

FWS Retirees Association NEWSLETTER



Summer (July) 2025

2025 Board of Directors

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Message from the Chair

Let me begin by saying that this is the first newsletter issued by the FWS Retirees Association since the new Administration took office. Throughout our careers, we have been through many changes in Administrations, and have dutifully obeyed by trimming our budgets, “doing more with less”, shrinking our office spaces, and implementing travel and hiring freezes, as a few examples. Like many of you, I watch the news, read the newspaper, talk to folks, and listen for potential impacts to our FWS family of dedicated professionals and potential impacts to the natural resources of this great country. Despite the warnings during his campaign, it’s still hard for me to envision that, just 6 months after the Inauguration, the ranks of the Fish and Wildlife Service have decreased by an estimated 1,500 people. In keeping with the spirit and purpose of the FWS Retirees Association (“not organized for any political purpose” as stated in the Bylaws), I decided to keep the facts of these staffing cuts to JUST the facts, and let our membership know about them. We have not received any natural resource impacts to report yet. Later in this newsletter, I have included a list of some of the OPM offers and directives that have been the source of these staff losses during the past 6 months.

Shortly after the Valentine’s Day firing of the Service’s newly-hired probationary employees, this Association issued a strong letter of support for these folks. We saw the future of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service being told that they were no longer needed, and it was heart-breaking. I encourage you to read our letter again, and know that to belong to this Association means that you are part of the Service family and we care.
<https://fwsretirees.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Retiree-letter-of-support.pdf>



This photo was taken when the FWS Retirees were touring the International Crane Foundation’s facilities at Baraboo, WI. Their educational exhibits were outstanding, but the close-up views of

all 15 of the world's crane species were a highlight of a lifetime! Here are a couple more of my lasting memories from this 22nd Reunion of the FWS Retirees Association. I felt like I was walking on hallowed ground during our visit to Aldo Leopold's shack and farm. We sat inside the shack and imagined what that family's life was like there (from 1935-1948) during his pursuit of his land ethic. Our last field trip was a comfortable motorcoach ride to Necedah NWR. I'll never forget the delightful greeting given us in a receiving line of staff and volunteers as we entered their Visitor Center! It is always emotional for me to see the dedication and passion from our FWS family. We hosted many great speakers during our in-house meeting at the wonderful Monona Terrace Conference Center. Rather than single any one out, I would encourage EVERYONE to read the articles in this newsletter for the highlights. It was another great Reunion, as they ALL are!

Your Board of Directors (and Robin West) have already started to plan our next Reunion in the Fall of 2026, as we are heading (for the first time) to Alaska! Given this much advance notice, I'll be saving up my money to attend. Please join us and bring another FWS retiree! Please spread the word, and invite others to join this Association at: <https://FWSRetirees.org> for all the news. *Cindy Uptegraft Barry*

Business

22nd FWS Retiree Reunion Madison, WI

About 50 retirees and spouses/partners attended the Madison reunion, May 12-16, 2025. The first event was the traditional Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife at the University of Wisconsin's Lakeshore Nature Preserve, especially poignant this year as Lynn Greenwalt had passed away shortly before the reunion. Seventeen attendees participated on this walk, observing warblers and waterfowl, getting a scenic view of the state capitol from across Lake Mendota, and finishing with the magnificent sight of a bald eagle soaring overhead.



Sharon Hagenbuck and Libby Herland watching birds

The opening reception was held at the Hyatt Place hotel and involved participants visiting and enjoying appetizers and drinks in a casual setting. It's always fun to meet new friends (similar careers!) and see other colleagues after many years! On Tuesday,

events were held at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, a short walk from the hotel. Retirees Association Board Chair Cindy Uptegraft Barry opened the event with welcoming remarks then the attendees all introduced themselves. Host Region 3 Regional Director Will Meeks greeted the group via video feed and gave an overview of the state of the Region and the many projects and programs they are carrying out. He had an upbeat message for participants. Acting FWS Director Paul Souza then addressed the group by video from California and again presented a realistic, but encouraging picture of the direction of the Service, despite the current staffing shortages. The morning ended with former Director Dale Hall providing a moving tribute to Lynn Greenwalt and others sharing their memories of Lynn.

The FWS History Committee met during the lunch hour with Service employee members participating via video with retiree members present in the room. Tuesday afternoon the FWS law enforcement retirees split off for a separate meeting at the hotel while the main FWS retirees group heard from Retirees Association Board members in attendance. Cindy, Paul Tritaik, Helen Clough, and Lew Gorman provided short updates on association activities including the new website, outreach activities, grants, and plans for the next reunion – September 21-25, 2026 in Anchorage, Alaska.

Next, Desiree Sorensen-Groves, President and CEO of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, highlighted the 50th anniversary of the Refuge Association and acknowledged the importance of retirees, who were their foundation. She then provided a candid assessment on the status of the Refuge System from her perspective and the numerous challenges it is facing in the current political climate. She also outlined some of the many activities of the Refuge Association, including advocacy, supporting friends' groups, expanding urban outreach, and combating threats to refuges.

Another 50-year anniversary observance followed with Bill Wilen speaking on the history of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). Bill's presentation provided a great background on how the NWI started in developing a wetland classification system to map wetland areas by location and type, and monitoring trends by periodically updating their Wetlands Status and Trends reports. The maps the NWI produced have been invaluable to decision-makers within the FWS and to all of our partners and stakeholders. Bill explained how much has been accomplished in the last 50 years, from creating hand-drawn maps from aerial photos to digitally automating maps from satellite imagery. Staff from the local NWI office joined the retirees for his presentation. For a copy of Bill's history, of the NWI program, contact him at BillWilen@gmail.com.

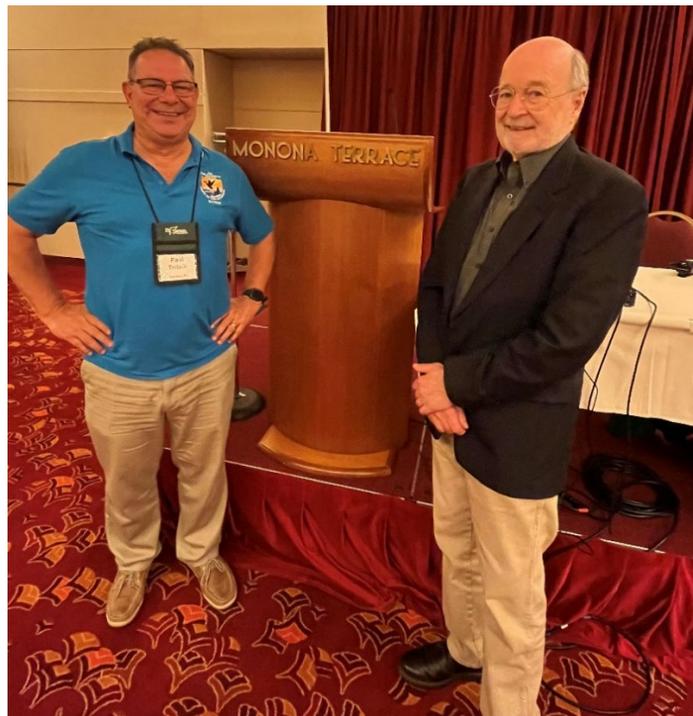
The afternoon's agenda closed with a presentation from our sponsor, Ducks Unlimited (DU). Brian Glenzinski, Manager of Conservation Programs for DU's Great Lakes Initiative, gave a brief overview of their work restoring, enhancing, and protecting large marshes and shallow lakes throughout the Great Lakes watershed, which provide critical feeding and resting areas for

waterfowl during spring and fall migration, as well as for waterfowl that breed within the region. Once again, we sincerely thank Ducks Unlimited for their generous sponsorship of and participation in our reunion.

Tuesday evening's program reconvened at Monona Terrace with the live video announcement of the 2024 and 2025 FWS History Awards by FWS History Committee Chair, Steve Chase. History Committee member Paul Tritaik assisted by presenting the plaques in person to 2024 recipient Jerry Smith and 2025 recipient Libby Herland. Jerry was recognized for his outstanding leadership in coordinating the collection of oral histories from retired special agents. Libby was recognized for exceptionally shepherding the Oral History Subcommittee in the wake of John Cornely's passing and substantially reducing the backlog of oral history transcriptions.



FWS History award winners Jerry Smith and Libby Herland



Paul Tritaik and Dr. Stan Temple

The evening concluded with a keynote speech by Dr. Stanley "Stan" Temple, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Forest

and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Senior Fellow of the Aldo Leopold Foundation. Stan gave us an excellent presentation on the history and legacy of Aldo Leopold, widely considered the father of wildlife ecology and conservation. Stan provided a compelling prologue to visiting the Leopold Center the next day. Stan's appearance was especially meaningful as he graciously agreed to fill in on short notice when Doug Brinkley unfortunately could not attend due to a family emergency.

On Wednesday, we traveled by bus to the International Crane Foundation (ICF) in Baraboo, where we were greeted by staff and given a tour of the facility to view each of the 15 crane species that occur worldwide. One of the highlights was seeing the captive whooping cranes in their marsh enclosure and learning about ICF's role in captive propagation and recovery efforts. We ate lunch in their library and had a presentation by one of the staff biologists.



Whooping Cranes at International Crane Foundation

After lunch we traveled to the nearby Leopold Center with a tour of the Shack and Farm of Sand County Almanac fame. There we stood on the same ground that inspired Aldo Leopold's groundbreaking Land Ethic and poetic observances of nature's rituals.

Thursday morning, we again boarded the bus for a 2-hour drive to Necedah National Wildlife Refuge. We arrived at the visitor center and were greeted by refuge staff and a host of wonderful refuge volunteers. After a brief welcome and introduction, we were divided into two groups – one getting back on the bus to view some of the habitat challenges and restoration projects underway while the other group started with a presentation at the visitor center. We then switched with both groups reuniting for lunch at the visitor center joined by refuge staff. Afterwards, we were free to enjoy the visitor center and nearby trails on our own or with refuge volunteer guides. We were fortunate to see wild whooping cranes and trumpeter swans in the adjacent marsh, along with sandhill cranes and many other birds. There was a forecast of severe thunderstorms and possible tornadoes, so we cut our visit short. As we arrived at the hotel in Madison, the sky opened up and pebble-sized hail pelted us for a few minutes.



Retirees at Necedah NWR Visitor Center

That evening, the banquet was hosted at the Monona Terrace in a hall overlooking beautiful Lake Monona. We enjoyed a delicious buffet of local fare and, of course, a cash bar. During dinner we held a small silent auction, followed by a live auction of the Kent Olson artwork after dinner. Beatrice “Bea” Cornely generously donated three pieces of artwork by Kent Olson that he gifted to her late husband, John Cornely. In honor of John’s wishes, Bea donated the art to raise money for the Retirees Association.

A total of \$1,125 was raised as a result of the auction! The three successful bidders all described their significant relationship to the subject of their winning artwork, and that they were very happy to have in their possession a piece of history by a renowned FWS artist. We are also very grateful that Jim Dubovsky kept these in his home until the auction in Madison.



Dick Gritman and Sharon Hagenbuck

One other memorable event that evening was the presentation of Vietnam War veteran commemorative pins to veterans Jerry Smith and Dick Gritman by Daughters of the American Revolution member Sharon Hagenbuck to honor their service. Sharon similarly recognized Vietnam War veterans Dale Hall and Lew Gorman earlier in the week.

While the attendance in Madison was smaller than other recent reunions, we received overwhelmingly positive feedback on the venue, accommodations, speakers, socials, field trips and banquet. All in all, it was another rousing success! We pledged to bring along more retirees to the next reunion in Anchorage, Alaska. With Helen Clough and Robin West co-chairing the event, with hopefully many of the Alaska retirees, it’s sure to be another excellent adventure! We hope you can join us to have even more fun in Anchorage, September 21-25, 2026!

Additional pictures of the reunion are at the end of this newsletter and the article about the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife. Also, the full program and more pictures can be found on the retiree webpage at <https://fwsretirees.org/reunions/2025-reunion/>

Lynn Greenwalt Memory Book

The FWS Retirees Association is putting together a scrap book of photos, letters, articles, stories, and remembrances of Lynn Greenwalt to give to his family. We will make a copy for the FWS Archives. If you have any photos or writings from or about Lynn, please consider sending us a copy. You can email them to me, Paul Tritaik, at vicechair@fwsretirees.org. If you have something that you can’t send electronically, you can mail them to me at Paul Tritaik, 1807 Serenity Lane, Sanibel, Florida, 33957. If you have any questions, you can call me at (239) 309-5728. Thank you.

