

FWS Retirees Association NEWSLETTER



Fall (November) 2025

2025 Board of Directors

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Message from the Chair



Greetings, everyone!

During my last newsletter message, I summarized this Administration's actions that reduced FWS staffing. On October 1, the New York Times reported (with many caveats) that the FWS has lost **23%** of its workforce, starting from 9,067 employees as of September, 2024, to a recent count of 7,001 employees. [See article elsewhere in this newsletter.] Their data "is based on publicly available contingency plans" provided

prior to the current government shutdown. What are the impacts to our natural resources? What partnerships are not happening, thereby delaying permits, projects, public use programs? These impacts are real, and when/if we are notified, our Association can report the facts through this newsletter and our website, so YOU can spread the word to those who can make a difference.

We are actively planning the next Reunion! As previously announced, SAVE THE DATES of September 21-25, 2026, for the 23rd Reunion, to be held for the first time in ALASKA! We'll be staying in Anchorage, with potential field trips before, during, and after the gathering. Robin West and Helen Clough will soon be putting together an agenda so we can make our reservations. I'm looking forward to seeing many of our Alaska colleagues! If

you are planning to attend, your assignment (per Dale Hall!) is to bring along another FWS retiree! *Cindy Uptegraft Barry*

Business

Elections

Every year, the terms for three of the nine Board members of this Association come up for election. Current Board members Lew Gorman (outreach, grants manager), Helen Clough (newsletter editor), and Patrick Martin (Treasurer) are running for re-election. However, another current Board member, Chris Cline, will be stepping off the Board at the end of this calendar year, leaving a vacancy for someone to serve out the remaining 2 years of her term. Have you thought about seeking a position on this Board to guide its direction into the future? If so, then please contact any of the Board members on this letterhead, for details on how to be a candidate in the election coming up next month.

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 Paul Tritaik, at vicechair@fwsretirees.org. If you have something that you can't send electronically, you can mail them to Paul Tritaik, 1807 Serenity Lane, Sanibel, Florida, 33957. If you have any questions, you can call Paul at (239) 309-5728. Thank you.

Alaska Reunion, September 21-25, 2026 Anchorage, Alaska

The next retirees' reunion will be held in Alaska next fall. Robin West and Helen Clough are co-chairs of this reunion and are busy recruiting other Alaskans and former Alaskans to help plan the reunion. This will be the first time retirees have met in Alaska. The late September date will coincide with the last part of the summer visitor season in Alaska providing ample opportunities for retirees to plan other Alaska adventures before and/or after the reunion.



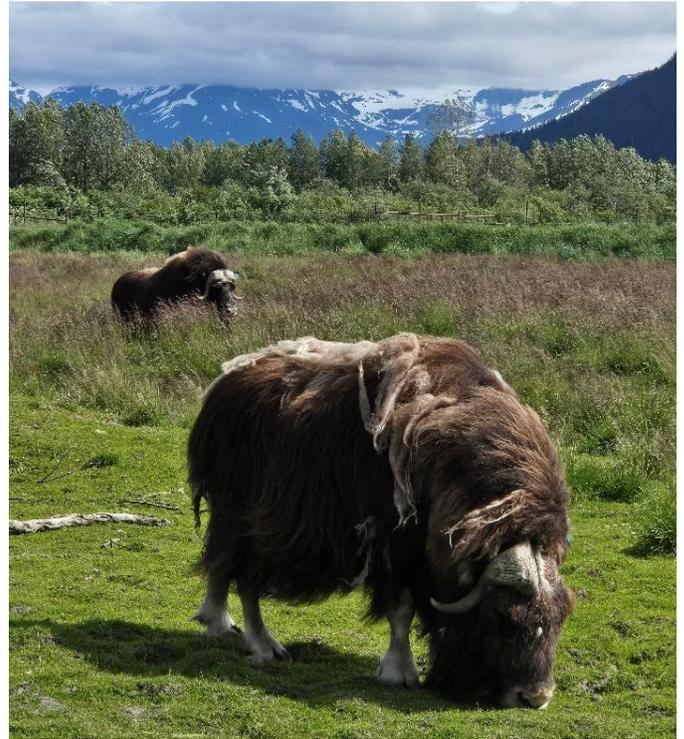
Shannon and Robin West

The Hotel Captain Cook located in downtown Anchorage is our host hotel. Here is the booking link: [Booking Link](#) and the group code is: FWS2026. The group room rate is \$199 per night plus taxes and fees. We are looking at a similar format to our last reunion with registration and an opening reception on Monday, September 21, followed by meetings/sessions at the host venue on Tuesday and outside adventures on Wednesday and Thursday. A closing banquet will be held Thursday evening at the Hotel Captain Cook.

Anchorage is served by many airlines so we encourage you to look for deals that work for you. Some airlines only serve Anchorage in the summer so we suggest you may want to compare flights on individual airline websites and travel sites such as Expedia, Kayak, etc.

While details of field activities remain to be determined, Robin and his wife recently checked out two possible trips.

Near town scenic and wildlife tour: 5-1/2-hour round-trip Anchorage via bus for Portage Glacier Cruise and stop at Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center. Trip would include a short boat ride to view active glacier and short opportunity to see some Alaska wildlife in large enclosures with narration.



Musk Oxen

Marine and terrestrial scenic and wildlife tour: 11 to 12-hour round-trip Anchorage to Seward for 4-hour boat ride/wildlife viewing in Resurrection Bay/Kenai Fjords National Park. Motor coach for this option for Seward travel. Majestic scenery and wildlife sightings along bus route as well as boat tour.



Sea lions

We are looking into other options as well and will likely offer a suite of trips to select from with attendees paying for their own selections directly with our vendors. Stay tuned for more information. We will be updating the reunion page on the retiree website regularly - fwsretirees.org.



Orca

Good information on the Anchorage area is available from “Visit Anchorage” which can be found at anchorage.net. Good information on visiting Alaska can be found at the State of Alaska’s visitor website <https://www.travelalaska.com/> You may wish to order their Alaska Travel planner which is loaded with information on Alaska travel options.

Also, feel free to contact Robin and Helen for their suggestions on things to do in Alaska. Helen lives in Juneau and is most familiar with the southeast part of the state. Robin lives on the Kenai Peninsula and is very familiar with much of the state. Between the two of them, they have probably been almost everywhere in Alaska either for work or on personal adventures. **If you chose to call, remember Alaska has its own time zone which is 4 hours earlier than eastern time.**

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907-321-4004

Robin West
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541-787-0938).

Treasurer’s Report

by *Patrick Martin*

Current balances as of the end of September:

Main account (general operations): \$35,454.71

PayPal account: \$ 747.06

The Retirees Association Board plans to discuss how the Association could use some of the funds in ways that support and align with the mission of the FWSRA.

Across the various operating income categories (donations, dues, lifetime memberships, miscellaneous and special projects), a total of \$6,857.06 has come in so far this year. We are three-quarters of the way through 2025 and that value is approximately 71% of budgeted income for the year.

Year-to-date operating expenses total is \$1,546.98, or approximately 34% of the budgeted amount of \$4,500 for the year.

Grants

- History Grant FY25: \$17,124.19 has been paid out. CY2025 budget is \$42,488.43. Expense categories are database management, History Committee supplies and travel, grant management, museum support, oral histories equipment, travel and transcription, and FWS station anniversaries.
- Youth Grant FY25: \$23,234.55 has been paid out. CY2025 budget is \$41,123.62.

Information submitted by Patrick Martin, Treasurer

Oral History Update

By Libby Herland, Chair FWS Oral History Subcommittee

FWS retirees and others with meaningful connections to fish and wildlife conservation continue to step up and agree to be interviewed about their conservation work. We have conducted 16 interviews to date in 2025. This spring and summer, Tom Busiahn, Liz Cummins, Frank Kohn, Gary Pearson, Walt Quist, Greg Siekanic, Jerry Stroebele, Craig Tabor, Vinny Turner, Mike Weaver, and Barry Whitehill were interviewed. Additionally, the oral history transcripts for Kevin Cobble, Rick Johnston, Jeff Lang, Charles LeBuff, Carol Lively, Mike Marchyshyn, Joe McCauley, Benito Perez, Joel Scrafford, Jerry Stroebele and Kristi Young were recently completed.



Libby Herland interviewed retiree Craig Tabor (OLE) at his home in July 2025.

Most of the new transcripts and those previously completed are accessible on the FWS website. However, changes by the administration resulted in the loss of the digitalmedia.fws.gov website, where most of the transcripts could be found. The FWS' new oral history collection website is <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/oral-history-transcripts>. It is hoped that all completed transcripts will be on this site in the future. However, for now, most of the transcripts are on www.fws.gov. That site contains over 24,300 documents alone and it is almost impossible to find one of the almost 500 transcripts on that site (this includes the 90 that are in the collection.) To find a particular transcript, search for a person (interviewer or interviewee) a key word or phrase, or "oral history transcript" on www.fws.gov.

Please note that some transcripts did not successfully migrate over from the digital media site and some have yet to be posted. Hopefully, they will be uploaded to the fws.gov website sooner rather than later. The government shutdown, still ongoing at the time of this writing, and the talk of layoffs in all federal agencies, raises concerns about the future of the oral history program and in particular, the safe storage of all interview files (audio and written). There have been discussions about ensuring the preservation and accessibility of these files. It is essential that the history of the FWS, as shared with us through interviews with our retired staff and conservation partners, be preserved for future generations. Be assured that this is a very high priority of the oral history team.

The oral history team is working diligently at conducting more interviews and completing more transcripts – several are in review but many other interviews have never been transcribed. There are not sufficient staff or volunteers to eliminate the backlog at this time. If you want to join us as a volunteer in this work, you want to be interviewed, you have been interviewed but haven't received a transcript yet, or you can't find a transcript online, please contact me at herland194@gmail.com. Thank you!

Membership

Membership chair Deborah Holle reported the following new/renewed members for May, June, July, and August, 2025.

Allan, Nathan (Gretchen); Cedar Park, TX; 12/2025; R2, Ecological Services **NEW**

Brennan–Dyer, Kathleen (Steven Dyer); Kelso, WA; 12/2025; R1, Finance until JAO established in 4/2025 **NEW**

Brown, Allan (Julia Brown); Lawrenceville, GA; 12/2024; R4, RO, ARD Fish and Aquatic Conservation, Asst RD FAC **NEW**

Burnside, Carla; Spokane Valley, WA; 4/2025; R9–HQ, National Wildlife Refuge System, DRLE Archaeologist **NEW**

Christoffers, Edward (Christian Christoffers); Easton, MD; 1/2007; R5, Special Asst. to Regional Director **NEW**

Chorazy, Jane, Vancouver, WA; 05/2019; R1, External Affairs, Communications **NEW**

Denman, Pamela; Burnsville, NC; 12/2023; R5, National Wildlife Refuge System, Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge **NEW**

DesRoberts, Kevin (Jeanne Tinsman); Terra Alta, WV; R8, National Wildlife Refuge System, Desert National Wildlife Refuge **NEW**

Dunstan, Andrea, (Michael Dunstan), Starkville, MS; 9/2023; R4, National Wildlife Refuge System, Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee NWR **NEW**

DiSalvo, Paul; Arlington, VA; R9–HQ, Ecological Services **NEW**

Edwards, Terri; Belchertown, MA; 05/2025; R9/HQ–Civil Rights Office of Communications **NEW**

Eisenschmidt, Tina (Robert Eisenschmidt) 3/2020; Smyrna, GA; R4, National Wildlife Refuge System & Ecological Services **NEW**

Elam, Diane; Sacramento, CA; 11/2023; R8, Ecological Services, Ecological Research Center – USGS **NEW**

Follrath, Thomas (Cathrine); Loganville, GA; 1/2004; R4, RO, Refuges and Wildlife, Realty Division

Ford, Patricia; Alexandria, VA; 8/2025; R9–HQ Internal Affairs, Botanist–Plant Conservation **NEW**

Frugé, Doug (Joyce Forbush); Whitingham, VT; 3/2017; R6, RO, Fish and Aquatic Conservation

Galves, John; Vero Beach, FL; 9/2025; R4, Fish and Aquatic Conservation, Peninsular Florida, FWCO, Deferred Retirement Program 2.0 **NEW**

Geiger, James (Amelia Geiger); Seabrook Island, SC; 4/2013; R5, RO, Fish and Aquatic Resources, Fisheries, ARD

Hall, Sarah; Raleigh, SC; 1/1994; R4, Division of Law Enforcement

Hastie, Kyla (Keith Hastie); Shutesbury, MA; 05/2025; R5, Northeast Regional Office, another program **NEW**

Heglund, Patricia (Kirk Lohman); Mazama, WA; 4/2020; R3, National Wildlife Refuge System, Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning.

