

FWS Retirees Association NEWSLETTER



Spring/Summer (June) 2026

2026 Board of Directors

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Message from the Chair



Greetings everyone!

I am passing along news of **more** FWS retirees this month as a result of another round of this Administration's offers of deferred resignations and voluntary early retirement. However, the offer was specifically targeted to **EXCLUDE** some staff from applying. Those who were **NOT** eligible to apply are field staff on hatcheries and refuges, and also not eligible to

apply are staff who work on ESA consultations and permits. As a result, there were less than 150 who retired as a result of this recent initiative by the Department, as compared to approximately 1,500 folks who left the Service last fiscal year from these initiatives. By my count, the Service could be down 25-30% of its workforce since the beginning of this Administration. The Secretary stated during his budget hearings this year that he is not planning on any RIFS, and any reductions will be using voluntary methods. We welcome these folks into our retiree FWS family.

Our next Reunion of the Retirees Association is just three months away, and details are in this newsletter. I made my reservation at our host location in Anchorage, the Hotel Captain Cook, and I hope to see many of you there! Co-chairs for this event, Helen Clough and Robin West, are planning a week that you won't want to miss!

Summer is in full swing here in the Pacific Northwest (Vancouver, WA), but next week I am heading off to even warmer temps for my annual trip to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. *Club Cascadas de Baja* is a resort that my brother discovered 40+ years ago, and called it his "happy place." Over the past few years, I have joined his friends in this annual trip. So, where is MY "happy place?" Well, Positano, Italy, is high on the list! However, I consider every new adventure to be in the running. Perhaps YOU will share an article for this newsletter to describe YOUR "happy place?" Maybe it's a far away destination, or the garden in your backyard. Wherever it is, I'll enjoy reading about it! *Cindy Uptegraft Barry*

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Business

FWS Retirees Association 2026 Reunion September 21-24, 2026, Hotel Captain Cook, Anchorage, Alaska

Get ready for your Alaska Reunion trip! Registration is now open.

Here's the link: <https://form.jotform.com/261515388128158>

The general schedule is:

Monday – registration, Walk for Wildlife and Opening Reception – all at the hotel

Tuesday – program at the hotel – speakers will address relevant Alaska history (setting the stage for the Service in Alaska), current status and activities of various service programs in Alaska, and an evening speaker on the Iditarod National Historic Trail and sled dog race – yes there is a nexus with the Service.

Wednesday and Thursday - Field trips:

- Seward, Alaska including visits to the Alaska Sea Life Center and the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center (Wednesday only)
- Alaska Native Heritage Center (Wednesday and Thursday)
- Anchorage Museum (Wednesday and Thursday)
- Hatcher Pass/Independence Mine (Thursday only)

Thursday – closing banquet at the Hotel Captain Cook. Our own Jim Kurth is the speaker and the silent auction will be held during the banquet on Thursday evening – bring your donations.

This reunion is expensive and we recognize that but this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in Alaska will be worth it. The Registration Fee for the Reunion is \$40. The deadline for registering and payment is **August 15, 2026**. The Opening Reception, Field trips, the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife and the Thursday evening banquet will involve additional costs for participation. Details on these are provided below.

Our host hotel is the Hotel Captain Cook, 939 W 5th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99501. Here is the booking link: [Booking Link](#) and the group code is: **FWS Retirees Reunion**. If you want to stay longer, subject to availability, the group rate is available before or after the reunion. You can call the hotel at 907-276-6000. Be sure to ask for “FWS Retirees Reunion” when you talk to the hotel. The group room rate is \$199 per night plus taxes and fees. If you have any problems making reservations, please contact Helen Clough at 907-321-4004 or hcloughak@gmail.com. Please make your reservations as soon as possible. Parking at the hotel is \$40 per day. Less expensive parking is available at nearby lots.

Anchorage International Airport is located about 5 miles from the hotel. The hotel does not provide a shuttle. Taxis and Ubers should be readily available. Taxis are located right outside of baggage claim. If you rent a car, as noted above, hotel parking is available but is expensive and you may not need a car during the reunion. Less expensive parking lots are nearby the hotel.

All Reunion attendees are expected to be members of the Association in good standing, which means being current with dues. You can also use the registration form to pay your current annual dues (\$25). In that same area on the form, you may also make a donation to support the Association and address unanticipated costs related to the Reunion.

Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife - Monday, September 21

This year's Retirees Association Walk for Wildlife is scheduled for the first day of the Reunion, September 21, and will begin at 3:00 PM at the Hotel Captain Cook. From there we will walk to Westchester Lagoon. Participants can either catch a ride back from the Lagoon or walk back to the hotel. Most of the walk is along the Coastal Trail. The donation for participants is \$20, and all donations will be presented to the Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges (the friends group for all 16 Alaska refuges). The Walk is planned to be about two hours. For questions, please contact Board Member Lew Gorman (lew.gorman@yahoo.com).



Westchester Lagoon

Opening Reception \$40. – Monday, September 21 – Will be held at the top of the hotel with an incredible 360-degree view of Anchorage and the surrounding area. We know, we are hitting you up for money for everything, but costs are high in Alaska and the reception will have great snacks and a cash bar. Unless you are really a big eater, it will probably feed you dinner.

Field Trips - We are offering several field trips at the Reunion. Each is listed below:

Wednesday, September 23 - Seward All-Day Field Trip \$110 (lunch is extra – see below). An all-day field trip (bus will load at 7:30 a.m. and return to the hotel around 7:30 p.m. A motorcoach (with restroom) will transport participants to Seward, Alaska via a very scenic drive with wildlife viewing opportunities along the way to visit the Alaska Sea Life Center

for a special behind-the-scenes tour. On the way back we will visit the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center near Girdwood. Box lunches (order with registration) will be provided for an additional fee of \$18 or you may bring your own lunch.



Horned Puffin (USFWS Photo)

Wednesday, September 23 and Thursday, September, 24 - Alaska Native Heritage Center Field Trip (morning) \$35.00

At 8:45 a.m. a van will shuttle participants 6 miles to the Alaska Native Heritage Center and will depart to return to the hotel at noon. Just minutes from downtown Anchorage, the Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) is Alaska's premier cultural destination representing all Alaska Native peoples. More than a museum, ANHC is a vibrant living cultural center where you can discover the traditions, languages, and arts of Alaska Native cultures through live cultural programming and exhibitions. Explore life-sized Village Sites and learn from dynamic exhibits in the Hall of Cultures. Enjoy cultural demonstrations and performances on the Gathering Place stage. Watch short films and documentaries in the Theater, shop for authentic Alaska Native art in the Ch'k'iqadi Gallery or from Alaska Native artist vendors on-site.

Wednesday, September 23 and Thursday, September 24, Anchorage Museum (afternoon) \$35.00: At 1:30 p.m. a van will shuttle participants the short distance to the Anchorage Museum. Return transportation will be available at 4:30 p.m. Visit the permanent exhibits including the largest and longest loan made by the Smithsonian Institution, the Living Our Cultures exhibition has brought more than 600 Alaska Native cultural heritage pieces to their homelands and provides access for hands-on study by Alaska Native Elders, artists, educators and scholars. The *Alaska* exhibition tells the story of Alaska through multiple voices and perspectives reflecting the ingenuity, technology, ways of knowing and intimate understanding of the landscape that have allowed people to survive and thrive across the North. A special exhibit invites visitors aboard a recreated section of the University of Alaska Fairbanks research vessel *Sikuliaq*, highlighting the role of science and the people behind it in deepening our understanding of the Arctic marine ecosystem.

Thursday, September 24 - Hatcher Pass/Independence Mine - approximately 6-7 hours. \$75.00 plus lunch. Your van will leave from the hotel at 8:00 a.m. to travel to the Hatcher Pass area north of Anchorage. Tucked into the Talkeetna Mountains just an hour north of Anchorage, Hatcher Pass is one of Alaska's most stunning, and accessible, alpine habitats. The drive alone is worth the trip: a winding road climbs through river valleys lined with cottonwood and birch before opening into sweeping tundra meadows, granite ridge lines, and panoramic views. Hatcher Pass is home to the Independence Mine State Historical Park, where the remains of a 1930s gold mining operation have been restored. Visitors can explore the restored buildings and learn the stories of the miners who once worked this remote terrain. The area is home to a diverse array of plant species adapted to the high-altitude environment, as well as moose, black bears, marmots, snowshoe hares, and occasionally Dall sheep. Birders will have a chance to spot numerous species, such as willow ptarmigan, golden eagles, American golden plovers, gray-crowned rosy finches and a host off songbirds that thrive in the alpine and tundra habitats. You will be back at the hotel in plenty of time to get ready for the banquet.



Hatcher Pass

Banquet, Thursday evening – Hotel Captain Cook \$85.00:

The banquet will be a buffet with salads, starches, vegetables, entrée, and a selection of desserts. There will also be a cash bar. The Banquet speaker will be Jim Kurth who will share information from his time in Alaska including as manager of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Oral History Opportunities at the Reunion

Our reunions provide excellent opportunities to record oral histories of former FWS employees' careers. Some of our oral history interviewers will be attending the Reunion and could arrange to interview you and record (audio tape) the stories of your career. After your oral history is transcribed into a written narrative, these make excellent gifts for your children or grandchildren! If you want to reserve a date/time to provide your oral history (approximately one hour), please check YES on the registration form. Someone from the FWS's History Committee will contact you to schedule an appointment at the Reunion.

If you have specific questions, contact the following

Registration form and payment by mail - Patrick Martin, Treasurer, 913-212- 0725, treasurer@fwsretirees.org

Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife - Lew Gorman, 856-952-6970, lew.gorman@yahoo.com

General Reunion Information – Helen Clough, hcloughak@gmail.com or 907 321 4004 or Robin West robinnoteast@gmail.com or 541-787-0938 (remember Alaska is 4 hours earlier than eastern time)

Additional Information

You can check out information on fall in Anchorage from the perspective of a local FWS retiree Donna Dewhurst at <https://www.anchorage.net/blog/post/autumn-in-anchorage/> You might want to consider visiting Denali National Park. If you go before the reunion as it will be the end of the season but the park road may be open to private vehicles.

Thanks to Robin West, Major Marine tours is offering us a 20% discount on two tours. The % discount can be used for the 6-hour Kenai Fjords National Park Cruise September 18 - 20, and/or the 4-hour Kenai Fjords Wildlife Cruise September 18 - 26. [Note: the longer cruise discount is limited to immediately preceding the reunion while the shorter cruise is discounted both before and after]. Use the following link <https://majormarine.com/fws-reunion/>. These are amazing tours. If you are not prone to seasickness, it is great in any weather. If you are, suggest you check to make sure good weather is forecast.

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.