Treasurer’s Report

by Patrick Martin

As of May 31, 2025 the balance in our Operations checking account, i.e. the main Association account, was \$43,562.62. The balance in our Grants checking account was \$1,200.08. This does not reflect awarded funds for approved projects. When payments are due, we request those funds via the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) to pay out to the respective grantees.

The financials of the Reunion are still being finalized so an overall summary is not yet available. The silent and live auctions at the Reunion brought in \$1,520. More details are provided elsewhere in the newsletter. Thank you to all who donated and/or purchased!

Oral History Update

By Libby Herland

So far, 2025 is turning out to be a very productive year for the oral history program. Oral history interviews have been conducted with Keith McCartney (LE), Frank Parauka (ES/Fisheries); Tony Léger (RW) and Betty Kay Scruggs (RW). Several more interviews are scheduled for July and many more will be conducted later this year. Additionally, 24 oral history transcripts have been completed, including Chente Bustamante, Virginia Carter, Jamie Clark, Domingo Cravalho, Jr., John Engbring, Conrad Fjetland, Steve Funderburk, Kofi Fynn-Aikins, Tom Goettel, Ben Harrison, Geoff Haskett, Bill Hesselbart, Mary Klee, Lynn Lewis, Jerry Marancik, Earnest Mayer, Doug McKenna, Ralph Morgenweck, Gary Mowad, Bill Palmisano, Dennis Peters, Betty Kay Scruggs, Rollie Sparrowe, and Elliott Sutta.



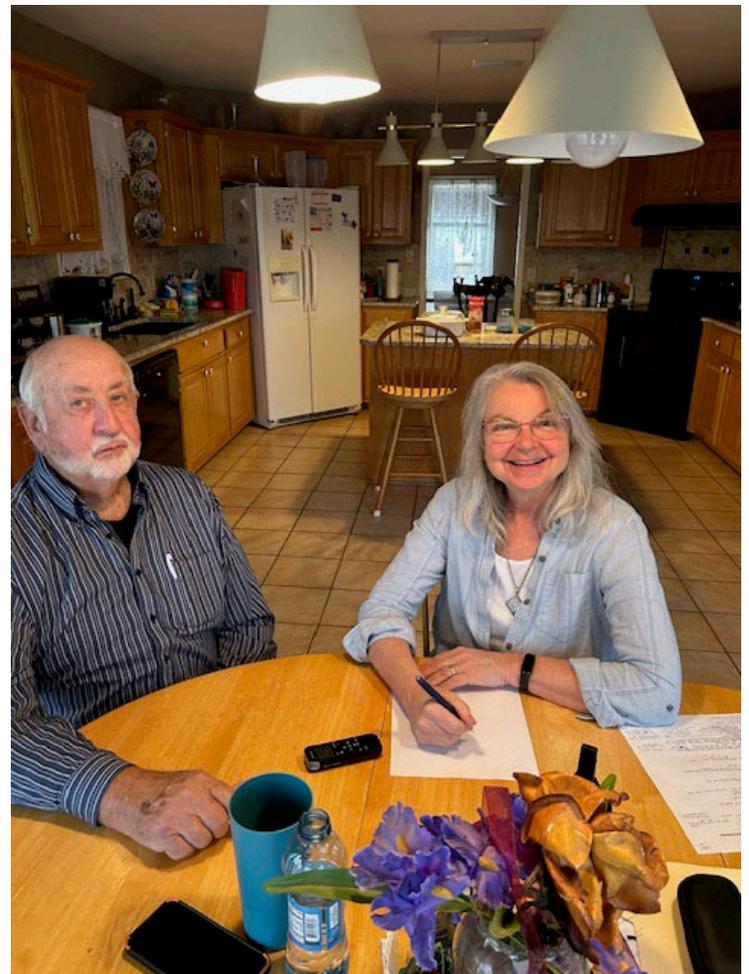
Fisheries biologist Frank Parauka, who retired from the Panama City Ecological Services office in 2011, was interviewed for his oral history by Libby Herland in January 2025. (Photo taken by Donna Stanek)

Newly completed transcripts are posted online at <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/oral-history-transcripts>. Transcripts that were posted before the FWS migrated to a new digital platform are still accessible at <https://digitalmedia.fws.gov/>. The transition is still in progress. We recognize that there are some completed transcripts that are not on either site. The FWS staff at NCTC are working hard to

get those uploaded to the new oral history collection in a timely manner.

Vicki Finn and Libby Herland spent a week at NCTC in April, working with FWS staff, to further organize the oral history physical and digital files. We made great progress which should result in even more interviews being transcribed. All this progress, though, is dependent on there being no changes to the oral history program at NCTC. So far, fingers crossed, we have suffered no loss of staff for this program.

We anticipate doing more interviews especially with retirees who took the deferred resignation and retirement offers. If you are one of those folks, or have been retired for some time, and would like to share your conservation career with us, contact Libby Herland at herland194@gmail.com. If you have been interviewed but haven't received a transcript yet, please contact Libby as well.



Keith McCartney, retired from the FWS law enforcement program, is interviewed for his oral history program by Libby Herland in January 2025. (Photo taken by Jerry Smith)

Membership

The first 4 months of 2025 will be long remembered. Two people signed up as life members this year, 2025, with Peggy Hobbs signing up at the end of 2024. The Association has a new total of 67 life members. They are Peggy Hobbs, Roberta Hylton and Jeff Underwood. Peggy and Roberta were profiled in the January 2025 issue of this newsletter. Their names will go on the “Lifer” plaque at NCTC as a special thanks. We like to thank all our sustaining members who regularly pay their dues as well as new members. This quarter members could pay their dues two ways. They included using the Reunion registration forms and our normal membership and dues renewal form.

If you want to make an update, new address, email address, or correct an error you can use the membership and dues renewal form, but check the update information block. Or contact Deborah Holle at (promote@FWSRetirees.org) to make sure your information is correct or update your information. I believe we had a record number of new members - 69 First Year Free. We also had 58 sustaining members who renewed their dues. Associate members are included as sustaining members.

Dues members pay, support the Association financially and through the work of its members. Many major Service events such as the Fishery and Aquatic Conservation’s 130th Anniversary celebration and the National Wildlife Refuge System’s 2003 Centennial events were supported. We have also funded small competitive youth projects for Field Stations. The Association supports Friends groups of Refuges, Fish Hatcheries and other FWS facilities. They may apply for a matching grant to support significant anniversary celebrations of their facilities, e.g. 50th, 75th, 100th etc. anniversary.

The DOGE Terminations

On February 14 2025, The Service was required to terminate all of its new hires who were still in their first 2-year probationary periods. One of our more active members, David Klinger, posted a note on social media for terminated employees to contact the Association. We had about 36 terminated employees decide to take advantage of the Association’s offer to join our organization without paying dues for the first year. We welcome them to the FWS Association. FWS retirees and employees joined to show their support for terminated staff.

Board members who were sent emails from DOGE affected employees replied back to offering support. The effects on many of the terminated staff were very significant. One lady had moving expenses, payments and deposits, and used all her savings. Then she couldn’t get unemployment compensation because she hadn’t worked long enough. A family was making plans to build a new house. The mortgage company canceled the loan process because of the job loss. And there were other sad stories from people who said they loved their job and working for the FWS. I want to thank the retirees who offered comradery

and support to the terminated staff. At the very least it was a huge disruption and negative emotional experience.

Terminated employees were called back to work and most returned. See article elsewhere in this newsletter for more information.

Membership—January, February, March, and April 2025

Last Name, Partner, City & State, Date Retired, Job, New/FYF, Life. Others assumed to be sustaining.

ADAMS, Jeff Francis; Fairbanks, AK; Fairbanks Fish & Wildlife Field Office

ADAMS, Kevin (Carol); Round Pond, ME; 2007; HQ, Directors Office, Law Enforcement

ANDERSON, Karen; Huntington, MD; 12/24; HQ, Ecological Services, Branch of Recovery and Conservation. **New**

ANDERSON, Lawrence; Otto, NC 12/2010; R4, NWR System; St. Marks NWR, Law Enforcement. **New**

ANSCHUTZ, Steve (Jurita); Russell, KA; 4/2007; Ecological Services, Nebraska Field Office

BABIJ, Eleanore; Reston, VA; 11/2025; HQ, International Affairs, Migratory Birds and Endangered Species. **New**

BERG, Ken (Jan Weydemeyer) Ashland, OR; 6/2019; R1, Ecological Services, Washington Fish & Wildlife Office. **New**

BLENDEN, Michael; Del Norte, CO; 2017; R6, RO; Refuges & Wildlife. **New**

BICKNESE, Nina, Sacramento, CA; 8/25; R8/Sacramento FWO. **New**

BINNER, Sean; Portland OR; HQ, R1, RO, EEO. **New**

BLOK, Elaine; Portland, OR; 10/2022; HQ, Ecological Services, National Wetlands Inventory. **New**

BOWDEN, Sally (Bennie) Wallops Island, VA; 9/2017; R5, Refuges & Wildlife, Chincoteague NWR.

BOWLES, Jeanette; Holt, MI; 3/2014; R3, RO, Michigan Private Lands Office.

BOUTHILLIER, William (Erin); Midland, GA; 2013; R4, Fish & Aquatic Conservation; Warm Springs NFH. **New**

BRYANT, JC (Catherine); Poplar Bluff, MO; 1996; R3, Refuges & Wildlife, Big Muddy Natl. Fish & Wildlife Refuge.

BUNCK, Christine (Ted); Verona, WI; 10/2014; R3, Patuxent–USGS, Natl. Wildl. Health Center. **New**

BURNHAM, Curtis, Mary (Gary Curtis); Cedar, MI, 2/2023; HQ Law Enforcement–National Fish & Wildlife Forensics Lab. **New**

BURNSIDE, Carla; Spokane Valley, WA; 4/2025; HQ, NWR System, DRLE Archaeologist. **New**

BUSIAHN, Thomas; Falls Church, VA; 08/2017; HQ, Fisheries and Conservation Investment (Federal Aid).

BUTERBAUGH, Galen (Glenda); Spokane, WA; 1992; R6, RD.

CASILLAS, Daniela; Koloa, HI 02/14/2025; R1, National Wildlife Refuge System; **New**

CARPENTER, Mike (Karen Anderson); 2/2014; HQ, International Affairs, Division of Management Authority, Branch of Permits. **New**

CHAPMAN, Lois; (Timothy, Davison); Peterborough; Cambridgeshire, England; 11/2005; R4, Visitor Services, Loxahatchee NWR. **New**

CHISHOLM, Wendy (Herb Thurber) 12/2025; R5, RO, NWR System. **New**.

CLARK, (Laurie) Decatur, GA; 4/25; R4, Gulf Restoration.

COLLINS, Gail (Aaron); Viola, ID; 8/2018; R1. National Wildlife Refuge System, Sheldon Hart NWRC. **New**

COTTINGHAM, David (Anne) Washington, DC; 1/2015; HQ, Directors Office.

DAHL, Thomas (Patrice); Gordon, WI; 3/2014; R9, RO, Ecological Services, Nat. Wetlands Inventory, Natl. Standards & Support Team, R6 at retirement.

DENMON, Pamela; Burnsville, NC; 12/2023; R5, NWR System, Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR. **New**

DETRICH, Phillip; Mt. Shasta, CA 3/2012; R1, Ecological Services, Yreka FWO, CA. **New**

DEWHURST, Donna (Scott Lawrence) Anchorage, AK; 2018; R7, RO, Migratory Birds.

EAMES, Michelle (Douglas Frederick); Spokane, WA; 11/2021; R1, RO, Eastern Ecological Field Office. **New**

EATON, Robert (Wanda); Johnson City, TN; 10/2018; HQ, Branch of Fire Management.

EDGERTON, Tom (Cathy); Redmond, OR; 4/2012; R1, NWR System, Pacific Islands NWR Complex, Papahānaumokuākea MNM. **New**

FINN, Vicki (Kevin); Portland, OR; 6/2024; R1, RO, Science Applications.

FLEMMING, David (Diane); Loganville, GA; 7/2011; R4, RO, Ecological Services, Endangered Species.