Hendron, Jane (Bryan Ezzell); Oceanside, CA; 5/2025; R8, Ecological Services, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office **NEW**

Howey, Ronald; Sunderland, MA; 2004; R5, Fisheries **NEW**

Hunter, Chuck (Peg Gallagher); Lilburn, GA; 6/2025; R4, RO, National Wildlife Refuge System **NEW**

Jones, Laura; Rio Vista, CA; 2/2017; R9, NCTC, Leadership and Employee Development **NEW**

Kuhar, Chris; N. Springfield, VA; 5/2025; R9, HQ, Management and Administration–JAO–Finance Payments **NEW**

LaBelle, Kylie; Meridian, MS; 2/2025; R3, National Wildlife Refuge System, Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District **NEW**

Lowe, Roy (Laurie); Waldport, OR; 1/2015; R1, Refuges and Wildlife, Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuges

Montoya, Gary (Carla Montoya); Truth or Consequences, NM; Geographic Manager AZ/NM **NEW**

Morrison, Hugh (Jenny Morrison); Portland, OR; 4/2025; R1, RO, Regional Directors Office–Pacific Region, RD **NEW**

Murphy, Daniel (Cindy Roberts); Annapolis, MD; 1/2025; R5, Ecological Services, Coastal Program, Chesapeake Bay Field Office **NEW**

Murphy, Karen (Pat Murphy); Bend, Oregon; 3/2025; R7, RO, Science Applications **NEW**

O'Brien, Heather; Casper, WY; 2/2025; R6, Wyoming Ecological Services Office **NEW**

Poole, Anne Post (Matt Poole); South Berwick, ME; 2016; R9, NCTC, Conservation Library

Schaumann, Sophie; Moorehead, MN; 2/2025; R3, National Wildlife Refuge System; Sherburne NWR **NEW**

Summers, Chloe; Davison, MI; 2/2025; R3, Fish and Aquatic Conservation; Alpena FWCO **NEW**

Tucker, Garry, (Sandy Tucker); Bishop, GA; R4, RO, Refuges and Wildlife

White, Susan; Kailua, HI; 9/2025; R1, National Wildlife Refuge System, Pacific Islands and Monuments Office **NEW**

Williams, Robert (LeeAnn), Spotsylvania, VA; 5/2025; R9, HQ, National Wildlife Refuge System, Infrastructure Management Division **NEW**

Young, Kristie (Mark Locatelli) Loveland, CO; 5/2025; R4, RO, Ecological Services **NEW**

Natural Resource Issues

Trump administration finalizes plan for Arctic refuge oil leasing, and moves to allow controversial King Cove and Ambler roads

The Trump administration on Thursday, October 23, 2025, advanced three major projects in Alaska, including two that had been halted under the Biden administration. The actions, including reopening the full coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to potential oil drilling, involve initiatives that have divided Alaskans and national political leaders and groups for decades. They were announced by Interior Secretary Doug Burgum at a Washington, D.C., event that included Gov. Mike Dunleavy and members of Alaska's all-Republican congressional delegation.

They include:

- A land exchange that's designed to allow an 11-mile gravel road through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, linking the community of King Cove to the airport in Cold Bay for better emergency medical access. Trump in 2018 had approved a land swap, but the Biden administration revoked the approval, citing legal flaws in the agreement.
- Reissuing right-of-way permits and the Clean Water Act permit for the 211-mile Ambler Road that would cut through the Northwest Alaska wilderness to access untapped mineral deposits. Interior also conveyed 23,500 acres near Ambler to the state, completing the state's longtime land selections in the area, Interior said in a statement.
- Burgum signed a decision to reopen the 1.5-million-acre coastal plain in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to future drilling.



A view of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and the mountains beyond is visible from near the end of an existing road on the eastern side of Cold Bay on April 20, 2022. (Marc Lester / ADN)

Conservation groups swiftly condemned the actions, saying they threaten wildlife and subsistence hunters and are especially egregious during a government shutdown. Alaska's

congressional delegation praised them, along with Gov. Mike Dunleavy and the state’s House Republican Caucus, saying they will benefit the economy, national security and support the village of King Cove.

The proposals advance President Donald Trump’s efforts to reinstate his first-term initiatives to open up oil and mining opportunities in Alaska and allow the road through the Izembek refuge. Trump laid out those intentions and others in January in his executive order, “Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential.”

“Today’s announcements are historic for Alaska,” Dunleavy said in a statement. “President Trump and his administration are delivering on promises made to Alaska.” Alaska politicians have fought for the projects for decades, U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski told reporters after the event. “How many times have we felt like Lucy with a football,” she said, referring to a character in the “Peanuts” comic strip. But they’ve moved closer to becoming reality in recent years, she said.



The Kaktovik Lagoon and the Brooks Range mountains of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are seen in Kaktovik, Alaska, Oct. 15, 2024. (AP Photo/Lindsey Wasson, File)

Abstracted from an article by Alex DeMarban, *Anchorage Daily News*. See the full article at <https://www.adn.com/business-economy/energy/2025/10/23/trump-administration-finalizes-plan-for-arctic-refuge-oil-leasing-and-to-allow-controversial-king-cove-and-ambler-roads/>

Fungus that causes white-nose syndrome has been detected for first time in Oregon

The fungus that causes white-nose syndrome in bats has been detected in Clatsop County. White-nose syndrome is an infection in bats caused by the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* that disrupts hibernation, causing dehydration and starvation. Samples analyzed by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) confirmed the presence of the fungus in guano collected from a bat roost at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. This is the first documented case of the fungus in Oregon.

National Park Service biologists collected the sample as part of a federal and state multi-agency bat disease and surveillance effort

in the Pacific Northwest coordinated by USGS. The sample was likely from a Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*), which migrate from winter roosts to maternity roosts in the spring. No bats in Oregon have been observed with signs of white-nose syndrome. However, bats can carry the fungal spores on their skin, groom themselves, and shed them briefly afterward in their feces or guano.

White-nose syndrome has killed millions of bats in North America since its detection in New York in 2007 and continues to spread. At least 40 states have detected the disease and five others have detected the fungus but no disease. The fungus spreads primarily through bat-to-bat contact during hibernation. White-nose syndrome does not cause illness in humans, but it can be spread by contaminated clothing, gear and equipment after recreating in or near caves.

Bats suffering from disease can have the fungus growing on their muzzle, ears and wings during hibernation, causing irritation and damage to the bat’s skin. Bats with white-nose syndrome also wake up more frequently during hibernation and use up critical stored fat reserves faster than normal. The excessive energy expenditure and dehydration during winter in diseased bats can lead to starvation and death.



Big Brown Bat, Leah Riley, USFWS Photo.

Since 2011, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and federal partner agencies (National Park Service, US Geological Survey, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) have surveyed for the fungus and white-nose syndrome across the state with the assistance of wildlife rehabilitators, the Northwest Bat Hub and the Oregon Department of Health. Surveys are completed throughout the year in places where bats spend the winter, spring sites where they raise pups, and other roost sites.

Federal scientists and the ODFW Wildlife Health and Population Lab will identify additional sites for surveillance around the positive sample area this winter and are planning increased bat population monitoring across the state. Testing is conducted by the Oregon State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Corvallis and the USGS National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, WI.

The White-nose Syndrome Response Team is led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and combines the knowledge and resources of experts across the continent to conserve bats and address the threat of white-nose syndrome through the implementation of a national response plan. Information on some of the treatment innovations developed by the response team to manage white-nose syndrome is available at [:Preventing and treating white-nose syndrome](#).

Oregon is home to 15 species of bats, including eight that are species of greatest conservation need. In North America, 12 bat species, including two federally endangered species and one threatened species, have been confirmed with white-nose syndrome. The fungus has been found on an additional nine species without confirmation of the disease. Learn more about white-nose syndrome and how it affects bats at whitenosesyndrome.org.

From FWS website news release Dated September 19 2025.

Reductions in Employment at the Department of the Interior

An article in the New York Times published on October 1, 2025 listed the best available information they could find on reductions in the size of the federal government since the current administration took office. The following table lists the reductions at the Department of the Interior. Sections of that article are quoted below

“Before the government shutdown began Wednesday, many agencies published contingency plans — routine frameworks that are typically updated before a shutdown. These documents included details about which programs will be suspended and how many employees will be furloughed until the shutdown is over. They reveal, to some extent, how much President Trump has slashed the federal work force through firings, layoffs and incentivized resignation programs, because they also include a recent report of how many employees work at each agency.”

“But there are limits to the data agencies released: some employment figures were from as early as March 2025, so they do not capture the sweeping cuts made through the year by Mr. Trump and Elon Musk’s cost-cutting effort, the Department of Government Efficiency.’

“And many of the agencies’ figures still include the [tens of thousands](#) of employees who accepted the deferred resignation program, generally ending their employment with the government at the end of September or December.’

Department of the Interior

Agency	Sept 2024	Recent	% change
Bureau of Safety & Environmental Enforcement	875	560	-36%
National Park Service	21,866	14,500	-34%
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management	634	473	-25%
U.S Fish & Wildlife Service	9,067	7,001	-23%
U S. Geological survey	8,417	6,776	-20%
Bureau of Indian Affairs	3,748	3,126	-17%
Bureau of Land Management	10,925	9,250	-15%

“**Sources:** Data is based on publicly available contingency plans from the Departments of [Agriculture](#), [Commerce](#), [Defense](#), [Education](#), [Energy](#), [Health and Human Services](#), [Homeland Security](#), [Housing and Urban Development](#), [Interior](#), [Justice](#), [Labor](#), [Transportation](#), [Veterans Affairs](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Office of Personnel Management](#), [Small Business Administration](#), [Social Security Administration](#) and [Treasury](#).”

The full article can be viewed at https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/10/01/us/trump-government-shutdown-federal-cuts.html?unlocked_article_code=1.qE8.h12m.OpN2ewr_Sq6F&smid=url-share

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.

Brian Nesvik Confirmed as Director of U.S Fish and Wildlife Service

On August 1, the U.S. Senate confirmed Brian Nesvik as the new director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by a vote of 54-43. Nesvik, who served as the director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) from 2019 until his retirement in 2024, was nominated in February and received a hearing in March. He served in the Wyoming Army National Guard including on two combat deployments, ultimately being promoted to brigadier general where he commanded the state’s

volunteer guard for almost four years. Professionally, he worked for WGFD for nearly three decades, rising up through the law enforcement division to become Wyoming's chief game warden before being tapped as the director of the agency by Governor Mark Gordon.



Brian Nesvik, USFWS Photo

“These experiences and opportunities starting in the field and working my way up have prepared me well to work complex, convoluted problems into decisive action in uncertain environments,” Nesvik stated during his confirmation hearing. “I’m proud of my work on big game migration corridors, protecting my state from the scourge of invasive species and working with the public and talented wildlife managers to recover species listed under the ESA.”

During his testimony he identified his commitment to meet the administration’s goals of better serving the citizens of the country by: “improving the Service’s interactions with the public, simplifying regulations, accelerating permitting with technology, and relying more on education, voluntary compliance, and verification.”

“I share Secretary Burgum’s vision that innovation outperforms regulation. Creative, innovative, purposeful action is a proven hallmark of American success,” he concluded in his hearing. “President Theodore Roosevelt personified such action as America’s earliest and most influential conservationist. His leadership and achievements have long influenced my career in wildlife conservation. His oft-quoted arena metaphor combines thoughtfulness, pragmatism, and courage. If confirmed to enter this arena I will dare greatly.”

Well-known in the wildlife conservation and management community, Nesvik was active with the Western Association of

Fish and Wildlife Agencies serving as its president in 2023. His nomination and confirmation were broadly supported by conservation organizations. *From Wildlife Management Institute*

More on the New Director

Brian Nesvik was born and raised in Casper and Cheyenne, Wyoming. While still in high school, he enlisted in the Army National Guard as a flight operations specialist. Four years later, he attended officer candidate school and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the field artillery. He graduated from the University of Wyoming in 1994 with a BS in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology and Management.

In 1995, he was selected by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to serve as a wildlife law enforcement technician and later a game warden where he focused on enforcing wildlife laws, collecting important wildlife biological data, dealing with wildlife/human conflict, and managing wildlife. He spent much of his time patrolling some of the most remote and wild parts of Wyoming.

Brian simultaneously continued his military career and in 2004 was charged with commanding a 180-soldier Wyoming unit as they deployed to combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq. Following this successful tour, Brian took command of the 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery and deployed again to Kuwait and Southern Iraq in 2009. Upon his return from this deployment, he was selected to command the 115th Field Artillery Brigade. In 2010, Brian was promoted to serve as the Cody Regional Wildlife Supervisor. In 2011, he was promoted to serve as the state’s Chief Game Warden, a position he would hold for eight years. At the same time, he served as the Chief of the Division of Wildlife and was responsible for the management and protection of all the state’s terrestrial wildlife resources.

