

FWS Retirees Association NEWSLETTER



Fall 2021

2021 Board of Directors

Cynthia Barry, Chair	Heritage, Oral History	360-909-4501	chair@fwsretirees.org
Robin West, Vice Chair	Miscellaneous Issues	541-787-0938	vicechair@fwsretirees.org
Steve Rideout, Treasurer		207-573-1935	treasurer@fwsretirees.org
Denise Baker, Acting Secretary		602-796-0769	mgrant@fwsretirees.org
Doug Frugé	Newsletter, Website	720-233-4233	communications@fwsretirees.org
Nancy Gloman	Reunion Arrangements	505-228-0140.	issues@fwsretirees.org
Lewis Gorman III	Grants	856-952-6970	minigr1@fwsretirees.org
Deborah Holle	Heritage, Membership	512-266-2949	promote@fwsretirees.org
Paul Tritaik	Heritage, Oral History	239-309-5728	heritage@fwsretirees.org
Jerry Grover, Emeritus	Reunion Arrangements	503-684-1809	reunion@fwsretirees.org

Board Business

Election of Board Members. By the time you receive this newsletter, those of you for whom we have e-mail addresses should have already received an e-mail from the Retirees Association with this same basic information. Each year, the terms of three members of the Association's Board of Directors expire and we must have an active Board to keep this Association running. Every dues-paying member can run for one of those seats or nominate someone else to run. Once a slate of candidates has been identified, every member **who is current with their dues** has the opportunity to vote for the candidates of their choice to serve on the Board. Elections are normally held in the fall or early winter with new or re-elected Board members taking their seats in January. This year, the terms of Board members Cindy Barry, Steve Rideout, and Doug Frugé will expire. While they may run for re-election to the Board, this is the opportunity for others interested in being active and influential in the Association to throw their hats into the ring. Ballots with the names and bios of qualified candidates, along with voting instructions, will be sent to eligible voters in mid-November. Therefore, a slate of candidates must be identified soon. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please let us know directly. Or if you know someone who you feel would make a good Board member, contact them first to confirm their interest before submitting their name for consideration. **To make the ballot, each candidate's name, a biographical summary (in Microsoft Word format), and a photo (in JPEG format) must be submitted by November 17th to acting Board secretary Denise Baker at dlynbaker5@gmail.com.** The duties of Board members consist of participation in monthly video/audio conference calls and, depending on the duties of each Board member, some Association business may be conducted more often through the year.

This year voting will occur using an online system, and instructions will be provided via another e-mail from the Association in mid-November. Voting will occur during November 27 - December 18. **Only members who pay their dues for 2021 by November 8 this year will be eligible to vote.** If you can't remember whether you are current with your dues or not, you can contact Marc Epstein, our Membership Database Manager at membership@fwsretirees.org. *Cindy Barry, Chair*

2022 Reunion. The next gathering of FWS retirees is scheduled for Spearfish, SD, in conjunction with the 150th anniversary celebration of the National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS) at the DC Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery (NFH) and Archives. It is being planned as a major event by the Service and the Booth Society (the DC Booth Friends group) with tentative planning bringing us together with current Service retirees, there will be the usual icebreaker social, day field trip, banquet and a special evening of a barbeque picnic in the park with live music. Lodging, meeting and banquet space are reservation blocked for us beginning Sunday, June 19 thru the 24th at The Lodge at Deadwood -- about a 10-minute drive outside Spearfish. It is a full-service facility with spa and casino and rates are within per diem. Current estimate is that Retirees and Service employees will occupy nearly all currently blocked lodging, but additional rooms will be secured, if needed. Planning efforts will accelerate at the beginning of the year and hopefully by April attendees will be able to make their room reservations. Nancy Gloman (njgloman@gmail.com, 505-228-0140) is putting together the program and Jerry Grover (groverjj612@frontier.com, 503-684-1809) will be responsible for arrangements. Please let either one of them know if you are interested in helping. *Nancy Gloman and Jerry Grover*

Welcome Melanie Fischer as our new webmaster!

Melanie Fischer joined us as our new Webmaster this year, replacing Linda Purviance, who served as our Webmaster for nine years. Melanie officially started in the position at the beginning



of October and is still working for the FWS as Outreach Coordinator for the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (Recovery Program) in Lakewood, CO but expects to be joining the ranks of Retirees in the not too distant future. Melanie's

responsibilities there have included design and development of the Recovery Program's website, graphic design of public outreach publications and educational items given to schools and children of all ages in areas of critical habitat of four rare native Colorado River fishes. When not working on websites or talking about fish, she enjoys traveling, photography, mixed media art and taking art classes. She has exhibited her art at the Denver Art Students League Summer Art Market. She is excited to be working with the FWS Retirees Association. PS to you former "personnelists" out there . . . Melanie has FWS approval to be concurrently working for the Retirees Association.

Our Website. Speaking of the website, those of you who happen to have visited it over the last several months may have noticed we're really behind on updating and posting new content. In April our long-time volunteer Webmaster, Linda Purviance, determined that she was no longer able to continue in that role. When she started in 2012 she redesigned and updated the website and then reliably managed and kept it up to date for nine years. So, we began searching for a new Webmaster. It took us a while to finally get all our ducks in a row, but with Melanie now in the position we hope to get up and running again soon with content updates, and Melanie has some great ideas for additional website re-design and improvements down the road. Many thanks from the Board go to Linda for her years of dedicated service, and we all wish her well in the years ahead.

Association Funds FWS Conservation Projects.

Over time the FWS Retirees Association can find itself with more funds than it needs to conduct our annual business. This comes primarily through increased dues paying membership and fundraising (raffle and auction) held at our reunion events. In keeping with our non-profit status, and our mission to support FWS conservation programs, the Association initiated a conservation project support effort early in 2021 and sent a solicitation memo to the Service Directorate and Deputies Group requesting proposals. The request was broad – we were looking for proposals from any Service Program for unfunded priority work. We received 50 proposals by our July 15 deadline, getting requests from most Service Programs and all Regions. The Retirees Board scored the proposals based on five criteria: 1) lasting benefits to Service heritage or natural resource conservation, 2) scope of perceived benefits, 3) likelihood of success, 4) likelihood of the funding being significant in contributing to such success, and 5) the reasonableness of the budget.

After scoring, the top five applicants were notified of their selection and funding was provided for their projects. The following is a brief summary of the selected proposals.

Connecting Migratory Shorebirds in the Pacific Flyway using Motus Tracking Technology on Refuge Lands (\$9,550). This project is a priority recommendation from *Partners in Flight* and will support the installation of three towers on refuge coastal lands in Oregon and Washington with a focus on tracking red knot, western sandpiper, dunlin, short-billed dowitcher, marbled godwit, and whimbrel. The work should be completed by the end of 2022 and continue to produce data for five to ten years.

Cultivating Habitat for Pollinators and People (\$10,000). This project is designed to construct "walkable" pollinator habitat at Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Idaho with a goal of improving habitat and educating the public. The effort highlights the many pollinators that qualify for listing as threatened or endangered and comes with in-kind support from the *Friends of Kootenai*.

Improving Agricultural Wells for Use in Restoration of Pahrnat National Wildlife Refuge (\$10,000). This effort was spearheaded by the Maintenance Mechanic at Pahrnat NWR in Nevada where critical wetland habitat in the Mohave Desert is shrinking due to drought. The project includes replacing one non-functioning well and evaluating and repairing if possible, a second poor performing well.

New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse Day-nesting Habitat Restoration, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (\$3,780). This work will result in critical habitat restoration for the last remaining population of this federally listed endangered subspecies in the Rio Grande Valley. It will be achieved primarily by the acquisition and planting of inland saltgrass seed.

Visitor Access Improvements and Pavilion at Makah NFH (\$10,000). This project is designed to improve the visitor experience and help with outreach and education at a tribal trust facility on the Washington coast. It comes with support from the Makah Tribe and other partners including an additional \$15,000 in support.

While some very good projects received financial support in this effort many, many very worthy projects could not be funded with the finances available to the Retirees Association. We continue to look for ways to support some of the currently unfunded proposals through our existing grants, where criteria can be met, and encourage FWS retirees across the Country to get involved in this effort as well. For information about currently unfunded FWS proposals, contact Robin West at:

vicechair@fwsretirees.org. Additionally, once funding builds to surplus levels in the future, the Association will look to fund additional projects. Retirees and others may make tax deductible donations directly to the Association to assist with funding.

Another great way to help build the Association's coffers is by joining as a life member. The onetime \$500 cost comes with special recognition from the Association, never needing to pay annual dues again, and is a fast way to build up the bank balance so additional work can be funded. Anyone interested can contact

our Treasurer, Steve Rideout at: treasurer@fwsretirees.org to make contributions or secure a life membership. *Submitted by Robin West, Vice-Chair*

Treasurer's Report. This new newsletter feature is intended to update the membership on our current financial status. Traditionally, members have received only an overview at our reunions and in newsletters following the reunions. The Treasurer updates the Board monthly and provides a more detailed report annually by the end of January summarizing the previous calendar year (our fiscal year). Shortly afterward a budget is drafted for Board review and discussion at the next monthly meeting. After the budget is approved, it can be modified only by subsequent Board action.

Our budget is composed of two parts: 1) our Main Account, including income from dues, gifts or contributions that support our operations; and 2) Grants Accounts, which are supported by grants from the FWS, which are, in turn, mostly used to administer and fund grants to FWS Friends Groups to help support special projects and anniversary celebrations. This year our Main Account income was approved for \$6,020 (\$5,000 Dues, \$20 Interest, \$1,000 Lifetime Memberships). As of September 30, we had received \$3,506.28 (\$2,000 dues, \$6.28 interest, \$1,500 in Lifetime Memberships). We should get a significant boost in dues following this newsletter and the recent request for dues payments. Not included in the budgeted income total is \$43,396.02 from our Main Account reserve funds the board decided to allocate mid-year in 2021 to support special Conservation Projects (see article above, *Association Funds FWS Conservation Projects*, and additional information below). A total of \$4,100 in expenses from our Main Account was approved this year (\$1,000 Board Travel, \$500 Legal and Professional, \$250 Mailing and Postage, \$450 Newsletter, \$500 Office Supplies, \$150 PayPal (online dues collection), \$1,000 Web Hosting, \$250 Miscellaneous). As with income, \$43,396.02 from main account reserve funds was approved to support Special Projects and is not included in the \$4,100 budgeted expenses.