**Please follow us on Facebook,
"Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees"**

Retirees Association Outreach at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference

The Association participated in the North American held in Columbus, Ohio from March 30-April 3, 2026 at the Columbus Convention Center/Hilton Hotel. Hosts included the Wildlife Management Institute, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA). Key Activities included: Establishing and staffing the Association exhibit booth, attending the Plenary

Session, attending the Federal Agency Leader Forum, and making a presentation to the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association on our Association memberships.

The Conservation Investment Program (old Federal Aid) had a booth covering that program. No other FWS programs were represented. Our booth was well received. Our exhibit area provided information on the Migratory Bird Program, Endangered Species Program, the Retirees Association, the Fallen Heroes memorial at NCTC, and pollinators. We also displayed a map of the National Wildlife Refuges that always invites interest and conversation.

Plenary Session Recap: The Director of the Wildlife Management Institute presented preliminary data on feedback received by those completing a survey on the topic of a fresh look at wildlife management beyond the North American Model. A final report is expected to be completed by the end of June 2026.



Lew Gorman at the Retirees Association Booth

Federal Agency Leader Forum. This session featured agency leaders or their representatives. Brian Nesvick, Service Director, listed the thrusts for the agency: Superior Service to Americans, Alaska Resource Extraction, Alaska Oil Extraction, 250th USA Celebration. He wants to conduct 250 projects this year on refuges and hatcheries. Other thrusts included deregulation, science and Make America Beautiful. He mentioned Secretarial Orders on enhanced management for big game species in the West, natural gas production science, hunting and fishing access, consistency across the Department, and “Innovate, not Regulate.” Other priorities included customer service, partnering, primarily with Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Tribes, investing in staff, stewardship of public funds, pride in excellence to take FWS to the next level, partners assistance needed to get to the next level, science to include social, political, and biological. The Director spoke about artificial

intelligence, enhancing/improving the Endangered Species Act, and enhancing refuges and hatcheries. The Director also mentioned looking in co-management with the states.

Mentorship: The NMFWA Outreach Program Coordinator approached Lew expressing an interest in coordinating with Retirees Association for their newly launched mentor program. We plan to follow up with the NMFWA Outreach Program Coordinator. Having the Association actively represented was valuable for our organization; to keep it relevant, gain current information, explore/expand partnerships, and help support the Service mission.

Info From the Treasurer

by *Patrick Martin*

As of May 1, the Association balances are

Main operations account: \$28,408.78

Grants account: \$5,920.13

Current tasks include finalizing IRS 990 annual filing and preparing arrangements to ensure Reunion payments are seamless and timely but within differing requirements of various vendors.

Oral History Update

By *Libby Herland, Chair, Oral History Subcommittee*

The year 2026 is turning out to be another productive year for the FWS Oral History Program. So far this year, 10 oral history interviews have been conducted, four more are confirmed for June and July, and several more are likely to be scheduled later this year. Draft transcripts are being reviewed by interviewers and interviewees, transcripts are being completed and uploaded to the FWS Oral History Collection at

<https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/oral-history-transcripts>.



Andy Yuen and Mendel Stewart.

Interviews were conducted in February with **Andy Yuen, Kenny McCain, and Andrew Gude**; in March with **Don Schmidt,**

Mark Johnson and Jeff Blakemore; in April with **Steve Chase**; and in May with **Rick Lemon and Gary Frazer.**



Andrew Gude, recently retired Lower Suwannee NWR/Cedar Keys NWR Refuge Manager who is the recipient of the 2025 refuge Manager of the Year Award. The interview and this photo were on his boat on the Suwannee River in the Lower Suwannee NWR.



Jeff Blakemore, 93, was interviewed at the recent Law Enforcement get together in Crystal River, Florida. He retired in 1987.

Transcripts completed and posted (or soon to be posted) in the Oral History Collection include **Steve Hensley, Roy Lowe, Marc Epstein, Dave Kraft, Dave Frederick, Laverne Smith,**

Donna Shaver, Janice Stone, Patricia Carter, Dennis Swartwout, Marge Kolar, Nancy Gloman, Gail Kobetich, Larry Telles, Denise Baker, Jeff Blakemore, Sheila Kratzer, Bill Kolodnicki, Deb Burger, Dennis Mackey, Joe Ramos, Meggan Laxalt Mackey, and Frank Parauka. Some of these folks are very recently retired and others retired years ago, including one interviewee who retired in 1987, proving it is never too early or too late to share your conservation story with an oral history interview.

If you are attending the reunion this September in Anchorage and would like to be interviewed or if you have questions or an interest in this program, please reach out to me at 413-822-5026 or herland194@gmail.com. Thanks!

Membership

Membership chair Deborah Holle reported the following new/renewed members. If you have questions about your membership, please contact *Deborah Holle* at promote@fwsretirees.org. **FYF stands for first year free.**

03–23–26 **ANDREW**, John (Sue); Signal Mt., TN; 8/2016; R6, Mountain Prairie R9/HQ transferred DOI1–year \$25

02–17–2026 **BAER**, Kathy, (Kenneth Baer), Garrison, ND; 12/2025; R6, Mountain–Prairie, National Wildlife Refuge System, Audubon NWR and WMD, **FYF**

04–09–2026 **BERENDZEN**, Steve (Tanda Berendzen); Sagle, ID; 12/2023; R1, Pacific Central, Washington NWR Complex, **FYF**

01–12–2026 **BIBB**, Krista; Bluemont, VA; 12\2026; R9/HQ, Management and Administration, **FYF**

03–4–2026 **BLENDEN**, Michael; Del Norte, CO; 1/2017, R6, Mountain– Prairie, RO, National Wildlife Refuge System. 1–year \$25

01–28–2026 **BOWDEN**, Mantana (Michelle); Portland, OR; 12/2025; R1, Pacific, Regional Business Office. **FYF**

02–05–2026 **BROOKS**, Billy (Jody Brooks); Fleming Island, FL;12/2021; R4 Southeast, FL Ecological Services Field Office, Jacksonville. **FYF**

04–26–2026 **CAMPBELL**, Burma (J Campbell); Stockbridge, GA; 1/2018; R4, Southeast, Office of Law Enforcement, Atlanta, GA Office. 2-years, \$50

3–23–2026 **CHRISTOFFERS**, Edward (Christian), Easton, MD; 1/2007; R5 Northeast, served RO Research Coordinator and Special Asst. 3–years \$75

3–14–2026 **CREASY**, Penny; spouse was the late Jim Creasy, he died 8 years ago

3–23–2026 **ELLIOT**, Charles; Prescott, AZ; 2/2002; R6, Mountain Prairie, RO, Ecological Services. 1–year, \$25

3–11– 2026 **FRUGÉ**, Doug (Joyce Forbush), Whitingham, VT 3/2017, R6 Mountain Prairie, RO, Fish & Aquatic Conservation. **LIFE**, \$500



Kenny McCain, retired Lower Suwannee/Cedar Keys NWR Refuge Officer received the Refuge Employee of the Year Award in 2014. Interview and photo were at his Cedar Key home.



Retired Special Agent Mark Johnson after his March 2026 oral history interview with Libby Herland. He looks relieved!

01-28-2026 **GARACIA**, Patrick; Rio Rancho, NM; 12/2025; 12/2025; R2, Southwest, Management and Administration **FYF**

03-09-2026 **GARCIA**, Ron (Kathy Faz Garcia); Antonio, CO; 12/2021; R6 Mountain Prairie, National Wildlife Refuge System, Baca National Wildlife System. 2-years, \$50

02-19-2026 **GLADWIN**, Terry, (Mary); Pocatello, ID; Refuges and Wildlife, SW Idaho NWR Complex. 1-year \$25

3-23-2026 **GEER**, Kelly (Michael Horton), Reston, VA; 10/2025; R9 Headquarters, Retired from USGS, after 20+ years with FWS, Ecological Services & Communications programs. 5-years \$100

02-15-2026 **HAMILL**, John; Montrose, CO; 2/2011; R6, Mountain-Prairie, Ecological Services, USGS, Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center. **FYF**

01-05-2026 **HANLEY**, Scott; Granada Hills, CA; 1/1981; R3, Midwest, Office of Law Enforcement, Chicago Office. 31/2 years with FWS & 22 years with FBI. 1-year, \$25

02-19-2026 **HARRISON**, Benjamin, (Jean); Portland OR; 04-2014. R1, Pacic Refuges and Wildlife, Deputy Regional Chief of NWR's. 1-year, \$25

04-10-2026 **HAYES**, Karen (Mark); Norfolk, VA 10/2008; R5, Northeast, Ecological Services, Virginia Field Office. 1-year \$25 plus \$10 donation

01-19-2026 **HEGLUND**, Patricia (Kirk Lohman); Mazama, WA, 4/2020, R3/Midwest, National Wildlife Refuge System 1980' and USGS Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning 1 year \$25

04-16-2026 **HEUPEL**, Laurie (Andrew Kling); Shepherdstown, WV; 5/2025; R9, NCTC, Visitor Experience Course Leader, **FYF**, plus 5-years-\$100

05-06-2026 **JEWELL**, Susan; Springfield, VA; 2/2024 R9, NCTC Fisheries and Aquatic Invasives. 5-years \$100

04-23-1016 **KAHAN**, Scott; (Michelle Kahan); Shutesbury, MA; 05/2026. **FYF**

3-29-2026 **KENT**, William (Lisa Kent), Brunswick, GA; 01/2011; R9, Headquarters, FLETC National Wildlife Refuge System-Law Enforcement, Refuge Officers. 5-years, \$100 plus \$25 donation

03-01/-026 **KOCHES**, Jennifer (Frank Koches); Charleston, SC; 12-2025; R4, Southeast, RO, Communications Office. **FYF**

1-05-2026 **LAMBERT**, Dale (Marcie Hamley); Portland, Oregon; 10/2018; R9/HQ, National Wildlife Refuge System, Facilities Management. 2-years \$50, plus \$10 donation

-12-12026 **LEDWIN**, Jane; Columbia, MO; R9/HQ; 5/2025; R9/HQ; Ecological Service, Branch of National Consultations **FYF**

3/23/2026 **LINDVALL**, Mark; Rapid City, SD; 4/2014; R6, Mountain Prairie, Refuges and Wildlife, Valentine NWR 1-year, \$25

3-17-2026, **LONGCORE** Jerry, (Joyce); Orono, ME; 6/2004; formerly R5, Northeast, Research, Patuxent Research Center transferred to USGS Oregon Coast. 1-year \$25

05-01-2026 **MAGHINI**, Mark; Province, VT 12/2025, Hadley, MA, Regional Office.