In 2016, he earned an MS in Strategic Studies from the United States Army War College. In 2018, Brian was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and charged with commanding Wyoming’s Army National Guard and serving as the Assistant Adjutant General. In this role, he was responsible for ensuring the combat readiness of Wyoming’s Army Guard units. After 35 years of service, he retired from the military in 2021.

In March 2019, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon appointed Brian as the Director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. In this role, he dealt with some of the state’s most complex and controversial issues including recovering species listed under the Endangered Species Act and preventing others from being listed, big game migration corridor policy, invasive species, and wildlife disease.

In September 2024, Brian retired from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department after nearly 30 years of service. He and his wife started their own ranching operation on his wife’s long-term family ranch near Glendo, WY where he was able to leverage three decades of experience to implement habitat projects

including the reduction of invasive annual grass, installing wildlife friendly fencing, and reducing conifer encroachment.

In February 2025, President Donald Trump nominated Brian to serve as the 19th Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on August 1, 2025 and assumed the leadership role on August 18, 2025.

Brian is married to his wife of 27 years and has three children and three grandchildren. He enjoys spending time with his family hunting, fishing, ranching, boating, and horseback riding. *From the FWS Home Page*

News from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Museum and Archives

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Museum and Archives, located at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), preserves, protects, and makes available for exhibits, research, and other educational uses, artifacts and archival materials that document the history, people, and work of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its principal partners within the American Conservation Movement.

The museum collection consists of approximately 1 million artifacts and archival materials (photographs, documents, papers, reports, scientific data, resource management records, and other items) that tell the stories of:

- 150+ years of Service history,
- FWS staff, such as Rachel Carson, Paul Kroegel, and Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling. and
- our ongoing work to preserve and protect the lands, wildlife, and resources that we manage for the American people

Highlights of the Collection

Sacred Sites Totem Pole

The House of Tears Carvers of the Lummi Nation created the Sacred Sites Totem Pole in early 2021. In July of that year, a delegation from the Carvers, the Native Organizers Alliance, and other partners transported the totem pole to Washington, D.C. Along the way, the delegation visited eight endangered sites sacred to Indigenous Peoples. At each sacred site they visited, the totem pole served as a powerful symbol of Native cultures, traditions, sovereignty, and conservation of the Nation's land, air, water, and wildlife.

At the end of their coast-to-coast journey, at an event on the National Mall, the delegation presented the Sacred Sites Totem Pole to the Secretary of the Interior. The donation agreement conveyed the totem pole to the Service and designated NCTC as its permanent home.



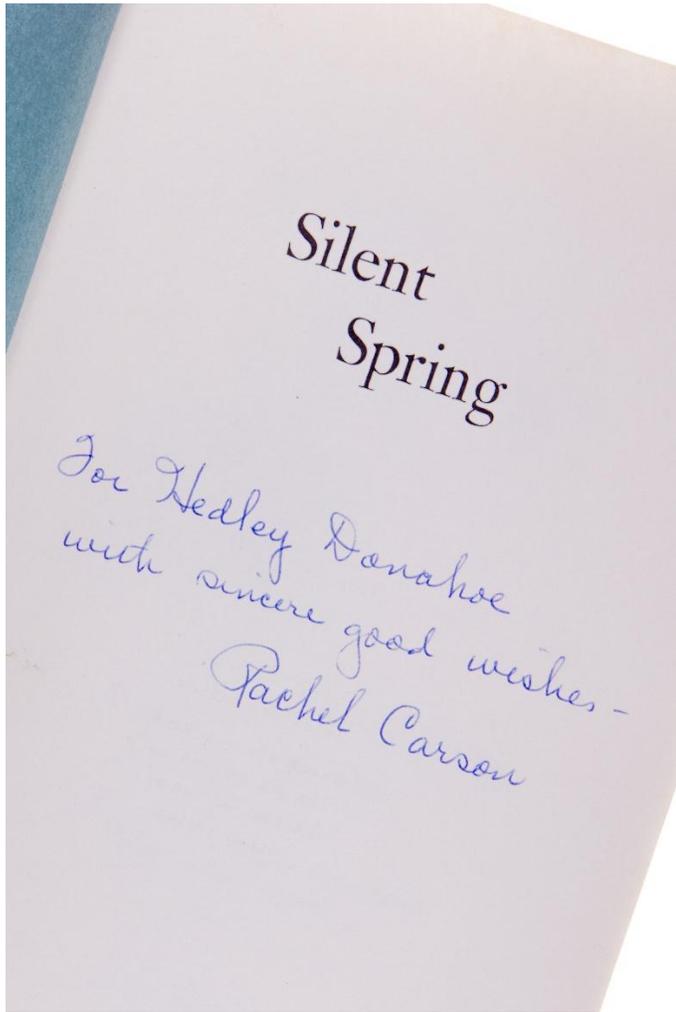
Sacred Totem at NCTC (NCTC photo)

Rachel Carson Collection

World-renowned scientist and environmentalist Rachel Carson worked for the Service for 17 years, from 1935-1952. In addition to her scientific work, she eventually became editor-in-chief of all Service publications. The Rachel Carson Collection includes nearly 600 volumes from her library, her Presidential Medal of Freedom and DOI Distinguished Service Award, and other personal items, such as her magnifying glass, college graduation cap and gown, diplomas, awards, photographs, and papers. The bulk of the collection was donated to the museum by the Rachel Carson Council, an important longstanding partner of the Service.

Paul Kroegel Collection

Paul Kroegel became the Service's initial refuge manager when he was appointed "Warden" of Pelican Island, the nation's first national wildlife refuge, in 1903. The collection includes Kroegel's badge, shotgun, revolver, and pipe, as well as the refuge entrance sign that he built and placed on the island.



Rachel Carson signed copy of Silent Spring

Ding Darling Collection

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling Director of the Bureau of Biological Survey. During Darling's short 20-month tenure as Director, he established the Federal Duck Stamp Program, greatly expanded the National Wildlife Refuge System, and designed the iconic "Blue Goose" that continues to serve as the emblem of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

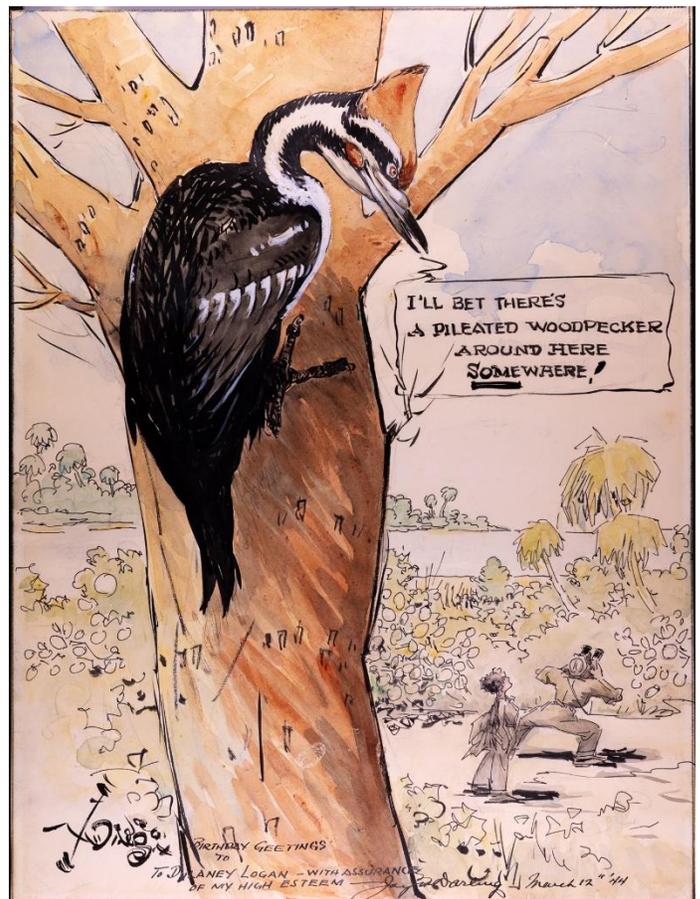
The Ding Darling Collection includes a shotgun that Darling received as a gift from his staff, one of his many fly-fishing rods, the copper printing plate used for the first Duck Stamp, his personal printing press, numerous books from his personal library, his U.S. Deputy Game Warden badge, and many of his original hand-drawn cartoons.

Archival Collections

Archival materials are the largest component of the museum collection, numbering almost 1 million items. The archival collection includes: oral histories of Service staff (a big thank you to all the retirees and the Association for your vital work in support of the FWS Oral History Program!), the Headquarters Public Affairs Photograph Collection, the California Condor Recovery Program Collection, the Red Wolf Recovery Program Collection, and the FWS Alaska Region Planning Program Collection, to name but a few.



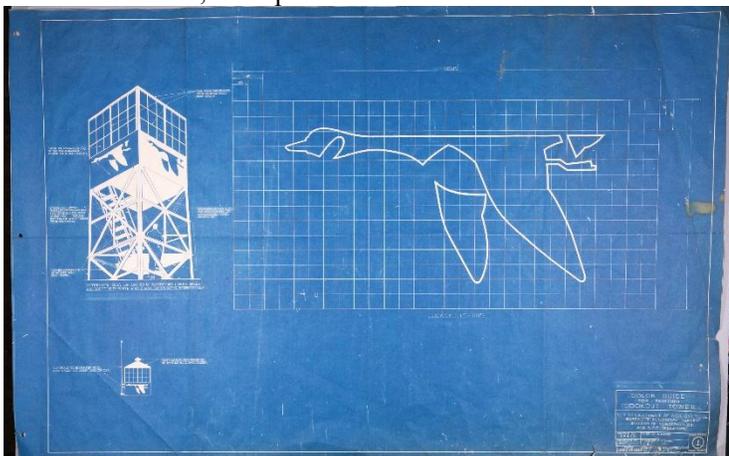
Paul Kroegel Exhibit at NCTC



J.N. "Ding" Darling cartoon

Additional archival holdings include:

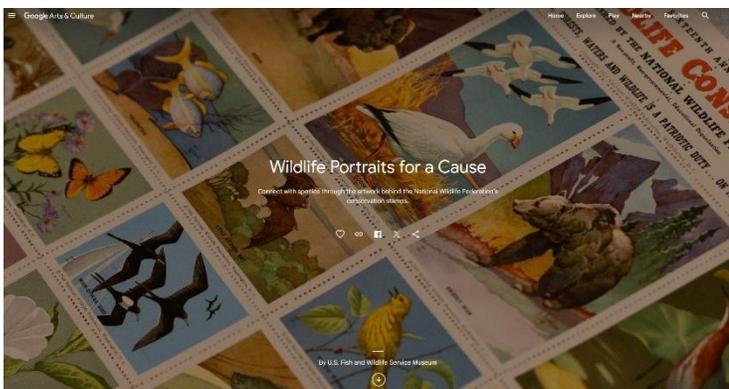
- Maps and photographs from various refuges, hatcheries, and offices Service-wide
- Motion picture films, audio and video tapes
- Blueprints, specifications, site plans, and other items documenting Service-wide construction activities and the development of facilities, including work undertaken by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression.
- Other documentary materials related to fisheries, wildlife, land management, resource management activities, and operations Service-wide



1930s CCC Fire Tower Blueprint

National Wildlife Federation Art Collection

The collection consists of nearly 3,200 watercolor paintings of plants and animals, primarily birds. These works, which were painted by Roger Tory Peterson, Bob Hines, Walter Weber, and other noted wildlife artists from the 1940s to the 1980s, were used to illustrate the organization's various publications, including *National Wildlife* magazine. To view portions of this wonderful collection, please visit the [online exhibit](#) on our Google Arts and Culture site.



New GAC Exhibit

Note: We have several other exhibits on our Google Arts and Culture site, with four more opening soon. Check out our [site](#) to view them all.

Contact

Steve Floray, Curator of Collections
(304) 876-7285
steve_floray@fws.gov

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

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

I recently read a book by Kelby Ouchley called **Bayou D'Arbonne Swamp, A Naturalist's Memoir of Place**. I met Kelby very early in my career when we worked in Region 4. His book is a myriad of subjects on the swamp and Northern Louisiana. Kelby was the recipient of the John Burroughs Medal. I had no idea he would one day be such a good author.

The John Burroughs Medal is a prestigious literary award given annually by the John Burroughs Association for a distinguished book of natural history written in the United State. Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson both received his award. Kelby also wrote **Iron Branch: A Civil War Tale of a Woman In-between** and a few more books.