As of September 30, expenses (less Special Project funds) totaled \$1,328.77, so while we were short in income from regular dues, total income still exceeded expenses. We have recently hired a new Webmaster to update and maintain our website, and while we anticipate website expenses will increase in future years, we should still be able to meet all expenses. We try to budget conservatively on income and liberally on expenses with the expectation that we will safely cover expenses and add modestly to our Main Account reserve funds. We expect that those reserve funds will periodically exceed at least two years of anticipated expenses, allowing us to fund one or more special Conservation Projects as we did this year. As of September 30, our Main Account had a balance of \$28,435.02, with Conservation Projects payments of \$9,550 still pending, so the account should be at about \$18,000 after those expenses are paid and should remain near that balance or higher by year's end.

We have two Grant Accounts: Heritage and Youth. Both receive funds from the FWS through cooperative agreements. Categories budgeted within the Heritage Account include: travel for Retiree members of the Heritage (now History) Committee; Oral History (for interviews and transcription services); Database

Management; Heritage Supplies; Anniversary (to support significant field station anniversary celebrations); Museum Support; and Indirect (to support management of the Grants program). Categories in the Youth Account include: Honoraria, Contracts; Mini-grants (generally up to \$1,500 and targeted to Friends Groups for station support projects); Travel and Miscellaneous. Nearly all activity in this grant program was shut down due to COVID-19, the only exception being honoraria for tribal elders to attend a tribal youth conference at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in July this year. Activities are expected to resume as COVID concerns ease. Grant accounts have a current balance of \$27,225.51, with additional funds available from the FWS per approved amendments, to draw on as needed.

After several years of a growing balance in our Main Account, the Board decided in 2021 to fund 4-5 significant FWS conservation projects nationwide (see article above, *Association Funds FWS Conservation Projects*) via the FWS Contributed Funds Account, with funding going directly to the designated FWS field station or activity, and not subject to FWS administrative overhead. The Board solicited projects from the FWS for funding of up to \$10,000 per project. Fifty proposals were received, and five were funded for a total of \$43,396.02. *Steve Rideout, Treasurer*

Retirees Association Initiates Conservation

Outreach. In keeping with one of the Retirees Association's objectives of contributing to the FWS's mission, we embarked on a new activity in September: community wildlife outreach. Partnering with the US Forest Service and the Shenandoah



Board Member Lew Gorman III and Retirees Association Booth at RioPalloza

Riverkeepers, Association Board Member, Lew Gorman III, set up an information booth at RioPalloza. an event held in a day-use area of the George Washington National Forest near Port Royal, Virginia on a tributary of the north branch of the Shenandoah River. The event was designed to particularly target the Hispanic community. This was the second year for the event, but the first with a wildlife conservation booth. Participants tested their skills at identifying endangered species, common local wildlife and animal tracks. The booth also allowed visitors to examine wildlife hides, antlers, furs, and mounted birds that were obtained from the FWS Law Enforcement Repository near Denver, CO. Participants left with a message designed to help them connect with nature through exploration and caring for wildlife and their habitats. College students from nearby Virginia colleges also inquired about careers in the Service. We answered questions and provided handouts addressing FWS careers. Stay tuned, as we hope to be able to report more of this type of activity by the Association in the future. *Submitted by Lew Gorman III*

Membership

New Life Members. New life member **Michael Horton** is an Endangered Species and landscape conservation planner with



more than 30 years of experience, 25 working for the FWS. During his time with the Service Michael worked to conserve old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest, vernal pool wetlands and valley floor habitats along with associated amphibian, reptile, mammalian, and bird species in northern and central

California, and forested and wetland habitats throughout the northeastern US. During his last 16 years with the Service, Michael worked in the Headquarters office in Washington, DC on legal, policy, and regulatory issues, and led the creation of the Service's online Information for Planning and Consultation decision support system (IPaC). Since accepting an early-out in 2015, Michael has formed his own conservation consulting company, Integrated Planning and Conservation Associates (IPaCA), and now works to facilitate conservation both within the US and around the globe. *Contributed by Michael Horton*

We're counting again new life members **Jim Smith** and **Sean Furniss** who were mentioned also in the previous issue of the newsletter. Jim, of Red Bluff, California retired in 2020 from the Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) Program at the Red Bluff Fish and Wildlife Office. Sean, of Province, Virginia, retired in 2010 from a career in the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) and was at Headquarters when he retired.

Thank You Sustaining Members! There was a total of nine new memberships and three new Life memberships and 36 regular member renewals for a total of 45 members getting their dues up to date this quarter. We could not support a Retirees Association without sustaining members. [We thank you for your support!](#) If you wonder where your dues go, read the Treasurer's Report above written by Steve Rideout. Suggestions to increase our sustaining memberships are always welcome. Please send any and all suggestions to Deborah Holle at promote@fwsretirees.org. New members, life members, and members who renewed their memberships since the previous (summer) newsletter are listed below with current location, year retired, legacy Region and program and last field station identified, if known.

- **ADAMS, Teresa**, Hartselle, AL, Retired 2020, R4, Refuges & Wildlife, Wheeler NWR – **NEW MEMBER**
- **ALBERS, Peter (Bernadette)**, Traverse City, MI, Retired 2007, R8, Research, Patuxent
- **BENFIELD, Dan (Connie Dodd)**, Winston-Salem, NC, Retired, R4, Refuges & Wildlife
- **BOGGS, James (Laura)**, Vero Beach, FL, Retired 2004, R4, Ecological Services (ES), Arkansas ES Office
- **BOWDEN, Sally**, Wallop Island, VA, Retired 2017, R5 Refuges & Wildlife, Chincoteague NWR
- **BURCH, Susan (Mark Shumar)**, Boise, ID, Retired 2014, R1, ES, Idaho State Office
- **CONNOLLY, Guy (Helen)**, Lakewood, CO, Retired 1997, R8, Research, USDA National Wildlife Research Center
- **FINCH, Kenny**, Coffeetown, AL, Retired 2013, R4, Refuges & Wildlife, Choctaw NWR – **NEW MEMBER**
- **FURNISS, Sean (Martha)**, Reston, VA, Retired 2010, R9, Refuges & Wildlife – **LIFE MEMBER**
- **GENTILE, Doug**, Arlington, VA, Retired 2013, R9, Federal Aid and State Programs – **NEW MEMBER**
- **GRABILL, Bill (Linda)**, Peachtree City, GA, Retired 2005, R4, Refuges & Wildlife
- **GREER, Kelly (Michael Horton)**, Reston, VA, R9
- **GRUENTHAL, Henn**, Stansbury Park, UT, Retired 1994, R6, Fisheries, Jackson NFH
- **Harp, Vergial (Cade)**, Danville, MO, Retired 2010, R3, Refuges & Wildlife, Mingo NWR – **NEW MEMBER**
- **HARTMAN, Paul (Janelle)**, Arvada, CO, Retired 1995, R6, Refuges & Wildlife, Realty
- **HEUER, Ted**, Homer, AK, Retired 2007, R7, Refuges, Yukon Flats NWR
- **HORTON, Michael (Kelly Greer)**, Reston, VA, Retired 2015, R9, ES, Arlington – **LIFE MEMBER**
- **HIMMELRIGHT, Sylvia**, Bunker Hill, WV, Retired 2018, R9, NCTC – **NEW MEMBER**
- **KELLY, Sean (Diane)**, Apple Valley, MN, Retired 2018, R3, Migratory Birds – **NEW MEMBER**
- **KOON, Ellie (Chuck Smith)**, Baldwin, MI, Retired 2012, R3, Ludington Biological Station – **NEW MEMBER**
- **KREMENTZ, David (Jeanne McLachlin)**, Fayetteville, AR, Retired 2018, R9, Research, Arkansas Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit – **NEW MEMBER**
- **LEACHMAN, Robert**, Grand Junction, CO, Retired 2005, R6, ES, Grand Junction Office.
- **LEWIS, Lynn (Steve)**, Eagan, MN, Retired 2016, R3, ES
- **LEWIS, Steve (Lynn)**, Eagan, MN, Retired 2015, R3, Migratory Birds
- **LINDELL, John**, Bayfield, WI, Retired 2005, R3, Refuges & Wildlife – Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge
- **LOWE, Roy (Laurie)**, Waldport, OR, Retired 2018, R1, Refuges & Wildlife, Oregon Coast NWR Complex
- **MALOY, Charlie "IL"**, Cape Coral, FL, Retired 1983, R5, NE Area Office
- **MILLER, Mark (Anne)**, Olympia, WA, Retired 2016, R1, ES, State Office
- **MUELLER, Allan (Kathleen)**, Conway, AR, Retired, R4, ES, Arkansas Field Office
- **NELSON, Jon**, Sierra Vista, AZ, Retired 1993, R7, Fisheries, Federal Aid, ES, Endangered Species, Engineering
- **PHEIFER, Frank**, Grand Junction, CO, Retired 2011, R6, Fisheries, Vernal Utah Office
- **PHILLIPS, Ray**, Buffalo, WY, Retired 1986, R3, Fisheries, Fish Food Technology Center
- **SAUL, Susan**, Vancouver, WA, Retired 2006, R1, External Affairs

- **SCHAFF, William/Bill (Chris)**, Vancouver, WA, Retired 2012, R7, Refuges & Wildlife, Alaska Peninsula/Bercharof NWR Complex
- **SPENCER, Douglas (Janine)**, Neenah, WI, Retired 2011, R1, Refuges & Wildlife, Willamette Valley NWR
- **SMITH, Carol (David Broyles)**, Gatesville, TX, Retired 2017, R6, ES, Missouri River Recovery Office – **NEW MEMBER**
- **SMITH, Franklin**, Kenton, DE, Retired 2003, R5, Refuges & Wildlife, Bombay Hook NWR
- **SMITH, Jerome (Elaine)**, Tyler, TX, Retired 1994, R9, LE, International Affairs
- **SMITH, Jim/James**, Red Bluff, CA, Retired 2020, R8, Fisheries, Red Bluff Fish & Wildlife Office – **LIFE MEMBER**
- **STEVENS (McLAUGHLIN) TONI (John)**, Portland, OR, Retired 1999, R1, Law Enforcement
- **STEWART, Bob (Norma)**, Lafayette, LA, Retired 2004, R8, National Wetlands Research Office
- **STALNAKER, Clair**, Ft. Collins, CO, Retired 2000, R6, USGS, Research
- **STARNES, Lynn**, Sparks, NV, Retired 2006, R2, Fisheries
- **STINE, Pete (Marlene)**, Albuquerque, NM, Retired 2004, R2, Fisheries
- **WEBBER, Ralph**, Troy, MT, Retired 2011, R1, Refuges & Wildlife, Tualatin River NWR Complex

