from Rogue River High School in 1941.

After graduation, Larry spent two years at Willamette University in Salem. He then went into the Air Force during World War II as a turret gunner on a B-17. Larry spent a year in Horham, England with the 95th Bomber Group, flying more than 25 missions over Germany. As the war ended, Larry moved back to his hometown of Rogue River. On November 30, 1946, Larry was married to Patricia A. Turner of Grants Pass. Larry and Pat were married for over 75 years before Pat’s passing in November 2022. Larry worked for the Oregon State Police for over eight years, and in 1957 was hired as a Special Agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Larry and Pat lived in several cities across the U.S., including Eureka and Fresno, CA, Olympia, WA, New Orleans, LA and Portland, OR. Larry made major cases on dove and waterfowl baiting in California and Louisiana, and major poaching cases on desert bighorn sheep and polar bears. Larry’s work on taking down a black market on alligator hides and his cases on the take of bald eagles and their nests were instrumental in the recovery of these species.

Upon retirement in 1979, Larry and Pat moved back to Grants Pass. Larry was very active within the Rogue River community, serving on the board of the Rogue River Fire Department, Woodville Museum, Rogue River Community Center and the local VFW. Larry enjoyed hunting and fishing and was a long-time member of the Grants Pass Golf Club.

Larry is survived by two daughters, Chris Frame and Susan (Mark) Voltz, and one son Charles (Donna) Wills; five grandchildren: Nicole Suk, Miles Frame, Holly Halter, Marie McNally, and Jeff McNally. Also surviving are seven great-grandchildren: Ashley, Joshua, Emily, Tyler, Aiden, Ryan, and Nora.



From Jerry Smith – “Larry was like a brother to me. He mentored me, worked with me and guided me for the 53 years I had the pleasure of knowing him. He joined the FWS as a Game Management Agent, then a Special Agent. He just celebrated his 100 Birthday this past July.”

### **Tom Richardson (February 25, 1937 – December 18, 2022)**



Tom Richardson of Chico California passed away on December 18, 2022 after a courageous year-long battle with kidney disease. Tom was born February 25, 1937 in Oakland, California and grew up in San Leandro. He spent his summers in the High Sierras of California at Philbrook Reservoir where he developed a great love of

nature and the outdoors. In 1955 Tom graduated from San Leandro High then went on to receive a degree in wildlife management from Humboldt State College in 1959. That year he married Nancy Whittaker.

Prior to college graduation Tom worked for a few summers as a seasonal aid for the FWS in the Territory of Alaska and after statehood Tom was part of the first group of fish and game biologists in the newly formed Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Under the Division of Commercial Fisheries, he managed the remote Chignik area on the Alaska Peninsula for four years. In 1963 Tom accepted a similar job managing the fishery in Wrangell. From 1966 until 1970 Tom worked in administration in the Juneau office.

In 1970 Tom joined the FWS as a biologist at the new Tehama Colusa Fish Facilities in Red Bluff, California. He was tasked with helping to increase the Coho salmon runs in the Sacramento River. In 1977 Tom transferred to the Sacramento Office of Ecological Service as a fish and wildlife biologist working with relicensing FERC projects in northern and central California. He headed up and supervised employees, reviewed and commented on impacts on the environment and coordinated with the Department of Fish and Game and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Friend and co-worker Gary Taylor said this: "I met Tom soon after arrival in the office and knew right away that he was highly respected throughout the office for his hard work ethic, passion and dedication to the mission at hand. He was a personable guy that was easy to be around and more than willing to share his knowledge and enjoyed helping others to become better at their tasks. He was friendly, outgoing, thoughtful, measured, empathetic, caring, and sharing. Tom will be remembered as long as our hearts keep beating. We

need more Toms to arise."

In 1994 Tom accepted a golden handshake from the President and retired from a 35-year career in the field he loved. Retirement gave him the leisure time to hunt and fish and spend more time at the place which always held a special place in his heart - the family mountain cabin he helped his father build when he was a teenager. Tom also expanded his Duck Stamp and paper collectible business both online and by buying and selling at collectible shows. After his death his daughter Suzy Repanich took over the business still known as trucks.com. He became a driver for senior gleaners, worked in his vegetable garden, took long walks with his faithful border collie Leia and enjoyed spending time with the family.

Tom is survived by his beloved wife of 63 years, Nancy, his son Alan Richardson (Stacy), daughter Suzy Repanich (Nick), grandchildren Jill (Tim), Amy (Tyler), Connor and Logan and three great grandchildren Calvin, Casey and Juno.

During his final years Tom strongly advocated for conservation, and protection of the habitat.

### **Robert Zepp, Jr. (September 26, 1946 – January 20, 2024)**



Robert “Bob” Lewis Zepp Jr., of Edgewater, Maryland, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, January 20th, 2024. Bob was born on September 26, 1946, in Baltimore, Maryland, as the oldest child of Doris Louise Zepp and Robert Lewis Zepp, Sr. The family resided in Finksburg, Maryland in the family home located on his granddaddy Barnes’ farm in the rolling hills of

western Maryland, where Bob first developed his love of the outdoors. While in Maryland, the family grew with the birth of Bob’s sisters, Ann in 1950, followed by Susan in 1953. In 1956, the family moved to Wyoming, Delaware where Bob was never happier when tramping through the fields and woods with one of his dogs to rouse up a rabbit or squirrel. He was a member of the local Boy Scouts Troop for many years. The Zepp family grew with the birth of Bob’s younger brother, Jimmy in 1960.