FORSELL, Doug; Point Arena, CA; 2012; R5, Chesapeake Bay Field Office, Coastal.

FORTENBERY, Donald (Luann); Lewistown, MT; 2005; Refuges, Lewistown, MT

FREIFELD, Holly (David Leonard); Portland, OR; 12/24; R1, RO, Coastal Program. **New**

FRIS, Michael (Rebecca); Sacramento, CA; 12/25; R8, Ecological Services, Sacramento Fish & Wildlife Office. **New**

GARCIA, Ron; Antonito, CO; 12/2021; R6, Natl Wildl. Refuge System, Baca NWR; **New**

GERHART, Dorothy; Basom, NY; 12/12; R5, NWR System, Iroquois NWR. **New**

GEHRI, Calvin (Sarah); La Crescent, MN; R3, National Wildlife Refuge System, Upper Mississippi River Refuge, La Cross District. **New**

GOTTHARDT, Tracey; Hauula, HI; R1, RO, Ecological Services, PIFWO. **New**

HAGLAN, William (Betty); Lancaster, VA; 6/2007; R5, Refuges & Wildlife, Chincoteague NWR.

HALL, James (Elaine); Friendship, ME; 9/2017; HQ, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. **New**

HARREL, Brent; Richmond, KY; 3/2025; R4, Ecological Services, State Coordinator, Partners for Fish & Wildlife, Kentucky Field Office. **New**

HARRISON, Benjamin (Jean); Portland, OR; 4/2014; R1. RO, Dept Regional Chief.

HARRISON, Phil; Greeley, CO; 11/2024; R6, RO, Ecological Services.

HAUGEN, Nancy, Prinston, MN; R3 Refuges and Wildlife; 8/2010;

HENSON, Colleen (Paul); Portland, OR; R1, RO, Michigan Private Lands Office.

HERNANDEZ–FRISKE, Juliana (Michael), Inver Grove Heights, MN; 2019; R3, LE.

HILLS, Marguerite (David); Portland, OR; R1, RO, Refuges and Wildlife **New**

HIRSCHBOECK, Robert; Fairbanks, AK 10/2023; R7, National Wildlife Refuge System, Fairbanks, Federal Wildlife Officer–Patrol Captain.

HOLMES, Ann–Marie; Los Cruces, NM; 12/2024; R2, Law Enforcement, El Paso, Texas. **New**

HUBERS, Laura (Matthew Hubers); Webster, SD; 12/20; R6, NWR System, Waubay NWR. **New**

HYLTON, Roberta; Abington, VA; Abingdon, Virginia; 5/2017; Ecological Services, Southwest Virginia Field Office. **LIFE**

JANEKE, Paul (Rita); Golden, CO; 2000. R6, Fish & Aquatic Conservation.

JOHNSON, Kurt; Fairfax VA; 12/23; HQ, Science Application Program at HQ.

JORGENSEN, Richard (Maureen); Forestdale, MA; 6/2013; NCTC – Conservation and Land Management and R5 Realty. **New**

JUNG, Susan (Henry); Clackamas, OR; 2019; R1, RO, Administration, CGS.

KARMAN, Shirley; Franklin, AR; 12/2016; R3, RO, NWRS, Realty.

KENDALL, Steven; Hilo, HI; 12/20; R1, National Wildlife Refuge System; Hakalau Forest NWR. **New**

KLINE, Philip (Holly Kline), Placitas, NM; not retired, but may get laid off; Associate Member; R9\HQ, Office of SOL. **New**

KNUTSON, Melinda (David Ford) Onalaska, WI; 5/2017; R3, NWRS, Inventory and Monitoring.

LAING, Karen; Eugene, OR; 12/2016; R8 NWR System Research (moved to USGS), then to NWR System Inventory & Monitoring, Sacramento, CA

LANE, Cindy (Mike) Suffolk, VA; 1/2018; R5, Refuges & Wildlife, Great Dismal Swamp NWR.

LAMMERS, Kenneth; (Dorothy) 1/2006; R3, Ecological Services, Columbus Field Office.

LeBLANC, Darren; Lake Charles, LA; 3/2024; R6, RO, Ecological Services, Section 7 Coordinator. **New**

LEWIS, Lynn (Steve); Eagan, MN; 6/2016; R3, RO, Ecological Services.

LEWIS, Steve (Lynn); Eagan, MN; 6/2015; R3, RO, Migratory Birds.

MACKAY, Jeff; Waldport, OR; 5/2023; R1, National Wildlife Refuge System, Malheur NWR. **New**

MAHAFFEY, Amanda, Brunswick, ME; 2025; R5, NWRS. **New**

MANERA, Dorothy; Millville, NJ; 11/2024; HQ, Law Enforcement, Vineland, NJ. **New**

MARLOWE, Karen; Lecanto, FL; 5/2025; R4, Ecological Services Division of Environmental Review, SE Program. **New**

MARTIN, Patrick (Alice) Louisburg, KA; R6. NWR System, Marais de Cygnes NWR.

MARTIN, Patricia; Ellerbe, NC; 1/1998; R7, NWR System, Kanute NWR. **New**

MARTINEZ, Joshua; Luxemburg, WI; 2/24/25; R3, Ecological Services. **New**

MARXEN, Michael (Kim Smith) Portland, OR; 12/2020; R1, National Wildlife Refuge System, Honolulu, HI.

MATZ, Angela (David Payer); Two Rivers, MN; 12/24. R7, RO, Ecological Services. **New**

MAUER, Alan (Maureen); Bend, Oregon; 06/2020; R1, Ecological Services, Bend Field Office. **New**

McCLURG, Kimberly, (Robert); Fair Play, SC; 5/2025; R4, NWR System, Division Chief Budget and Infra Structure Management. **New**

McLAURY, Eldon, (Ginny); Fitchburg, WI; 5/1994; R3, NWR System, Wisconsin Private Lands Program. **New**

McLAIN, Sarah; Albuquerque, NM; SOL. **New**

MEEHAN, Rosa; Anchorage. AK; 12/2011; R7, Ecological Services, Director Marine Mammal Management Program in Alaska. **New**

MELIUS, Tom (Mary Lee); Dalton, MN 6/2018; R3, RO, Directors Office, RD. **New**

MEYERS, Chris (Rachel); Arlington, VA; HQ, NWR System, Policy Division of Natural Resources. **New**

MIERZYKOWSKI, Steve (Barbara Smith); Orono, ME; 4/2014, R5, Ecological Services, Maine Field Office.

MOTT, Seth (Sarah); Herdon, VA; 12/2018; R9, HQ, Migratory Birds. **New**

MULLEN, Douglas; Lansing, IA; 9/1998; R3, NWR System, Upper Mississippi Wildlife & Fish Refuge – McGreager Unit.

MUSAUS, Mark (Linda); Newnan, GA; 12/2012 R4, RO, RD Office.

NEIBAUER, Judith (Jeff Krupa), Peshastin, WA; 6/30/24; R1, Ecological Services, Wenatchee Field Office. **New**

NELSON, Peggy; Burnsville, MN; 1/2007; R3, RO, Equal Employment Opportunity.

NIGG, Cathy; Blooming, ND; 02/2024; R3, RO, National Wildlife Refuge System. **New**

NILSON, Carl (Barbie); Clifton, CO; 2/17/2025; R7, Seasonal Kanuti, Kenai, Yukon Delta, and Ouray National Wildlife Refuges. **New**

PARAUKA, Frank (Jeanne); Lynn Haven, FL; 12/11; R4, Fish and Aquatic Conservation, Panama City Field Office.

PITMAN, Robert (Joann), Florence, MT; 1/2010; R2, RO, Fish and Aquatic Conservation, Invasive Species.

PRIOR, Tim (Anne Marie); Plymouth, MA; 7/2005; R5, Refuges & Wildlife, Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex.

RICH, Mike (Nikki); Flora, MS; 6/2020; R4, Natl Wildlife Refuge System, Theodore Roosevelt NWR Complex. **New**

RINKEVICH, Sarah; Tucson, AZ; 4/2025; R2, RO, Ecological Services. **New**

RIEBEN, Craig (Elizabeth); Lynchburg, VA; 6/2014; HQ, Public Affairs, Communications.

RORICK, Hart; Charlotte, NC; R4, Natl Wildlife Refuge System. **New**

SALZ, Ron (Janice); Frederick, MD; 12/2021; HQ, NWR System; Realty. **New**

SANCHEZ, Kenneth; Sacramento, CA; 5/2016; R8, Ecological Services, Sacramento Field Office. **New**

SCHENK, Mathew; Pocatello, ID; 02/14/2025; R1, Ecological Services, Chubbuck Field Office, Fish and Wildlife. **New**

SCIONTINO, Michael (Sara); South Riding, VA; 12/24; HQ, Joint Admin. Operations (JAO). **New**

SHEPARD, Jay; Laurel, MD; 1/1995; R9, NCTC, Ecological Services, ES

SHULL, Alisa (Patrick Conner); Broken Arrow, OK 4/2022; R3, RO, Ecological Services, Endangered Species Division.

SMITH, Carol (David Boyles); Gatesville, TX; 9/2017; R6, Ecological Services, Yankton, SD Office.

STREET, Phillip; Star, ID; 3/2006; R1, National Wildlife Refuge System, Washington, DC.

SWORDS, John; Cotopaxi, CO; 7/2022; R6. Ecological Services; Ft. Collins, CO. **New**

TAYLOR, Janith; Worthington, MA; 5/2018; R5, NWR System, Division of Natural Resources and Planning.

TELLES, Laurence, (Michelle); Indianola, WA; 12/2014; R1, Fish and Aquatic Conservation; Mostly Natl. Fish Hatcheries and & 3 years in RO. **New**

TRUDEAU, David (Jesse Chiplly–Trudeau) Nekoosa, WI; 4/2014; R3, Refuges and Wildlife, Necedah NWR.

TUCKER, Garry (Sandy Tucker), Bishop, GA; 12/2016, R4, RO, Refuges and Wildlife.

TUEGEL, Marty; Albuquerque, NM; 12/2024; R2, RO, Ecological Services. **New**

TURNER, James; Port Ludlow, WA; 6/2011; R1, RO, Information Resources IRM.

UNDERWOOD, Jeff (Karen); Midtown, DE; 2021; HQ, Fish and Aquatic Conservation, FWS Liaison to Army/Pentagon. **LIFE**

VANIMAN, Mark (Susan); Hotchkiss, CO; 3/2014; R3, NWRS, Seney NWR.

VARNEY, Raymond (Nancy); Naples, ME; R2, Refuges & Wildlife; Kofa NWR, Special Agent.

WALKER, Ann; South Beach, OR; 12/2020; R1, ES Newport Oregon Field Office. **New**

WALSH, Noreen, (Mark Williams); Littleton, CO; 7/2021; R6, RD's Office, Management & Administration. **New**

WARD, Rick; Knox, IN; 12/2019; R3, NWR System, Indiana Private Lands–NW Indiana Partners for Fish & Wildlife. **New**

WEBBER, Ralph (Marsha) Troy, MT; 1/2011; R1, NWR System, Tualatin River NWR Complex.

WESTERVELT, Miriam; Waterford, VA; 11/98; HQ, Education.

WHITE, Rollie, (Annie White), Rancho Mirage, CA; R8, Ecological Services; Palm Springs Fish & Wildlife Office. **New**

WILL, Robin (Eric); Tallahassee, FL; 1/2020; R4, National Wildlife Refuge System, St. Marks NWR. **New**

WILLIAMS, Lisa; Laingsburg, MI; 5/2024; R3, Ecological Services Field Office. **New**

WOOLEY, Charles (Julie); Lakeville, MN; 1/2023; R3, RO. Regional Director. **New**

WORTHINGTON, Tom (Melissa); St. Louis Park, MN; 6/2018; R3, RO, Refuges & Wildlife.

WYNN, Anthony (Adrian Flores); Rancho Cordova, CA; 5/2018.

YAKUPZACK, Paul (Janice); Houma, LA; 4/2014; R4, NWR System; Mandalay/Bayou Teche NWR. **New**

Natural Resource Issues

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the National Wetlands Inventory

For the past 50 years, the National Wetlands Inventory Program (NWI) has shaped the understanding and conservation of wetlands, while supporting the vitality of America's communities and economy.