Deborah Holle

Fun Facts and Other Interesting Stories. Retirees submitted more Fun Facts to help celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the FWS. Mark Madison, the FWS's one and only Historian, is collecting Fun Facts to put in social media, electronic communications within the Service, and written documents. I suppose that is a Fun Fact in itself. Mark is also Chair of the newly designated History Committee (formerly known as the Heritage Committee). Mark said he will keep all of the **Fun Facts** and **Interesting Stories** that are submitted. Mark is also very interested in documenting families who have two or more members working for the FWS, as in the article below (*Family Ties*) featuring a family with three FWS employees. I enjoy reading these stories and getting them published in our newsletters. But I need our members to submit them to me at promote@fwsretirees.org or miamibig99@fws.gov. So, keep those Fun Facts and Interesting Stories coming. *Deborah Holle*

Exploding Fish. Who ya gonna call when an explosion at Washington National Airport in a mail bag on the flight line yields fish remains and an FWS address? Why, you call the FWS Fisheries Headquarters Office. That's who the FBI, FAA, and USPS called – Charley “One L” Maloy, Branch Chief, Fish Distribution. The story is, the Eastern Fish Health Center in WV sent an all-points notice to hatcheries seeking sick catfish. They were to be frozen and shipped to the lab ASAP. A young Mississippi biologist dutifully prepared some frozen catfish in a vacuum bottle filled with dry ice, and to assure timeliness, sent them by air . . . frozen CO₂ sealed in a vacuum bottle!!! Best it happened before all the heightened airport security of today. *This*

fun fact was taken from the Mr Maloy's Oral History by Jerry Grover.

The (Almost) National Aquarium. In the 1970's there were still plans to build a state-of-the-art National Aquarium on Haines Point in East Potomac Park in Washington, DC. Ten million dollars was appropriated for design and construction. A planning and scientific staff, numbering 40-50 people, were already working on the design phase for the Aquarium. The previous aquarium was in the basement of the Commerce Building. Around September of 1991, plans for the Aquarium were in trouble because of budget shortages and the cost of the Vietnam war. Congressman Kirwan, main advocate for the Aquarium died and Congressional support died too. The \$10 million was re-appropriated. During the 1960's, nearly 70 aquarium tanks with fish were placed in the Secretary's Office at DOI and in various Congressional and Senate offices. Tanks were even placed in the Press Secretary's office at the White House. It was hoped that would garner support for the new aquarium. Tanks were maintained by National Aquarium staff who visited each office at least weekly at taxpayer's expense. After several years and stinging adverse publicity in the Washington Post, this unusual perk ended. Coincidentally, the site for the Aquarium was either going to shrink or eliminate an 18-hole golf course at the park frequented by members of Congress. The staff of 40-50 people who were working on the design phase suddenly left. Most of them were new to government and had other career pursuits. *Cindy Barry contributed this fun fact based on Dave Allen's Oral History.*

You Never Know What You'll Find. Wally Soroka, Special Agent (retired) in the Division of LE, reported that in the mid-1980's, agents ran a sting operation called “Operation Taxidermy.” They operated a taxidermy shop in Anchorage. Word got around that the shop would look the other way when customers brought in wildlife to be mounted. The shop was wired for sound and video. On the morning of the “take down”, it was pretty hard for the defendants to plead not guilty when there was video of them bragging how they were too smart to get caught. Agents served a search warrant on an Anchorage residence seeking an illegal trophy walrus head mount containing a secreted transmitter borrowed from Kenai NWR. Besides the walrus head mount, agents also found a case of canning jars filled with several pounds of cocaine. At that time DEA said it was the largest drug seizure in Alaska history. And about that hidden transmitter they borrowed, . . . In the middle of the investigation Kenai NWR biologists contacted Law Enforcement to report that someone must have killed one of their collared wolves because their tracking flights showed transmitter signals coming from an Anchorage neighborhood – the home where the walrus head and cocaine were eventually recovered. *Contributed by Wally Soroka, Retired Special Agent, Division of Law Enforcement*

A Silver Lining or Not? Do you know how many years it took after the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill until criminal charges were settled? Two years, in 1991. And the fine paid by Exxon Corporation, and Exxon Shipping was the largest fine paid in US history. The fine was \$100 million but mitigated down to \$25 million with \$11 million of that for violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act which was earmarked for purchase of wetlands around

the country. *Contributed by Wally Soroka, Retired Special Agent, Division of Law Enforcement*

You Just Have to be Patient Sometimes. Wally Soroka's career began in 1971 as a Special Agent at the Boston LE Office. He took his new job seriously and wanted to do his part in saving wildlife. Noting the request for "suggestions" in a monthly Service publication, he decided to offer one . . . that the Division of LE should employ canines to detect and sniff out illegal wildlife shipments at designated ports and assist agents in detecting other hidden wildlife. Wally wrote up the suggestion, submitted it through appropriate channels and waited for what he was sure would be a positive response. A few weeks went by when he was summoned into his supervisor's office who shared a written memo (no e-mails then) from an upper level manager in the Washington LE Office. The memo was short and to the point . . . "Doesn't Soroka have anything better to do than submit suggestions." Sadly, Wally didn't submit any more suggestions and went on to a long, successful career with LE as a Special Agent. One should note that his suggestion eventually was implemented as there are presently a number of canines performing the task he suggested over 50 years ago. In fact, we are all aware of how many things dogs can sniff out, including drugs, bombs, nutria scat, and even some types of human disease. *Contributed by Wally Soroka, Retired Special Agent, Division of Law Enforcement*

(SCEP). That was over 19 years ago. Stacy spent almost 11 years in the field at Havasu NWR, Bosque del Apache NWR, Salt Plains NWR and Laguna Atascosa NWR. Then in 2013 she transferred to Headquarters and has worked for the Migratory Bird Program in the Bird Habitat Conservation Division for the past eight years.



Shaun Sanchez fishing in Alaska in 2016

Shaun also started working at FWS through the SCEP program and is now the Deputy Chief of the NWRS at Headquarters. He has also worked around the country on numerous Refuges, including Buenos Aires and Las Vegas NWRs as a SCEP, as well as in permanent assignments at Bosque del Apache, Salt Plains, Anahuac and Yukon Delta NWRs and the Desert NWR Complex. Following that he worked in the Atlanta Regional Office as Deputy Chief of Refuges, in Headquarters as the NWRS Budget Chief and currently as the

Deputy Chief of the NWRS.

Their father, Martin, owned a welding business for 30+ years. After retirement from that he volunteered at the Las Vegas NWR



Shaun and Stacy Sanchez honing their fishing skills

Family Ties. We like to recognize families with members who share the same passion for wildlife and decide to work for the FWS, albeit in different capacities and programs. One is the Sanchez family of Buena Vista, NM. Stacy and her brother Shaun were raised on a ranch in the northern part of the State nestled in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Stacy and Shaun come from mixed roots of proud people. Their

European ancestors migrated to North America in the 16th century, and their Native ancestors thrived in northern New Mexico for centuries before that.

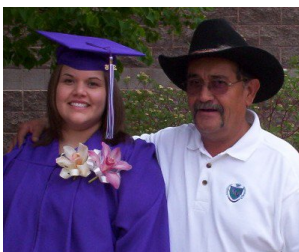
Wildlife is definitely in their blood as they grew up hunting, fishing, camping and continue to be active in the outdoors. Their mother Joyce, married to Martin for 49 years, supported and joined in their outings. They have also added birding, hiking, and photography to their outdoor endeavors. Shaun is older, and by the time Stacy started college, he had already been working for FWS for a few years. Stacy wanted to be a science teacher but loved the outdoors. Shaun told her the FWS had



Martin Sanchez hunting near his ranch

Complex for a few years. Then as fate would have it, a maintenance position opened, and he was hired. He worked for FWS for about three years before retiring again with more time to enjoy the family passion for wild things and wild places. Between the three of them they worked in nine states: NM, CA, AZ, OK, TX, AK, NV, GA and now VA. Both Shaun and Stacy currently work at Headquarters. *Deborah Holle*

Albuquerque Area Retirees Hold First Post-COVID Luncheon. Retiree Association member and legacy Region 2 Liaison Pete Stine reports that he and his wife Marlene hosted the first post-COVID-19 Association luncheon for Albuquerque-area retirees on July 7 this year. They had 13 attendees which they thought was probably not too bad considering what New Mexico had gone through over the previous year. He reported they all had a great time, as it had been over a year since any of them had gotten together. They passed around the latest (Summer 2021) newsletter and discussed information on the Interior Department's 2018 reorganization by watershed, the passing of recent retirees



Stacy with her father Martin Sanchez at college graduation

outreach/environmental education specialists, so she could do both — teach and be outdoors with a variety of students. While attending New Mexico Highland University, she attended a Hispanic Conservation Conference in Albuquerque. There she was able to meet FWS representatives and apply for the Student Career Experience Program

and recent retiree moves. They also circulated a copy of the 2018 Retirees Association directory and reported they were seeking to get in touch with lost contacts. They also “talked up” the next Retirees Reunion to be held in Spearfish, SD next year. *Thanks go to FWS Retiree Pete Stine for providing this information.*

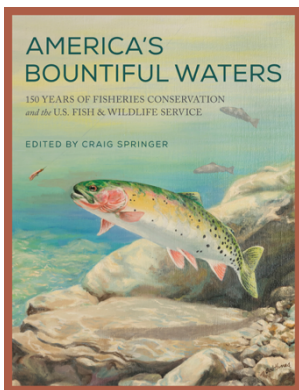
Need Identification Help with an Old Photo. Back in December, Richard Craven sent us a note asking for help identifying a photo from his father. His father worked for the Bureau of Biological Survey during 1936-1938 in ND as a Junior Refuge Manager. He retired from Tishomingo NWR in 1966. In between, he was at several refuges as a trainee in ND, transferred to Lacreek (1938-1941) in South Dakota. He was then manager at Aransas NWR during 1941-1945, and then to Tishomingo NWR, where he retired in 1966.