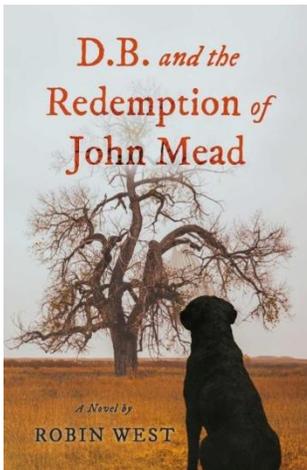
I was so pleased I wanted to call attention to other FWS people who wrote books. You would be surprised how many there are. So, this is the launch of a new section of the Retirees Newsletter. Whether you are a reader or writer of a book by a FWS employee, please send me either the author's name or the name of the book(s). I can Google more information but if you want to add something extra, please do. I'm not going to read all the books and I'm not going to do a review on each one either. I could barely write my refuge narratives.

The first book I read by a FWS employee was **Halt I'm a Federal Game Warden** by Willie J. Parker. My supervisor, Ronnie Shell gave me the book to read when I started my first refuge job at Piedmont NWR. Refuge game warden and later Special Agent Willie Parker was an amazing person. If you want to read about early law enforcement that started in the 1970's, this book may be for you.

Happy reading!

Deborah Holle, email me at promote@fwsretirees.org

The Latest Book from prolific FWS Author Robin West



Ever wonder what the real story was with the 1970s hijacker D.B. Cooper? Well, after reading the novel I just released you probably still will, but maybe, just maybe, there is some truth to who he really was that is captured in D.B. and the Redemption of John Mead." If not, at least I had fun writing it and I hope you might enjoy reading it now. It has lots of elements of life in the 60's and 70's, the Vietnam War, mystery and adventure, and a spiritual awakening. It also includes love and loss, and while I didn't try to write anything too

violent or steamy, it probably isn't suitable for most pre-teen readers. If interested, you can check it out at:

<https://store.bookbaby.com/book/db-and-the-redemption-of-john-mead>

It is widely available now in most eBook formats and can be ordered in print form directly from the publisher. It also can be ordered now from other outlets (like Amazon or Barnes and Noble) for print copies to be shipped early next month. Honest feedback is always appreciated too!

Kind wishes to all,
Robin West, Soldotna, Alaska

Unraveling the Mystery of the Edmund Fitzgerald



Edmund Fitzgerald, 1971 (from Wikipedia)

In the underwater search for the subject of the 1976 pop tune of the same name—the Great Lakes ore boat Edmund Fitzgerald—the Fish and Wildlife Service played a minor role, 14 years after the mammoth ship plunged to the bottom of Lake Superior.

As all who remember the haunting song by Canadian balladeer Gordon Lightfoot can recall, the Fitzgerald and its crew of 29

perished on November 10th 1975, near Whitefish Point, Michigan, while enroute to Ohio, loaded with 26,000 tons of taconite in the midst of one of the worst November gales to hit the Great Lakes.

By 1989, the wreck located but its loss still unexplained, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service research vessel *Grayling*, a 75-foot steel fisheries boat homeported in Cheboygan, Michigan, served as the floating platform for a Michigan Sea Grant investigation. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers and the National Geographic Society, among the others agencies, participated in the dive.

“Television and newspaper, eager for new information on the Great Lakes’ most famous shipwreck,” author Michael Schumacher relates in his 2005 book, *Mighty Fitz—The Sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald*. “The suspense aboard the *Grayling* heightened as the ROV (remote-operated vehicle, an underwater robot) moved about the pilothouse, edging up to the smashed-out windows and peering inside. The pilothouse structure had been extensively damaged, and items inside had shifted and scattered when the *Fitz* plowed into the lake floor. Visibility in the water was excellent, and images sent back to the *Grayling* revealed a grotesquely damaged ship virtually unchanged since the time of its sinking.”

Schumacher credits the expedition with producing “five hours of the best footage yet of the wreckage,” yet inconclusive results in pinpointing the cause of catastrophe. “The footage added more frustration to those seeking answers about the ship’s demise.”

The *Grayling* continues its service as a Great Lakes research vessel, now for the U.S. Geological Service’s Great Lakes Science Center (formerly managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. This was the first in a series of short features about little-known aspects of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by David Klinger of the National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

David Klinger, retired from FWS, Division of External Affairs at NCTC in 2012. He wrote a number of articles for the Fish Tales section for publication in the Fish and Wildlife Services News. He graciously sent us several articles, including this one on the boat—Edmund Fitzgerald. It is reprinted here:

Albuquerque Area Retirees Gather

Pete Stine reported, “Marlene and I hosted our latest FWS retiree’s luncheon on September 10, 2025, in Albuquerque, NM. We had 16 retirees attend this time. Again, we met in the covered patio at the El Pinto Restaurant because it helps dissipate the loud conversation and laughter that we create. This large patio is appreciated by those of us that are getting on in years and ‘don’t hear so well’”.

As usual, I took individual photos of all attending and have put them our “Lunch Bunch” photo album which I pass around among the group. After all these years, this 3-inch binder is getting awfully heavy...and we love it!



With the Good Lord willing, we will gather again on the 2nd Wednesday in April 2026.

“Marv bucks”

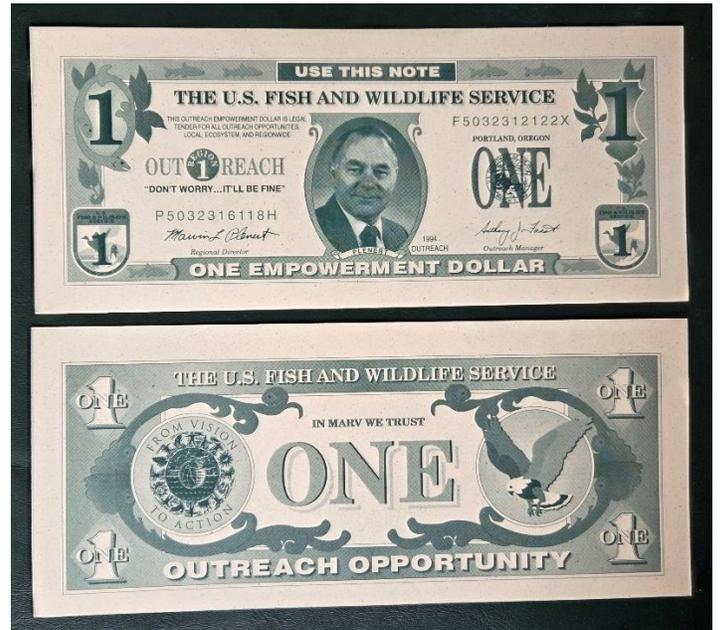
In the White House of the late 1940’s, the “buck” stopped with Harry Truman. He even had a sign on his Oval Office desk to prove who held the final say.



President Truman with the famous sign

But in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of 1994, the “buck” didn’t stop. It was passed ... by regional director Marvin “Marv” Plenert ... like Harry Truman, an unassuming and plain-spoken Midwesterner, too, from Kansas. The Portland director issued his own currency during the spotted owl wars in the Pacific Northwest in the 1990s— kind of an in-house legal tender — to empower his employees to get out and tell their story before the American public.

“Buck-passing” of a far different sort than the traditional bureaucratic tactic.



Marv Buck – front and back.

Plenert died August 27, at age 90, in Happy Valley, Oregon.

Undoubtedly his \$1 bills are still being happily spent by his agency’s heirs, throughout far corners of the Fish and Wildlife Service, furthering the fish and wildlife mission, compounding his interest ... issued by “the man who printed his own money”. The notion of an “empowerment note” for proactive engagement with constituents was the brainchild of biologist Anthony “Tony” Faast, Region 1’s peripatetic outreach manager, who’d grown weary of field employees wondering whether they had permission from agency higher-ups to assertively engage with citizens, news media, and constituent groups on some of the most controversial issues in contemporary American conservation.

Faast needed a “hook”. Lisa Remillard, one in a stable of talented graphic artists in the late Richard “Dick” Kuehner’s Region 1 education, publications, interpretation, and cartography (EPIC) division, brainstormed it. “Let’s make our own money!” was the solution. Plenert bought it. Off the presses came stacks greenish \$1 Empowerment Dollars, inscribed as “legal tender for all outreach opportunities, local, ecosystem, and regionwide”.

On its face was the image not of George Washington, but of Marv Plenert, and the admonition “Don’t Worry ... It’ll Be Fine”. On the reverse, the declaration “In Marv We Trust”. Faast, in his regional travels from Seattle to San Diego, carried stacks of fresh bills in his briefcase — a “mule” in the service of his mission. Whenever he encountered a fellow agency colleague, unsure of how far out to stick his neck on a complex and thorny issue, Faast would hand him a “Marv buck” — a tangible reminder that no matter how intense the controversy or political squabble, a fellow biologist — now the regional director of an important Federal agency — had his back.

David Klinger, Assistant Regional Director—Public Affairs/Portland (1988-1998)

Mini Grants Report

Mashpee Wampanoag “Preserving Our Homelands” (POH) Tribal Youth Camp: Natural Conservation Experience Day of “Fire, Native Plants and Wildlife Biology” (July 23, 2025)

FWS Station: Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR), MA

Friends Group: Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. (FMNWR)

This Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe conservation day event introduced outdoor skills and conservation/wildlife opportunities to tribal youth ages 9-14. The focus of the day was for tribal youth to gain not only the big picture and hands-on experiences, but we make sure they make the long-term connection with The Tribe’s ancestral and cultural aspects as well. The youth spent the day with hands-on learning experiences while asking questions about conservation jobs with conservation professionals. This year’s POH camp included a group of over 20 youth, plus counselors and staff.



The full award of \$1500 was used to purchase plants to add to the pollinator, medicinal and traditional food plant gardens at the Wampanoag Tribal Maushop Farm. Plants purchased included Highbush Blueberry, Sweet Pepperbush, Common Elderberry, American Cranberrybush, Wild Raisin/Witherod, Red Chokeberry, Anise Hyssop, Boneset, Eastern Purple Coneflower and Foxglove Beard Tongue. Over 300 plants were planted.

This day’s activities showcased the multiple conservation groups and career opportunities for working in the natural resources and wildlife conservation field. The US Fish and Wildlife Refuge staff have been working with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and Town of Mashpee Fire Department to conduct numerous burns throughout the tribe’s property and on adjacent refuge partner’s land. Understanding fire, combined with learning about native plants and pollinators, helps to reinforce the many connections to conservation principles.

The tribal youth participated in all of the events of Fire management, Native Plants, and Wildlife Biology/Management throughout the day together as a group and split into several groups for safety and small group mentoring and instruction. The day also included tours of a traditional Wampanoag home site that included a wetu and long house. Campers and science partners were educated on the construction of each, shown handmade cat tail mats, and taught the different uses and customs of each style home. Finally, flowers and leaves were used to create beautiful natural crafts for each of the youth to bring home.

At all times, at each scheduled event, Refuge partners, volunteers and staff were there to instruct, educate and interact with the children. They started off with an introduction of the subject matter, explained the cultural or ecological significance to the tribal youth, and answered questions.

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Every year we try to return to the past years pollinator gardens to add to the plant diversity and make the cultural connection of honoring each other's contributions, and then creating a new pollinator-related planted area within the tribal lands. This year we added over 300 plants to the upland gardens near the Santuit River at their Tribal farm. Predominantly, these plants have cultural or medicinal qualities. Traditional foods harvested were an exciting addition to our plantings and included blueberry, red chokeberry and elderberry. All need pollination, so we help our pollinator friends and the result are fruits, nuts, and roots for tribal consumption. The Tribe will be able to harvest the fruits for many years to come.

This Tribal Youth Camp Day of learning, doing, and getting dirty involved multiple Mashpee NWR partners. The Mashpee NWR is unique within the US Fish and Wildlife National Refuge System in that it is managed by eight conservation land partners (including the Wampanoag Tribe) with support from the Friends of Mashpee NWR. The POH Camp affords Tribal youth the opportunity to work with some of the refuge partners and make connections between the Tribe and the refuge and see their contribution to broader conservation and land management efforts.

It is inclusive of all audiences (accessible/available to anyone with an interest in participating): Although the targeted group ages are preferred, the tribe makes decisions to include a broader age range of tribal youth and always hires past camp participants as counselors for their camp to support the new campers with their knowledge as mentors.

It was an amazing day with an enthusiastic and highly engaged group of tribal youth! All participants, including staff, volunteers, counselors and campers, learned from one another and contributed to this important community project. We thank the USFWS Retiree Association for supporting this project!

Note: A full list of the 2025 minigrants is at the end of this newsletter.

Retirees Association at The Wildlife Society Meeting.

The Retirees Association participated in The Wildlife Society's 2025 Annual Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The key elements of our participation included: Providing mentoring to students majoring in wildlife biology and related subject who constitute a major component of the conference attendees, recruiting potential members for the association and serving as

the face of the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the national conference.



Plenary Session, TWS Conference, 2025

The exhibit booth served as a key location for the next generation of wildlife biologists to ask specific questions about a career in wildlife biology with the USFWS. It was particularly difficult this year to provide a positive message with the huge reduction of USFWS employees and the federal government shut down. The booth was staffed by Associate Member, Peggy Jessee, and Lew Gorman III.