3-5-2026 **McCOLLUM**, James (Ann); Great Falls, MT; 8/2000; R6, Mountain Prairie, National Wildlife Refuge System, Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge. 1-year, \$25,

3-24-2026 **MOTT**, Sarah (Seth Mott); Herndon, VA; 12/2018; R9-Headquarters, Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, Migratory Birds. 1-year, \$25

3-24-2026 **MOTT**, Seth (Sarah Mott); Herdon, VA; 12/2018 R9-Headquarters, Science Applications. 1-year, \$25

3/18/2026 **Murphy**, Daniel (Cindy Roberts); Annapolis, MD; 1/2025; R5, Northeast, Ecological Services, Chesapeake Bay Field Office. 2-year, \$50

01-28-2026 **NELSON**, Peggy; Burns, MN; 1/2007; R3, Midwest, Diversity and Civil Rights. 1 year \$25

02-10-2026 **NOKAI**, Glyniss; Lacey, WA; 12/2025; R1, Pacific; Nisqually NWR Complex. **FYF**

01-06-2026 **PENDLEY**, Brad (Gretchen Pendley), Wappapello, MO; 12/2016; R4 (Southeast), National Wildlife Refuge System, Reelfoot NWR also worked 15 years in R3 at Mingo. **FYF**

03-03-2026 **PERRY**, Martin (Pam Perry); Russellville, AK; 5/1994; R4, Southeast, National Wildlife Refuge System, Holla Bend NWR, Refuge Manager. 5-years, \$100, plus \$25 donation

3-23-2026 **PFISTER**, Allan (Kathy), Pagosa Springs, CO; 8/2011; R6, 1-year \$25

04-06-2026 **PHILLIPS**, Cynthia; Davis WV; 4/23/2023, Rachal Carson NWR. **FYF**

2/28/ 2026 **PITTS**, Alexandra (Keith Pitts); Fair Oaks, CA; 2/2025; R8, Pacific Southwest, RO, Communications. **FYF**

05-03-2026 **POTTER**, Michele, (Ballston, NY) R9/ Headquarters National Wildlife Refuge System.

RAUCH, Aurthur Ray; Pueblo, CO; 8/1999; R6, Mountain Prairie; National Wildlife Refuge, Regional Refuge Chief

1-year, \$25

3-19-2026 **REED**, Jennifer (Ian Wright); Fairbanks, AK; 3/2026; R7, Alaska, National Wildlife Refuge System, Arctic NWR. **FYF**

2-22-2026 **SCHULTZ**, Rick; Farmington, MN; 9/2012; R3, Midwest, National Wildlife Refuge System, Region Refuge Chief. 1-year, \$25

3-23-2026 **SMITH**, Carol (David Broyles) Gatesville, TX; 9/2017; R6, Mountain Prairie, Ecological Services, Missouri River Recovery Program. 5-years, \$100

01-15-2026 **SPENCER**, Sandy; Mount Nebo, WV; 10/2024; R5, NE Atlantic-Appalachian, National Wildlife Refuge System, Patuxent Refuge Biologist. **FYF**

01-15-2026 **SOJDA**, Richard; Ft. Collins, CO; 10/2023; R6, Mountain-Prairie, National Wildlife Refuge System, Research Biologist; retired from USBS/USGS, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center. **FYF**

02-13-2026 **THOMPSON**, Carrie; Georgetown, TX; R8/Pacific Southwest, Ecological Services. **FYF**

3-23-2026 **WILBUR**, Sanford "Sandy"; Gresham, OR; 4/1994; R1, Pacific, RO, National Wildlife Refuge System. 3-year, \$75

02-08-2026 **WING**, Amy; Payson, AZ; 12/2021; R9 HQ, NCTC. **FYF**

02-04-2026 **ZAPOTOCKI**, Nancy (Matthew Graves); Boone, NC; 2019; R9/ NCTC Division of Training. 1-year; \$25

Newest Life Member Doug Frugé

Originally from southwestern Louisiana, Doug completed a BS degree in Zoology from McNeese State University in Lake Charles and an MS in Fish Biology from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. He began working for the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1978 at the Ecological Services Field Office in Vicksburg, Mississippi. From there he moved into the NWRs in 1980 as an Assistant Refuge Manager at the Upper Ouachita and D'Arbonne NWRs in northeastern Louisiana.

Then on to Alaska in 1982 as the Oil, Gas and Minerals Coordinator for the NWRs in Alaska at the Regional Office. In 1984 he moved up to Fairbanks as Deputy Refuge Manager of Arctic NWR in Fairbanks. While in place there he transferred in 1987 to a fish biologist position at the Fairbanks Fisheries Assistance Office.

In 1989 he returned to ES at the Field Office in Ft Worth (and Arlington), Texas as Deputy Field Supervisor. In 1991 he went back into the Fisheries program to a newly established position as Gulf Coast Fisheries Coordinator in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. In 2008 he moved to the Mountain-Prairie Regional

Office in Lakewood, Colorado as the Program Supervisor for the Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program, supervising the field stations in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming.



Doug retired from the Service in 2017 and currently lives in southern Vermont. Doug served on the Retirees Association Board from 2019 to 2025, initially as Website Coordinator, he edited the Newsletter in 2021 and 2022 and served as Treasurer during 2023-2024.

Natural Resource Issues

President Trump Lifts Restrictions on Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands

The president rescinded two executive orders that led to prohibitions on the use of the vehicles in most national parks. President Trump on Friday rescinded two decades-old executive orders that restricted off-road vehicles on public lands, in a move that could lift prohibitions on their use in most national parks.

The first executive order, signed by President Richard M. Nixon in 1972, established strict criteria for the use of off-road vehicles on federal lands, in an effort to minimize their environmental impact. The second, signed by President Jimmy Carter in 1977, authorized the government to immediately shut down off-road driving if it was causing ecological damage.

Both orders applied to a variety of vehicles designed to drive on unpaved surfaces like dirt, sand, gravel, mud, rocks and snow. That included all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes and snowmobiles. In a fact sheet, the White House called both executive orders "outdated and burdensome," noting that they were issued before

the advent of modern technologies that can help the government detect off-road vehicle tracks in sensitive ecosystems. “President Trump believes the American people should be able to access and enjoy their public lands without being burdened by unnecessary and outdated regulations,” the fact sheet said.

It was the latest move by the Trump administration to prioritize recreation, oil and gas drilling, logging and mining on public lands and waters across the country. The Biden administration, in contrast, had prioritized their use for conservation and renewable energy development. Last year, the Forest Service moved to open 58 million acres of national forests to road construction and development. And this month, the Bureau of Land Management proposed to repeal a Biden era rule that allowed public lands to be leased for conservation purposes.

Kate Groetzing, a spokeswoman for the Center for Western Priorities, a conservation group, sharply criticized the repeal of the executive orders. “Rescinding guidance meant to reduce conflicts in the backcountry and protect wildlife habitat isn’t popular; that’s why Trump tried to bury it by putting this order out on a Friday evening,” Ms. Groetzing said in an email.

From the New York Times May 29 2026. Article by Maxine Joselow. https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/29/climate/trump-off-road-vehicles-public-lands.html?unlocked_article_code=1.mVA.ePcY.cg2xNwlmBWu5&smid=em-share

Inside Devils Hole: mysterious depths, an endangered fish, and an unwavering partnership

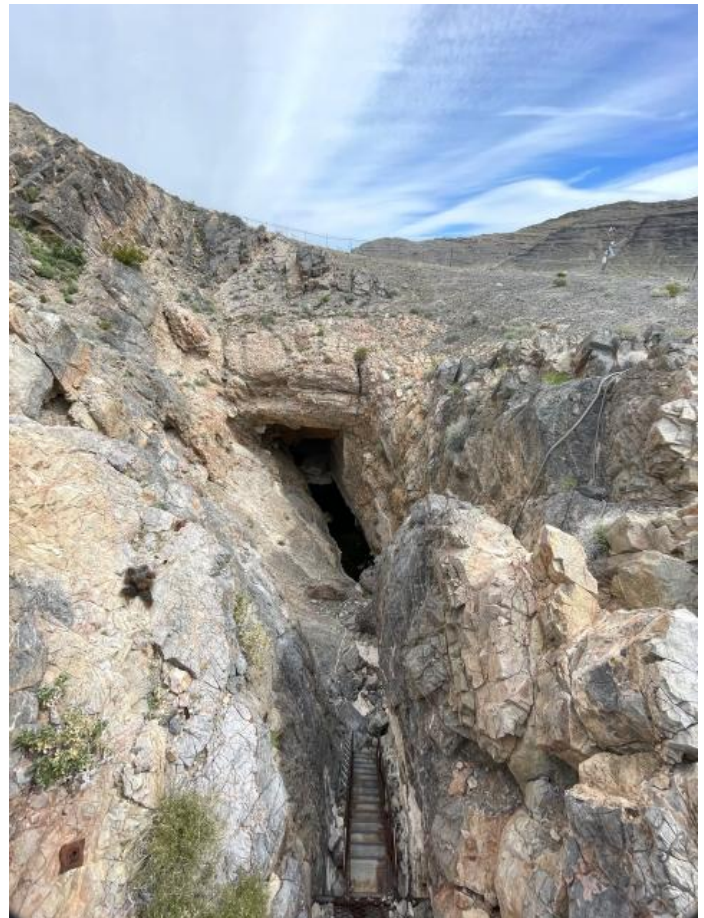
By Vanessa Morales in collaboration with USFWS Pacific Southwest Region and Death Valley National Park

In the seemingly bottomless depths of Devils Hole in southwest Nevada, there was a terror lurking below. But it wasn’t some type of science fiction sea monster lurking in the depths. The terror was the looming potential of wild extinction for the Devils Hole pupfish, the rarest fish in the world. A March 2025 dive found only 20 or so of the tiny fish that only exist at Devils Hole, a detached unit of Death Valley National Park within the boundary of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. These fish, between 1 to 1.5 inches long with males an iridescent blue and females an olive-green color, have special adaptations that allow them to live in the water-filled limestone cavern’s 92-degree Fahrenheit geothermal waters. This entire population of pupfish primarily feeds and breeds on a shallow 215-square foot natural shelf on one side of Devils Hole. The fish feed primarily on algae that grows on the limestone shelf and on small invertebrates.

The cause of the sudden population drop in early 2025 was clear: habitat disruption caused by earthquake-generated waves in December 2024 and February 2025. These six-foot waves sloshed around inside of the cavern like water in a washing machine, sweeping algae and fish eggs off the shallow shelf and

into the cavern’s depths. While this put the fish’s future in peril, there was a team of biologists from the National Park Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service standing at the ready. The multiagency team acted quickly, following the existing strategic plan, and released Devils Hole-derived fish from the Ash Meadows Fish Conservation Facility back into the wild—an action that was instrumental in ensuring the wild population’s survival. This was the first time that captive Devils Hole pupfish have been returned to the wild.

“We were fortunate we had a strategic plan that allowed us to act cautiously but swiftly, moving the refuge tank fish to Devils Hole to assist with recovery,” said Kevin Wilson, aquatic ecologist and Devils Hole Program Manager with Death Valley National Park. “This plan was instrumental in ensuring the wild population’s survival—for this decision it provided both the recovery options and timing agreed upon by our multi-agency team,” said senior fish biologist Michael Schwemm with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Devils Hole pupfish that were reared at Ash Meadows Fish Conservation Facility being released into Devils Hole.