Richard found a photo in his father’s papers. He thinks it may have been taken at Lacreek NWR, but it could have been Aransas NWR. He also assumes his father took the photo when visitors from the Regional Office or other FWS personnel visited the Refuge. Richard doesn’t know who the people in the photo are, but his dad was always talking about Mr. Salyer, Mr. Gatlin and Mr. Barclay. Richard was born in 1942, remembers Mr. Barclay from the Albuquerque Regional Office and he isn’t in the picture.

The NCTC checked the photo against their photo library and did not have it. They were unable to identify the people in the photo.

You can see the photo at the end of this newsletter. If you recognize the refuge, where the steel structure was (is) or can identify any of the men in the photo, please let Deborah Holle know at (promote@fwsretirees.org), and she will pass the information on to Richard. The photo will also be at the Retirees Reunion in SD next summer. You are also invited to bring any mystery photos you may have to the reunion for help with identification by our fellow retirees. *Deborah Holle*

FWS News



New Book Celebrates History of the FWS Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program. The FWS Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC) Program this year marks its 150th anniversary (and so by association does the FWS as the oldest conservation agency in history) being the direct descendant of the US Fish Commission, founded in 1871. To commemorate this milestone, the FWS published in

June this year *America’s Bountiful Waters*, a comprehensive history celebrating the many scientists and others who were instrumental in the evolution of modern fisheries and aquatic management. Craig Springer, FAC fish biologist and writer in the Albuquerque Regional Office, artfully edited the 300-page book that contains many historic and contemporary photos documenting the aquatic resource work and accomplishments of

the FWS. It also features sections focusing on more than 40 selected fish and other aquatic species with masterful illustrations by aquatic artist Joseph R Tomelleri. Each of those stories is told by biologists or others who have worked closely with those species. Carlos Martinez and April Gregory at the National Fish and Aquatic Conservation Archives in Spearfish, South Dakota greatly assisted in development of the volume by providing historic photos and other materials from that facility’s trove of items documenting the history of aquatic science and management in the United States. Copies of *America’s Bountiful Waters* are available from Barnes & Noble (<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/americas-bountiful-waters-craig-springer/1137517962?ean=9780811739559>) and Amazon.com in both hard copy and digital formats as well as from other national and independent book stores.

FWS Experienced Services Program. We reported on this in our previous newsletter issue but thought it might be good to include a reminder here about the FWS’s Experienced Services Program (ESP) that was launched earlier this year. Under this program US citizens aged 55 or older can be employed to assist the Service with temporary workforce needs. These could include a wide range of positions, from budget analysts to wildlife biologists in fields ranging from maintenance to scientific specialists. Enrollees earn an hourly wage depending on education, experience and amount of oversight needed. Positions could be full-time, part-time or intermittent. Participation would not impact the pension for most Retirees. The program is being implemented and administered through two non-governmental organizations: the Center for Workforce Inclusion (www.centerforworkforceinclusion.org) whose key contact is Chris Garland (cgarland@poweringopportunity.org); and the National Older Worker Career Center (www.nowcc.org) whose key contact is Paul Schmidt (paulschmidt4c@gmail.com). Edith Thompson is the FWS Coordinator for the program (edith_thompson@fws.gov) and primary source for additional information. The two NGO’s are listing different jobs independently of each other, so you should visit both sites to see what’s available and check frequently for updates.

Heritage Committee is now the History Committee. Earlier this year, FWS Principal Deputy Director Martha Williams asked the NCTC to consider a new name for the Heritage Committee, given some negative perceptions regarding the word “Heritage”. The Heritage Committee discussed options and concerns during the course of a couple of meetings. Ultimately, members voted to change the name to the FWS History Committee. In early October the Heritage Committee sent an updated charter to the Director’s Office to officially change the name. Within the next year, the Committee will also update the FWS Manual to reflect the new name and other recent charter updates. *Submitted by Jerry Grover*

Expansion of Hunting and Fishing Opportunities. The FWS has opened new or expanded hunting and sport fishing opportunities across 2.1 million acres, the largest expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities in recent history. The increased recreational access covers 88 NWRs and one NFH. A complete list of all affected refuges and hatcheries is available at <https://www.fws.gov/home/feature/2021/2021-2022-Station->

Federal Duck Stamp Winner!! Minnesota artist James Hautman won the 2021 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest. Waterfowl hunters aged 16 and older are required to purchase and



carry the current Federal Duck Stamp. Many non-hunters, including birdwatchers, conservationists, stamp collectors, and others also purchase the stamp in support of habitat conservation. Ninety-eight percent of the purchase price goes directly to help acquire and protect

wetland habitat and purchase conservation easements for the NWRS. Additionally, a current Federal Duck Stamp can be used for free admission to any national wildlife refuge that charges an entry fee. You can buy yours starting in June 2022. Submitted by Nancy Gloman.

Grants Programs



Retiree Association Helps Fund Fishing Kit Program in Western Washington State. We all know it can be challenging to learn about and acquire basic equipment and skills for any new activity, and that includes fishing. The time needed to learn about and expenses for acquiring equipment and gear can be major barriers for some people who want to give fishing a try. To help address this, the Puget Sound/Olympic Peninsula Fisheries Complex initiated a library loan

fishing tackle program in April this year, through which library members can check out fishing kits free of charge. The program was developed in partnership with the Mountain View Timberland Regional Library in Randle, Washington, which serves nearly 500,000 residents, specifically to target youth, and under-served families. The FWS Retirees Association through its Youth Mini-Grant program helped purchase gear for the program, along with the South Puget Sound Anglers organization. Retirees Association Board Member and Youth Grant Coordinator, Lewis Gorman III, states that “Supporting Service programs that reach youth and connect them with nature is a key goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Retirement Association, and we are proud and pleased to be financially supporting this program”.

The kits each include three different size fishing rods, a tackle box with gear, casting targets for practice, along with a Washington State “Discovery Pass”, required for parking at most of state lake access points. In addition, the kits include information on how and where to fish, covering basic knot tying, casting, use of floating and sinking bait rigs, with lists of area lakes, including information about each, directions to shore fishing access, species present, and seasonal restrictions. The Randle location is the first of three planned within the Timberland Regional Library system’s 27 locations. So far, response to the program has been very good,

and there are plans for expansion to the other two libraries later in 2021 after an evaluation period. Following that the program is likely to expand beyond those three original libraries in 2022. The Fisheries Complex will also continue to assist the libraries with staff training, instructional resources, additional gear, technical assistance, and routine gear maintenance. *Information provided by Lewis Gorman III*

Natural Resource Issues

The Association believes it is important that we keep our readers informed on what we think may be the most important or highest profile fish and wildlife matters of regional or national significance, especially those of major importance to the FWS. Please note that we also try to keep our website updated with more expansive information on important fish and wildlife issues. Please visit the website at www.fwsretirees.org.

Arctic NWR Update. One of the last actions of the Trump Administration was the issuance of leases for oil and gas exploration, including drilling, on the coastal plain of the Arctic NWR. The Biden Administration suspended the oil and gas leasing program on June 1 and initiated scoping for a supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS) on the leasing program. Public comments for the scoping process closed on October 4. Six poorly attended virtual public scoping meetings were held during the week of September 20 with testimony almost unanimously in opposition to oil and gas leasing on the Refuge. The BLM will now review the comments received and develop a draft and eventually a final supplemental EIS, both with the requisite public reviews, with a record of decision estimated for 15-17 months after the close of scoping. In September the House Natural Resources Committee completed a mark-up of the 2022 budget reconciliation legislation that included repeal of the Arctic Refuge oil and gas program. In addition, more than a dozen major banks have committed to not fund oil and gas development on the Refuge, and the number of insurance companies that refuse to insure drilling operations on the refuge continues to grow.

Migratory Bird Incidental Take Update. The FWS on May 6 announced plans to revoke a January 7, 2021 regulation limiting the scope of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) that had excluded incidental take as violations of the Act. The Interior Department also rescinded a 2017 Solicitor’s Opinion used to justify that regulation. The comment period on the proposed revocation ended June 7 and on October 4 the FWS published a final rule revoking the January 7 regulation. The revocation allows the FWS to resume enforcing incidental take provisions of the MBTA. This final rule becomes effective on December 3, 2021.

Proposal to Delist 23 Species Due to Extinction. The FWS is proposing to remove 23 species from the Endangered Species List due to extinction. Based on rigorous reviews of the best available science for each, the Service has determined they are extinct, and no longer require listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The proposal to remove includes the ivory-billed woodpecker, Bachman’s warbler, two species of freshwater fishes, eight species of freshwater mussels in the Southeast and eleven species from Hawai‘i and the Pacific Islands. The Service

is seeking information, data, and comments from the public regarding the proposal (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/09/30/2021-21219/angered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-removal-of-23-extinct-species-from-the-lists-of>) and you can also comment via the link. Comments should be received or postmarked on or before November 29, 2021 or posted online by midnight that day. For more information, see the News Release at https://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ref=u.s.-fish-and-wildlife-service-proposes-delisting-23-species-from-amp_ID=37017. Submitted by Nancy Gloman

Proposal to Delist a Famous Little Fish. In better ESA news, the FWS is proposing to delist the snail darter! There was a time when this species was the biggest little fish in the United States. In the 1970s, the tiny, endangered Tennessee fish was in the news regularly, the subject of a Supreme Court ruling, an act of Congress, and a giant proposed dam that threatened it with extinction, but the Service has determined threats to the species have been reduced to the point that it no longer needs ESA protection. See the proposal at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/09/01/2021-18127/angered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-removing-the-snail-darter-from-the-list-of-angered>. Submitted by Nancy Gloman.

Humpback Chub Reclassified from Endangered to Threatened. And in more better ESA news . . . following a review of best available science, the FWS has reclassified the humpback chub from endangered to threatened under the ESA. The humpback chub was classified as endangered in 1967 due to impacts from the alteration of river habitats by large mainstem dams and is one of four ESA listed fishes in the Upper Colorado River basin, the others being the bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker. The down-listing was made possible largely through the efforts of the



Humpback Chub. Photo © Freshwaters Illustrated.

Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program, a partnership of state, regional, Tribal, and federal agencies, as well as private entities. The action to down-list the species was based on updated monitoring data demonstrating that populations are more resilient than previously thought and incorporated updated information on the potential effects of climate change on water availability in the Colorado River Basin. Ongoing threats to the humpback chub include impacts of non-native species such as smallmouth bass in the upper basin and uncertainties related to river flow. The final rule to reclassify the humpback chub from endangered to threatened was published in the *Federal Register* on October 18 this year. *Information and photo provided by Melanie Fischer.*

New Status Review of Gray Wolves in the Western US. The FWS has completed initial review of two petitions to re-list gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) in the western US as threatened or endangered under the ESA. The Service found that the petitions present substantial, credible information indicating that a listing action may be warranted and is initiating a comprehensive status review of the gray wolf in the western U.S. The petition finding can be found at

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/09/17/2021-20088/angered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-90-day-finding-for-two-petitions-to-list-the-gray-wolf>
The petition review form which provides additional information can be found at <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/es/species/mammals/wolf/westernpetitions/90-day-finding-petition-review-form-gray-wolf.pdf>. On January 4 this year the FWS removed all Gray Wolves in the contiguous 48 states from ESA protection and returned full management of them to the states, although that decision excluded the Mexican Gray Wolf in the Southwest and the Red Wolf in the Southeast. Submitted by Nancy Gloman.

Protections Restored to Three National Monuments in Utah and New England. Although not FWS conservation areas, these have been prominently in the national news over the last few years. On October 7 President Biden reinstated and slightly expanded the original 1.3 million acre boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument (NM), and restored the original 1.8 million acre boundaries of Grand Staircase-Escalante NM, two rugged and pristine expanses in Utah that are defined by red rock canyons, rich wildlife and archaeological treasures. Protections were also restored for the Atlantic Ocean's first marine monument, the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts, an expanse of sea canyons and underwater mountains off the New England coast. Protections for these areas had been significantly curtailed by the previous Administration. Submitted by Nancy Gloman.

Miscellaneous

Update from the National Wildlife Refuge

Association. Like the Retirees Association, the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) was initiated by former FWS employees. The NWRA is now the leading independent voice advocating on behalf of the NWRs's 568 refuges nationwide. The Association continues to build organizational capacity to advocate for the Refuge System, to connect conservation communities, to broaden support for the system, and to promote conservation initiatives. Recent accomplishments include partnerships to secure lands for the Everglades Headwaters NWR, sea turtle habitat restoration in Puerto Rico, webinars for networking and Friends groups, community action in Southern California, assistance to the FWS Urban Wildlife program, and legal actions when needed, to name a few. Our advocacy for Refuges on Capitol Hill, at DOI, and among conservation partners is important for maintaining



awareness of all the issues and funding needs of the Refuge System. An example is the report sent to the Biden transition team last year. You can view the report at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c2a3500f793923866cf19b8/t/5ffc7844d756af1ec0a6e1bf/1612555505332/Transition+Report+2020.pdf>.

With a staff of just nine full-time and five part-time employees plus a very active Board of Directors, the NWRA is dependent on donations and grants. We appreciate the many Retirees who continue to support FWS by supporting the NWRA. Donations to the NWRA can be made directly at <https://refugeassociation.salsalabs.org/fall2021/index.html> or through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) (see more information below). The CFC code for donating to the NWRA is 10076. Be assured that any small or large contribution that you make to the NWRA will go towards defending refuges and protecting wildlife. *Contributed by Gail Carmody*

Refuge System History and Future Project. The NWRA is currently working to develop a document and associated web content describing the history and future of the NWRS. Mark Madison at NCTC is also a partner in this project. The goal is to publish a document and a chronological timeline of events on the internet. The NWRA hopes this information will be a useful tool to encourage folks to learn more about the Refuge System and thereby increase the likelihood of enhanced involvement and support for it. They are currently looking for two areas of help from Retirees or others who may have an interest in this project.

1. Feedback on draft edition #1 of the overall document. The document is available for review and comment at https://refugeassociation.org/s/historyfuture_refugesystem_9172021.pdf. Input can be e-mailed to nwrs.history.future@gmail.com and is needed by December 31, 2021.
2. Help with Internet posting. They are seeking help to get materials posted to the Internet. If you have experience in posting content and would like to help, or know someone with these skills who might have an interest, please contact FWS retiree Ken Grannemann (e-mail nwrs.history.future@gmail.com or call 571-264-7977) who is coordinating this effort. Volunteer work is preferred but a paid internship is also a possibility.

Contributed by Ken Granneman

Retirees, You Can Still Donate through the Combined Federal Campaign.

Even though most of us have left the federal service at this point, we can still take advantage of the convenience of making donations to our favorite organizations using the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Also, new legislation in 2020 allows taxpayers to deduct \$300 (\$600 for married couples) for charitable donations even when taking the standard deduction, and if you take a required minimum distribution (RMD) from a retirement account, you can arrange to donate a portion of your RMD through the CFC as well.

If you've never donated through the CFC, it's simple. You can access the CFC through your OPM Retirement Account online or you can go directly to GiveCFC.org. Choose your organizations to donate to, then make your pledge via a full range of options including a deduction from your annuity, credit/debit card, e-check, or you can print and fill out a paper form and send them a real check. The CFC 2021 campaign has begun and continues until January 15, 2022.

Please note, however, that you cannot donate to the FWS Retirees Association through the CFC at this time. To join the Retirees Association or to renew your membership by mailing us a check, go to <https://form.jotform.com/83496854784982>. If you'd like to renew your membership with a credit or debit card, go to <https://www.jotform.com/83388271936974>. Association dues are considered donations and are fully tax-deductible. *Based on Information provided by Gail Carmody*

Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for Federal Retirees Announced. The 2022 federal retiree cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be 5.9 percent for those under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and 4.9 percent for those under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). *Submitted by Nancy Gloman*

Passing of Colleagues

If you are aware of the passing of any retired FWS employees, including those who left the Service before retirement because of organizational or late career changes, please let us know so that 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 Doug Frugé at communications@fwsretirees.org.



John Allen Blankenship (1946 – 2021). John was born January 20, 1946 and passed away peacefully on August 10, 2021, at his home in Sparks, Nevada at age 75. He was born in The Dalles, Oregon, graduated high school in Oregon and served in the Navy Seabees for four years in Vietnam. He received a degree at the University of Portland in Oregon. John worked for a short time for the Alaska Department of Fish and

Game before he joined the FWS. John was Field Supervisor for ES in 1978 in Puerto Rico, Chief of Environmental Contaminants at FWS Headquarters, Assistant Regional Director for ES in the Midwest Region, Deputy Regional Director for the Mountain-Prairie Region while also serving as the Board Chairman of the Heritage Committee (now the History Committee).

After retirement, John served as the Executive Director of Wolf Haven, a sanctuary for captive wolves in Washington State. He is survived by his wife Keri, two sons and was Papa John to eight grandchildren. John loved fishing for walleye and smallmouth

bass in South Dakota and looked forward to annual trips with his buddies each spring. A fund for a new state-of-the-art year-round fish cleaning facility along the Missouri River in Pierre, South Dakota, has been established in John's memory by the family with the South Dakota Fish & Game. Memorial Fund donations may be mailed to John Cooper, 108 Iris Court, Pierre, SD 57501. Personal checks or money orders are preferred. *We appreciate Ralph Morgenweck alerting us to John's passing and Jerry Grover drafting this article.*



Jannette Smith Brummel (1962 – 2021). Jannette, a small-town high school girl who traded the deep-fat fryer of a Vancouver, Washington, hamburger stand for the rarified heights of a federal agency, as its public face and later manager of the myriad assets of its 175 West Coast field stations, died June 7, 2021.

Jannette's FWS tenure spanned 32 years. Her well-earned retirement lasted less than three and was marked by tragedy. A month after Jeannette died of liver disease, at age 58, her husband, Jeff Brummel, 63, died by suicide. They leave behind a stepdaughter, Kayla, from her husband's prior marriage.

Jannette was born in Vancouver and graduated from its Hudson's Bay High School in 1980 and joined the FWS's ES program in its Portland Regional Office in 1986. She was hired in 1991 as a public affairs assistant in the Service's front office, as spotted owl, salmon and water wars roiled the agency in one of conservation's most contentious erises. The upward mobility position enabled her to earn a two-year college certificate in Public Affairs from Portland's Marylhurst College at the same time she was representing the agency on conservation's battle lines.

"When I hired Jannette, I broke — or perhaps bent — the rules. At first glance, she wasn't the best qualified for the job. Other applicants presented longer experience or deeper academic training," remembers David Klinger, her public affairs supervisor. "But Jannette possessed something intangible — an innate drive, a steely determination to better herself. Those are things you can't learn or teach. You just have to possess them from life experience. And Jannette had what it took. I knew, instinctively, she'd succeed. In the end, I don't think hiring Jannette to represent the Service publicly was any gamble for the agency at all."

Pressed into service on desert tortoise and spotted owl public hearings and California condor reintroductions, Jannette rose to multiple, often contentious, challenges before a hostile and questioning public. Conversely, needing a public face and presence during the Service's 1994 launch of its rhino/tiger conservation fund, Jannette, in one of her first solo press assignments, was dispatched to the toney environs of Palmdale, CA. There, on the 80-acre Shambala Nature Preserve for lions and tigers run by Tippi Hedren, star of director Alfred Hitchcock's film classic, "The Birds", Jannette navigated high

society with great poise. By all accounts, the Hollywood actress and Brummel hit it off famously.

Astute judges of employee character, the retired husband-and-wife agency team of Judy and Jerry Grover parallel each other's assessment of Brummel. "Probably as good a person as I ever had," concludes Jerry, who recruited Jannette to work for him as the agency was morphing into its geographic/programmatic management split in the mid-1990s. "Widely accepted, trusted by the people, overall, well reflective of the Service." Adds Judy, who observed Jannette's front office skills while serving as administrative secretary to regional directors Marvin Plenert and Michael Spear, "I was impressed with Jannette's hard work, competence, and quick learning."

In 1999, Jannette assumed progressively more responsible administrative positions in the Regional Office's Contracting and General Services branch, finding a niche that lasted until her retirement in 2018. Mastering a series of financial and business management systems, she became, in bureaucratic parlance, a GS-11 property utilization specialist, keeping track of everything from cabins to cars and a plethora of accountable property in between at field offices across a multi-state region. "I will remember Jannette as a caring person who never gave up, always putting 100 percent into her job," says supervisor Sue Jung, who worked with Brummel for her final 16 years in the agency.