Peggy Jessee at the FWS Booth

Lew also attended meetings that included:

State TWS Chapter leaders. The message was: please provide me with your contact information and I will have the Association send an email to all members living in the vicinity of their Zip Code. The message would ask members to contact the Chapter leads to see how they could help students with such activities as mentoring, presenting about a wildlife biology focus areas and/or what a career in the USFWS look like.

University Student Chapter Faculty Advisors. Same message. We acquired the contact information from about 15 faculty advisors who understood the concept and gladly wanted interactions with retirees. We have been trying to establish such a system for the past two years with no success primarily due to privacy issues. This newly designed system addresses the privacy concerns of both TWS and RA. Lew plans to draft an email and provide the contact information to Jessy, our secretary, to send to the faculty advisors who provided their contact information.

TWS Heritage and Retirees Association. Briefed them on how the Association is trying to increase mentoring and support of chapters.

Student Networking Events (2). This provided more one-on-one time with interested students.

The association tablecloth, banner and pamphlet all helped to promote a message of recruitment to TWS older attendees. Although a small portion of the conference attendees, some older participants stopped at the exhibit to learn more about us and took a brochure. Before the end of Lew's report during the October Board meeting, our Treasurer informed us that two had already signed up.

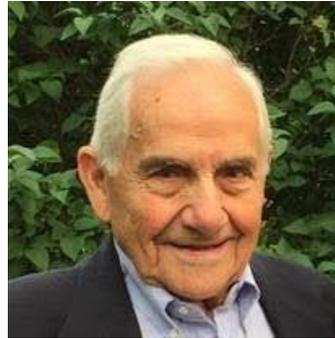
Face of the USFWS. Although USGS, BLM, and USFS donated to the conference, USFWS did not. This was the first time FWS had not contributed to our professional association's annual meeting in recent memory. No official federal employees could attend due to the Federal Government Shutdown, even from those agencies that contributed to the conference. The only place that the 1400 TWS conference attendees could view the FWS shield was on Lew's shirt and on the Association tablecloth. The TWS executive director, Ed Arnett, and his deputy expressed at separate occasions to Lew that they were glad the we were in attendance. The chair of the TWS Heritage and Retirees Committee also expressed the same sentiment, and was looking forward to our participation in 2026. *Information provided by Lew Gorman.*

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.

Pete Anastasi, November 11, 1921 – February 9, 2025



On Sunday, February 9, 2025, Peter Anthony Anastasi, beloved husband, father, grandfather and friend, passed away at Commonwealth Senior Living of Manassas, VA. He was 103. Peter was born in Philadelphia, PA to Pietro and Carmella Anastasi. He was a WWII Army Veteran, serving in North Africa and was later

stationed at Vint Hill. While stationed there met the love of his life, Betty Thomas Anastasi. They were happily married for 79 years.

Pete was very active in Manassas with Trinity Episcopal Church for 79 years-he and Betty were married in Trinity in 1945. He taught Sunday school, served on the vestry, was an usher, sang in the choir and was a trustee. He and Betty were also founding members of Sudley Club and Evergreen Country Club. Pete worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where he had many jobs, however, his favorite was directing the Federal Duck Stamp contest. He once described it as a "dream job". He was given the opportunity to travel the United States and often made time for fishing and hunting around the country. When he retired, he volunteered with the Manassas VFW, was a member of Prince William Ducks Unlimited and OWAA. Pete loved fishing, hunting, golfing and traveling the world. He also enjoyed woodworking, gardening and mall walking with Betty and friends, but most of all he loved and cherished being with his family.

Pete was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Thomas Anastasi, his parents, sisters-Sara Anastasi Lowe, Mary Anastasi and Annette Anastasi Ventrone and one brother, Dominck Anastasi. Pete is survived by one son, Rodney Anastasi, one daughter, Ellen Anastasi Patterson, her husband, Jack and one grandson, Andrew Patterson and 3 nieces and 3 nephews. *Provided by Deborah Holle.*

Note: An article about Pete, probably the oldest FWS Retiree appeared in the Winter (February) 2024 newsletter.

Diane Marie Cody, September 19, 1955 – September 2, 2025



Diane Marie Cody, age 69 of Rosemount, MN, passed away on Sept. 2, 2025, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Diane was born on Sept. 19, 1955, in Winona, MN to Harry and Lucille (Kronebusch) Putnam. She graduated from Cotter High School and Minnesota State College East. Diane was employed with the Diocese of Winona Pastoral Center for 15 years and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 25 years.

Diane married Murray Cody on Aug. 8, 2009. She enjoyed traveling with her husband, cooking for her family, tending to her rose garden and spending time with her grandchildren. Diane and Murray enjoyed wintertime trips to Ft. Myers Beach in Florida and trips to Hawaii. They took several trips to the East Coast, touring Boston, MA and Newport, RI, and two trips to Texas. They also vacationed near Brainerd with their grandchildren for several years and enjoyed many trips to Winona.

Diane enjoyed spending time with her family. She saw her grandchildren grow up, from babysitting them as infants to watching them participate in school, church and sporting events. Neighbors, family and friends enjoyed her roses, which bloomed several times each year. She was known for her cooking expertise. She enjoyed hosting family meals for the holidays, with a wide variety of dishes catering to everyone's tastes.

Diane is survived by her husband, Murray; daughter, Nicole (Paul) Tatkenhorst; step-son, Chris Cody; brother, William (Renee) Putnam; and brother-in-law, Mike Becker. She is also survived by her six grandchildren, Jacob, Ryan and Noah Tatkenhorst; Brianna and Nora Zittel; and Noelle Cody. She was preceded in death by her parents; son, Jeremy Zittel and sister, Nancy Becker.

Nancy Christine Coon, (October 18, 1940 – June 10, 2025)



Nancy Christine Coon passed away peacefully at her home on June 10, 2025, at the age of 84, after a long and courageous battle with multiple myeloma. She was under the compassionate support of hospice and her husband Richard Coon at the time of her passing.

Nancy was born on October 18, 1940, in Monmouth, Illinois, to Edna Caroline (Hilsenhoff) Guilinger and Ralph Glenn Guilinger. She grew up

in the small town of Little York, Illinois, a short drive to the Mississippi River. Nancy loved riding horses, especially in the country. She helped her neighbor train trotting horses into riding horses. She also helped her father with bookkeeping and inventory for his farm equipment dealership and service garage where she interacted with the local farmers. Nancy was also influenced by her mother, who was a schoolteacher and inspired Nancy to become a bright and driven student.

Nancy graduated from Little York High School in 1958 as the valedictorian and went on to earn a scholarship to nearby Monmouth College. There, she majored in biology, earning her Bachelor of Science degree in 1962. She continued her education at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois, where she completed a Master of Science degree in wildlife biology and wildlife management in 1965, studying limnology and the life history of copepods while also teaching freshman biology. Nancy was the only female student in most of her biological classes. During her graduate studies, she met Richard Coon, a fellow biology student and was impressed with his efficient study methods. So, she asked him to row her boat while she dragged a plankton net to collect copepods in a small campus lake. She returned the favor by helping him radio-track deer. After both completed their master's degrees, they were married on September 4, 1965, in Monmouth, Illinois, beginning a lifelong partnership in both life and work.

In 1965, she followed Richard to the FWS Springfield, Illinois Office and took her first job with the Illinois State Museum as a Laboratory Assistant in Zoology, classifying and cataloging specimens. That lasted less than one year due to Richard being drafted by the U.S. Army, but because he had a master's degree, he was advised to apply for a direct commission to the local Navy Reserve Unit. He was assigned as an ensign in the Medical Service Corps in Bethesda, Maryland, where they lived from 1966 to 1969.

Nancy took the Civil Service Exam and did not wait long before Dr. Lucille Stickel at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (Patuxent or PWRC) in Laurel, Maryland called and asked her to come out for an interview. She was hired in 1967 as a GS-7 biologist to work in the Contaminants Section assisting research on bald eagles and coturnix quail. Dr. Sickel became her supervisor and was her mentor throughout her career. In 1968, she gave birth to their son David at the Bethesda Naval Hospital, but continued to work full-time with the help of day-care.

In 1969, Richard was honorably discharged from the Navy and placed at the FWS Sandusky, Ohio Field Station. Nancy followed him again as she was relocated to Patuxent's Animal Depredations Research Station in Sandusky, co-located at NASA's Plum Brook Station studying bird control chemicals, like Turgitol, which Richard coincidentally was using for Animal Damage Control.

They moved to State College, Pennsylvania in 1971 for Richard to begin a Ph.D. program at Penn State. Nancy was pregnant when they moved and gave birth to their second child, Christine,

in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. Nancy then found a part-time position with the Pennsylvania Fish Commission at the Benner Spring Research Station and Fish Hatchery. She was hired as a clerk-typist, because they did not have female fishery biologists then, but she conducted fishery research on trout disease.

In 1975, Dr. Stickel called Nancy as Richard was completing his doctoral work and offered her a position back into the contaminants program at Patuxent. Richard was also offered a position at Patuxent so they moved to Bowie, Maryland. Nancy authored or co-authored 13 published research papers dealing with the effects of pesticides and crude oil on various wildlife species. Her research showed that adult ducks could consume large quantities of oil, but one drop on an incubating duck egg would kill the embryo. She then became the Pesticide Research Coordinator when Dr. Stickel was promoted to Patuxent's Director. Later, Nancy was chosen to head the new Section of Information Management to implement a study planning process and later became Branch Chief of Technical Services providing assistance for Patuxent-wide research and becoming a member of PWRC's Directorate. During this time, she completed the FWS Upper-Level Management Development Program in Washington D.C., but continued to work at Patuxent to be close to home.

In 1990, her position was abolished due to reorganization. Their son and daughter were in college at the time, so she and Richard relocated to the Atlanta Regional Office and moved to Marietta, Georgia. Nancy was offered the Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services (ES) for the Southeast Region to help supervise all ES offices in 12 states and territories. She retired as a GS-14 in 1995, taking advantage of a buy-out two years before Richard retired. Together, they shared not only a career but a deep commitment to conservation and public service. After retirement Richard and Nancy moved to Franklin, North Carolina, then to Elmwood, Illinois, before settling in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. While in Franklin, they volunteered with the local Appalachian Trail Club, maintaining trails and going on hikes.

Nancy had many passions beyond her professional life. Besides raising two successful children, she loved traveling—exploring Europe, China, South America, and Scandinavia—and was an accomplished needlework artist. Her handiwork included needlepoint, quilting, and countless counted cross-stitch projects that showcased her patience and skill. She was also a life member of the FWS Retirees Association and enjoyed attending retiree reunions with Richard. She and Richard assisted the FWS History Committee by interviewing former Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel Reed for an oral history project. She wanted to make sure research was well represented in the FWS Retirees Association, even though that program was moved to USGS. She knew most Research employees maintained a strong affinity to the FWS. She enjoyed maintaining strong connections with her colleagues and friends. Nancy paid homage to her mentor, Dr. Lucille Stickel, by contributing articles on her for the *Journal of Wildlife Management* and *The History of Patuxent: America's Wildlife Research Story*.

Above all, Nancy cherished her family. She was survived by her beloved husband of nearly 60 years of marriage, Richard, until he died on October 13, 2025. Nancy is survived by her children, David and Christine; and five grandchildren—Sebastian, Beatrix, and Josephine with Christine and Thomas; and Cody and Marlon with David and Aicha. She is also survived by her sister, Anne Dillibe.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Edna (Hilsenhoff) Guilinger and Glenn Guilinger, and her brother-in-law, Alex Dillibe.

Nancy will be remembered for her intelligence, kindness, dedication, and quiet strength. A memorial service will be held at a later date to honor her life and legacy.

Written by Paul Tritaik, Richard Coon, Dave Coon and Matthew Perry

Richard Allen Coon, (December 24, 1939 – October 13, 2025)



Richard Allen Coon was born on December 24, 1939 in Peoria, Illinois to Helen Louise (Troth) Coon and Allen Theodore Coon. His father was a teacher and civil engineer. As a child, Richard enjoyed all aspects of nature and developed an interest in target shooting. He worked as a bell-hop at the Elmwood A&W drive-in.

Richard went to Elmwood High School where he played varsity basketball and baseball and graduated in 1957. He then attended the University of Illinois to study engineering but decided to change to biology, so he transferred to Western Illinois University and graduated in 1963, with a bachelor's degree. Richard pursued a master's degree studying muskrats at Valentine NWR in Nebraska. He conducted the first radio-tracking of muskrats by assembling radio transmitters small enough to collar them. He also helped Illinois state biologists run deer check stations in the fall. Richard's first job was a laborer on Valentine NWR.

Richard met Nancy Guilinger at Western Illinois University. They enjoyed studying together and helping each other's master's research. He particularly enjoyed using her electric typewriter with erasable bond paper and driving her '64 Pontiac. He completed his master's degree in 1965 and married Nancy on September 4, 1965, in Monmouth, Illinois.