Bob graduated from Caesar Rodney High School in 1964 where he participated on the wrestling team and became self-taught in taxidermy. During his senior year, he was drafted into the United States Army during the Vietnam War era but was deferred until after college. Bob received a scholarship to attend West Virginia University where he graduated in 1968 with a bachelor’s in forestry. After graduating he attended

Boot Camp at Fort Liberty (Bragg), North Carolina and was then stationed in Oahu, Hawaii from 1968-1971 where he trained in operating cryptographic communications equipment in the Signal Core. After his service, he used his GI Bill to further his education at Virginia Tech receiving a master's degree in wildlife management in 1975. His master thesis was on the effects of polychlorinated biphenyls on cotton tail rabbit reproduction.

After graduate school he worked for an environmental consulting firm in Chicago, IL where he conducted fishery surveys to determine if nuclear powerplants were influencing aquatic environments. Bob began working for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1976, at the Ecological Services Annapolis Field Office. Bob's career in the ES program focused on permits, licenses, and environmental reviews under the Rivers and Harbors Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. He participated in the start of the joint permit processing concept in Maryland, where all federal and state agencies involved in project reviews would meet to develop consistent recommendations on permit issuances. Highlights of his career were working on the Bay

Agreement for the funding of the Chesapeake Bay program, the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project for the Potomac Crossing, and the U.S. 1 Highway Project to save bog turtle habitats. Bob started his career at a GS-7 level and ended at the GS-13 as Deputy Field Office Supervisor. During his career, Bob was recognized with several awards for his work to preserve the natural habitat. After 38 years of service, Bob retired in 2013. In reflection, Bob felt he had a wonderful career and would not have traded it for the world.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents Robert and Doris Barnes Zepp, sister Virginia Ann Jester, and brother James Russell Zepp. Bob is survived by his sister, Susan Zepp Stephens, brother-in-law Clay Jester, nephews Aaron Jester (Tiffany) and Nicholaus Stephens, nieces Tracy Jester and Amanda Stephens (Eric), and great nieces and nephews Cole Falcon, Ava Falcon, and Harper Stephens.

## **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](mailto:communications2023@fwsretirees.org).***

***Also, be sure to visit our website for more up-to-date information at [www.fwsretirees.org](http://www.fwsretirees.org)***



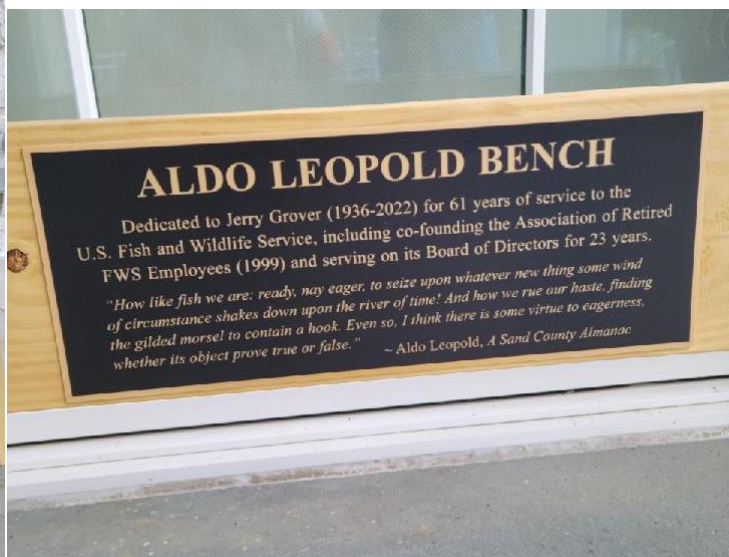
## More reunion photos



Reunion of the Association of Retired USFWS  
November 28 - 30, 2023



Note: a list of those in the photo is on the FWS Retirees website



Jerry Grover bench and plaque



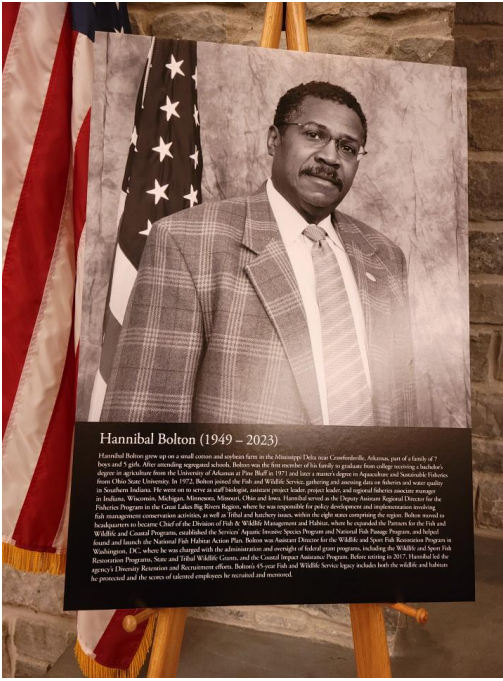


Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) Field Trip



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





Hannibal Bolton's NCTC Poster



Mark, Annie, John and Mary Kay Turner with historic sign



Hikers on the Greenwalt for Wildlife. Robin West foreground



Denise Baker, Jane Lyder, Alan Palisoul, Jeff Underwood, next to the Sacred Sites Totem





George, Nicole, Marina, Judy, and Jeff Grover



Mary Kay and John Turner



Jessy Jacobs and Bill Zinni



FWS Historian Mark Madison displaying artifact in Archives