Child fishing at a wetland in Hadley, Massachusetts. Wetlands provide opportunities for recreation, including fishing, hunting, and boating.

Wetlands contribute to the health, safety, and prosperity of communities by supplying clean water, protecting people and infrastructure from floods and storms, and providing opportunities for recreation including birding, hunting, fishing, and boating. Wetlands have long been central to the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because they are critical to the well-being of a wide range species — from fisheries that put

food on American tables to migratory birds that people look forward to welcoming home each year.

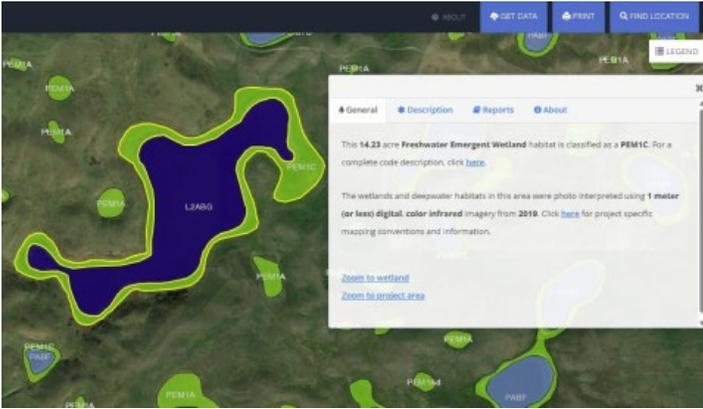
The NWI Program was created in 1974 to inventory wetland area, location, type, and trends — the foundational information needed to better manage wetlands and their many benefits. Similar to the way that scientists must consider the path of water and migratory birds over thousands of miles, wetland managers must zoom out to the landscape scale to understand how wetlands are intertwined with the landscape to best conserve them and their benefits. NWI maps (geospatial data) and Wetlands Status and Trends reports provide this comprehensive, landscape scale information so that decision-makers can best support American interests.

Over the past five decades, NWI and its partners built the knowledge and structures necessary to collect this vital information. It started with the development of a comprehensive, hierarchical classification system — the “Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats.” Scientists spent years collaboratively developing this system — which would become the national Wetland Classification Standard. The process included gathering feedback from hundreds of wetland managers and testing at pilot sites across the United States. The resulting classification system is so precise that it can pinpoint the habitat of thousands of fish and wildlife species, yet flexible enough to support a wide range of mapping objectives.

Mapping in the 1970s and '80s, was very different than it is today. That was the era of mainframe computers that occupied entire rooms but had less computing power than today's smart phone. At that time, wetlands were drawn by hand on mylar overlays and stereoscopes were used to find low-lying areas where wetlands often form. The public could request NWI maps by calling 1-800-USA Maps.

Technology changed rapidly since that time, and the NWI Program has been at the forefront of these advancements. The Program leverages the best available mapping approaches while meeting the high standards for accuracy and detail called for by the national Wetlands Mapping Standard. NWI does this by adaptively managing all components of the mapping process to leverage the best of different datasets and techniques — including automated approaches that rely on satellite imagery and artificial intelligence.

This leveraging is made possible by partnerships with companies, nonprofits, universities, other government agencies, and more. By working directly with partners on data production — NWI benefits from research being conducted by these groups. Partners benefit from funding for mapping projects — and create jobs across the United States. Taxpayers benefit from improved data — as well as the cost efficiencies that come from partnerships. This includes coordination between NWI and the U.S. Geological Survey 3D Hydrography Program that aims to produce more cost-effective and interoperable wetland and stream data.



Today, NWI geospatial data includes over 37 million features, and is delivered via the interactive Wetlands Mapper (pictured), data downloads, and web map services.

NWI data enables environmental managers and policymakers to make more efficient, strategic decisions regarding the future of America’s wetlands. NWI maps are used to help streamline planning and regulatory decision-making that supports effective infrastructure and energy development. A wide array of organizations, ranging from Tribes to companies, use NWI data in this way – savings tens of millions of dollars every year.

Partners, like Ducks Unlimited, rely on NWI data to target wetland restoration to areas where waterfowl and sports enthusiasts benefit the most. Tribes depend on NWI data to help support enduring traditions, like subsistence hunting and fishing and the harvest of culturally important plants. Within the Service, NWI maps and reports are used to guide billions of dollars’ worth of wetland conservation, supporting wildlife while generating clean water and other benefits for communities.

The most widespread application, and perhaps the most impactful, is the use of NWI maps by individuals to guide land acquisition and development. This conserves countless wetlands and their benefits through passive avoidance — or the voluntary decision not to impact a wetland.

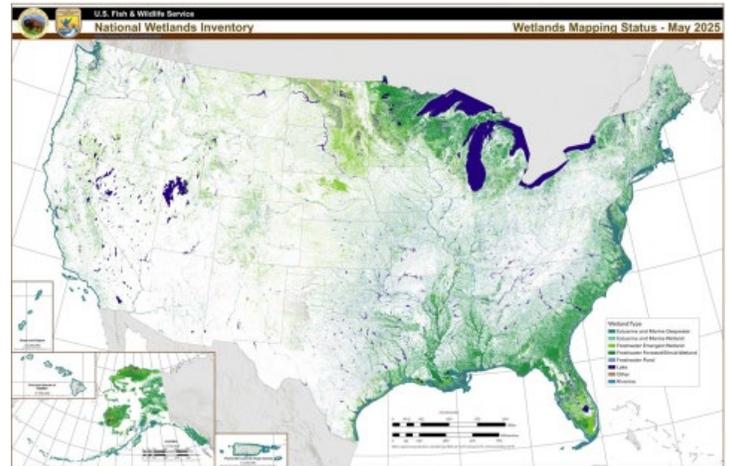


Mallards flying over a wetland at Rainwater Basin Wetland Management District in Nebraska. Wetlands are important habitats for migratory birds, including waterfowl.

NWI data can be used in many different ways and these applications have and will continue to shift along with the needs of data users. However, one fact will remain unchanged. The use of NWI data helps people across the country — from farmers that depend on a consistent supply of water to small business owners that rely on abundant fish and shellfish.

Widespread reliance of stakeholders on NWI data is evidenced by its extensive use. NWI’s Wetlands Mapper is viewed over half a million times each year and its web map services receive several tens of millions of requests for information annually. In 2024, NWI maps were downloaded more than 286,000 times and nearly 300,000 maps were printed.

The need for NWI data is further demonstrated by increased partner investment in data production. Last year was one of the largest updates ever to the NWI Wetlands Mapper, and 2025 is on track to match or exceed that record! As the NWI Program celebrates its 50th anniversary we recognize not only the achievements of the past — but the promise of the future. Over the past decades, NWI has provided the foundational geospatial data necessary to guide strategic wetland decision-making by harnessing technological advancements to produce consistent, high-quality national wetlands data. The Program will continue to lead the development and distribution of this vital information by not only providing training, shared standards, quality control, database management, and national distribution but also working with partners to identify, develop, and implement even better ways to produce and share high-quality wetlands data.



The NWI Program provides information on wetland area, location, and type for the United States and its territories.

As workflows evolve along with technology, the Program will incorporate these advancements into the national Wetlands Mapping Standard which ensures that user needs are met consistently across America. The Program will also continue to work with other geospatial data producers to ensure interoperability and production efficiency. These actions and others uphold the principles of FAIR — findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable — data in keeping with statutory authorities like the Geospatial Data Act of 2018.

Producing the data needed to support the conservation of wetland benefits while supporting efficient infrastructure and energy development requires strong and sustained partnerships. The NWI Program stands ready to work with partners to provide consistent, high-quality wetlands data to the public. Doing so is especially important today given the growing importance of wetland benefits in meeting the needs of America's communities and economy. *From the FWS website suggested by Jane Harner of the NWI.*

Land deal ends controversial mining fight near Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp

A contentious, years-long fight over a proposed mine next to one of the South's last truly wild places ended abruptly, when a nonprofit group announced it would spend nearly \$60 million to acquire thousands of acres of land near the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in rural Georgia. The Conservation Fund, which works around the country to acquire and protect threatened landscapes, said it had agreed to purchase roughly 7,800 acres from Alabama-based Twin Pines Minerals, as well as the underlying mineral rights.



Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge (Stacy Shelton, USFWS)

The landmark deal halted a proposed titanium mine on the site, which has been the subject of legal and political fights, as well as sustained criticism from advocacy groups, scientists, lawmakers and other citizens. The opponents argued that mining the mineral-rich area known as Trail Ridge would not only be risky but also environmentally reckless, given its proximity to the largest blackwater swamp in North America.

“This is the most important deal we’ve worked on,” said Stacy Funderburke, vice president of the central Southeast region for the Conservation Fund, who said the group felt compelled to end the prospect of mining near the Okefenokee. “It’s just a unique place.” Funderburke said the purchase came after about a year of negotiations, and was possible in part because of significant support from a number of individuals and philanthropic groups — including the Holdfast Collective, a nonprofit dedicated to environmental protection and funded by the outdoor gear

company Patagonia. Friday’s news brought praise — and relief — from activists who had opposed the mine over the past 6 years.

“This is an incredibly special outcome, and there is no place more deserving than the Okefenokee,” Megan Huynh, a senior attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center, said in a statement Friday. “Georgians sent a clear message to Twin Pines Minerals that mining next to the Okefenokee is an unacceptable risk. This wouldn’t have been possible without a powerful coalition, and regular Georgians who were willing to stand up and defend a place as beloved as the Okefenokee.”

The roughly 640-square-mile refuge in southeastern Georgia supports an astounding array of life, from black bears and red-cockaded woodpeckers to thousands of alligators. It is the headwaters for two rivers, the Suwannee and the St. Marys. And its vast peat deposits, formed by the slow decomposition of plants and 15 feet deep in places, store enormous amounts of carbon. Formed by a saucer-shaped depression left behind when the ocean retreated thousands of years ago, the Okefenokee is now a shallow, sprawling, mystical bog, fed almost entirely by rainwater — and a place that draws an estimated 800,000 annual visitors.

It is also a fragile ecosystem — one that proponents feared could easily be upended by a nearby mining operation. Twin Pines initially sought permits in 2019 to mine roughly 2,400 acres near the southeastern corner of the swamp. The company later amended its requests and sought to operate on a 582-acre site vowing that its investment would expand the local tax base and bring hundreds of good-paying jobs to an area where poverty runs deep.

The company insisted that its operations to extract titanium dioxide — widely used as a pigment in paints, sunscreens and an array of other products — would not leave a lasting scar on the land or threaten the beloved swamp. It vowed to mine only a small portion at a time, to dig no deeper than 50 feet, and to operate no closer than 2.9 miles from the swamp. Last year, Georgia’s Environmental Protection Division issued draft permits that, if finalized, would have allowed the project to move forward. In its response to the tens of thousands of public comments it had received raising concerns about the mine, the agency wrote in part that it believed the proposed operation “should have a minimal impact” on the swamp.

Funderburke said the land deal should be fully complete by the end of July. Over time, he said, the group plans to manage the site for permanent conservation and allow public access. “It felt like the most urgent thing was to stop the mining threat, which was imminent,” said Funderburke, who said he has been coming to the swamp each year for decades, often bringing along his daughters. “There’s just no other place like the Okefenokee.”

Excerpted from an article by Brady Dennis in the *Washington Post* June 20, 2025

Various Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Offers and Directives

January 28, 2025: OPM's "Fork in the Road" memo, articulated the "reformed federal workforce built around four pillars"

- 1) Employees must return to their physical office, five days a week.
- 2) Update performance standards
- 3) Down-sizing, restructurings, reductions in force. (This led to further directives to cancel leases for agencies who occupy leased office space. This affected 46 FWS offices nationwide.)
- 4) "Enhanced standards of conduct: The federal workforce should be comprised of employees who are reliable, loyal, trustworthy, and who strive for excellence in their daily work." This has translated to the DOI policy that requires all employees to write down 5 things that they did each week, and submit to an HR email box in the DOI. This weekly task is still in effect.

This "Fork in the Road" memo also offered a voluntary "deferred resignation" to employees, with mandatory resignation by February 6, 2025, but employees will continue to receive full pay, benefits, and leave accruals, until September 30, 2025, and cannot do any government work during this time.

In March, all DOI employees (with some limited exclusions) were then offered a more traditional Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and/or Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment (VSIP) opportunity. This offering required employees to separate by May 30. Similar to VSIP offerings in recent decades, the maximum VSIP payment was \$25,000.