A dual memorial service for Jannette and Jeff Brummel was held August 20 at the Salmon Creek Methodist Church in Vancouver. *Thanks to David Klinger for writing this tribute, to Sue Jung for her anecdote about and providing the photo of Jannette and to Jerry and Judy Grover likewise for their anecdotes.*



Kenneth Mitchell ("Ken") Butts (1927 – 2020), Ken Butts passed away last year at age 93. He was living in Bella Vista, Arkansas and died on March 29, 2020. Ken was born in Dillard, Oklahoma and was valedictorian of his high school class when he graduated in 1945. He served in the US Navy during World War II as a radarman on the USS Cone in the North Atlantic. While working on his MS degree at Texas A&M University

Ken served as Director of the first Recreation Management Institute held there for state and federal middle and senior level natural resource managers in 1967. He received his MS degree in Restoration and Parks Administration the following year in 1968.

Ken began his FWS career in the Atlanta Regional Office in the Division of Wildlife Refuges as Chief of the Branch of Public Use that same year. Following that he served as the Chief of the Branch of Youth Programs, and then as Chief of the Planning Branch. His last position prior to retiring in 1990 was as the Regional Minerals (oil and natural gas) Manager. He moved to Ardmore, Oklahoma following retirement and then to Bella Vista, Arkansas in July 1993. Ken's son, Thomas, informed us about his passing and that he continued his love of the outdoors by hiking, fishing, hunting and participating in various land conservation

projects following retirement. He organized the Hill ‘N’ Dale Hikers Club of Northwest Arkansas in February 1999 and served as President for two years.

Ken is survived by his son, daughter, a sister, five grandchildren and three great grandchildren. *Thanks to Ken’s son, Thomas Butts, for informing us of his Dad’s passing.*



Ronald Ellis Erickson (1936 – 2021). Ron Erickson, 84, passed away on May 10, 2021, after battling health problems. Ron was raised in the Annandale, MN area where he schooled (Annandale High School 1954) in the winter and farmed in the summer, instilling in Ron an ethic for the land and lifelong quest to read and learn.

After serving in the US Army’s Presidential Honor Guard from 1956 to 58, Ron earned a wildlife biology undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota and a master’s degree in Wildlife and Fisheries from South Dakota State University. Along the way, Ron married LeRae Loken on September 6, 1958, and they had Terri, Ladd and Bret – all of whom survive him.

Ron began his professional career as biologist and game manager with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, but in 1966 the FWS hired Ron to serve in many capacities – from refuge and watershed management, the White House’s Scientific Assessment and Strategy Team, to ultimately being in charge of mapping and digitizing all the wetlands in eight states for the National Wetland Inventory. Ron co-authored a paper on the impacts of stream channelization in the Dakotas, which highlighted the need to consider wetland habitat loss when such projects are publicly funded.

Ron, his brothers, and a brother-in-law bought 100 acres of woods and wetlands near Pine River, MN, where they built a rugged cabin that served them and their families with years of fishing and hunting adventures. When Ron retired in 1994 the northern woods called him to rural Walker, Minnesota, where he spent his retirement years crafting logs and boards out of his woods for the house of his dream. The 80 acres he built it on showed that from boyhood through fatherhood, from young veteran to learned professional, there was never a separation between Ron and the land.

Ron is survived by his three children, Terri Shepherd, Ladd Erickson and Bret Erickson; three granddaughters; Codi, Casie, and Kelsey; and three great grandchildren; Brooklyn, Wyatt and Maxley. Also surviving Ron is his brother Glenn and several nieces and nephews.

Ron was buried with an honor guard and family service at the Ft. Snelling Veteran’s Cemetery. *Paul Tritaik prepared this article based on an obituary provided to the Retirees Association by Ron’s daughter, Terri Shepherd.*



Wayne “Reid” Goforth (1932 – 2021). Reid Goforth of Sanibel Island, Florida passed away on October 11, at the age of 89. After several months of declining health following cancer surgery and a diagnosis of Lewy Body Dementia, Reid died peacefully with his beloved wife Prudence at his side.

Reid was born in Wentzville, Missouri on February 13, 1932, to Harold Goforth and Mary Elder (Reid) Goforth. In 1963, Reid married Prudence Osborn, the love of his life. The couple had a daughter, Heidi and a son, Justin. Soon, birding became a shared pastime as the family developed a profound appreciation for the Earth and its richly diverse inhabitants.

Drawn to the natural world from a very young age, Reid called himself a Wildlife Biologist and devoted his professional life to the research and preservation of migratory bird habitats and other natural ecosystems. After earning his PhD at the University of Missouri, Columbia, in 1968, he went on to supervise the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units among his several leadership roles with the federal government’s various fish and wildlife management programs. He loved teaching and many of his students have followed in his footsteps to conserve and protect our natural resources

He is survived by his wife Prudence and children Heidi Goforth Klein and Paul Justin Goforth. As Reid wanted it, his ashes will complete their carbon cycle by returning to nourish one of the many spots he deemed sacred ground during his journey here on Earth.

People wishing to honor Reid’s lifelong commitment to habitat preservation and the education of humanity to the importance of ecology can make donations to the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. This Refuge Friends Group is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports nature conservation, wildlife protection, and education efforts at the refuge. You can donate online at <https://dingdarlingsociety.org/donation> or mail your donation to the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society at PO Box 565, Sanibel Island, FL, 33957. Reid was an early supporter of the Refuge during his federal career and spent his last year on the Island enjoying the many birds and wildlife. It was his hope that many others will have that opportunity in future years. *Thanks to Jerry Grover for drafting and to Judy Grover for help in editing this article.*

Donald William Imm (1960 – 2021). Don Imm, aged 61 of Athens, GA passed away October 1, 2021, from post-surgical complications. Don was born May 14, 1960, to Eileen “Joyce” Imm (Wilson) and William H. Imm. Don grew up on a small farm in Sinclairville, NY, where his days were spent exploring and growing a love for the outdoors. After graduating from Cassadaga Valley High School in 1978, he served four years in



the US Navy as a Sonar Technician. He received a BS in Biology from State University of New York, Fredonia and earned a PhD in Ecology from the University of Georgia (UGA) in 1991 with research focused on biogeochemical cycling, then accepted a post-doctoral position at Duke University in NC, where his research focused

on forecasting climate change impacts on the eastern deciduous forest ecosystem.

After completing his education, Don became an assistant research faculty member of the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, where his research focused on evaluating land-management impacts on various rare species and ecosystems. In 1996, Don served as a forest ecologist with the US Forest Service. In 2005, he returned to UGA, researching sustainable forest management. In 2009, Don joined the FWS as the Field Supervisor for the Panama City, FL Ecological Services Field Office (PCFO). Within a year, Fish and Aquatic Conservation Office there was added to his supervision, along with a growing sub-office at Eglin Air Force Base, which uniquely positioned PCFO to address species recovery challenges in the Florida Panhandle including the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

In 2014, Don moved to the Field Supervisor position for the three Georgia Ecological Services Field Offices, including a sub-office at Fort Benning. In 2021, Don was selected to serve as the Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Gulf Restoration. He loved advancing our understanding of the natural world through research and had many successes in the recovery of imperiled species and preservation of rare habitats. He was highly respected by his colleagues for his intelligence, knowledge, and approachability, becoming a mentor to many.

Don was a loving husband, father, and grandfather with a unique sense of humor. He lived with his wife, Gayle Martin, in Athens, Georgia with their two beloved dogs, Madison and Ivy. Don enjoyed playing Strat-O-Matic, exploring natural areas, feeding the deer that would roam his yard in the afternoons, and using his creativity in the kitchen to prepare delicious meals. He loved visiting the UGA Botanical Gardens with his family and supporting native plant conservation, and he loved sharing with them his imagination and passion for science and was very much still a child at heart. Left to remember his love are Don's wife Gayle Martin, three daughters, three grandsons, his father, mother, brother, stepbrother and six nieces and nephews.

Don always led with kindness and consideration for others. He would listen to others before sharing what he thought, invariably laced with wisdom and humor. He believed in the mission of conservation and was committed to its achievement. Don was successful at bringing together stakeholders to build effective partnerships and innovative strategies. Don was particularly adept at working with others to solve complicated endangered species issues. Don's positivity and courage in extremely difficult circumstances was an inspiration. Don's last email to friends and colleagues before undergoing surgery summed up his inspiring courage and wisdom – "I just wanted to share that the steps and

processes are the same whether you are saving and improving lives through medicine or conserving and improving species and ecosystems - collaboration, communication, cooperation, and working with partners!". *We appreciate Wilson Laney and Gail Carmody for notifying us about Don's passing, Paul Tritaik for drafting this article, and Catherine Phillips, Gail Carmody and Don's family for providing information.*



Richard 'Dick' Kuehner (1940 – 2021).

Dick Kuehner, 81, who retired from the FWS at the Portland Regional Office passed away at his home in Gardnerville, Nevada in September from the effects of Parkinson's Disease. He was the Regional Branch Chief of the Public Use Division for the NWRS before his retirement in 2000. He is survived by his wife Barbara whom he married in May 1966 in Portland and daughters Elizabeth Kuehner Reynolds and Heather Jeanne Kuehner plus two

grandchildren.

Dick was born and grew up in San Diego, California. He earned an undergraduate degree at Humboldt State University in California and a master's degree at the University of Michigan where he met Barbara. His graduate work was a hybrid between forestry, landscape architecture and social survey research. This led him to begin a career in teaching at Humboldt State University in environmental design. After five years, he joined the ranks of the Bureau of Land Management as a landscape architect, also doing some specialized work for the US Forest Service on Bristlecone Pine. By the time he went to work for the FWS in 1978, Mr. Kuehner was professionally adept in landscape architecture, social survey research, and natural resource interpretation. He saw a job advertised by the FWS to promote, design and develop public facilities on NWRs and NFHs. This was the beginning of a 22-year career with the FWS. His first efforts were to convince the agency to enhance its approach to public use and develop a leaflet for every refuge and hatchery in full color along with signage and enhanced interpretation at its visitor centers. During his career he promoted establishing kiosks and interpretive signs with welcoming messages to visitors focusing on the things visitors could do on FWS lands rather than all the things you can't – the goal being to create a better experience for the visitor. His greatest joy was finding money where people said there was none. He loved to say, "We're making it work." His efforts drew the attention of other FWS Regions, led to instructional workshops and he was frequently consulted on projects, for example, the DC Booth Historic NFH and Archives and an interpretation project there that resulted in the display of an actual historic railroad fish car. His input also led to the design of the endangered species wall mural in the main terminal of the Honolulu International airport.