A month later, Richard was hired directly into the FWS as an Animal Damage Control Biologist (Division of Wildlife Services) for the Springfield, Illinois Office. That job lasted less than one year due to Richard receiving a draft notice from the U.S. Army, but because he had a master's degree, he was

advised to apply for a direct commission to the local Navy Reserve Unit to fulfill his obligation. He attended Officer's Training School at Great Lakes Training Station near Chicago. Shortly thereafter, Richard was assigned as an ensign in the Medical Service Corps. He was stationed at the U.S. Navy Toxicology Unit (National Naval Medical Center) in Bethesda, Maryland, from 1966 to 1969. There he participated in a study of the effects of trace contaminants on laboratory animals to determine safe concentrations for a variety of chemicals used on submarines. He co-authored four papers from this work. Their son David was born in 1968 at the Bethesda Naval Hospital.

Richard was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1969 after three years of service and reaching the rank of lieutenant. Because Richard was on military furlough from the FWS, he was then placed as an Animal Damage Control (ADC) Biologist, at the Sandusky, Ohio Field Station, in 1970, working under Dick Smith. There he worked on dispersing blackbirds in the Lake Erie area using Avitrol, a chemical frightening agent, and Turgitol, a wetting agent. Nancy was transferred from Patuxent Wildlife Research Center to a FWS research station in Sandusky to study the same chemicals Richard was using.

In 1971, Richard took an educational furlough under the GI Bill to pursue his doctorate degree at Penn State University. Richard moved his family to State College, Pennsylvania when Nancy was pregnant with their second child, Christine, who was born in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania in 1971. Richard studied woodcock migration from Maine to Louisiana through banding and radio telemetry. Richard also studied the nesting habitat of woodcocks and management techniques (burning, cutting) to improve their habitat. Richard published a paper on the characteristics of Pennsylvania woodcock in the *Journal of Wildlife Management*.

After Richard completed his Ph.D. in 1975, Nancy was offered a position to return to Patuxent, so Richard contacted Dr. Fant Martin, Director of the Migratory Bird and Habitat Research Laboratory located at Patuxent, and was hired as a Wildlife Research Biologist. There Richard selected proposals from universities to fund nongame bird research and assisted some of the field work. Richard entered the Departmental Managers Development Program in Washington, D.C. in 1980. As part of the training, Richard learned how to build a sweat lodge from Native Americans. After completing the training, Richard continued to commute from Bowie, Maryland, to Washington, D.C. when he was assigned to work on budget development for FWS Budget and Finance to produce the budget for various FWS programs. In 1985, Richard worked on Program Plans for FWS to evaluate new programs and how their results could be measured to determine success.

In 1990, Nancy was offered a position in the Atlanta Regional Office. Richard made a few phone calls to his old supervisor from Animal Damage Control, Dick Smith, who was then the FWS Deputy Director. Shortly after, Harold Benson, Assistant Regional Director for Refuges and Wildlife offered Richard a position in the Office of Realty. So, Richard and Nancy moved to Marietta, Georgia in 1990. One project Richard coordinated

was providing the biological justification for the nomination of Pelican Island NWR in the Indian River Lagoon as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in 1993. Richard then transferred to Migratory Birds to coordinate the Partners In Flight program. He also supervised wildlife permits for eagle feathers and catfish depredation, for which he presented a paper to the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Richard retired in 1997 after 31 years of service.

After retirement Richard and Nancy moved to Franklin, North Carolina, then to Elmwood, Illinois, before settling in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. While in Franklin, they volunteered with the local Appalachian Trail Club, maintaining trails and going on hikes. Richard and Nancy joined the FWS Retirees Association and enjoyed attending retiree reunions. Richard also joined the FWS History Committee as a Retiree Representative for Research to make sure research was well represented in the archives and oral histories of the FWS, despite the program being moved to USGS. Most USGS Research employees maintained a strong affinity to the FWS. Richard and Nancy assisted in interviewing former Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel Reed for the oral history project. They also donated many items to the FWS Archives that would have otherwise been lost.

Richard was also instrumental in preserving the history of the Order of Yellow Dogs, a secret social society within the Division of Wildlife Services, which was part of FWS and then Department of Agriculture. Its roots go all the way back to the Theodore Roosevelt administration. Richard was a card-carrying member, as were most employees in Animal Damage Control.

Richard is survived by his children, David and Christine; and five grandchildren - Sebastian, Beatrix, and Josephine with Christine and Thomas; and Cody and Marlon with David and Aicha; and his brother Larry Coon.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of nearly 60 years, Nancy, just a few months prior: and his parents, Helen and Allen Coon.

Richard will be missed and remembered for his devotion to Nancy, intellect, resourcefulness, compassion, and dedication to conservation.

Written by Paul Tritaik, Dave Coon, Matthew Perry and David Klinger

Marion Irene Cruikshank, December 3, 1943 – July 23, 2025.



Marion Irene Cruikshank, age 81, entered eternal life on July 23, 2025. Marion was born on December 3, 1943, in Faribault, Minnesota, to Bernhard and Irene Wegner.

She graduated from Faribault High School in 1961 and went on to attend beauty school in Mankato, earning her beautician's license. Marion began her career at Milady's Beauty Salon in

Faribault before marrying her high school sweetheart, David Cruikshank, on June 6, 1964.

Just days after their wedding, Marion and Dave packed up their 1957 station wagon, hitched a U-Haul, and moved to Maryland, where Dave was stationed with the U.S. Navy. There, Marion continued her work as a beautician in the base salon. After Dave's discharge, they returned to Minnesota and made their home in Bloomington, where they spent the next 59 years together and were blessed with two daughters: Julie and Joanie.

In addition to raising her family, Marion worked for a dermatologist and later for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Marion began her Service career in Law Enforcement and retired from Migratory Birds.

Marion was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She cherished time with her grandchildren-playing games, reading stories, coloring, and helping them learn to read and write. She enjoyed gardening, long walks, word finds, Wheel of Fortune, and always had a fondness for large earmuffs.

A dedicated volunteer, Marion gave generously of her time at church, participating in the sewing group, grooming the church grounds, sharpening pew pencils, and gathering baby clothes from thrift stores to donate to families in need.

She was preceded in death by her sister Ilene Henry, brother-in-law Warren Henry, brother Eugene Wegner, and parents Bernhard and Irene Wegner.

Marion is survived by her beloved husband of 61 years, David; her daughters, Julie (Ross) Tanner and Joanie (Tim) Ilstrup; her sister, Kathleen (Mark) Humphrey; her grandchildren Nicholas (Allie) Jonas, Brody Ilstrup, Cael Tanner, and Aiden Tanner; and her great-grandsons, Wesley and Ryland Jonas.

Laurie Jane Gudinski, (February 24, 1952 – October 6, 2025)



Laurie Jane Gucinski, age 73, of Port Wing, passed away peacefully, with her loving family by her side, Monday, October 6, 2025 at Aspirus St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth, MN.

Laurie was born February 24, 1952 in Clear Lake, WI, the daughter of Jack and Jane (Larson) Allen. She was raised in Clear Lake and graduated

from Clear Lake High School in 1970. She later when on to graduate from UW-Superior with a Business degree. Laurie married her husband, Mike, on August 14, 1992.

She worked for many years at Security State Bank in Port Wing, WI, and later at the Iron River National Fish Hatchery, WI until her retirement in 2014. Never one to sit still for long, she and Mike spent several unforgettable summers in Alaska serving as campground hosts, fishing and meeting new people.

Often finding time for fishing and hunting Laurie appreciated time spent in the woods or on the water. But nothing brought her more happiness than time spent with her grandchildren. Her face lit up when surrounded by them, and she created countless lasting memories through trips, family outings, and holiday traditions.

Her commitment to her community was extraordinary. For over 43 years, Laurie served as a volunteer EMT with the South Shore Ambulance and gave generously of her time to the South Shore Lions Club, the Fig Leaf Thrift Store, and First Lutheran Church in Port Wing. Whether delivering meals to seniors or helping organize events, she could always be counted on to lend a helping hand.

When she wasn't volunteering, she could often be found playing cards with one of her many card groups, with laughter and competitive spirit. And if that wasn't enough to do, she always turned into her crafts, often attending classes to learn the next Pinterest craze picking up knitting needles or at least shopping for materials for the next project.

Laurie leaves behind a legacy of love, generosity, and service. She will be deeply missed by her family, friends, and the entire community she served so faithfully. She is survived by her husband, Mike Gucinski – Port Wing, children, Kylie (Brian) Swen – Wisconsin Rapids, Casey (Marie) Christenson – New Auburn, step-daughter Lori (Hank) Wakefield, step-son Eric (Becky) Gucinski; grandchildren Evan and Carter Swen, step-grandchildren Amber, Tory, David, Miranda, Caleb, Easton and Rayna, great-grandchildren Callum, Rory and Gemma, several nieces, nephews and other relatives.

She was preceded in death by her parents, and step-son David Gucinski.

Richard Hart, (June 25, 1943 - June 29, 2025)



Richard Eugene Hart passed away on June 29, 2025, at the age of 82. He was born June 25, 1943, in Damariscotta, Maine to Eugene and Barbara (Stanton) Hart. Richard grew up in Bath, Maine and was a 1961 graduate of Morse High School in Bath, Maine for which he loved playing baseball and basketball. He went on to earn a Bachelor's of Science degree in criminal justice from Youngstown State University, in Youngstown, Ohio.

Richard began his criminal justice career in Arizona with the Tucson Police Department but spent most of his career as a federal agent with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). That career enabled Richard to enjoy living in some truly beautiful states with his family (Arizona, Colorado, California, Montana and Pennsylvania). Richard, a passionate and committed Federal Wildlife Agent, made a significant impact on the preservation of wildlife habitats throughout his lifetime. His diligent work with the FWS was not just a career, but a testament to his love for nature and wildlife.

He had a unique ability to see the beauty in all living things and worked tirelessly to ensure they thrived. In the words of John Muir, "In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks." This quote encapsulates Richard's philosophy, as he dedicated his life to protecting the natural world and inspiring those around him to do the same. Richard retired in June 2000 and moved back to his beloved state of Maine.

Richard had an uproarious, infectious laugh and was always able to make those around him laugh as well. He was a lifelong learner and loved digging into his ancestry, particularly the long family history of ship building in Bath, Maine. Richard also loved the Boston Red Sox and religiously watched games with family and friends and a cold Sam Adams.

Richard gifted several of his passions to his children. He gave them his love for music, quality movies, Broadway musicals, and Daffy Duck quotes ("Youuu're deththpicable!"). Richard passed on his love for reading, traveling and a good margarita (with salt, of course). He also instilled in his kids grit and perseverance. Most of all, Richard gifted his kids with his love and the knowledge that he was there for them—no matter what.

Richard is survived by his devoted domestic partner – Gayle Warren, his loving children -twins Aaron Hart and Carrie (Hart) Sansom and Lisa Maley, his son-in-law Jamie Sansom, his brother and sister-in-law David and Rebecca Hart, his sister and brother-in-law Susan and Danny Ramos, and his six grandchildren – Patrick, Jacob, and Alissa Hart, Jesse, Derek and

Alexandra Sansom, as well as numerous other family members and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, Eugene and Barbara Hart.

Richard lived a life that was as vibrant and beautiful as the natural world he loved and worked to protect. In his 82 years, he touched countless lives, and his legacy will live on in the hearts of those he loved and in the lands he tirelessly safeguarded. Richard was not just a man but a beacon of light who taught us to appreciate the world around us. His life was a lesson in love, dedication, and the pursuit of passion. Richard Eugene Hart will be greatly missed by all who knew him!

Prepared by Paul Tritaik and the Hart Family

Elwood "Woody," Martin (October 22, 1934 — June 6, 2025)



six years.

Elwood "Woody" Monroe Martin of Bowie, Maryland, passed away on June 6, 2025. Woody was born in Lake City, Iowa, to Ada Barkley Martin and James Robert Martin on October 22, 1934. Woody grew up on his father's farm and attended Gowrie High School in Gowrie, Iowa, before he was drafted into the Army in 1952. Woody honorably served his country in the U.S. Army for

Woody obtained a master's degree from Iowa State University. He worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland, for 45 years. He loved the natural world and belonged to many environmental and wildlife organizations. During his career he participated in many bird counts and studies including a 50-year study on red-shoulder hawks.

Woody discovered that sora rails were ingesting lead shot in Maryland marshes and co-authored a paper that helped bring a ban to lead shot. He participated in the annual Waterfowl Parts Collection Survey or "Wingbee" to estimate the species, sex, and age composition of the duck and goose harvest in the U.S. He was also a bird bander, and he climbed trees to band young eagles, hawks, owls, and other birds. Woody also enjoyed collecting stamps.