After the window for the VERA/VSIP closed, a second round of the voluntary "deferred resignation/retirement" offer was made, with the same provisions of the first offering. This second round allowed for those who had opted for the VERA/VSIP to switch to the "deferred resignation/retirement" option. As with the first offer, employees will continue full pay and benefits, and leave accruals, until September 30, 2025. In some instances, the final departure date could be extended to December 30, 2025. Those choosing this second round were required to stop reporting to work after April 18, 2025.

Any employee who accepts the deferred resignation or deferred retirement is technically still an employee until the end of their deferment date, since they are receiving full pay/benefits, but cannot come to the office or do any government work, even on a voluntary basis.

On Valentine's Day, February 14, 2025, all 420 FWS employees who were newly-hired, serving their probationary period, were fired. Subsequently, due to the results of legal action, these employees were ordered back to work, including back pay/benefits. Most, but not all, returned to work for the Service. Some of these new hires have said that they fear a reduction-in-

force (RIF) action would result in their separation anyway, and therefore chose to sign up for the "deferred resignation" offer, so they would receive pay and benefits until September 30.

So far, the Service has NOT implemented any RIF actions, though preliminary administrative steps for RIF processes have begun. Here's a link to the FY 2026 President's Budget request, so you can speculate where the staffing cuts may occur if this budget is enacted:

<https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/fy26bibfws508.pdf>

In addition, restructuring within the Service includes some Service employees who now report directly to the Department of the Interior because their job series no longer resides at the agency level (e.g., communications, training, law enforcement, budget, finance, contracting, human resources, to name a few).

Cindy Uptegraft Barry (with fact-checking provided by some recent FWS retirees)

Notes From the Field and Other Things

We welcome your contributions on just about anything that may be of interest to FWS Retirees. Just send them to Helen Clough at communications2023@fwsretirees.org.

The Experienced Services Program: A Rewarding Post-Retirement Opportunity

Consider applying your knowledge, expertise and skills through NEW Solutions **Experienced Services Program (ESP)**!

NEW Solutions, a national non-profit based in Arlington, Virginia, partners with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), and 14 other federal agencies, to administer experienced worker programs. The ESP offers high-quality, merit-based project support opportunities to workers ages 55+. Positions are posted and candidates go through a competitive selection process. The selected experienced workers, known as "enrollees," provide mission critical project support that helps agencies achieve their initiatives.

Through ESP, enrollees earn a competitive wage for their service and choose from part-time, full-time, or call-when-needed positions. Enrollees come from numerous professional backgrounds, allowing NEW Solutions to match FWS with specialized project support specific to their needs.

ESP positions include Wildlife and Fish Biologists, Engineers, Realty Specialists, Park Rangers and other visitor services staff, Fire Management, Refuge Maintenance and Heavy Equipment Operators, and administrative support staff.

For more information or to apply, please visit the NEW Solutions website at NEWSolutions.org or contact us directly:

Holly Pardue, FWS Program Manager
hpardue@newsolutions.org
703.520.6285

Paul Schmidt, Program Development Manager
pschmidt@newsolutions.org
901.395.3221

International Migratory Bird Day Celebration

Date: May 10, 2025

Location: Patuxent Research Refuge Visitor Center, Laurel, MD

Partners: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees Association, Corazón Latino, Defensores de Cuenca.

Our celebration at Patuxent Research Refuge showed how deeply we care about connecting Americans with their natural treasures. We brought together more than 80 people on a beautiful May weekend that coincided with Mother's Day, creating memorable outdoor experiences for families and individuals alike.



Everyone was welcome, and we made sure families could get their hands dirty with activities that honored our shared values of access, tradition, and opportunity. Visitors got up close with live birds, explored trails with expert guides, tried their hand at archery, wandered through our interpretive galleries, and cast lines at Lake Reddington. The kids went wild when Woodsey Owl showed up! He mingled with everyone and even caught a native fish—showing families firsthand how much fun our public lands can offer.

By opening our doors to local families, we strengthened the connection between public lands, community health, and regional economic vitality. This gathering helped advance our national priorities of outdoor engagement, civic participation, and responsible stewardship of America's natural heritage.



A FWS Retirees Association mini-grant helped fund this celebration at the Patuxent Research Refuge.

Article and photos provided by Corazón Latino report to the Association.

Fun Facts & Family Ties

Some of you may know that Fun Facts was the idea of Mark Madison, FWS Historian and his staff. Employees sent them to Mark by the dozens. Most were about the FWS. The Retirees Newsletter Fun Facts deal with the experiences of the people—YOU. Deborah Holle. Send your submissions to me at promote@fwsretirees.org

Lynn Greenwalt responds to everyone

On the next page you will see a letter and the answer provided by Lynn Greenwalt courtesy of David Klinger.

Dear Mr. Greenwalt: . . .

Notes from the Director's Mailbag

Dear Lori and Chris,

I was most surprised and pleased to learn that I had been chosen by at least two of you as the person to whom you would write as a part of your class project. I can remember when I was a part of a class effort of this kind, and we wrote to people, only to find that sometimes they don't reply. I could not let that happen to your class, even though this reply may be a little bit late.

Chris, you said that you picked my name out of a sack and that almost nobody had heard of me. That's not too surprising, since I'm not really very well known, but I am pleased that you chose to write to me in spite of that.

What I do is fairly simple. I am the director of a Federal Government organization which has the responsibility for helping make sure that fish and wildlife and the places those creatures live are kept safe and whole, so that we will always have wild creatures to enjoy, even when each of you has children and grandchildren. That is basically what the Fish and Wildlife Service is trying to do: to make sure that fish and wildlife are around for many, many years to come.

We do that in many ways. We manage the National Wildlife Refuge System, which includes refuges all across the country. (You may have been to Blackwater Refuge, in Maryland, or have heard of the Okefenokee, in Georgia, or maybe the Great Dismal Swamp Refuge in southern Virginia.) We manage fish hatcheries, where fish are produced to make sure there are enough fish and fishermen and to help make sure that our lakes and streams always have fish in them.

We help enforce the conservation laws, and we do research studies on fish and wildlife to learn how best to protect them from pollution or disease or how to help save endangered species, like the whooping crane, or the peregrine falcon. The Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for most endangered species in the United States and we spend a lot of time working to make sure that manatees are protected, or to see that eagles and grizzly bears are not made extinct, along with many other endangered species.

Dear Mr. Greenwalt,

I go to St. Matthias School and it's a great school. I think everyone would like to go there. What school did you go to?

In your name, what does the "A." mean?

When you write back, could you send me some information on where you work at?

Where did you live before you came to Washington?

I would like to visit the place you work at.

My teacher has a poster from the place you work at.

Write back!

Sincerely,

Lori C.

Lanham, Maryland

Dear Mr. Greenwalt,

I am Chris L. from the school Saint Matthias. The reason I am writing to you is that all of us had to pick a name out of a bag and I picked you. Hardly anyone heard of you, so that makes you more interesting. So could you please send me a couple of little surprises like books or posters or stuff like that?

Do you ever meet anybody special like the President or people like that? My dad sometimes does and sometimes lets me meet them too. My dad works in the government.

Would you please tell me what the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is when you write back to me? I'm very excited to learn what it is. Maybe I will be that when I grow up; it sounds like fun. Is it?

Well, I have to go now because we are starting math now bye.

Sincerely,

Chris L.

Lanham, Maryland

P.S. If you write back then maybe we can become pen pals.

One of the more important things we do, however, is help each of the States conserve and protect their own wildlife. Your own State, Maryland, has one of the best fish and wildlife programs in the country, and the Fish and Wildlife Service helps by providing money to help Maryland do its important work. Without the com-

bined help of the Federal Government and State governments, I'm pretty sure we would not have our fish and wildlife around for very long.

You asked me if I ever get to meet important or famous people. I do, once in a while, because we depend upon Congress to make laws that will protect fish and wildlife and to provide the money to make sure we can continue to work. I get to meet and work with many Congressmen—and Congresswomen, too—and once in a long while I may even get to meet and talk with the President. That is a rare treat, as you might imagine, and since the President is so busy with so many different things, I cannot expect to see him often or to talk with him much.

Lori, you were interested in what the "A." as my middle initial stands for. I don't think about it too much, but when I do recall it, it turns out to be for Adams, which was my mother's name before she got married. It does not mean that I'm any relation to a former President of the country, but it would be nice if it did.

Chris, you said you might be interested in working with fish and wildlife when you grow up. I have done this all of my life and I have found it to be exciting and a lot of fun. It's hard work and nowadays it takes a lot of training to do the work, but the results are worth the effort, I think.

I appreciate your taking the time to write to me, each of you, and I am pleased to see how well you write and spell and that you have a real interest in what other people do for a living.

Since both of you are interested in fish and wildlife, I have asked somebody to send you some things you might find interesting for your class to have. I'm not sure these will qualify for a real "surprise" of the kind Chris had in mind. I thought about sending you a fish, or maybe some kind of a snake, but my advisors convinced me that was not the kind of surprise you had in mind, either. I hope you will enjoy and find use for the things that will be coming to you as a separate package.

Again, thank you both for writing. I feel very fortunate to have had my name pulled out of the sack.

Sincerely,

Lynn A. Greenwalt

Director

Fish and Wildlife Service

Another Day at the Office

One of my duties as Assistant Refuge Manager at La Creek NWR in southwestern South Dakota was to conduct a Mourning Dove coo count each spring. The procedure was to drive a twenty-mile route on back roads a few miles west of the refuge. Starting a half hour before sunrise, I would stop at each mile on the route and count the number of doves I heard calling and also count those I saw.

In 1973 I was driving my bright green FWS station wagon doing the count when I came upon some law enforcement activity at an intersection. There were barricades on the right side and another group of barricades across the road. A rather tough looking guy stepped out of the barricade on my side of the road and flagged me down. As I recall, he identified himself as an FBI agent. "What are you doing?" he asked. "A Mourning Dove coo count," I replied. "What's going on?"

"A standoff between law enforcement and the American Indian Movement. Are you nuts? Get the !#%& out of here," he said, (or something like that). Apparently, my route took me into the Wounded Knee standoff of that year. With my window down, I could hear a dove calling, but this wasn't one of the designated mile stopping points. He shook his head in disgust as he waived me through. I think he thought I was an idiot; Perhaps he was right, but at least no shots were fired. I finished the route and submitted the results. Just another day at the office.

P.S. Since this happened over 50 years ago, my memory of the details may be a little foggy, but I will never forget the look on that guy's face when I said I was counting Mourning Dove coos.
Conrad Fjetland

Conrad Fjetland was my supervisor when he was the Ecosystem Manager for Texas. He has a great sense of humor. Conrad knows I like to put funny stories, interesting stories, fun facts and stories about family ties in the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Retirees Newsletter. He sent me this one and it put a big smile on my face. A bunch of us have probably been asked what we were doing on our field station and hesitated a millisecond or two before answering. I challenge you all to send me some stories
Thank you!! Deborah Holle

New Podcast – note from Jerry Smith

Hi, just to let you know that retired Agent Ed Newcomer (retired in 2022) has started a weekly Podcast featuring retired Special Agents I don't know if you saw or heard but I have started a podcast that features notable FWS agents from the past. I'm going to tell our stories from our perspective and in a way that helps the public understand what we do for them on a daily basis. It will be a friendly place where ever guest will be the hero of the story. You can learn more about it at www.naturessecretservice.com Give Ed's Podcast a shot, you won't be disappointed. *Jerry*

Retiree Travel

Fish and Wildlife Retirees' Adventures on Safari - An Unforgettable Journey through Africa's Natural Wonders

In the heart of the vibrant African continent, two groups of retirees from the Fish and Wildlife Service embarked on two enchanting safaris, creating memories that would last a lifetime. This article recounts their adventures, exploring the breathtaking landscapes and diverse wildlife of Victoria Falls, Botswana's Chobe National Park, South Africa's ChaZen Game Reserve, and Pilanesberg National Park.



Victoria Falls and Chobe National Park: March 4-14

The retirees' first journey, spanning from March 4th to March 14th, began at the magnificent Victoria Falls. Known locally as "Mosi-oa-Tunya" or "The Smoke that Thunders," Victoria Falls is one of the most awe-inspiring natural wonders of the world. The sheer power and beauty of the cascading water left the group spellbound, providing a perfect start to their African adventure. The retirees were able to observe the falls from the trail along the falls and from a helicopter above.