After 34 years of federal service, Dick retired to a home he built in Captain Cook, Hawaii, and continued his interpretive work in retirement in Hawaii assisting with NWRS and National Park

Service projects, though he had to give that up to better deal with worsening Parkinson's Disease symptoms. A special memorial service was held in September 2021 at the urban Tualatin NWR just outside Portland, a refuge that he was involved with in the early planning stages. *Thanks go to Jerry Grover for drafting this article and to Ken's wife, Barbara for editing.*



Jerry Dale Kuykendall (1949 - 2021). Jerry Kuykendall, age 72, of Tunnel Hill, IL, passed away on September 6, 2021, in Herrin IL, after bravely fighting a 2-week battle with COVID-19 complications. He was born May 19, 1949, in Carbondale, IL, the son of Joseph Benton "J.B." and Evelyn Pauline (Pate) Kuykendall. Jerry

attended school in Marion, and was a graduate of Marion High School Class of 1967. After graduation he continued his education by attending Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He then answered the call of this nation by enlisting in the US Air Force, serving in Southeast Asia in Thailand during 1968-1972. After being honorably discharged he resumed his education, attending Fresno State University in CA, where he received a BA in Biology. While in the Fresno area he met Linda Johanning, and they were married December 29, 1972, in Belmont, CA, and they spent nearly 49 years together.

Jerry worked for the FWS for 27 years, serving as a Federal Law Enforcement (LE) Officer. Jerry started his Service career in 1977 as a Manager Trainee at Aransas NWR, TX, then as an Assistant Refuge Manager at Swan Lake NWR, MO in 1978. A year later, he received training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, GA and began his federal LE career as a collateral duty Refuge Officer. He took a 15-month hiatus to tend to his farm in IL before being reinstated at Mingo NWR, MO in 1984 as an Assistant Manager with LE duties. One of Jerry's most notable cases was a manhunt on Mingo that went from dangerous to almost lethal to a positive outcome and made the *Fish and Wildlife News*. In 1991, he transferred to FLETC, where he was a Loaned Instructor on a two-year detail. He then went to Wichita Mountains NWR, OK to be the Senior LE Officer. In 1998, he returned to FLETC as the LE National Training Coordinator for the Division of Refuges and served until 2003. After he left that position, he moved back to southern IL to serve as the Supervisory Park Ranger (LE) at Crab Orchard NWR and officially retired in 2004.

A great portion of Jerry's career was dedicated to advancing the Refuge LE program. Jerry worked tirelessly to bring Refuge LE up to professional standards on a par with the highest levels of federal LE. His unceasing efforts to that end ultimately resulted in the current cadre of full-time LE officers serving in the NWRs. Those officers currently undergo approximately 32 weeks of intensive training before beginning enforcement operations on their own. A far cry from the days when an employee was handed a gun and badge by a Refuge Manager and told to "go do law enforcement."

Living in the country in Johnson County, Jerry took on cattle farming for about seven years before he and Linda began

missionary work in Honduras. He was a member of The Roads Church of Norris City, IL and served on the Board of Directors for Cornerstone Foundation, supporting the Hospital Loma de Luz in Balfate, Honduras. He loved the outdoors, traveling, operating farm tractors, cattle farming, shooting his guns, living in the country, being a missionary, supporting missionaries, and top of the list was spending as much time as he could with his wife Linda. Jerry was a proud supporter of LE and the US Armed Forces.

Jerry is survived by his wife, Linda, a son, his mother, two sisters, an aunt, a brother-in-law, and a host of nieces and nephews, other extended family and many friends. *Thanks to Paul Tritaik for drafting this article about Jerry and to Tom Worthington, Steve Lenz, Deborah Holle and Jerry's family for providing information.*



Charles ("Chuck") Lane (1940 - 2021). Chuck Lane passed away at the age of 80 on February 21, 2021. Chuck was born September 15, 1940, in Helena, Montana. Chuck survived both polio and rheumatic fever early in life and went on to graduate high school in 1958 and Carroll College there with a BA in Biology in 1962.

He then went on to Oregon State University in Corvallis earning a MS in Fisheries in 1965. While there he met his wife, Janet Marie Hahn, on a blind date in 1965 and they continued a long-distance courtship until their marriage in 1966. They adopted two sons, Christopher and Stephen, and one daughter, Jennifer.

Right after getting his MS, Chuck worked a while for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Indiana, but fairly soon took a job in Canada as a fisheries biologist for the Saskatchewan Provincial Government (1965-1967) and then moved on to another with the Alberta Department of Fisheries (1967-1972). From there Chuck and family moved to Utah in 1972 where he worked for the US Bureau of Reclamation on the Central Utah Project. While employed full-time there, Chuck earned a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Brigham Young University in Provo in 1982. Their next move was to Weaverville, California for Chuck's first job with the FWS working on the Trinity River Restoration Project. Chuck's final two years with the FWS were at the Sacramento Field Office (1995-97) working on the Salton Sea Project.

Chuck's second career began after retirement when he and Jan moved to Blodgett, Oregon to help Jan's brother, Dale, with the family farm. Not having grown up in a rural area, Chuck had to learn new skills such as fencing, working with sheep and cattle, baling hay and cutting firewood. A FWS associate of Chuck's, Ron Iverson, recalls that he loved farming and living in the Blodgett area. During retirement, Chuck volunteered time with the Mary's River Watershed Council in Corvallis, reflecting his continued interest in aquatic biology. He also volunteered with the Salvation Army and served as a volunteer fireman and on the Board of Directors for the Blodgett-Summit Rural Fire Department. While Chuck and Jan were living in Utah and California, they hosted exchange students from Japan.

Chuck was a frequent contributor of letters to the editor of the Corvallis Gazette-Times . . . seems as often as they would allow, and he was a constant consumer of news and relished discussion of current events. His dry sense of humor and penchant for teasing will be missed by all who knew and loved him. A memorial service for Chuck was held June 19, 2021 at Peace Lutheran Church in Philomath, Oregon. *Thanks go to Ron Iverson for notifying the Retirees Association about Chuck's passing and for his anecdotal information about Chuck.*

Patrick Hugh (Pat) Mullane (1947 – 2021). Pat Mullane died October 9, 2021 from injuries suffered in a tragic accident. Pat was born June 4, 1947, in Macon, Georgia. He is survived by his wife, Suzanne, a daughter and son, four brothers, a sister and five grandchildren. One of Pat's great loves was the outdoors, following closely behind that for his wife and family. During college he worked summers at Yellowstone National Park and then went to work for the FWS, initially in the Fisheries Program and, according to FWS Retiree Pete Stine, he was stationed at several Fisheries field stations. A friend of Pat's, Jerry French, informed us that he believes Pat graduated from New Mexico State University, probably in 1969, and that he worked with Pat from late 1970 through the spring of 1971 at Alchesay NFH while Jerry was stationed at Williams Creek NFH in the same hatchery complex in AZ and that Pat transferred to the Fort Worth NFH (now a State hatchery) in TX in 1971. Steve Rideout recalls confidently that Pat was Assistant Hatchery Manager at Craig Brook NFH, ME in 1978. Pat finished his FWS career in the Federal Aid Program at the Albuquerque Regional Office. Pat's interests were wide, ranging from concrete, cars and history to fishing, hunting and wildlife conservation. He was known as a consummate game player, comedian and trickster, with lots of funny stories, an easy laugh and ready smile.

Pat was surrounded by loved ones when he passed and despite the tragic circumstances, his passing was peaceful. A celebration of life is planned for December 12, 2021 at 2:00 PM at the Sandia Golf Club, 30 Rainbow Rd, NE Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87113. All who knew Pat are invited to attend and share any Pat stories they may have. His family is requesting no donations, but asking instead that you go hiking, fishing, or camping with family. *Thanks to Pete Stine for reporting Pat's passing to the Retiree Association and to Pete, Jerry French and Steve Rideout for providing anecdotes about Pat's FWS career.*



Burkett Shaw Neely, Jr. (1936 – 2021). Burkett Neely passed away on September 5, 2021, following a 2-year battle with Alzheimer's. He was 85 years old, born on June 27, 1936 to Estelle Love (Lumsden) and Burkett Shaw Neely Sr. in Mendenhall, Mississippi. Burkett graduated from Mendenhall High School in 1955 and then attended a year of college, before taking a break to work as a surveyor for the Western Geophysical Company. There he traveled to places like Alaska,

Colorado, Utah, and Texas, surveying for oil exploration. In 1958, he served a two-year tour of duty in the US Navy, traveling to foreign ports, including Italy. In 1960, he returned to work for Western Geophysical and married his sweetheart, Era Lea Cockrell in 1961. They later had two sons, Alan "Keith" and Brian "Kevin."

In 1962, Burkett traded his surveyor's transit for textbooks when he enrolled in the University of Southern Mississippi to finish his degree. He was such an outstanding student, he was listed in the "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities," a national recognition. His leadership was also evident when he was elected president of the local chapter of Beta Beta Beta (TriBeta), an honor society and academic fraternity for students of the biological sciences. In his senior year, he received the C. Harris Award as outstanding senior biology student and graduated with a BS in biology in 1965.

Burkett joined the FWS in 1965 and served as Assistant Refuge Manager, first on the Savannah NWR Complex, and then at Mattamuskeet NWR. He was selected as the program coordinator for a special student group training course by the Atlanta Regional Office. His first Refuge Manager position was at Cape Romain NWR, followed by Pee Dee NWR. While at Pee Dee NWR, he was designated as the Service's representative on the Eastern Brown Pelican Recovery Team.

In 1976, Burkett transferred to the Washington Office, where he worked as a Wilderness Planner in the Refuge Division for a year and a half. In that position, he led the ongoing efforts of the FWS and Department of the Interior to establish wilderness areas on refuges. In early 1978 he transferred to FWS Director Lynn Greenwalt's staff as Deputy Chief of the Alaska Native Claims (ANC) Staff. That unit worked within another staff unit, the Alaska Planning Group (APG), consisting of staffs from Parks, Refuges, and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. The APG had been established by and reported directly to the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks and after 1976, following the election of President Jimmy Carter and appointment of Cecil Andrus as Secretary of the Interior, as direct support for the Secretary's Alaska Task Force. While in the ANC unit he supported President Carter's proposals, as developed by Secretary Andrus in 1977 with APG input, for new and expanded refuges and other conservation units in Alaska.