Overlook at Devils Hole. Photo credit: Joanna Gilkeson/USFWS.

The first-ever transfer of 19 fish from captivity was characterized by extreme caution. Biologists moved fish while limiting their exposure and handling time to an absolute minimum. Subsequent transfers over the next year were less unnerving and time-sensitive, incorporating additional fin-clips, health assessments

and acclimation steps to improve success. The Devils Hole pupfish population is now steadily increasing, rebounding from the significant decline in 2025 caused by earthquake activity and limited food availability. During the spring 2026 count, 77 fish were counted, nearly four times the number seen during that ominous dive back in March 2025. This shows that pupfish are reproducing again in Devils Hole. In addition, several hundred remain in captivity at the Ash Meadows Fish Conservation Facility.

The staff from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and the Nevada Department of Wildlife continue to work together to support both the wild and captive population, strengthening the Devils Hole pupfish's long-term resilience.

While there are several local legends and theories on where the seemingly bottomless cavern got its name, the mysteriousness of Devils Hole's depths and natural phenomena undoubtedly adds to its intrigue. Professional scuba divers have mapped Devils Hole's depth to nearly 450 feet, but the bottom has never been found.

The water in Devils Hole changes very little with the seasons. The geothermal pool within the cave maintains a relatively constant 92-degree water temperature. The pool is in shadow all winter and only receives direct sunlight in the summer.

Yet, once every few generations of pupfish, conditions can change dramatically in Devils Hole. Earthquakes thousands of miles away can cause waves up to 6 feet tall inside of the cavern. The cavern itself is also susceptible to earthquakes, tsunamis and both human-caused and natural environmental changes leading to declining water levels, creating threats to the endangered population of fish residing within it. The water level over the shallow shelf started to decline in the late 1960s. The Devils Hole pupfish became protected under the Endangered Species Act in 1967. Since then, federal and state agencies have worked together to conserve the species. A landmark Supreme Court case (Cappaert vs. U.S.) in 1976 recognized a water right for Devils Hole, protecting a sufficient water-level for the shelf that the pupfish rely on for food and spawning.

Biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and Nevada Department of Wildlife have been counting Devils Hole pupfish nearly every spring and fall since 1972. The multi-agency team splits up to count fish simultaneously from the surface and by scuba diving into the cavern. There are usually more fish in the fall than spring due to algae growth stimulated by direct sunlight in the summer. From 1972 through the mid-1990s, there were an average of 200 fish counted each spring and 425 counted each fall. The number of Devils Hole pupfish then started a mysterious decline in numbers, dropping to 35 fish in spring 2013 and only 65 in fall 2013.

The multi-agency team had attempted to establish new populations of Devils Hole pupfish since the 1970s, but each attempt failed due to the technical and biological challenges of

keeping this unique species in introduced habitats. In 2013, through a Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act grant, the Ash Meadows Fish Conservation Facility was built to house a captive population of Devils Hole pupfish and conduct research to support conservation of Devils Hole pupfish and Devils Hole, completely transforming and enhancing the way biologists could work to preserve the species. The facility contains a 100,000-gallon tank that includes replicas of parts of the shallow shelf habitat and the deep pool ecosystem of Devils Hole, and state-of-the-art-the-art equipment built to maintain their environmental parameters. The primary purpose of the captive population at the facility is to ensure the species does not become extinct, serving as the as a source of fish for Devils Hole should that become necessary.

The lifeboat population is continually maintained by the transfer of individuals from the wild population. Eggs are collected each month from Devils Hole, raised to adults in aquariums, and released into the 100,000-gallon refuge tank. This ongoing transfer of fish maintains genetic similarity between the wild and captive populations. Each fish released into the large refuge tank is fin-clipped to preserve a genetic sample for future analysis. Similarly, fish propagated directly from the refuge tank are also fin-clipped, allowing periodic population genetic analysis of fish derived from both populations. Previous genetic research has shown that fish in the refuge tank and the wild Devils Hole population are genetically very similar but maintain slight differences that may be important for conservation. The movement of adult fish from the refuge tank to the wild population follows recommendations from the [Devils Hole Pupfish Strategic Plan](#), which considers transfers during instances of extremely low abundance. The goal of this management action is to avoid extirpation of the population in Devils Hole. *From FWS News Release*

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.

Ribbon Cutting at the Rachel Carson Center for People and Nature

On an uncharacteristically warm spring day, conservation leaders gathered in beautiful Kennebunk, Maine to celebrate the grand opening of the Rachel Carson Center for People and Nature. The event coincided with environmentalist, writer, and former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Rachel Carson's birthday, offering a unique opportunity to honor her conservation contributions and celebrate this new addition to her legacy.

The 12,000-square-foot facility includes a welcome center for visitors with an exhibit space, multipurpose room for community and educational gatherings as well as a gift shop operated by the

Friends of Rachel Carson. The new visitor center will also serve as office space for staff from the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, the Maine Ecological Services Field Office, and the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program.



Service staff, leadership, congressional representative, state and town partners gather for the ribbon cutting ceremony at the new Rachel Carson Center for People and Nature. (Sydney Guiliano USFWS)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acting Deputy Director for Operations Dave Miko remarked, “Having these teams working shoulder to shoulder makes it easier for innovative ideas to grow into on-the-ground solutions and I’m excited to see what happens when you get this many dedicated conservation professionals working together under the same roof.”

Local government officials spoke at the celebratory event applauding this new addition to Maine’s outdoor recreation opportunities and emphasized the importance of continued conservation partnership across the state. Speakers included U.S. Senator Angus King, U.S. Representative Chellie Pingree, and Pam Buck on behalf of U.S. Senator Susan Collins.

Immediately following the ribbon cutting ceremony, attendees were invited to tour the new facility. Originally a home built by local philanthropist Elmina Sewall in 1956, the center is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In coordination with an architectural historian, the building and site’s history was preserved as much as possible retaining much of the original woodwork.

Through collaborative planning and thoughtful design, the new visitor center was engineered with modern sustainability in mind, incorporating recycled materials, bird-safe glass, and native landscaping. This ribbon-cutting event offered an opportunity for the Service to thank all the incredible staff, volunteers and partners that made this project possible including; the Town of Kennebunk, Oak Point Associates, Benchmark Construction, the previous landowners Kate and Paul Nash, the Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, and of course the staff of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, the Maine Ecological Services Field Office, and the Gulf of Maine Coastal Program.

Refuge Manager Karl Stromayer noted, “Projects like this don’t happen because of one organization or one leader. They happen because architects, engineers, volunteers, donors, staff, town officials, construction crews, and community members all decide that this space matters.”

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast Regional Director Sharon Marino concluded, “As we commemorate 250 years of American independence, it’s important to recognize that conservation itself is an act of service and patriotism, one that honors the legacy of those who came before us.

Carson believed that wonder and knowledge go hand-in-hand and wrote that, ‘If facts are the seeds of knowledge, it is a Sense of Wonder that makes the seeds take root.’ The Center for People and Nature will be and already is place where visitors can be curious and ask questions. Here the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, its partners and community will plant those seeds of knowledge and watch as the future of conservation takes root.”
From FWS News Release

Retiree Travel



Newsletter editor Helen Clough on a recent trip to Italy.

Travel Program Reboot

Do you like to travel? Would you like to travel with fellow retirees and friends, are you looking for new adventures but want to travel with like-minded explorers? Well, we may have an answer for you!

The Retiree’s Association is rebooting its travel program. Here is the rundown as to how we see this working. Do you have an idea of a place that you would like to go, but want to go with a group of like-minded people or reconnect with past co-workers? Write

up a short description of your proposed adventure, it can be national or international and for any duration. Your description should include the basics: where, when, estimated cost, and travel service or tour agency (if applicable).

Donna Stanek has agreed to function as our Travel Coordinator, you can send your ideas to her (dstanek0418@hotmail.com) and she will help you complete the package and get it published in our FWS Retirees Newsletter, website, and Facebook page. She will also assist you in coordinating the trip you propose, coaching you through the process. If you propose a trip, you will be asked to be the point of contact for the trip.

So, get out your maps and globes and start seeking new and exotic places and let's go!

Author Author

This section was started to bring attention to the number of FWS writers who have published novels or short stories. Previously we had Interesting Stories and Fun Facts but not enough people are submitting them. Several folks have already sent in reviews of their books and they have appeared in our newsletters. I don't know what the per capita is for how many folks in an agency write popular books and short stories. I'm not a writer, but we have a large number of employees who write more than reports required for their job. I have been impressed with how many of our employees have the gift of writing novels and short stories.

Our most famous writer in FWS/DOI is probably Rachel Carson. Her most popular books are *The Sea Around Us*, *Edge of the Sea* and *Silent Spring*. NCTC even put copies of these books in the dormitories on their Campus. She authored a number of other books too.

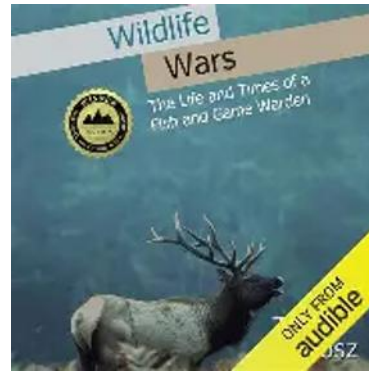


This time I'm going to talk about Terry Grosz. I never knew him, but he was a Game Management Agent/Special Agent who started out with the California Fish and Game. After four years he started working for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. He was born in 1941 in Washington and died in 2019 in Evergreen, Colorado.

He was stationed in a number of states and a few Regions. After, he retired, he began to write

prolifically. I tried looking up how many he wrote and counted at least 30 on Google. One of his most popular books is titled "Wildlife Wars." Some writings are classified as books and others as collections of stories, especially one on mountain men. Terry was also the recipient of the first Guy Bradley Award for a Federal employee in 1989.

In 1905, Guy Bradley, a Florida game warden, became the first wildlife law enforcement agent killed while performing his



wildlife conservation, from recovering endangered species to managing waterfowl and big game resources.

In honor of Guy Bradley, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) established a national award in 1988 to recognize individuals for achievements in wildlife law enforcement. The award focuses on activities which directly aid or advance the law enforcement goals and mission of state and federal fish and wildlife agencies. It is an opportunity to recognize those officers who put their life on the line for wildlife during their careers. Each year, a number of awards are presented to worthy recipients by a variety of agencies and organizations. NFWF's award, however, seeks to recognize extraordinary individuals who have made an outstanding lifetime contribution to wildlife law enforcement, wildlife forensics or investigative techniques. The award is presented to one state and one federal recipient each year.