Their exploration continued into Botswana's Chobe National Park, renowned for its substantial elephant population. Chobe's diverse ecosystems offered the retirees unparalleled wildlife viewing opportunities. From the lush floodplains to the dry

hinterland, the park is a haven for a variety of species. The group enjoyed game drives and river cruises, marveling at herds of elephants, prides of lions, and pods of hippos. The sight of these majestic creatures in their natural habitat was both humbling and exhilarating.

Highlights of Chobe National Park

- A close encounter with a large herd of elephants, watching their playful interactions and observing their social structures.
- Observing lions resting in the shade, showcasing the park's thriving predator population.
- A serene river cruise on the Chobe River, with sightings of hippos, crocodiles basking in the sun, and elephants coming down to the Chobe River for an evening drink and swim.



ChaZen Game Reserve and Pilanesburg National Park: March 24 - April 4

A second group of retirees set off on safari from March 24th to April 4th. Their destination was South Africa, where they would explore the privately- owned yet equally enchanting ChaZen Game Reserve and the renowned Pilanesberg National Park. ChaZen Game Reserve, a hidden gem, offered the group an intimate and immersive safari experience. The reserve's commitment to conservation and sustainable tourism was evident in its well-maintained landscapes and thriving wildlife. Here, the retirees experienced the thrill of tracking wildlife, guided by knowledgeable guides who shared insights into the flora and fauna of the region. The group learned of the efforts to breed and re-introduce lions and the much-endangered African wild dogs to other private reserves in South Africa.

Their journey culminated in Pilanesberg National Park; a volcanic crater turned conservation area. Pilanesberg's unique geology and varied habitats provided a rich tapestry of wildlife experiences. The retirees were treated to sightings of– lions, rhinos, and buffaloes – each encounter more thrilling than the last. A highlight was encountering an elephant “roadblock”! Elephants of all shapes and sizes were seen up close and personal as they inspected our game drive vehicles!



Highlights of Pilanesberg National Park

Reflections on the Journey

The safaris were not just about witnessing wildlife; they were a celebration of nature, camaraderie, and the enduring spirit of adventure. The retirees cherished the moments of shared discovery, the stories exchanged around campfires, and the friendships forged in the wild.

As they returned home, their hearts were filled with gratitude for the experiences that reminded them of the beauty and fragility of our natural world. The safaris in Victoria Falls, Chobe National Park, ChaZen Game Reserve, and Pilanesberg National Park were more than just trips; they were journeys of the soul, leaving an indelible mark on each retiree's memory.

These Fish and Wildlife retirees, once stewards of wildlife in their own country, found renewed inspiration and purpose in the wilds of Africa. Their adventures serve as a testament to the profound connection between humans and nature, and the endless possibilities that await those who seek to explore the world's natural wonders.

Future Safaris

There are more safari opportunities coming up in 2026. Since this years were so successful and fun, we are offering three different safaris for 2026. As usual we will be keeping the group size small – between eight and 10 people. Please contact Donna Stanek at dstanek0418@hotmail.com for more information and details.

Okavango Delta and Victoria Falls

If you are a fan of the PBS documentary “Big Cats 24/7” this is the trip for you! We have timed this safari to be in the Okavango during high water, when wildlife is most visible and active. We will journey the lush waterways and view the abundant wildlife on this extraordinary adventure. Prepare to explore one of Botswana’s most iconic landscapes filled with awe and wonder. As an added treat we will be at Victoria Falls during a “moonbow”; when during a full moon it is possible to see a “moonbow” instead of a rainbow.

Dates: June 16 – 26, 2026 Group Size: 8



Wine and Wildlife Safari Adventure

This is a new offering, but one we have been asked about providing. Many safaris venture to Cape Town and the surrounding wine country either before or after a safari. So, we are combining the best of both worlds! During this adventure we will visit an elephant rescue facility where you can get up close to these magnificent creatures. Pilanesberg National Park is known for being the home of the “Big Five” and you may see them all! A peaceful rest awaits at ChaZen Game Reserve (owned by our hosts) and home to a large variety of antelope and you will learn of their lion and wild dog breeding programs. Then it is off to Cape Town – Table Mountain, Signal Hill, penguins at Boulders Beach, Cape of Good Hope, and of course, wine tasting! Dates: July 8-18, 2026

North West South Africa

This is the perfect safari for beginners or those that are looking for a less-strenuous adventure. Discover unforgettable moments with our exclusive safari experience, featuring exciting game drives and immersive cultural encounters. Enjoy luxurious stays at privately owned reserves and a truly relaxing experience. Highlights include Pilanesberg National Park one of South Africa’s more popular parks, here we may encounter elephants, rhinos, lions, and leopards. We spend part of our time at the private ChaZen Game Reserve and learn of efforts to breed and re-introduce lions and wild dogs to other South African private

reserves. They are also home to about a dozen antelope species – more than any other place we visit.

Dates: August 18 – 28, 2026

A Cultural and Historical Tour of Ghana

Service Retiree Kofi Fynn-Aikins established Center of the World Tours to support his nonprofit Hope for Sisi's Kids (HOSIKIDS.org), which focuses on the health and education of the children at the school.

His tour stands out due to its deep cultural immersion, where you'll be welcomed like family. Guests will have the chance to interact with locals, including his relatives and friends from various socio-economic backgrounds. You'll be invited to enjoy a luncheon and dinner party at the homes of Ghanaians.



Group in Ghana (from Center of the World Tours Website)

Additionally, you'll spend time with joyful school children who are excited to have visitors. The kids will entertain you with drumming and dancing, and invite you into their classrooms. According to my friends who have joined me, these interactions with the local people are the highlight of their experience in Ghana.

The Tour includes

- All accommodations and breakfasts and dinners when visiting Ghanaian families

- Cultural immersion – visit with friends and family of tour guide, including eating authentic home-cooked meals in their homes
- Visit historic sites, national park, botanical garden, beaches
- Visit a rural community primary school and interact with kids
- Entrance fees to tourist attractions’
- Transportation in air-conditioned van
- Buffalo, NY Tour Guide (Kofi) born and raised in Ghana\

Tour does not include airfare to Ghana, travel insurance, immunizations and visa.

Contact 716-913=9835 or Kofi@centeroftheworldtours.com



Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's Memorial Park and Mausoleum (from Center of the World Tours Website)



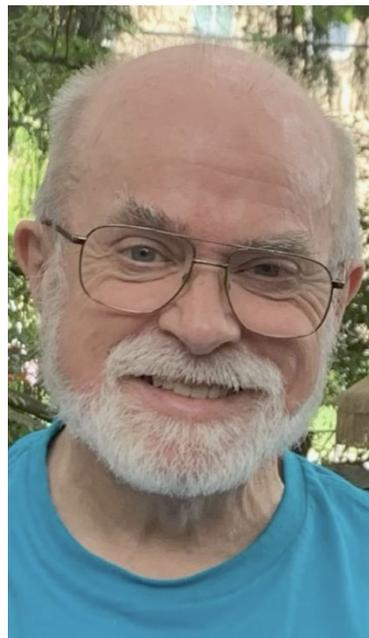
Wli Waterfalls, the highest falls in West Africa (photo provided by Kofi Fynn Atkins)

Passing of Colleagues

If you are aware of the passing of any retired or active FWS employees, including those who left the Service before retirement, please let us know so we can pass that information on to our readers.

If you can provide us with links to online obituaries, that would be most helpful, and should be sent to Helen Clough at communications2023@fwsretirees.org.

William ‘Bill’ Ashforth (May 11, 1949 – May 16, 2025)



William “Bill” Robert Ashforth passed away peacefully on May 16, 2025 at the Hospice of the Panhandle, with his loving wife beside him and surrounded with poetry and music from his children. Raised as a Catholic, he embraced the teachings of the Buddha as he reflected on changes he wanted to see in himself, and landed at the Presbyterian Church in Shepherdstown.

Originally from Massachusetts, Bill was educated at Boston Latin

School, Northeastern University and finished with a Master of Science in Information Systems at the Naval Postgraduate School in California.

After many posts around the US with his family, Bill found his way to West Virginia as the Commanding Officer for the U.S. Coast Guard's Operations Systems Center in the early 90s and remained in the area after developing a great appreciation for the landscape and community. Bill had common threads that united his life: family, leadership, community, music and nature.

He served 28 years in the Coast Guard and retired as a Captain. Bill received a variety of commendations including Commendation Medal with Gold Star, Humanitarian Service Medal, The Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement/Gold Medal and many, many more.

After leaving the Coast Guard, Bill was a trainer with the Easter Management Development Center before joining the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) for his final career move. He said working for the USFWS "felt like coming home after the Coast Guard - the sense of mission in both is doing something larger than yourself." Over the next 10 years, his over 500 USFWS students referred to him as the "Yoda of Leadership" teaching the Stepping Up To Leadership Program, where he modeled "leading from the heart" and co-authored a paper with Rick Lemon on the FWS' Succession Planning and Leadership Development. NCTC was also where Bill met his new joy in life and future spouse – Georgia Jeppesen.

As an active member of the community, Bill was a deacon and member of the Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, a volunteer with the Shepherdstown Elementary "Read Aloud Program," and board member of his homeowner's association. In his retirement, you could find him operating the sound camera equipment on Sundays and co-leading strategic planning and visioning at church, mentoring youth from elementary to recent grads, supporting local community needs through book donations to Shepherdstown Day Care and helping to address basic community needs through Shepherdstown Shares.

Bill loved music and he loved to channel his generosity and sense of community through that love. While working at NCTC, he integrated music and musical instruments into his leadership trainings. He also volunteered his eclectic collection of drums and musical instruments and his leadership talents to lead local nature camp classes in musical appreciation activities. Bill loved creating a room in the house for music, where visiting family members could just "pick up and play" his many instruments.

Bill also enjoyed the outdoors and would enjoy weekend retreats with his family, hikes at Potomac Valley Audubon Society's Yankauer Nature Preserve and annual Thanksgiving trips to Valley of Fire State Park in Nevada. He carried with him a love of photography and enjoyed developing pictures in his self-built darkroom in his younger years.

Bill is preceded in death by his father, Louis William Ashforth, and mother, Kathleen Ashforth Farese. Bill is survived by his wife Georgia Jeppesen, brother Robert Ashforth, daughter Jeanine Ashforth, son Kerry Ashforth (Michael) daughter Brittany Ashforth-Leavitt (Christopher) and their son Brendan, and son Skylar Jeppesen Benedict (Caitlyn), as well as many cherished in-laws, nieces and nephews.

A celebration and remembrance gathering will be held at the Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, Shepherdstown WV on Saturday June 21 at 11:00 am. Reception in the church fellowship hall to follow. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Michael J Fox Foundation (<https://give.michaeljfox.org/give/>) or the Potomac Valley Audubon Society's Yankauer Nature Preserve (<https://www.potomacaudubon.org/support/>).

Prepared by Paul Tritaik and the Ashforth Family

Duane Gaulke (October 18, 1951 — March 2, 2025)

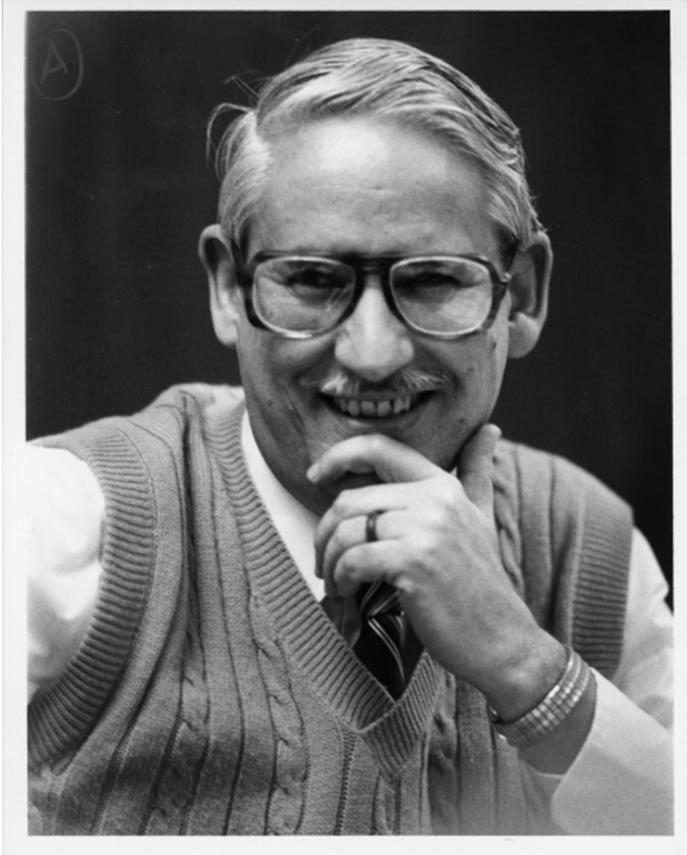


Duane Allen Gaulke, 73, of Houston, MN died Sunday, March 2, 2025 at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, WI. Duane was born on October 18, 1951 in Winona, MN, the son of Edward Puchalla and Darlene McNish. On May 8, 1974 Duane was united in marriage to Charlotte Nowlan, the love of his life. Two daughters came from this union. Duane worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife sign center in Winona, as the silk screen maker and print foreman. Animals, especially dogs, held a special place in Duane's heart.