Woody is survived by his friend Marty, his sister Barb, niece Joni, nephew Scott and 3 great nephews.

Written by Paul Tritaik, Matthew Perry, and the Martin Family.

Daniel William Moulton, (November 21, 1944 - September 3, 2025)



Daniel William Moulton was born on November 21, 1944, in Cornwall, New York, to Katherine (Lent) Moulton and Daniel Moulton. He died peacefully, with his family at his side, on September 3, 2025, in Plano, Texas. His death resulted from a fall that caused a spinal injury.

Dan was a graduate of Colgate University and received his master's and Ph.D. degrees in wildlife ecology at University of Wisconsin and Utah State University, respectively. He was drafted into the Army from graduate school during the Vietnam War, and he served his time in a lab at the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine in Natick, Massachusetts.

He did post-doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota. This work took him to an island in the Pacific to study the Laysan Duck. Between his two field seasons on Laysan Island, he worked at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland, where he met his wife Lynne Stokes, who worked as a mathematics statistician for Patuxent. They were married in 1981 and their first child, Laurel, was born in Laurel, MD. When he was offered a position with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) in 1983, they moved to Austin, TX, where their daughter, Claire, was born. He worked in Resource Protection at TPWD, where he was responsible for protecting selected areas of Texas wetlands for waterfowl and recreation through purchase and restoration of coastal land. After retirement, he moved to Dallas, where he taught environmental science in several local colleges.

Dan was the author of numerous scholarly and popular articles about waterfowl and their habitats, and of a guidebook to nature centers in Texas. He chaired the Dallas Sierra Club for several years and was a passionate environmental steward.

Besides his family, his loves were nature, good food and wine with friends, spirited discussions about politics and science, and dogs. He was a straight shooter, a lifelong learner, a brave cancer survivor, and a source of strength for his family.

Dan was predeceased by his parents, Daniel and Katherine (Lent) Moulton. He is survived by his wife, Lynne Stokes, his daughters, Laurel and Claire Moulton, his sister, Marilyn Moulton Bucher, and her husband, Bill, several nieces and nephews, and his beloved dog, Gigi.

Prepared by Paul Tritaik, Matthew Perry, and the Moulton Family

Marvin L. Plenert, (February 4, 1935 – August 27, 2025)



Marvin "Marv" Leo Plenert, a Kansas farm boy who made "Ds" on his first college courses in zoology and botany but who rose to broker deals on management of the Nation's forests with a president of the United States, died August 27, 2025 in Oregon.

From his birth during the Great Depression on February 4, 1935 in the small Midwestern town of Hillsboro, in the near-center of a state that forms the center of a country, Plenert's career horizons expanded from the prairies of Kansas to the lush forests of the Pacific Northwest, where his innate brand of down-to-earth common sense and practicality made him the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's go-to point-man for some of the thorniest natural resource controversies of the past half-century. It culminated with President Clinton's Northwest Forest Conference in 1993, in Portland, where, in the crucial opening months of the new administration, the government's top foresters and land managers attempted to break an impasse created by a curious denizen of the deep woods, the northern spotted owl. It was to Kansas farm boy Marv Plenert, the Fish and Wildlife Service's regional director, that a president and his vice president and two Cabinet secretaries turned for advice.

Marv grew up on his family's farm with his parents Elsie (Bartel) Plenert and Ervin Plenert in Hillsboro, Kansas. Beyond doing his farm chores, Marv liked to hunt and fish. After graduating from Hillsboro High School in 1952, Marv went to Tabor College for two years. He then joined the U.S. Army and was stationed in Fort Bliss, Texas, where he worked on the guided missile program, the first ground to air missile program in the Army. He then spent a year in Germany and rose to the rank of specialist 4th class before being honorably discharged in 1956. While overseas, Marv managed side trips to France, Belgium, England, Scotland, and Ireland.

After returning to Kansas, he started seriously dating his childhood friend, Carol Ann Ollek. They were married on June 29, 1958. They eventually had two children, a boy, Lonnie, and a girl, Christine.

Marv then attended Kansas State University on the GI Bill in 1958 and earned a bachelor's degree in biology in 1960 and a master's degree in wildlife management in 1962. He did his thesis on the ecology of the black-tailed jackrabbit in southwestern Kansas.

In 1962, Marv started his career in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at Jamestown, North Dakota with the Wetlands Drainage Program as a GS-7. He defined wetlands to make drainage referrals to the Soil Conservation Service for cost

sharing, then delineated which ones the FWS should acquire under the Accelerated Wetlands Program.

In 1966, Marv transferred to Lewistown, Montana for the drainage wetland acquisition program as a GS-9 and promoted to GS-11 wildlife biologist, working out of Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range. He started the wetland acquisition program and in one-and-a-half years, he singlehandedly did all of the preliminary delineations of all the wetlands in Montana. Marv's zeal for wetland acquisition ran afoul of FWS leadership when he bypassed administrative obstacles to get Congressional approval to protect the north shore of Flathead Lake and establishing Flathead Waterfowl Production Area (WPA). He also wrote Wilderness Studies for national wildlife refuges (NWR) in the west including the Desert NWR, Sheldon NWR and Hart Mountain NWR in Nevada, and Charles. M. Russell NWR and Medicine Lake NWR in Montana.

In 1972, Marv transferred to Alaska and worked as the Assistant Refuge Supervisor, GS-12. He worked with Congress to prevent fraudulent claims under the Alaskan Native Land Claims Settlement Act resulting in keeping 600,000 acres in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Marv's work on native village eligibility issues earned him high praise from Alaskan attorney John McMunn who said "Your work on these cases has been the finest case preparation I've ever seen. If you worked on all Government cases, we'd never lose one." He received a special commendation from Interior Secretary Rogers Morton for his work on those issues. Marv was promoted to a GS-13 as Refuge Supervisor before he left Alaska.

In 1977, Marv went to Denver, as a Supervisory Fish and Wildlife Biologist and then as a GS-14 Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Refuges and Wildlife in Region 6, overseeing refuges in nine states. He also managed numerous capital improvements in the Refuge System under the Bicentennial Land Heritage Program.

In 1987, he went to Washington, D.C. to become Deputy Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife, GS-15. He was there for a year and then promoted Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife, which was at the SES level. He worked in D.C. for 21 months.

In 1988, Marv transferred to Portland as the Regional Director for the Pacific Northwest, which included the states of California, Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Hawaii and the Trust Territories of the Pacific. The Oregonian newspaper wrote "Since his arrival in 1989 [sic.] he's been the unsung conscience of an agency that's squarely in the eye of countless storms over logging, grazing, stream protection, irrigation, mining, resort development and other activities that affect fish, wildlife and native plants. 'Marv' has won praise even from his critics for his strong handling of controversies besetting the agency since he took over."

Over two hundred species endemic to Hawaii and the Pacific Island to this region were added to the nation's list of threatened

and endangered species during his tenure. Other listings included the northern spotted owl, the marbled murrelet, the California gnatcatcher, the Mohave desert tortoise and the Delta smelt and their critical habitats. These triggered titanic debates over logging in the Northwest, grazing and off-road vehicle access in the Southwest, development in Southern California and Las Vegas, irrigation in the California's Central Valley and water quality in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River delta.

Marv also made tough calls on the management of national wildlife refuges. He evicted a private, all-male club from the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge and took heat from ranchers for approving a plan to remove cattle from the high desert refuge. Marv also took on a waterfowl hunting club in Southern California ordering a phase-out of a controversial feeding program that violated the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Marv hired 15 biologists to help the Forest Service and BLM design timber sales that complied with the Northwest Forest Plan. In Southern California, Marv worked with developers to find room for the California gnatcatcher in the fast-disappearing coastal sage-scrub ecosystem.

During this time, he motivated his employees by issuing an in-house legal tender called "Marv Bucks" to empower them to get out and tell their story before the American public. See accompanying article on Marv Bucks in this issue.

Marv also expanded the land base for refuges including Sacramento NWR and San Francisco Bay NWR in California and Hakalau Forest NWR in Hawaii, as well as establishing several new ones including Tualatin River NWR and Nestucca Bay NWR in Oregon and Midway Atoll NWR in the Pacific. Marv retired in 1994, after 33 years with the FWS.

Sen. Mark O Hatfield, R-Ore., said in a congratulatory letter to Marv "You have always acted with the public interest in mind and with absolute professionalism." Marv said "I never had any constraints as long as I used biology. We've never lost a lawsuit based on biology."

Marv was a mentor to many in the Service and supported the folks in the field in all program areas. Refuge folks knew they had a friend in Marv Plenart. Marv lovingly called Ecological Services staff "Birkies" for the sandals they wore. Marv hosted annual evening Christmas parties at local restaurants and he and Carol were among the first to dance.

After retirement, Marv continued to work on behalf of conservation and national wildlife refuges. Marv was a plaintiff in a lawsuit to prevent the National Bison Range from being removed from the National Wildlife Refuge System. Marv was also a member of FWS Retirees Association and attended FWS Retiree Reunions with his wife Carol. Marv also enjoyed hunting (especially elk and turkey), fishing, restoring old cars, and was an avid gun collector. He also enjoyed woodworking and carving gifts for family, friends, and colleagues.

Marv is predeceased by his parents, Elsie and Ervin Plenert; daughter Christine Holzer; and brother Alfred Plenert. Marv is survived by his loving wife Carol Plenert; son Lonnie (daughter-in-law Nancy) Plenert; son-in-law Charles Holzer; grandchildren Griffin Plenert (Melanie), Calli Plenert, and Rachel Holzer; great grandson Cassius Plenert; sister Marge and brother Kenneth Plenert.

Written by Paul Tritaik, David Klinger, and Cindy Uptgraft Barry.

Carrell Lee Ryan, (January 10, 1931 – May 7, 2021)



Carrell Lee Ryan was born January 10, 1931 in Chriesman, Texas, the son of J.T. and Eulala Seigler Ryan. He passed from this life May 7, 2021 in Round Rock, Texas at the age of 90 years. Carrell had lived in the Austin area since 2004, moving here from Massachusetts.

He was a veteran of the United States Navy, having served as an Aviation Machinist with Fire

Squadron 192 during the Korean Conflict from 1948-1952, at which time he was Honorably Discharged after an injury. Carrell then attended Texas A & M University, graduating in 1956 with a BS in wildlife management. He had a very distinguished career in Fish and Wildlife Service, working as a Refuge Manager. He received many honors and prestigious awards, including a Meritorious Service Award in the area of Moist Soil Management which had a great impact on waterfowl. Carrell was adored and respected by his family and colleagues. He will always be remembered for his “rib cracking” hugs and strong handshakes.

Carrell never met a stranger and greeted everyone with warmth until his last breath. He strove to treat all people with respect and genuine interest. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife Polly and sister and brother-in-law, Mary and Ben Lagrone. niece, Cheryl Yanez and nephew, Maurice Ryan.

He is survived by his children, Paula Ryan and Tim Ryan; grandchildren, Erik Stagg and Mayra Alejandra, Dakota Stagg, Lacey Stagg Malerba and husband Max, Kodie Sioux Ryan and Dylan Kade Ryan; great-granddaughter, Kairi Moon Stagg; sister, Betty Woods and husband Don and brother and sister-in-law, Howard and Maxine Ryan; nieces and nephews, Darrell and Tracy Woods, Darren Woods, Lou Ann and John Cearley, Sharon and Emmett Lewis, Patricia and John Wilkey.

Richard C. Schaack, December 26, 1936 ~ August 13, 2024)



Richard Charles Schaack, age 87, passed away on August 13, 2024, in Watertown, SD. Richard was born on December 26, 1936 in Watertown to Paul P. and Jennie (McPeck) Schaack. He attended McKinley Elementary School and Watertown High School graduating in 1955.

Following high school Richard attended South Dakota State University. He was drafted into

the army and served from 1958-1960 and again in 1961-1962 when he was recalled to active duty during the Berlin Crisis. After he was honorably discharged, he returned to school at SDSU where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife management in 1965.

Prior to graduation, Richard worked for the Department of Fish and Game in Glenallen, Alaska. Upon graduation he began his career with the US Fish and Wildlife Service - National Fish Hatchery System. He served in hatcheries in Michigan, South Dakota, Alabama, Iowa, Kansas, Colorado and Wisconsin.

On November 3, 1962 Richard married June Matthes at Immanuel (Our Saviors) Lutheran church in South Shore, SD. He retired from the US Fish and Wildlife Service at Genoa, WI in 1993. He and June then moved to South Shore, SD.

During retirement, they enjoyed spending winters in Southern Texas Richard’s hobbies included fishing, hunting, playing pinochle and cheering on the Minnesota Twins and Vikings. He especially enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren. He and June moved to Watertown in 2020.