All proceeds from the sale of Terry Grosz's books, both before and after his death are donated to the St. Jude Children's Hospital. If you are going on a long plane ride you might want to grab one of his books to read and make for a more enjoyable trip.

Several folks have contacted me about the book or books they have written. Please let me know if you want your book or story in our newsletter. All I ask is a short review. And we are still accepting Fun Facts and Interesting Stories. *Deborah Holle*

Editor's Note: another prolific retired FWS writer is Sanford (Sandy) Wilbur. He regularly sends me his materials and I've read a few and have others saved for after the Reunion. Below are excerpts from his latest missive that he called "a Book Report."

Reading and Writing

Sanford R. "Sandy" Wilbur, 26 May 2026

I've been an insatiable reader and writer most of my life. Recently, I was trying to calculate how many books I've read in my lifetime. I started reading whole volumes by the time I was about ten years old and, from the start, I was voracious. I consumed books like they were food. I have no idea how consistent I was during the first ten years or so, but I wouldn't be surprised if I averaged at least a book a week. Later, I might read a book a night, several nights in a row. These were not

"children's books," or short stories. They were full, adult works. Say I averaged one book a week for 70 years: that's over 3,500 books. Pretty impressive, but I'm sure I went through more than that. Say one-and-a-half books a week – and I think that's still conservative – that's close to 5,500. That's a lot of words.

My publishing efforts began in the 1950s and 1960s, with weekly news columns in several papers. The 1960s through the 1990s produced dozens of journal and magazine articles on wildlife and ecology, as well as books on birds, American history, genealogy, and a "Christian" novel. For the past quarter century, I've been writing mostly fiction, including three novels and several collections of short stories.

I described my reading because it and my writing feed on one another. When I read the stories others have written, it becomes a personal challenge: could I write something as compelling-charming-exciting-realistic as they have? I need to try. Reading also opens up a limitless world of times, people, and places to write about. In person, I haven't been far beyond the United States - just a few trips into Canada and Mexico - but a lifetime of reading has taken me from the Dawn of Time to the present day, to every continent, and even to other planets and Outer Space. I've learned about other cultures in various eras. I've learned about how people talked, learned wonderful words seldom used today, and what the words were used to talk about. I've learned about historic events - some world-changing - that never make it into our standard history books. The many doors that have opened to new knowledge and new experience are amazing. There is no end to the reservoir of ideas I can use to create stories of my own.

My favorite of my several novels is "Vic and Greg: A Wildlife Refuge Romance." It's set at a fictitious national wildlife refuge in southern Idaho in the mid-1960s. It's all imaginary, but anyone who has worked on a refuge will identify with the work described, the wildlife seen, the individual stories, and the interactions between the refuge staff and the refuge neighbors. The story centers around a young man fresh from college, beginning his first career job as assistant refuge manager. His growing attachment to one of the refuge manager's two daughters provides the "romance."

I describe my novels as "factual fiction." The main characters, what they do and what happens to them, are all entirely made up, and not intended to represent any real people, living or dead. On the other hand, the settings of my stories and the events portrayed locally, nationally, and worldwide are real. For example, in "Vic and Greg," weather, news headlines, football scores, range fires, what's playing at the theater and on television - all really happened on the dates in 1965-1966 that are noted in the narrative. In other words, this is a fictional story told against a background of what was really going on in southern Idaho at the time. My other novels are developed along similar lines.

My novels have been serialized on my website (writing-in-down.com), and can be read online. Many of my short stories are published there, also. You can find some of my early books for

sale online, but my recent endeavors are available in book form only from me. I also offer free pdfs (readable on most platforms) for most of my writings. Ask about books and pdfs at symbios@condortales.com

The Fish and Wildlife Service career of Sanford "Sandy" Wilbur extended from 1960 to 1994, during which time he worked on and for national wildlife refuges in two regions (Portland and Atlanta); investigated endangered Western birds for the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center; and served as chief of the endangered species program in the Western states. His last ten years, he was district supervisor for the national wildlife refuges in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

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

A Nice Restoration Story

By Conrad Fjetland

From 1960 to 1962, 57 cygnets were released on Lacreek NWR as part of a program to restore the swans to more of their historical range. First nesting occurred in 1963. By 1972, while I was at Lacreek, the population had grown to over 100 birds and pairs were nesting both north of the refuge in western South Dakota and south in the Nebraska Sandhills. Now known as the High Plains flock, well over 3,000 Trumpeter Swans are found throughout much of South Dakota and Nebraska, including Crescent Lake and Valentine National Wildlife Refuges, and the population continues to grow and expand.



Some of the more than 1,000 Trumpeter Swans on Lacreek NWR late winter 2025. Photo By Todd Schmidt, Refuge Manager, Lacreek NWR, January 31, 2025, Martin S.D.

From Deborah Holle: *Most of us who are retired from the US FWS are very familiar with David Klinger. He also retired from the FWS and was the Senior Writer-Editor at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Prior to that he was the Assistant Regional Director for Public Affairs in Portland, Oregon, and he also served as the National Press Officer in Washington, D. C. from 1977 – 1988. David holds an A.B. degree in Journalism and political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am totally awed by Dave’s writings, but I am utterly astonished at David’s prolific detective skills in ferreting out unique and unusual stories with an FWS connection. With a robust skill set that includes feature writing, and media relations he produces incredible stories. And some of the stories are well over 80 years yet he found them. His stories were originally published in a Service magazine, Fish and Wildlife News, in his column called Fish Tales. For example, one of the eerier stories I read is entitled –*

Bad Medicine

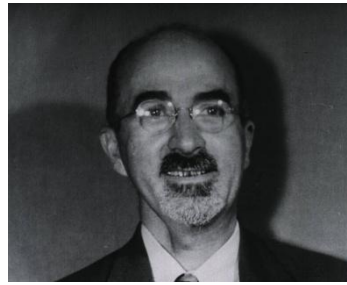
By David Klinger, 2009

That Dr. Walter Freeman—the “father of American lobotomy”—got his start working for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Services parent agency is both a fascinating account of muddled missions in the Federal bureaucracy and a challenging reminder to today’s arbitrators of “sound science” that standards in medicine—like biology—evolve, and can take occasional wrong turns down dark and perilous alleys. “Aside from the Nazi doctor Josef Mengele,” one critical contemporary biographer concludes, “[Freeman] ranks at the most scorned physician of the twentieth century.”

Historically, the Interior Department and its bureaus have displayed a schizoid personality, their pasts a cluttered attic of responsibilities and missions that now seem alternately charming and baffling. Interior once managed the District of Columbia jail, the pensions of Civil War Veterans, Colonization plan for freed Haitian slaves, and the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb (now the Gallaudet University). Fish and Wildlife’s past is littered with forgotten refuges and decommissioned fish hatcheries unfamiliar to contemporary ears. . . and its curious assignment of servicing Congressional fish tanks on Capitol Hill.

But our employer’s penchant for oddball responsibilities took its most unusual twist during Interior’s 88-year management, of the Government Hospital for the Insane, a Washington asylum for mental patients from the District, the military and other agencies founded in the 1850’s by legendary reformer Dorothea Dix. Later renamed St. Elizabeths, Interior’s supervision lasted until 1940.

With the dramatic rise in institutionalization of the mentally ill in the early 1900’s, St. Elizabeth’s cared for 4,300 patients by 1924 and hosted one newly-arrived neuropathologist intent on making a name for himself, Dr. Walter Freeman.



“Even in the 1920’s, hospitals lacked treatment that healed, or even helped, many patients and institutions like St. Elizabeths had grown into huge warehouses of the sick,” writes Jack El-Hai, author of *The Lobotomist: A Maverick Medical Genius and His Tragic*

Quest to Rid the World of Mental Illness. “Psychiatric hospitals of the 1920s really could do little for patients with mental disease except house and feed them. Younger, often Idealistic psychiatrists bridled at the sterile incarceration and sought alternatives.

That alternative was the new technique, pioneered in Portugal, of leucotomy—popularly called lobotomy—by which the nerve fibers of the prefrontal lobes of the brain were cut in an effort to relieve various psychiatric disorders like anxiety, anger and violent mood swings. Walter Freeman, St. Elizabeths’ supervisor of autopsies until 1933, became its greatest American proponent, performing the first lobotomy in the United States.

Because of its invasive nature, limited tract record and wildly varying results, lobotomy was—and remains—a controversial surgical procedure. Some patients experienced remarkable success in their restoration to a semblance of normal life. Others were reduced to dull and listless shadows of their formerly violent and raging selves. An unlucky few died on the operating table.

Freeman, having left St. Elizabeths and in private practice and on the staffs of Georgetown and George Washington universities by 1936, accelerated the pace of lobotomies with his “transorbital” technique. The procedure employed icepick-like tools through the bony orbit of the eye sockets to reach and sever the offending sectors of the brain.

Part medical visionary, part operating room showman, Freeman would perform 3,500 such quick-turnaround operations, assembly-line style, at state hospitals across the nation. He traveled in a van known as the “lobotomobile,” in a career that lasted until his death in 1972. Once hailed as a miracle technique by the international medical community, lobotomy began its rapid decline by the 1950s eclipsed by various mood-altering psychiatric drug therapies that didn’t require invasive surgery.

Far less than a story of good and evil than a complex account of science account of science in a more primitive era—barely a generation ago—a retrospective portrait of Interior’s Walter Freeman is the complicated story of a caring physician who employed a deeply flawed and largely unproven surgical technique in what in what was believed to be the best interests of his patients. Such accounts force us to question how we regard good medicine and remind us that one generation’s scientific optimism is occasionally discredited upon the arrival of the next.

This was the sixth in a series of short features about little-known aspects of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by David Klinger of the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. And appeared in Fish & Wildlife News, Winter 2009.

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.

Forrest Wylie Cameron (August 9- 1948 – May 8, 2026)



Forrest Wylie Cameron, born August 9, 1948, in Amity, Oregon, passed away peacefully on May 8, 2026, surrounded by his children.

Forrest was born to Mildred "Sam" and James "Jim" Cameron. He had two brothers and one sister. While the Cameron kids were full of

shenanigans growing up, they were taught a strong work ethic and the value of attention to detail while building homes. There were many stories and laughs shared when they were all together.

Forrest lived a life defined by dedication to family, service, and a deep appreciation for the land he spent his career protecting. He is survived by his four children, Tara Ott, Kelsie Cameron, Leslie Fox, and Brett Cameron, along with a beloved bonus son, Jeff Stenson. He also leaves behind seven grandchildren and his siblings, Colin Cameron and Shelli Cameron, who will carry forward his legacy and stories.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Lynn, with whom he shared a remarkable 45 years of marriage. Forrest met Lynn in 1971, and they were married in 1972, building a life rooted in love, resilience, and partnership until her passing in 2018.