He raised and showed champion Pomeranian's for over 50 years. He also judged dogs for 4-H and the American Kennel Society. Duane was an active member of the American Rose Society of Winona, and the American Kennel Society.

Duane is survived by his daughters: Lea (Marc) Mickschl, Katie (Paul) Schmitz; and grandchildren: Samantha, Nicholas, and Catalina. He is preceded in death by his parents, and wife, Charlotte. No public services are planned at this time; condolences sent to the funeral home will be directed to the family

Lynn Adams Greenwalt (March 15, 1931- March 20, 2025)



Lynn Greenwalt, age 94, of Rockville, MD passed away peacefully on March 20, 2025. Lynn was born on March 15, 1931 to Lyndel and Ernest Greenwalt, in Reno, Nevada. Lynn is survived by his beloved wife, Judith Greenwalt, and two children: Mark Greenwalt of Mechanicsville, VA and Grant Greenwalt of Arlington, VA; and predeceased by his parents and his son, Scott Greenwalt. He was a proud grandfather to five grandchildren.

Lynn was raised within the National Wildlife Refuge System and during his long career oversaw some of our nation's most beautiful and remote places before ultimately running the agency that nurtured him over the decades. Lynn was the son of a newspaperman turned refuge manager, Ernest Greenwalt, and he inherited his father's eloquence and love for public lands. For the first five years of his life, Lynn lived on the Charles Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), now the [Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge](#), in northwest Nevada.

As there were no schools near this remote refuge, his family moved, and Lynn, an only child, spent nearly 20 years at Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma. Lynn spent his early years swimming and fishing and doing chores like milking the family cow. During his Wichita Mountains childhood that was marked by the Great Depression, Lynn would watch motion pictures at one of the three Civilian Conservation Corps Camps located on the refuge, which was remarkable for that time and

place. He collected scrap metal for World War II and watched German prisoners of war mowing lawns, fixing roads, and repairing buildings on the refuge.

Lynn was privileged to grow up on a refuge managed by his father where legendary leaders like Ira Gabrielson and J. Clark Salyer would visit and eat at his mother's table. He listened intently to them talk with his father and would ask them questions. He was enthralled with how Gabrielson deftly skinned birds and impressed with Salyer's stargazing expertise. This was when there were so few refuge people, they all knew each other and treated one another as family.

In high school, Lynn started working summers at the refuge as a laborer earning \$0.55/hour cleaning toilets and hauling garbage. He took up photography as a hobby, which he used to photograph the refuge and refuge operations. Having grown up surrounded by wildlife and their habitats, Lynn was inspired to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology from the University of Oklahoma in 1953 and a Master of Science in Wildlife Management from the University of Arizona in 1955, where he studied the movement of Gambel's Quail. While working on his undergraduate degree, Lynn continued working summers at Wichita Mountains as a maintenance worker repairing roads and facilities. There he met his future wife, Judy Cunningham, herself the daughter of a refuge manager, Fred Cunningham, who was then an assistant under Ernest Greenwalt. Judy shared Lynn's inherited passion and dedication to the refuge system.

After earning his MS degree, Lynn was appointed Refuge Manager Trainee at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Utah, where he learned to run an air thrust boat that he had to start by hand. But, after only a couple of months, he was drafted by the U.S. Army and stationed at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Judy was attending college at Murray State in southwestern Kentucky near her father's refuge, Kentucky Woodlands NWR. Lynn and Judy married in 1955. After a year of training, Lynn was sent to Germany for a year as a combat medic, rising to the rank of corporal.

Upon returning stateside in 1957, Lynn picked up Judy at her father's new refuge in Loxahatchee NWR in Florida, and then moved to Jackson, Wyoming where his father was managing the National Elk Refuge. Lynn spent several months building pole and buck fences and cleaning campgrounds. Lynn finally got a permanent job later in 1957 when he was hired as Assistant Refuge Manager, GS-5, at Salt Plains NWR back in Oklahoma. In 1958, he became Assistant Refuge Manager, GS-7, at Bosque del Apache NWR in New Mexico, which he loved.

In 1959, he was offered the Refuge Manager position, GS-9, at a new refuge in a remote part of western Utah called Fish Springs NWR. It was an opportunity he couldn't pass up, even though the closest civilization was a military base 60 miles away and the nearest paved road was 104 miles away. He moved there with his pregnant wife and toddler, unbeknownst to the regional office. But they were no strangers to primitive living. Their home was a

26-foot camper trailer with no electricity or plumbing. They relied on a pitcher pump well and an old generator that could only power lights and a radio.

Lynn relished the opportunity to start up a new refuge. He started with a similar trailer for an office, a truck, and a D4 cable blade dozer, with a pull-behind road grader. Lynn wrote the Master Plan, one of the first for a national wildlife refuge, with which he successfully acquired funding to hire staff and contract the development of the headquarters and marsh. After just 3 years, the refuge had 5 houses (with plumbing and full-time electricity), 2 maintenance buildings, a water tower, 9 miles of canals, 9 miles of dike and roads with 8 water control structures. He led a small staff to remove invasive salt cedar and phragmites, extinguish peat mines, and manage water levels for a more productive marsh, resulting in the increase and return of a variety of migratory birds, including sandhill cranes. He considered his time at Fish Springs NWR one of the most enjoyable and rewarding of his career.

Lynn's talents were evident and in 1962, he was promoted to Regional Refuge Planning Officer and then Assistant Refuge Supervisor at the Southwest Regional Office in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1968 he moved to the Midwest Regional Office in Minneapolis, Minnesota to serve as the Regional Refuge Supervisor. His career then led him to the Pacific Regional Office in Portland, Oregon where he served as the Regional Law Enforcement Supervisor. Lynn had done a lot of collateral duty

law enforcement on refuges, but never full-time. Though he was the first to go from refuge work to supervising law enforcement, he successfully led the 25-30 agents, whose respect he earned by supporting them, working closely with state officers, and focusing on major wildlife violators, both domestic and international. Lynn enjoyed working with the agents to outsmart the poachers and wildlife traffickers.

Two years later, Lynn was summoned by the FWS Director to Washington, DC., to become Chief of the Division of Refuges. After about six months, Lynn was assigned Special Assistant to the Director to manage the fallout from the banning of Compound 1080, which was a widely used poison for coyotes, but also lethal to eagles. After successfully handling that controversial issue, Lynn was asked to serve as Assistant Director of Operations where he continued to oversee Predator and Rodent Control, Refuges, Realty, and Law Enforcement.

In October 1973, at the age of 42, Lynn was tapped to be the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He served as Director from 1973 to 1981, stewarding a huge transformation in conservation serving under Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter.

During Lynn's tenure he established the 230,000-acre Seville National Wildlife Refuge (1973), which he considered a crowning achievement. He successfully implemented the newly passed Endangered Species Act (1973) with unprecedented attention, as well as the Convention on International Trade in

Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (1975). He created the National Wildlife Health Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin (1975) to combat wildlife disease outbreaks.



He formalized law enforcement training for special agents and refuge officers at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia. He oversaw the 54-million-acre expansion of the National Wildlife Refuge System through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (1980), which was the culmination of planning he helped lead earlier. Lynn was also the one who selected the current logo for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Lynn managed these challenges and opportunities with political acumen and a compass that always pointed towards conservation. He successfully transformed the agency from a competitive collection of independent regions to a collaborative collection of interdependent regions with a unified purpose. His astute, scientific approach to regulations and handling of the politically charged and precedent-setting snail darter controversy demonstrated his principled and resolute leadership that was ultimately affirmed by the Supreme Court.

After leaving the Service, Lynn worked for the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) for 13 years, following in the footsteps of an earlier Director, Jay "Ding" Darling, who founded NWF. Lynn served in a number of capacities, including as vice president for all of NWF's conservation programs. He participated in several other national conservation organizations, including The Wildlife Society, the Boone and Crockett Club, and the American Fisheries Society.

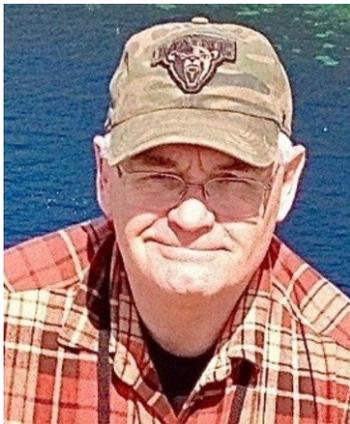
Lynn continued to travel, teach, mentor, and speak out passionately for the agency that he was so deeply connected to and so ably led. Lynn spoke at the NWRS Fulfilling The Promise conference in Keystone, Colorado in 1998, the NWRS Centennial Celebration at Pelican Island NWR in Sebastian, Florida in 2003, and the NWRS Conserving The Future conference in Madison, Wisconsin in 2011. Lynn and Judy attended all but a few of the FWS Retiree Reunions and most of the FWS Law Enforcement Get Togethers. In 2013, the FWS

Retirees Association started a fundraiser to honor Lynn with the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife in Kalispell, Montana with proceeds going to support the local friends group. The FWS Retirees Association has kept that tradition by having a Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife at every Retiree Reunion location since.

Lynn's contributions to fish and wildlife conservation will forever be remembered as part of the Service's legacy. His eloquent speeches resonate with all Service employees fortunate enough to have heard him speak. One of his most memorable speeches was at the Fulfilling The Promise conference where he inspired the faithful: "Move forward with the opportunities presented for you in a way that does not denigrate, dilute or diminish in the slightest degree that which came before you, because many thousands of men and women gave their careers and some even gave their lives for what you are working toward—saving dirt."

Prepared by Paul Tritaik, Mark Madison, Steve Chase, and the Greenwalt Family

Paul M. O'Neil (February 21, 1949 – April 23, 2025)



Paul M. O'Neil died on April 23 at home in Leyden, MA following a short illness. Paul was born in Fall River on February 21, 1949, the son of Paul Francis O'Neil and Dorothy Muriel (Davis) O'Neil. Paul has left his wife of 53 years, Karen E. O'Neil and his daughter, Kathleen Claire and her husband, Louis Bouzon of Spotsylvania, VA. as well as many cousins and friends, all of whom miss him dearly.

With his degree in Wildlife Management from the University of Maine, Paul and Karen lived in many parts of the country as he pursued his career in public service, always in a wildlife branch of the U.S. Department of Interior or the U.S.D.A. He began as a research technician for the U.S. Forest Service in Maine, which included caring for and researching the dietary needs of moose using abandoned calves, in order to make recommendations for forest cutting practices. A professional move took him to the Albany area of New York in animal damage control (ADC), to Knott's Island, N.C. as Assistant Refuge Manager at Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge, San Diego County for ADC work, and the regional ADC office for Washington, Alaska and Hawaii, until the return home to New England as a grants manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Hadley, MA.

He was known for his vast knowledge and expertise, his engaging personality, love of the outdoors, and conservation values, but especially for his drop-everything-to-help-a-

neighbor-or-friend approach. All of these skills and experiences served as fodder for his most recognizable trait: true story telling. One such experience involved color marking gulls at Fresh Kills landfill in N.Y. City proving that the gulls who scavenged there were the same ones who populated the runways of the nearby airports. When he lunched at a nearby deli during work few people seemed to take much notice of his fuchsia pink complexion with circles of undyed skin around his eyes. There was one notable exception when a woman at a nearby table remarked to Paul in her N.Y. accent, "I just l lo-o-o-ve that color on you." Ultimately the color marking resulted in airport actions to reduce the number of gulls threatening take-offs and landings. Even later, it may have contributed to the permanent closure of the largest landfill in the free world.