As Deputy Chief, one of Burkett's principal duties was supervision of the ANC Cartographic unit which served as the Department's map creation and storage unit for all legislative proposals involving NWRs, National Parks and Forests, Bureau of Land Management Conservation Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness. That was a large and vital responsibility that had developed over the years beginning in 1972-73 as the required studies, NEPA compliance and essential decisions were made within the Department and as legislative proposals were developed in the US House of Representatives and Senate. By 1978 the mapping and storage requirements were substantial. Burkett's cartographic role in supporting the proposals led to his being designated a liaison to President Carter's Alaska Lands Staff within the White House. Thus, Burkett met with that Staff and with President Carter using appropriate maps to brief the President on the various State, Federal, non-governmental

organization and Congressional proposals developed in the 95th and 96th Congresses. Burkett also worked closely with the US Geological Survey mapping unit in Denver, CO assuring necessary arrangements for ultimate production of maps showing the official boundaries of the new and expanded congressionally established units created with passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act on December 2, 1980.

In 1981, Burkett became the Refuge Manager of the 221-square-mile Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee NWR in the northern Everglades. He also managed the 1,000-acre Hobe Sound NWR, a key nesting beach for sea turtles. He began duty at these South Florida refuges during a drought that left the interior of the Loxahatchee marsh so dry, he recalled walking around in it "...without changing my shoes." When he first drove around the levee encircling the Refuge, he was appalled to see a pump spewing green water out of sugar cane fields into the Refuge. He saw fish dying and wondered why so many cattails were growing in the Refuge's southwest end, but not in its interior. He initiated a water monitoring system to determine the causes of pollutants affecting water quality and the area's fish and wildlife. He soon discovered the cattails were being fed by the phosphorous-laden runoff from the nearby sugar and vegetable farms. Cattails grew so thick in areas normally open that none of the aquatic vegetation important for wildlife habitat could flourish.

Burkett launched a long fight to win cleaner water for the Refuge that was home to the then endangered wood storks, Everglade kites, and thousands of wintering waterfowl. He worked with a US Attorney in Miami to provide vital information for filing a 1988 lawsuit that charged the State of Florida with failure to prevent agricultural discharge from polluting the Refuge and Everglades National Park. That legal action led the Florida Governor and the Florida State Legislature to enact the Everglades Forever Act in 1994. It proposed a network of marshes, called stormwater treatment areas, built to cleanse farm runoff before it flowed into the Everglades. It also added two pollution-absorbing marshes at the Refuge's northern end and changed a water management plan that sometimes drowned and sometimes over-drained the marsh. Burkett also persuaded the US Army Corps of Engineers to plan for more water in the Refuge during drought periods over the objections of water managers who wanted the right to siphon it off to replenish Palm Beach County drinking water supplies.

In 1983, Burkett was also confronted with pressure from the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, the Florida Wildlife Federation, and the Palm Beach County Airboat and Half-track Conservation Club, who petitioned the FWS Director to open the Refuge to deer hunting. Though two State-managed Water Conservation Areas south of the Refuge were already open to deer hunting, the half-tracks had seriously damaged their aquatic vegetation. The Loxahatchee impoundment was still in a natural state that needed to be protected. Local hunters and State wildlife officials campaigned to get a deer hunt with airboats and half-track vehicles on Loxahatchee. Though airboats were initially considered, Burkett waged a successful campaign to prevent this and negotiated, instead, a scaled down, two-day deer hunt without airboats that still drew protesters and local headlines. Only two deer were bagged.

The airboat issue on Loxahatchee grew to become part of a national controversy over allowing *incompatible uses* on NWRs. Eventually, Burkett was able to prove that private airboats were an "incompatible use" because airboats conflicted with the Refuge's primary mission, to protect bird colonies. Airboats had been straying from the established trails and disturbing birds and habitat, so they were banned permanently from the Refuge. Burkett also closed the concession that operated airboat tours in the canals that circled the edges of the impoundment.

Another challenge was mercury contamination in fish. In 1989, game fish in the Everglades began showing mercury levels that were among the highest ever recorded in the United States. The discovery alarmed experts, who were unable to explain the cause. Burkett posted warnings for the public about eating fish from the Refuge because of elevated levels of the toxic metal in bass and other fish.

Other threats that Burkett tackled included the Palm Beach County Solid Waste Authority's plans to build a landfill adjacent to the southeast corner of the Refuge and a proposal to run a bullet train past the Refuge. He also initiated biological controls for invasive *Melaleuca* plants and helped resolve a decade-old legal dispute over 1,200 acres of swampland that the South Florida Water Management District bought as a buffer to protect the Refuge from urban and agricultural development. That area, the Strazzulla Tract was eventually transferred to the Service.

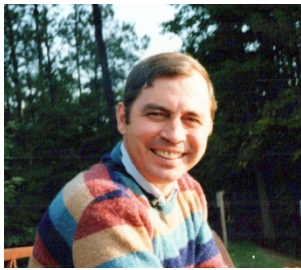
During his 33-year career, Burkett was widely recognized as one of the Service's outstanding refuge managers. He served as a Departmental and Service spokesperson on many issues, including conservation efforts to restore the integrity of the Everglades ecosystem. He received both the Meritorious Service Award and the Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Department of the Interior. The latter award was presented in the presence of President Bill Clinton and Secretary Bruce Babbitt.

Burkett retired on March 31, 1998, and moved with his wife Lea to a placid stretch of the Santa Fe River near Fort White, FL. In retirement, he enjoyed canoeing, fishing, traveling, and just spending time with Lea, without having the multitude of meetings to attend, business trips to take, reports to write or problems to solve. He did, however, find time to do environmental consulting work, including some for the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. He and his wife also volunteered every summer at Cape Romain NWR (his first refuge manager duty station), clearing trails, assisting visitors, and documenting wildlife observations. He was particularly fascinated with the work on Cape Romain's loggerhead sea turtle project, which he enjoyed showing his grandson Hunter.

Burkett Neely was a role model for other NWRs employees through his tireless efforts defending Loxahatchee NWR's northern portion of the Everglades from pollution, urban water demands, urban development, and other threats. He had a steely resolve and didn't mince words on issues dear to his heart. Nathaniel Reed, the Interior Department's former Assistant Secretary of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, once remarked that Burkett could be cheerful and bright, but also " . . . hard-nosed --

exclamation point!" Above all, Reed stated, "He is one of the most vigilant environmentalists that ever crossed my path." Burkett's successor at Loxahatchee, Mark Musaus, said that "he was truly a conservation warrior, especially at a time when we needed strong managers to fight very entrenched, anti-environmental agencies and mindsets."

Burkett Neely left a legacy of conservation achievements despite the many challenges that confronted him. He once summed up his management challenges this way: "Wildlife doesn't give you any problems . . . people do." About his long, steadfast effort fighting for Everglades restoration, he simply said: "I was working for the refuge." *No obituary was available. Paul Tritaik drafted this summary of Burkett Neely's life milestones and highlights of his career, with contributions from Mark Musaus, John Oberheu and Bill Reffalt.*



Don Walton Stephenson (1944 – 2021).

Don was born December 9, 1944 and died August 16, 2021 at his home in Clayton, NC. He left behind his wife Francine, two step-children, a brother and sister and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Don graduated from Four Oaks

High School in Four Oaks, NC and obtained a BS in Wildlife Biology and a MS in Zoology from North Carolina State University working on Wood Ducks under Dr. F. Eugene Hester. His first professional position was as Principal Environmental Scientist with Carolina Power & Light Company. Probably about 1981 he began work as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist with the FWS at the ES Field Office in Raleigh. Don's former supervisor, FWS Retiree Mike Gantt, informed us that while there, Don was very involved with and may have been lead biologist on the Dan River Project, a major undertaking, as the Dan River Habitat Evaluation Procedures (HEP) study was one of only four such studies being undertaken at the time nationwide by the FWS to evaluate this new procedure to assess impacts of large-scale projects. Don's colleague Dave Rackley reports that Don did all the data collection and number crunching on the study without assistance of any kind. Dave also said that Don served as Acting Field Supervisor for 2-3 months during a period between field supervisors at an extremely stressful time and that Don managed to smoothly run the office while also continuing his duties as a biologist, including work on the Dan River HEP. In 1981 Don

left the FWS and then for 26 years he was a biology instructor at Johnston Community College (JCC) in Smithfield, NC and taught anatomy, physiology, microbiology and pathology in the nursing and radiology programs, according to Mike.

Don was a biologist, environmentalist, naturalist and conservationist, an artist, teacher, US Army veteran, poet, a good conversationalist and humorist, and both a boy scout and scout leader. Later in life he played guitar, sang in a bluegrass band and was known for his watercolors around Clayton, especially his portraits. His spiritual life ran deep, and he had a great sense of compassion for all living things. He was active in church, including as a Church Council member and Education Committee Chair at Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Raleigh and Service Director, Deacon, and Sunday school teacher at Hickory Grove Advent Christian Church in Four Oaks.

During his life Don received numerous honors and awards for dedicated service in his many endeavors. Outside of "work" Don served on the North Carolina State Employees Credit Union Board of Directors and the Clayton Visual Arts Council. He assisted with Keep Johnston County Beautiful projects and the Howell Woods development project. For several years Don was chairman of the Johnston County Committee of the Triangle Land Conservancy (TLC) and was involved with the TLC since its' earliest days. In 1988 he started working tirelessly with fellow Board members and the public and led efforts to preserve the 10-acre Flower Hill Nature Preserve, in Johnston County. The area had first been recognized in the 1930's as a disjunct mountain community left behind by the last ice age 10,000 years ago and supports Catawba rhododendron, galax, wildflowers and other plants typically found in the southern Appalachian Mountains. The unique parcel of land was permanently protected in 1989, opened to the public in 1993, and was one of Don's greatest contributions to conservation. Despite all his many achievements and awards, Don never lost his humility and characteristic self-effacement. He enjoyed volunteering and gave those efforts the same care and energy his career jobs received.

Contributions in Don's memory may be made to The Triangle Land Conservancy, 514 South Duke St, Durham, NC 27701 or to Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2723 Clark Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27607. *We thank FWS Retiree Wilson Laney for notifying us of Don's passing, as well as FWS Retirees Mike Gantt and David Rackley for their anecdotes about Don's FWS career and life.*

This Newsletter was edited by Acting Newsletter Editor Doug Frugé with contributions from other Board members. If you have information that would be of interest to Association members for inclusion in future newsletters, please contact Doug at communications@fwsretirees.org. We also welcome any articles you may wish to contribute!

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



If you can identify the location (either Aransas, TX or Lacreek NWR, SD) or any of the men in this photo, please contact Deborah Holle at promote@fwsretirees.org. Richard Craven's father took the picture. His father retired from Tishomingo NWR in OK.