Forrest graduated from McMinnville High School in 1966 and went on to attend Oregon State University, graduating in 1970. He began his career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1969, serving for a total of 42 years before retiring in 2011. He started his career at the Desert National Wildlife Refuge outside Las Vegas, later serving at two North Dakota refuges—Lostwood National Wildlife Refuge and Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge—before moving to Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada. He then went to the Northwest

Regional Office in Portland, Oregon, later moving to Burns, Oregon to manage the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. He ultimately returned to Portland to serve as the Northwest Regional Refuge Manager, overseeing refuges across the Northwestern states, Hawaii, and the U.S. Island territories.

Outside of his professional life, Forrest found great joy in the simple things—especially his five acres in Turner, Oregon, which he and Lynn purchased in 1999. It was a place he loved deeply, a reflection of his lifelong connection to the outdoors and the peace it brought him. He also loved hunting deer, elk, and birds, spending time outdoors doing what he truly enjoyed.

Forrest will be remembered for his witty sense of humor, a trait he proudly shared with his mother, and for the lighthearted way he spoke of his lifelong “bad luck,” often turning life’s challenges into stories that brought laughter to those around him. He was steady, kind, and will be deeply remembered by all who knew him. Above all, Forrest was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend. His life was one of quiet strength, commitment, and love—a legacy that will live on in the hearts of his family for generations to come.

A celebration of life will be held at Champoeg State Park in St. Paul, Oregon, on August 9. Please RSVP with family members by July 6, 2026. **Contact us at:** director@malheurfriends.org for their contact info.

Jerry Allen Cegelske (November 15, 1948 - April 12, 2026)



Jerry Allen Cegelske, 78, was born November 15, 1948, in Fairmont, Minnesota to Juanita and Clarence Cegelske. He passed away on April 12, 2026, at his home in Ketchikan, Alaska, as he wished, on Hospice after a long and arduous fight with cancer.

He served in the U.S. Air Force. He retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a Special Law Enforcement Agent and served as an Air Marshal during Covid. As part

of Aid to International Development, he traveled to Russia and the Galapagos Islands to train agents and develop training programs. Since retiring from the FWS, he served as Code Enforcement Officer for Ketchikan, Alaska. In 2014 he received the Distinguished Alumni award from the University of Minnesota.

He enjoyed his family, World War II books, old movies, sport fishing and crabbing. He made it his mission to send boxes of fish yearly to his family, who did not have the same opportunity

to fish. He was a kind and generous man and faithful member of the Gateway Baptist Church which he attended regularly. He is survived by his wife Tamela of 17 years, his sons, Matthew of Arlington, Va., Andrew (Sandra) of North Bend, Wash., daughters Erin Rose (Lauren) of Shoreview, Wash., Aubree of Ketchikan. Grandchildren-Arwyn and Evan Cegelske (Matt), Isla and Manny Rose of Shoreview, Washington. Brothers, Norden Cegelske (Jean) of Queens Creek, Ariz., Eldon Cegelske of Bonners Ferry, Idaho, Arlen Cegelske of Isle, Minn. Sisters Karen Cegelske (Steve Johnston) of Minneapolis, Minn., Connie Richison (Mike) of Winnebago, Minn., also several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his mother Juanita and father Clarence and nephew Cameron Cegelske. *Compiled by Paul Tritaik*

Jefferson Lodrick Fountain III (1942 – 2026)



Jefferson Lodrick Fountain III of Tucson, Arizona, died peacefully on March 9, 2026 after a long battle with cancer. He was born in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 1942 to Theodore King Fountain and Dora Howell Fountain Johnson, and spent his childhood in Farmville and Greenville, North Carolina. At NC State University, Jeff was an active member of the Sigma Nu fraternity and ROTC, graduating in 1965 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology.

He served overseas as a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army from 1965 to 1967 before beginning his career as a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in Florida.

Over the course of his career, he worked at refuges throughout the southeastern United States before moving to a field office in Kansas City, Missouri. In 1980, he was selected for a management program with the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C., and later transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southwest Regional Office in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

After retiring in the late 1990s, he continued to embrace new challenges, working for several years as an airplane mechanic. In recent years, he could be found working on his golf game at Oro Valley Country Club in Tucson. Jeff was truly a Renaissance man - always eager to learn, explore, and master something new. An avid outdoorsman, he loved hunting, camping, and fishing, and also found joy in reading, drawing, and cooking. Over the years, he raced cars, flew airplanes, and sailed boats, approaching each pursuit with enthusiasm and curiosity.

Phil Norton first met Jeff when he worked in Kansas City. They met at an Animal Damage Control meeting in Louisiana and

stayed close friends for the rest of Jeff's life. Both worked in the Washington Office and lived in Manassas, VA. They were part of a carpool that traveled into DC every day. To make the drive more interesting they dreamed up contests among the various drivers that had to do with merging onto Highway 66. For many years Jeff and friends including Phil would hunt quail in Arizona. After a few years, getting tired of camping out and sharing a love for Cajun food, Jeff and Phil quit quail hunting and began annual trips to Louisiana to enjoy Cajun food and their favorite adult beverage. During Jeff's struggle with cancer they stayed in touch regularly and Phil made three trips to Tucson to help Jeff and Pat deal with the large supply of aircraft parts Jeff had accumulated.

A devoted father and grandfather, and faithful friend, Jeff will be dearly missed by all who knew him. He was preceded in death by his brother, Ted Fountain, Jr. (1937-2006), and is survived by his wife Pat Langley, brother Clark Fountain, ex-wife Judy Funderburk Fountain and their children, Alyssa Fountain Morris (Kelly) and Anne Fountain Rewis (Barry), and grandchildren, Emily Morris Simpson (Austin), Ryan Morris, Logan Morris, Tanner Rewis and Tate Rewis. There were no services per his request.

"Successful is the person who has lived well, laughed often and loved much, who has gained the respect of children, who leaves the world better than they found it, who has never lacked appreciation for the earth's beauty, who never fails to look for the best in others or give the best of themselves." - Ralph Waldo Emerson. Information provided by Jeff's family and his good friend Phil Norton.

Donald N. Frickie (July 27, 1937 – May 8, 2026)



We are sad to report the passing of Donald Norman Frickie, 89, recently of Dundee, Ohio on May 8, 2026, after a long illness.

Don was born on July 27, 1937, to Bernard F. and Hazel M. (Coons) Frickie in Ohio. He was raised in Ohio and attended college at Ohio

State University earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology in 1963. Shortly after that or while in college he learned to fly, a skill that complemented his education and was to serve him well in his career.

In 1965, he started his 31-year career with the Department of the Interior's US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). He first worked as a Research Biologist in the fledgling Endangered Species Program at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland; then from 1968 - 1971 he put his pilot's license to good use as the Atlantic Flyway Biologist/Pilot stationed in Atlanta, GA. He then moved to Alaska where from 1971-1975 he was the

Assistant Refuge Manager/Pilot at the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Don then transferred to the Yukon Delta NWR in Bethel, AK as Refuge Manager from 1976-1979.

Don loved being a FWS Pilot. He flew dozens of low-level waterfowl surveys in the US, Canada, and Mexico to collect population data for managing international migratory waterfowl. He could fly about anything and had many ratings on his pilot's license for additional skills and types of aircraft. In Alaska, which captivated his heart and spirit, his piloting skills were used for wildlife surveys and research projects, search and rescue efforts, law enforcement and field support, and of course, for recreation. One of his favorite assignments was flying for polar bear studies, looking for maternity dens, tracking radio-tagged individuals, and on and on ... He had many great stories of his Alaska adventures and loved to share them. Of particular significance at the time, was Don's knowledge and experience with Polar Bears. Significant enough that he was recognized in 1994, in part, for his contributions to Polar Bear conservation when he was awarded the Department of the Interior Meritorious Service Medal Award.

Other than flying, Don was an avid hunter, fisherman, and trapper and Alaska gave him many incredible wilderness experiences. He truly enjoyed living off the land and was good at it. But, perhaps most significantly on a personal level, Don met the love of his life in Anchorage, Alaska, when he met Beverly Wistrom. They married on August 1, 1979, in Ohio. Prior to their marriage, Don's mother, Hazel, was the only female of influence in his life. Don, being a kind and thoughtful son, made sure his mom was taken care of no matter where he was. He and Hazel continued to share their love of fishing into her '80s.

About the time Don and Bev got married, they migrated south to the lower 48 where Don took an assignment in the Washington Office of the FWS in the Division of Refuges where he worked on issues of national importance before escaping back to the field as the Refuge Manager at Seney NWR on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. They enjoyed about 9 years at Seney before finding their way in 1987 to New England and the FWS Northeast Regional Office in Newton Corner, MA.

Don took on the job of a Refuge Supervisor, overseeing operations at all National Wildlife Refuges in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York. This was a job that also allowed him to continue his contributions to many FWS regional and national programs. Initially, he worked out of the office in Newton Corner, MA, then in Hadley, MA when that office was relocated. He and Bev resided the entire time in Merrimack, NH until his retirement on December 31, 1995. They then moved back "home" to Dundee, Ohio, near where his mother Hazel had lived, although she had passed in March of 1995.

Don is survived by his beloved wife Beverly, her sister and brother Candy and Charles Powell of Alaska, and good friends Wes and Ellen McMillen, of Ohio. He was predeceased by his parents, Beverly's parents, a brother, and a good friend Dr. Jim

Brick. At Don's request there will be no services. Condolences can be sent to Beverly Frickie at: frickies@msn.com. Donations in his memory can be made to the Friends of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (through the Friends and Alaska Refuges), or The National Wildlife Refuge Association (<https://www.refugeassociation.org/donate>).

Don should be remembered as a good, personable, respectable, and respected man who had one of the most enviable FWS careers a person could hope for. He loved his family, friends, flying, hunting, fishing, trapping, dogs, sourdough bread, and other people (in that order). He was most comfortable sitting around and cooking over a campfire with friends in the wilderness. He worked hard to protect and manage special lands, waters, and wildlife for posterity. He'd be proud to know that we think he made a difference. So, when you get a chance, raise a glass to a good, good man, husband, and friend who lived life well and made a difference!! The photo is Don and his companion Lieutenant Dan. *Submitted by: Margaret (Maggie) Anderson and Mark W. Sweeny*

Craig M. Gigglesman (December 19, 1960 – April 14, 2026)



Craig Gigglesman, a devoted naturalist, dedicated public servant, story teller, and history buff passed away on April 14, 2026. A man of immense adventure, Craig spent his life uncovering the hidden wonders of the natural world and meticulously preserving history. He passed away leaving behind not just memories, but a

carefully preserved record of a life deeply observed and fully lived.

Craig proudly served his country as a United States Army veteran. He went on to build a distinguished career in environmental science and emergency response, serving as a Senior Environmental Contaminants Specialist from 1997 to 2017 and later as an Emergency Response On-Scene Coordinator from 2017 to 2022. His work reflected a lifelong commitment to protecting and preserving the environment.