He was preceded in death by his parents, three sisters: Caroline Kant, Darlene Letze & Lorraine Acker and three brothers: Donald, Clifford & Kenneth.

Richard is survived by his wife, June of Watertown; two daughters: Kristi (John) Duffy of Roseville, MN & Nancy (Alex) Heiser of Bismarck, ND, five grandchildren: Jimmy, Kevin, Colleen, Max & Joe and three sisters-in-law: Esther Schaack of Watertown, SD, Adeline Schaack of Watertown, SD and Karon Schaack of Rapid City, SD.

Sherman William Stairs



Sherman William Stairs of Machipongo, VA passed away at home with his family on Wednesday, November 22, 2023. He was 87 years old. Stairs, originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, attended Penn State University where he earned a degree in agriculture. Stairs spent his career working for the

Department of the Interior Fish & Wildlife Service in Wildlife Management. He was also a Federal Law Enforcement Officer.

Throughout his career, Stairs was posted at the North Attleboro Fish Hatchery in Massachusetts, Hebron Fish Hatchery in Ohio, Valley City National Fish Hatchery in North Dakota, Lake Mills Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin, Wytheville Fish Hatchery in Max Meadows, Virginia, the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in Suffolk, Virginia and Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia Beach. He was instrumental in the creation and ongoing development of the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge and worked to showcase and preserve the natural beauty of Eastern Shore habitats.

Stairs was an original member of the community-based organization CBES, Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore, former President of the Cape Charles Rotary Club and was a Mason. Through his work and he was dedicated to conservation. Stairs was an active member of Hungars Episcopal Church in Bridgetown and served as Senior Warden and on the Vestry.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Nancy Robertson Stairs, and two daughters, Karen Stairs Malone of Port Saint Lucie, Florida, and Kristen Corderman of Bury St. Edmunds, UK. He is also survived by his brother and sister-in-law, John and Jane Stairs of Harwood, Maryland. *Provided by Tom Goetell*

Ronald Sidney Sullivan, November 22, 1934 – August 30, 2025



Ronald Sidney Sullivan, 90 of Sallisaw, Oklahoma passed away Saturday, August 30, 2025, at his home. Ronald was born November 22, 1934, in Waldo, Arkansas.

He retired from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He loved spending time outdoors and reloading his own bullets. He was an avid reader and loved studying the books he was reading, especially Hemmingway.

Ronald is preceded in death by his parents, Sidney Lafayette Sullivan and Verdie Inez (Chamlee) Sullivan, and his wife 66 years, Patsy Lou (Clark) Sullivan. Ronald is survived by his two daughters, Lisa Lewis and Jackie Hood of Sallisaw, Oklahoma; a sister Sylvia Skinner of Cleburne, Texas; 7 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

David Lee Trauger, (June 16, 1942 – September 20, 2025)



David Lee Trauger, 83, of Marine on Saint Croix, Minnesota, passed away on September 20, 2025, surrounded by family. He will be laid to rest beside his parents at Lu Verne Cemetery in Kossuth County, Iowa, near the farm and fishing waters of his youth.

Dave was born June 16, 1942, in Fort Dodge, Iowa, to Harold and Thelma (Hof) Trauger. He grew up in Lu Verne, where he worked in the family grocery store, helped his grandparents on their farm, went waterfowl hunting with his father and discovered his lifelong passion for the outdoors. Dave's family took summer vacations all over the country and visited 42 states and five Canadian provinces.

Dave's family lived 25 miles from Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) where he and his father would scout migrating geese. Dave volunteered for their Christmas Bird Counts and assisted with deer and pheasant surveys. He graduated from Lu Verne High School in 1960.

Dave pursued wildlife biology at Iowa State University. He spent his first summer after his freshman year at Union Slough helping the refuge manager complete a land use blue-winged teal breeding study that was published in the Journal of Wildlife Management. He also participated in studies on the American coot, yellow rail, deer reproduction, mink, muskrat, and water impoundments. During Christmas breaks he went to Squaw Creek NWR in Missouri to band snow geese and other waterfowl, during which he captured a hybrid between the lesser snow goose and Ross' goose. He collaborated with other biologists to examine other hybrid goose records and published a paper on white intermediates between the lesser snow geese and Ross' geese in *The Auk*.

In the spring of 1963, he dropped out of class to go to Jamestown, North Dakota to do a land use history, wetland delineation, and waterfowl survey which became the first year of data of the Woodworth Study Area. This 2,500-acre wetland would become the primary research site for the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center (NPWRC) which would be established two years later. After earning his B.S. degree in 1964, Dave returned to the Woodworth Study Area to work on his M.S. degree for Iowa State. He studied the relationship between

wetland characteristics and waterfowl productivity in 64 wetlands and completed his M.S. degree in 1967.



Dave Trauger with nasal-marked lesser scaup, (USGS Circular 1434).

Dave stayed at Iowa State for his Ph.D., and drove 2,500 miles to the subarctic Yellowknife Study Area, in the Northwest Territories, Canada to study lesser scaup and determined that brood:hen ratios varied with the age of the hen. This groundbreaking research on the breeding biology of the lesser scaup remains influential today, because it was one of the first studies of waterfowl using a known-age population. While pursuing his Ph.D., Dave was also hired as an instructor to teach wildlife, mammalogy, and ornithology courses. Dave received his Ph.D. in 1971 and continued to teach.

In 1972, Dave's mentor Harvey Nelson hired him as a GS-12 biologist at NPWRC to conduct an age-related productivity study on canvasbacks in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, Canada. Dave concluded that re-nesting effort, success, and return rate of canvasback hens increased with hen age. Dave also started a canvasback migration ecology study where he demonstrated that the intensive use of the Mississippi River by canvasbacks and other diving ducks was directly related to the diverse and abundant food resources available. Four years later, Dave was promoted to Assistant Director of NPWRC, supervising all of the biologists on staff, while continuing to do field research in Canada. As an administrator, Dave had a larger impact on research. He established the wintering waterfowl studies at the Davis Field Station in California and the migration ecology field station at La Crosse, Wisconsin.

In 1979, Dave was hired as Chief of Wildlife Research in Washington, D.C., to supervise all research within the FWS. After four years in Washington, he was assigned the coveted position of Director of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland to replace Lucille Stickell in 1983. Dave served as Center Director until 1987 and led the development of the first strategic research plan for the Center. He introduced and instructed classes in Total Quality Management, and helped plan the National Wildlife Visitor Center at Patuxent. Dave also found time to teach a course at George Mason University and serve on

the Advisory of Committee for the College of Natural Resources at Virginia Tech.

Dave continued to assist FWS Headquarters by chairing the Research Grade Evaluation Panels, which evaluated the credentials of research scientists resulting in increased promotions and establishing senior research scientist positions that acknowledged international contributions and getting paid at the same rate as Senior Executive Service leaders. When FWS Research was transferred to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), he served as a senior biologist and continued the Research Grade Evaluations for their biologists. He helped build the careers of about 500 research biologists working on wildlife research across the country.

On June 31, 2001, Dave retired after 32 years of service with the U.S. Government in the Department of the Interior, FWS, and USGS. On July 1, 2001 he started his next career as the director of the Natural Resources Programs with the College of Natural Resources at Virginia Tech. He took a program with no degree and no students, and developed a Master of Natural Resources degree program to meet the needs of mid-career professionals. As Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Virginia Tech, he guided the next generation of conservation leaders. He left the Virginia Tech program after 13 years of dedicated service to the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

Dave authored more than 80 publications and received numerous awards, including the Meritorious Service Award from the Department of the Interior, Fellow of the Geological Society of America, and the Washington Academy of Sciences Leo Schubert Award for teaching science in college. He was recognized as Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech and Scientist Emeritus at USGS.

Outside his career, Dave enjoyed gardening, cooking, photography, reading, birding, hunting, and fishing. A devoted genealogist, he published two family histories and organized reunions. He was also an active voice on issues of conservation, sustainability, and critical thinking.

Dave's professional and academic work reflected a lifelong commitment to conservation and ecology. His combined field research, policy engagement, and teaching in a career that bridged government and higher education. Throughout all of this, he held a passion not only for the science, but for people.

Dave is survived by his wife, Alice; his children, Brent (Tracy) Trauger and Amy Trauger; stepson Brendan (Melissa) Pearson; seven grandchildren, Alexis, Taylor, and Sitara Trauger, and Antone, Ellie, Norah, and Milo Pearson; and his brothers, Harold Dean (Kathleen) Trauger and Daryl Roger (Elaine) Trauger.

Dave will be remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather, mentor, and passionate conservationist whose legacy lives on in his family, students, and the natural world he worked so tirelessly to protect.

Written by Paul Tritaik, Matthew Perry, and the Trauger Family.

Michael “Mike” Young (November 27, 1954 - July 5, 2025)



William Michael “Mike” Young of Annandale, VA, died due to cancer on July 5, 2025, at age 70. The child of William Riley Young, deceased, and Virginia Lee Young, Mike was a graduate of the University of Montevallo and Cumberland School of Law, Samford University, where he was managing editor of the Cumberland Law Review. After law school, Mike served as law clerk to the Hon. C.C. (“Bo”) Torbert, Jr., Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama.

Mike was in the private practice of law in Montgomery and Cullman, Alabama, before having a distinguished career as a staff attorney and, ultimately, Assistant Solicitor for the Fish and Wildlife Service with the United States Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor, from the 1980’s until his retirement in 2017. In his role as Assistant Solicitor, Mike supervised a team of attorneys who advised the Service regarding its wide-ranging legal issues that included the National Wildlife Refuge System, Migratory Bird Management, Fisheries, Endangered Species, Marine Mammals, Wildlife Law Enforcement, Federal Aid to States, and Ecological Services.

Mike was the wise and steady legal counsel to the Service for much of the golden era of crafting the implementing regulations for the species conservation laws and treaties, e.g., Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), that put the Service at the forefront of global conservation. His duties included providing legal counsel to the U.S. delegation at six meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES including CITES CoP8 (Kyoto, 1992), CITES CoP9 (Fort Lauderdale, 1994), CoP10 (Harare, 1997), CoP11 (Gigiri, 2000), CITES CoP12 (Santiago, 2002) and CITES CoP16 (Bangkok, 2013). Mike was instrumental in the negotiations required to carry out provisions protecting imperiled wildlife. Mike was also key in crafting and codifying the U.S.–Russia Polar Bear Treaty. Perhaps flowing from his days as a civil rights attorney in the Deep South, Mike was a fierce defender of the law and its proper application to conserving the species and lands that the Service is charged to protect. Mike enjoyed sharing his deep knowledge of endangered species and participated on the expert panel for the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Endangered Species Act at the 2023 FWS Retiree Association Reunion at NCTC.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his son William (Bill) Chapman Young, Psy.D. (Alston Scott Young), his sisters Vicki Owens (James) and Lori Lindstrom (Tim), and numerous other loved ones. He repeatedly expressed appreciation for the help provided him by his former wife, Martha Chapman, during his recent illness.

Prepared by Paul Tritaik, Gary Frazer, Alan Palisoul, Cindy Uptegraft Barry, and the Young Family

Mini Grant Awards FY 2025

Awardee	Project	FWS Field Station	Award Amount
Friends of Hatchmatack NWR	Youth Conservation Day	Hatchmatack NWR	\$1,350.00
Friends of NW Hatcheries	Kids Fishing Day	Winthrop NFH	\$1,457.90
Stewards of the Upper Mississippi Refuge	BioBlitz	Upper Mississippi NWR	\$1,500.00
Friends of Rice Lake NWR	Wildflower Identification Signs	Rice Lake NWR	\$505.00
Friends of NW Hatcheries	Aquatic Education Trailer	Leavenworth NFH	\$1,500.00
RodsnReels n Need	Fishing Academy	Western WA Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office	\$1,427.00
Friends of Mashpee NWR	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Youth Camp National Conservation Experience Day of "Fire, Native Plants, Archery & Wildlife Biology"	Mashpee NWR	\$1,500.00
Great Plains Nature Center	Linking Students to Nature Water Quality Education Program	Great Plains Nature Center	\$1,500.00
Friends of Crane Meadows NWR	Spotting Scope	Crane Meadows NWR	\$1,500.00
Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends	Supporting Interns and Careers	Minnesota Valley NWR	\$1,500.00
Merritt Island Wildlife Association	Getting Hooked on Public Lands	Merritt Island NWR	\$1,500.00
Friends of Alaska Wildlife Refuges	Tiglax in the Bay School Program	AK Maritime NWR	\$1,500.00
Friends of Tamarac NWR	Ice Fishing Mentor Adventure	Tamarac NWR	\$1,499.00
Friends of Ottawa NWR	Waterfowlers of Tomorrow	Ottawa NWR	\$1,500.00
Merritt island Wildlife Association	Archery, Angling & Adventures in Florida's Wild Outdoors	Woodruff NWR	\$1,495.00
Total			\$21,234.55

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