Paul was most proud of his daughter Kate. He was her go-to for conversations about nearly every topic: history, geography, the conundrums of daily life and practical solutions. Paul was kind, generous, honest and values-driven. No doubt he inspired and reinforced these qualities in his family and friends. Among his accomplishments was working with Warren Facey and 11 other neighbors to help bring together the protection of 13 contiguous properties totaling more than 700 acres under the "Leyden Working Farms and Forest Conservation Project" led by the Mt. Grace Land Trust.

Richard "Dick" Nutter Smith (December 15, 1933 – May 16, 2025)



Richard "Dick" Nutter Smith of Vienna, Virginia, passed peacefully at home on May 16, 2025. He was the beloved husband of Dorothy Shoemaker Smith for 65 years, and loving father of Gretchen Burke (Paul), Cynthia Loftin (James), Jennifer Smith (Parris), and Hilary Lambrecht (Bruce). Survivors include ten grandchildren, Timothy (Maggie), Kelly, Jack, Steven, Daniel, Haley (Timothy), Anna, Stephanie,

Samuel, Isaac and great-granddaughter Penny. Also surviving is sister Marcia Mink (Roy) of Franktown, VA and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Dick Smith was born in Boston, Massachusetts on December 15, 1933, the son of Lloyd Lalus and Ruth Nutter Smith. He graduated from Towson High School in Baltimore, MD in 1951, and played a year of Freshman Varsity basketball at the University of Maryland before serving in the Army for two years during the Korean Conflict. He then received degrees in Wildlife Management from the University of Maine (B.S.), and the University of Massachusetts (M.S.) and later an M.S. in Public Administration from American University in Washington, DC.

Dick was always clear where he stood and was not shy about asking the tough questions. In 1971, Dick moved to Washington, D.C. to head the Research Division and became a member of the Senior Executive Service for fifteen years. Dick held the position of Deputy Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service from 1989 to 1995 and served as Acting Director in 1993 between John Turner and Mollie Beatty.

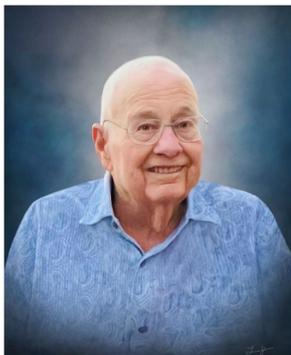
He built strong relationships with state partners throughout his career, but was not afraid to make difficult decisions in the interest of conservation, such as removing cattle from Matagorda Island NWR in Texas to improve habitat restoration. Though some considered his management style as gruff, he was liked and admired by those who knew him well. He was very efficient and productive and challenged others to be innovative and resourceful. He was also reliable and effective in advancing the priorities of the Directors he served.

Dick's commitment to conservation didn't end at retirement. As a volunteer, he participated in waterfowl banding trips to the Northwest Territories in Canada for three years. There, he worked with flyway biologists and others to band as many as 75,000 ducks a year. He also volunteered at the remote Midway Atoll NWR in the Pacific Ocean. There he spent two months helping the refuge manager he once mentored in Washington, by removing invasive plants and replacing them with native vegetation to restore habitat for Laysan Albatross and other species of seabirds.

Dick was an avid small game and waterfowl hunter and fisherman, who enjoyed showing new Washington Office recruits the best places to hunt and fish in the state he grew up in. He also enjoyed canoeing with his family and friends. To his daughters, he was the dad who coached their victorious softball teams and supported them in all their endeavors. To his wife, he was the most loving and loyal companion that anyone could dream and wish for.

At his request there will be no service. A scattering of ashes will be private, followed by a celebration of his life at a gathering of the family. Those that wish may make contributions to The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, 6 Herndon Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403. *Prepared by Paul Tritaik and the Smith Family*

Troy Dean Winham (February 28, 1938 — April 11, 2025)



Troy Dean Winham was born on February 28, 1938 in Lawton, Oklahoma. He was called home by our Lord and Savior on Friday, April 11, 2025 at 87 years of age. Troy's parents were Paul and Marie Winham. His family moved to Dexter, NM in January of 1949 where they farmed. Troy attended Dexter Schools and graduated in

1956. He was very active in sports and activities during his school years.

Troy met and married the love of his life, Kay Foster, in July of 1957. They were married for 67 years. While in Dexter, Troy served on the Dexter Volunteer Fire Department for 18 years, serving two terms As Chief. Troy went to work for the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Dexter National Fish Hatchery in 1970 until 1995 when he retired.

Troy joined the Elks in 1960 and remained a member until his passing. He was very active in the Elks moving up through the local lodge and eventually serving as State President in 1998 and on the National Level as DDGER.

Troy and Kay were blessed with three daughters, Kathy and her husband Patrick Jennings, Debbie and Her husband Israel Campos and Diane Terry, all of Roswell. Troy and Kay moved to Roswell in 2017 where they resided until his death.

Troy was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Eugene and Steve Winham, and his precious granddaughter Sarah Bradley. He is survived by his loving wife Kay, daughters and son in laws and grandchildren Patrick Jennings Jr and Juanita, Eric Jennings and Lisa, Ty Terry and Ashly, Emily Grandi and Jonathan. He is also Survived by nine great Grandsons, Patrick III and Ryan Jennings, Lucas and John Jennings, Caleb and Logan Bradley, Ayden, Austin and Tyler Terry and one precious granddaughter, Avery Grandi.

A Celebration of Life for Troy was held on Thursday, April 17 at 10:00a.m. at Grace Community Church in Roswell, NM.

More from the Madison Reunion

Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife

Armed with binoculars around their necks and Merlin app at the ready, a group of 17 USFWS Retirees Association members kicked off this year's Reunion Conference with a nature stroll along trails on the University of Wisconsin's Lakeshore Nature Preserve.



Doug Foresell and Gail Carmody

As warblers sang, Red-winged Blackbirds flashed their fancy red shoulder patch, wildflowers lined the path toward Picnic Point, the turnaround point on the walk. The point provided a lovely view of the sizeable Lake Mendota. Perfect weather gave the walkers a great day for a nature exploration event and even a distant shot of the Madison skyline dominated by the state capitol building.

Not only did the hikers hear lots of birds, but some even graced the binocular and camera lenses. Two miles later and back in the parking lot, our national bird bid us farewell. A Bald Eagle sighting at the end of Walk for Wildlife capped a lovely and memorial experience setting the tone for the rest of the conference.

Funds generated by the event totaled about \$300 and was donated to the Friends of Necedah NWR to improve outreach infrastructure at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, a conference field trip host. *Photos and article by Lew Gorman III*



Bald Eagle soaring over Madison.

History of the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife, hosted by the Association of Retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Employees

Former Director Lynn Greenwalt is now gone, but not forgotten. Back in 2013, at our Reunion in Kalispell, MT, the FWS Retirees Association started a small tribute to former Director Greenwalt by hosting the “Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife.” It was enjoyed by

many! In Kalispell, the walk was held at Creston National Fish Hatchery along the new 1 km interpretive trail and outdoor classroom. Participants paid a fee of \$25 and were also treated to a BBQ dinner provided by the Hatchery Manager Mark Haskell and his crew. The money collected went to the Creston Hatchery Friends Group.



Photo from Kalispell 2013 Reunion

The Walk was so successful it was decided to make it an integral part of all future Reunions. Corpus Christi hosted the 2nd Walk, in 2015, at the Delta Wildlife Reserve. Participants paid \$30 each. Funds went to support the Friends of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. A BBQ dinner was held after the Walk. The 3rd Walk was held in 2018 at the Reunion in Lincoln, OR, and raised over \$700. This Walk was along the Pacific Ocean beach and was very scenic. It ended at a delicious seafood restaurant where we were entertained by a humpback whale that breached numerous times!

In Annapolis, MD, 2020, the 2–mile 4th Walk was held at Broad Creek Park. Funds collected went to FWS field stations near Chesapeake Bay. In 2022, Deadwood, SD, participants ascended (a gentle ascent) the ½ mile hike to the summit of Mt. Roosevelt to a beautiful view of the Black Hills. The Booth Society (Friends Group) used the money raised for signage at the D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery & Archives.

The Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife, held at the National Conservation Training Center in 2024, toured the grounds of NCTC. It was too early for nesting eagles, but we visited the bald eagle nest site where NCTC films and broadcasts (live) the nest as an environmental education activity. Historic sites, a cemetery, and other old building sites were also toured with background information. Many people do not see these sites but was very interesting to see this "hidden" part of NCTC. \$280 was donated by the walkers and given to the Friends of the NCTC.

Former Director Greenwalt passed away on March 20, 2025, at the age of 94. We will continue to honor his legacy with this traditional Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife at our Reunion gatherings around the county, with funds donated to support the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on-the-ground.

Written by Deborah Holle, May 2025.

Are you up to date on your dues?

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

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

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



Albuquerque New Mexico Retiree Luncheon, April 9, 2025 - Sitting (l-r): Carlotta Ortiz, Karen Welch, Janie Jones, Joe Spier, Sally Spier, Denise Baker; Standing (l-r): Marlene Stine, Pete Stine, Jeff Haskins, Yvonne Haskins, Warren Hagenbuck, Sharon Hagenbuck, Sue Burton, Jerry Burton & Dean Watkins.



Madison Wisconsin FWS Retirees Reunion Attendees – Monona Terrace Convention Center



FWS Retirees at the Madison Reunion – Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife



FWS Retirees at International Crane Foundation



Charlie & Julie Wooley at International Crane Foundation



FWS Retirees on Field Visit to the Aldo Leopold Shack



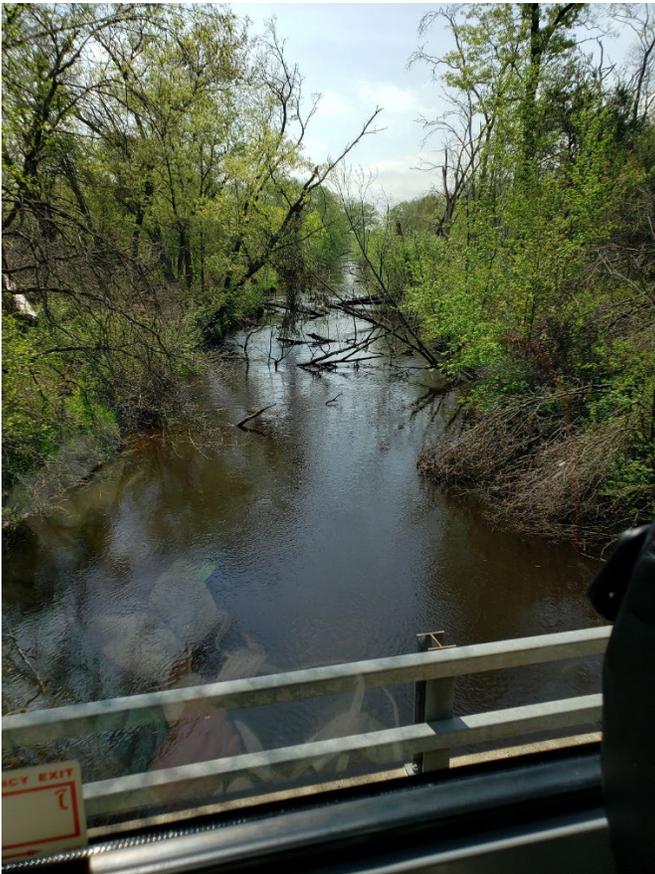
Judy Grover waving to fellow retirees at the International Crane Foundation



Necedah Refuge Manager & retirees



Necedah Refuge Volunteer in Whooping Crane costume



Little Yellow River at Necedah NWR



Kofi Fynn-Aikins & Cindy Barry at International Crane Foundation



Jerry Smith and his family – left to right, Brad Ross, Melodie (Smith) Ross, Jerry Smith, Meri (Smith) Caggiano, Steve Caggiano, Stephanie (Smith) Lucachick, Steve Lucachick



Lew Gorman, Elaine Blok, & Marge Kolar Madison Reunion Opening reception – Hyatt Place