He earned a Master of Science and a Bachelor of Science from the University of North Texas, along with a Bachelor of Arts from Stephen F. Austin State University, demonstrating his passion for knowledge and learning.

Craig had a magnetic personality that drew people in wherever he went. He loved to tell stories—long, detailed, and often filled with the kind of insight only he could provide. Whether recounting a personal adventure or sharing a piece of history, he had a way of making people listen, laugh, and learn. A true history buff, he carried a deep respect for the past and a desire to understand it, preserve it, and pass it on.

His greatest joy was found outdoors. Craig was an avid "herper," spending countless hours catching and logging snakes and turtles. His thirst for discovery led him searching riverbeds for shark teeth along the South Sulphur River, hunting fossils, or scanning the ground for arrowheads. His home was filled with sea shells that were hand-picked; over 20,000 shark teeth, and the shells from 15 different species of turtles. In his lifetime, Craig caught thousands of documented turtles and almost 3000 snakes. Craig approached every outing like an adventure and a discovery waiting to happen. He traveled across the country researching and photographing Native American battle sites, carefully gathering stories for a book he was writing—one more way he worked to preserve history before it could fade. Known for his meticulous nature, Craig often saw the details others overlooked and remembered moments that might otherwise be forgotten (his memory and recall were amazing). Craig had a unique habit of preserving nearly every document and memory (old speeding tickets from the 1970s, every driver's license he had ever been issued, photographs labeled with names and years, important documents preserved with care—not just for himself, but for his wife and son as well). To some, it might have seemed excessive. To those who knew him, it was simply Craig's way of holding on to life, making sure nothing important was ever lost.

Craig was the son of Gene Gigglesman Sr. and Linda Cadenhead Gigglesman Long, both of whom preceded him in death. He was also preceded in death by his beloved wife, Dr. Marina Vargas Gigglesman; his son, Erik Martin Gigglesman; his sister, Karen Kay Gigglesman; his uncle, C.T. Cadenhead Jr.; and his aunt, Marie Cadenhead.

He is survived by his big brother, Gene Gigglesman Jr. and wife Kathy; his nieces, Kristin Gigglesman and husband Heath Burns, and Lauren Gigglesman Dethlefs and husband Benjamin Dethlefs; his nephew, Gene "Scooter" Long; his great-nieces Avery Burns, Sadie Burns, Kayleigh Dethlefs, and Allison Dethlefs; his great-nephew, Ethan Dethlefs; Ralph Long; as well as countless friends across Texas, including Corpus Christi, and throughout Virginia and Colorado who were fortunate enough to share in his stories and adventures.

Craig will be remembered for his adventurous spirit, passion for life, steady presence, thoughtful nature, his dedication to preserving history and nature, and the way he could turn even the smallest detail into something worth keeping. He respected all life and spent his life promoting ecology and preservation of the natural order. He would risk his life on a busy highway to save a turtle crossing the road. He was a man of integrity and character and he loved the fire out of his family. Craig will be deeply missed, but his story—like the many he spent his life collecting and sharing—will not be forgotten. He truly died living.

Richard Alan Gilbert (March 7, 1946 – April 13, 2026)



Richard Alan Gilbert, 80, of Lake Havasu City, Arizona, passed away peacefully on April 13, 2026. Born on March 7, 1946, in Meadville, Pennsylvania, Richard dedicated his life to conservation and service, embarking on a career that spanned over 30 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Known affectionately as Dick to his friends, family, and community, his journey began at the Erie National Wildlife Refuge in Guys Mills, Pennsylvania. His work led him to wildlife refuges across the country, a testament to his deep respect for the environment—a commitment that eventually brought Dick to Lake Havasu City, the place he would call home.

Upon retiring from federal service, Dick entered a new chapter as an entrepreneur. Alongside his wife, Elaine, he became a proud small business owner, operating the EnV Hair Salon. Beyond his professional life, Dick was a passionate collector and restorer of the past. He found immense joy in the hunt for antiques, possessing a keen eye for the history and craftsmanship found in old treasures.

Dick was a devoted husband, a loving father, and a cherished grandfather. He is survived by his loving wife, Elaine Gilbert; his children: Greg Gilbert of Kemmerer, Wyoming; Heather Clark and her husband Todd of San Clemente, California; and Isaac Vici of Aurora, Colorado; as well as nine grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his grandson Anthony Vici, and three brothers. A man of deep faith, Dick cherished his relationship with God. He found his greatest peace in the outdoors, whether hunting, fishing, golfing, or spending quality time with his family. His warmth, guidance, and unwavering love left a lasting mark on all who knew him. Dick Gilbert's legacy of dedication to family, faith, and the natural world will be remembered and celebrated by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Craig Heflebower (September 13, 1953 — May 29, 2026)



Craig's journey began on September 13, 1953, in Lubbock, Texas, where he was born to the late Charles and Peggy (Coleman) Heflebower.

Craig's early years were spent in Muskogee, where he attended grade school, before graduating from Midwest City. His passion for nature and wildlife led him to pursue a degree in wildlife biology from Oklahoma State

University, an accomplishment that would set the course for a lifetime dedicated to the natural world.

Craig commenced his illustrious career at the Foss National Wildlife Refuge in western Oklahoma, where his commitment to preserving and understanding wildlife was evident. His journey then took him to the Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge, south of Vian, where he continued his work with integrity and dedication.

In matters of the heart, Craig found his lifelong companion in Pat, whom he married on March 17, 2001, in Sallisaw. Their union was one of love, companionship, and shared dreams, and together they built a home filled with warmth and laughter.

Craig was a man deeply rooted in his community. An active member of the First United Methodist Church of Sallisaw, he lived a life of service and faith. His dedication extended to the Lions Club, where he worked tirelessly for the betterment of others. Craig's commitment to service was instilled in him from a young age, as he proudly achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, a testament to his character and perseverance.

His love for the outdoors was nurtured through a lifetime of hunting and fishing, activities that brought him peace and joy. He went on many rafting and kayaking trips with his wife, Pat. Rafting through the Grand Canyon, and down the Middle Fork and Buffalo rivers. Craig's love for nature was also exhibited in his numerous pen and ink sketches. Drawing cardinals, scissor tails, ducks and owls. Craig was also an avid collector of Buck knives, a passion he proudly shared with fellow enthusiasts at national shows, where his collection was admired by many. Craig was an artist and drew many pictures that are cherished by his friends.

Craig leaves behind a legacy of love and cherished memories. He is survived by his beloved wife, Pat; his sister, Judie Croisant; and numerous nieces and nephews who adored him. His presence will be deeply missed, but his spirit will forever live on in the hearts of those who knew and loved him. The family kindly

requests donations be made to the Boy Scouts, an organization that held a special place in Craig's heart.

Though Craig is no longer with us, his legacy of kindness, dedication, and passion for life will continue to inspire all who were fortunate enough to have known him. May he rest in peace, forever in the embrace of nature he so dearly loved.

Guy Philip Million (August 9, 1938 - March 8, 2026)

Guy Philip Million passed away peacefully at his home in Arlington, Virginia, on Sunday, March 8th, 2026. He was 87 years old — and despite his age and some recent health issues, his death came as a genuine shock to family and friends. June Coder Million, his loving wife and closest friend of 62 years, was by his side when he passed. He was in the backyard of their beloved house in Cherrydale — one of his favorite places — when the time came.

“Phil,” as everyone called him, had a long, happy and fruitful life filled with a large loving family, world travel, an immense amount of fishing and hunting, good food, long friendships, several Volkswagen Beetles, yearly trips to Cathance Lake Maine, a wonderful career, lively nights drinking martinis, Walleye sandwiches, golfing and telling tales at his local East Potomac public course, and so many other things. He was a wise, highly intelligent man — a true lover of words and literature, reader of books, and a natural storyteller with a wickedly sarcastic wit. While it's true that Phil could be cantankerous, those who knew him best embraced this personality trait as an endearing feature.



He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on August 9th, 1938, to parents Guy C. Million Jr. and Dorothy Erb Million, and grew up in Boonville, Missouri — a small town named after Daniel Boone. It's fitting that Phil grew up in a town named after a frontiersman, as the outdoors played a central role in his life and career. Incidentally, he always pronounced Missouri *MissourAH* — and was immediately suspicious of anyone who pronounced it differently.

After graduating from Boonville High School in 1956 (where he played football and regaled family with stories about how he was “small, but mean” and an “ankle biter”), he attended the University of Missouri and graduated with honors from its renowned Journalism School in 1960. Before graduating from Mizzou, Phil traveled to Europe and was hired by the Associated Press to work at the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome. He often spoke fondly of that youthful summer and the Olympic Games where he saw Cassius Clay win a gold medal. For Phil, this summer job was the starting point of a long, successful career in Public Affairs.

In 1961, Phil chose to enlist in the U.S. Army and was extremely fortunate to be deployed to the beautiful town of Verona, Italy. During his four years in the Army, Phil worked in Intelligence gathering, or what he would call “spook stuff.” He loved his military service and often credited the Army with broadening his world view. It was quite a formative experience for a kid from a small town in Missouri to be working in Army Intelligence, in Europe, at the height of the Cold War.

While overseas, Phil was also incredibly fortunate to meet his future wife June Coder — the person he would spend the rest of his life with. June had come to Europe and traveled throughout the continent with little more than a sense of adventure and her trusty “*Europe on \$5 A Day*” book. She ultimately decided to stay in Europe to see more of Phil, and found a job with Radio Liberty in Munich — then a CIA-funded outfit. A year later they were married in a small ceremony in Verona on August 14th, 1964.

Phil and June returned stateside, put down roots and raised a family in Arlington, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C. He briefly joined the Office of Education — the precursor to today’s Department of Education — before finding his true calling at the Department of the Interior’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where he would build a remarkable 40+ year career that perfectly blended his lifelong passions for fishing, hunting, and wildlife conservation with his talents in communication, journalism, and public affairs.

At the Fish and Wildlife Service, Phil served as the Chief of Public Affairs for over 15 years. In this role, he was the Spokesman for Fish and Wildlife and was often quoted in major newspapers on a range of issues. He worked effectively with both Democratic and Republican administrations from Johnson to Obama and provided them all with a valuable sense of continuity and expertise. A co-worker perfectly summed up Phil’s somewhat wry outlook on government and his role in it when he said: “*Phil had bi-partisan impatience.*”

During his long tenure at the Fish and Wildlife Service, Phil was a quiet but enormously influential force in American conservation — someone who consistently drove major outcomes often without seeking credit. He was instrumental in the development of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, a landmark program responsible for the protection and restoration of millions of acres of wetlands. He also played a key

role in passing the Wallop-Breaux Amendments of 1984, which modernized sportfish restoration funding, and was a driving force in creating the agency’s Office of Partnerships.

Equally gifted as a communicator and diplomat, Phil almost single-handedly maintained the agency’s relationships with the hunting and fishing tackle industries during a period when those partnerships were at Risk. He was also instrumental in the heavily publicized Yellowstone Gray Wolf reintroduction of 1995. Two of his personal favorite professional accomplishments brought him to Hollywood where he produced high-profile public service announcements featuring megastars Paul Newman and Lorne Greene. He always liked to say — a bit tongue in cheek — that he “made movies with Paul Newman.”

Perhaps his most enduring achievement while at Fish and Wildlife was dragging a deeply insular, science-focused agency into the modern era of public communication. Before Phil’s influence, the agency’s idea of outreach was publishing in peer-reviewed journals. Phil built and mentored a public affairs staff and insisted the agency be responsive to the public. Colleagues remember him as someone who consistently delivered outsized results while rarely seeking recognition — a hallmark of his character throughout his career.

In 2008, he retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service and that day the U.S. Government lost a truly dedicated civil servant who spent most of his professional life making things better for our country by protecting wildlife and the outdoors. In his retirement, Phil continued to catch an incredible amount of fish and travel to the world’s most beautiful rivers, streams, and oceans. He often spent quiet afternoons and evenings tying intricate flies that he would use on upcoming fishing trips. An excellent cook and BBQ master, Phil had recently rediscovered a love for baking sourdough that he shared with his daughter Heather. On the day he passed away he made a breakfast of sourdough pancakes for June.

Phil will be remembered by his family and those who knew and loved him as a humble and loving force in all of their lives. As a father, Phil was completely devoted to his children. His interest in their lives stretched from little league to adulthood. He was an ever-present figure at the end of the dinner table and was always there with support, pragmatic midwestern values, and yes, a healthy dose of sarcasm.

His grandchildren will remember “Papa” as a gentle, often quiet man who taught them how to cast a fly rod in the side yard and made them laugh with his faux-surlly demeanor. Phil never sought the limelight. Indeed, it’s fairly certain he would have been uncomfortable reading this obituary. His dry sensibility and singular presence will be dearly missed by everyone who knew him. One thing is certain; the fish of the world are all a little bit safer now that Phil has hung up his fly rod.

Phil is survived by his wife June; children Doug, Heather, Mike and the late Brian Million; grandchildren Bryce, Max, Zoey, Kate, Jack, Chloe and Nathan; brothers John, Tom and Steve;

son-in-law Mark; daughter-in-law Laura; sisters-in-law Louise and Azusa; nieces and nephews Laura, Stacy, Peige, Adam, Sam, Nika and Mari; and countless friends and fishing buddies who were lucky enough to spend time with him.

David Seth Rothstein (August 28, 1968 - November 11, 2025)



David Rothstein died unexpectedly on November 11, 2025 at the age of 57, just as he was about to undertake yet another dream-come-true artistic adventure -- participating in the creation of the Ice Hotel in Sweden.

David was born on August 28, 1968 in Worcester, Massachusetts to Jane and Dr.

Ralph Rothstein, joining his older sisters Deborah and Pamela. Being the youngest by several years, David enjoyed a special bond with Ralph and Jane that lasted throughout their lives. As a youngster, David was drawn to the natural world and exhibited a keen curiosity and creativity that provided a foundation for his lifetime of studies, work and artistic creativity.

At the University of Michigan, he studied wildlife biology and shared "Go Blue" fervor with fellow alumnus Ralph. He then studied law at Northeastern University and entertained fellow law students with lyrics and poetry. He spent his co-ops doing legal work in Alaska and, after graduation, clerking for the Alaskan Supreme Court. Throughout his legal career, David

devoted himself to environmental protection. He worked at the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control in Dover, DE in the 1990's. He moved back to Massachusetts, where he worked for the EPA in Boston and the Fish and Wildlife Service in Hadley, MA. When he retired, he took a position as a Land Protection Specialist with Mass Audubon, putting to use all his professional and people skills to secure open space in the state.

David was the gentlest soul and made friends readily, connecting with people from all walks of life. Attentive, empathic, and truly kind, generous with hugs, he made people feel heard, seen and appreciated. An artist at heart, when he was not working, he devoted himself to all varieties of art in multiple media. His curiosity and creativity were endless.

It was the beauty and snow of Alaska that first inspired him to try snow and ice sculpting, a medium in which he excelled, winning international competitions and working with teams that he loved, from Breckenridge to Yellowknife, Canada. In recent years, he turned to hay sculpture at Park Hill Orchard, MA and in the Dolomites, Italy and exhibited his photography around Northampton, MA. He always tried to elevate local businesses

and farmers. He even became a mint farmer at his Black Birch Vineyard and loved sharing his products with local food producers. His November 2023 cruise in a giant pumpkin down the Connecticut River made national news and aimed to raise awareness about protecting the river.

David was one of the nicest and most talented people one could know, whose kindness and creativity seemingly knew no bounds. He was unbelievably professional, compassionate, humble, inspiring with a very warm heart and great wit and humor. All who had the pleasure of working and getting to know him loved him.

David did not live long enough, but he lived his life to the fullest, pursuing dreams, and touching so many people, animals and places that bear his mark. David was a beloved son, brother and uncle. May his memory be for a blessing.

David is survived by his father, Dr. Ralph Rothstein, sisters Deborah (Scott) and Pamela, and nephews Zachary (Raji & Anasuya) and Ansel (Sydney), and by his cat Boomer.

Compiled by Paul Tritaik

Sandra Marie (Goltz) Siekaniec (March 23, 1964 – November 6, 2025)



Sandra Siekaniec was born March 23rd, 1964 in Indianapolis, Indiana to Yolanda and Charles Goltz. She is survived by her husband of 38 years Thomas Siekaniec. They have been residents of Menasha, Minnesota for the past six years.

As a child, Sandra was very interested in animals and nurtured several generations of gerbils, a preview of sorts of her career to come. She also

was creative, winning a Christmas coloring contest by drawing with light crayons on black construction paper, unlike the other entrants.

Sandra attended Plainfield Public Schools outside of Indianapolis then completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Management at Purdue University.

She was a career wildlife biologist and manager in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 34 years. Her career took her from the Northeast corner of Maine to the far western reaches of Alaska, along with many states in between. She lived and worked at Fergus Falls Wetlands Management District, Minnesota; Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio; Seney NWR, Michigan; Assistant Refuge Manager, Upper Souris NWR, North Dakota; Refuge Manager, Moose Horn NWR, Maine; Refuge Manager,

Tewaukan NWR, North Dakota; Deputy Refuge Manager, Innoko NWR, Alaska; Refuge Manager of the Izembek NWR, Alaska; Regional Office Budget Manager, Alaska Regional Office; and Regional Office Budget Manager, Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Sandra retired after 34 years of service in 2019.

After retirement, Sandra volunteered for Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge and Itasca State Park, both within an hour's drive of her home in Menahga, Minnesota. Sandra enjoyed the outdoors, gardening, having served recently as treasurer of a community Gardening Club, crafting, singing and music. She loved birds and dogs, especially her and Thomas' hunting dogs that were members of their family. Her career gave her extensive knowledge about the flora and fauna of the entire United States. She was adventurous and passionate about wildlife and natural areas and was beloved by coworkers. She lived every day by the motto that "Life is a Journey not a Destination."

Sandra was a lifelong member of the United Methodist Church, most recently attending the Hubbard United Methodist Church with her mother. Sandra was kind, considerate, caring and compassionate. Sandra is survived by her husband Thomas; mother Yolanda Goltz; mother-in-law Char Siekaniec; sister Sonia Goltz (Jim Northey); brother-in-law Greg Siekaniec (Janelle); nephews and nieces Casey Siekaniec (Britni), Claire Siekaniec (Tyler), Jacob Northey (Brita), and Madeline Larson (Chad); and several great nieces and nephews. She also is survived by her uncle in Brazil, Onesimo Pereira, and many cousins in Brazil and the U.S. *Compiled by Paul Tritaik*

Charles Allen "Bo" Sloan (April 17, 1965 - February 28, 2026)



Charles Allen "Bo" Sloan, 60 of Ethel, Arkansas passed away Saturday Feb 28th, 2026. Bo was born on April 17, 1965, to Mr. Tommy Sloan and Mrs. Phyllis Sloan of Tupelo, Mississippi. Bo attended Tupelo High School where he was active in several clubs and met many of his lifelong friends.

After graduation, Bo took a gap year and worked on the family farm. At the end of that year, he attended Mississippi State

University where he received a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology and forestry. Bo went to work for the USDA where he worked with APHIS/Animal Damage Control in the Mississippi Delta where he worked on double-crested cormorant depredations of catfish aquaculture farms. He later transferred to the USFWS where he worked at Panther Swamp NWR. Soon after arriving at Panther Swamp NWR, he met and married the love of his life, Holly Elizabeth Cook of Leland, Mississippi. Bo and Holly moved to McGrath, Alaska where Bo worked for the Innoko NWR. Here he would work with the native community to help preserve their natural habitats and presented clinics to get young people engaged in some of the traditional outdoor activities. After Alaska, he and Holly moved to Ethel, Arkansas where he finished his career and retired at White River NWR.

Anyone who knew Bo knew that protecting wildlife habitat was not just a career for him, it was a calling, his passion. That passion gave him a spine of steel in a field where political winds blow hard. That Mississippi country boy never bent. He was ironclad in his principles and understood one simple truth: you either protect the land, or you don't. His principles served him well and he never traded precious habitat for an easy compromise. The refuge and the conservation community have lost a true champion far too soon.

Bo never met a stranger with his big smile, good humor, outgoing nature and epic story telling! He made friends everywhere he went. Nothing made him happier than when he met Holly. She was his entire world. They enjoyed all things outdoors, from hunting, fishing and trapping. In his retirement, he could be found in their garden where he and Holly worked so tirelessly to tend, or working at training his dog Ruby, also gone far too soon.

Someone once said that a man could consider himself fully successful in life if he was blessed enough to have lived with and enjoyed an awesome wife, one good dog, one good horse, and at least 5 good friends. Bo was successful in all these things! Many friends along with the forestry and wildlife community lost a good one.

Bo was preceded in death by his parents Tommy and Phyllis Sloan of Tupelo and his brother Brad Sloan also of Tupelo. Bo leaves behind his adored wife of 21 years, Holly of Ethel, Arkansas, and his brother Jonathan Sloan of Tupelo.

Compiled by Paul Tritaik

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

USFWS Retirees Luncheon Wednesday, April 8, 2026, El Pinto Restaurant, Albuquerque, NM



Front row (l -r) Sally Spier, Warren Hagenbuck, Sharon Hagenbuck, Sue Burton, Jerry Burton; Back row: Terry Craig (Sally's daughter), Pete Stine, Mary Murphy, Marlene Stine, Dom Ciccone, Carlotta Ortiz, Craig Springer, Martin Suhr and Dean Watkins.