

FWS Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER

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2017 Board of Directors

Bob Streeter, -Chair	970-495-1893	rgstreeter@gmail.com
Rowan Gould, Vice Chair	703-864-0864	ifishak2@yahoo.com
Gail Carmody, Treasurer	850-235-9012	gcarmodv@att.net
Jim McKeivitt, Sec'ty/Scribe	530-878-7883	jimmymac@usamedia.tv
John Cornely	303-910-9360	johncornely@msn.com
Jerry Grover	503-684-1809	Groverjj612@frontier.net
Skip Ladd	719-561-8313	Laddskip45@comcast.net
Mamie Parker	703-948-0032	mamie.parker@comcast.net
Larry Shanks	417-236-0480	carleenshanks@gmail.com

Memphis 2016 – Another Successful Gathering.

Over 120 of your fellow retirees and their spouses, active Service members, and others convened at this lively city on the mighty Mississippi in early October to party, celebrate our own careers, keep up to date on fish and wildlife matters, and to learn of impending issues that could affect our retirements. A list of those attending can be found at the end of this newsletter. Our agenda was packed and our days full but it seemed that all enjoyed themselves and found the trip worthwhile.

As advertised, our venue for this reunion was the Crowne Plaza in east Memphis, an area dotted with parks yet within 15 minutes of most of Memphis's attractions. The hotel accommodations were fine and we enjoyed its many amenities. Food there was good and plentiful, but unfortunately, there were not many other restaurants within walking distance. This is something the Board will take into account at our next get together.

Our off-site events included a Mississippi River riverboat cruise, a tour of Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge with an opportunity to mix and mingle with kids there on an educational field trip, and a fabulous tour of the Ducks Unlimited headquarters with a great buffet provided courtesy of former FWS Director and now DU's CEO, Dale Hall. Many also took the time on their own to visit Beale Street ("the Birthplace of Rock and Roll and Home of the Blues"), the impressive Memphis Pyramid, Elvis Presley's Graceland mansion, and/or the Civil Rights Museum which includes the Lorraine Motel where Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated.

Scheduled agenda items provided something of interest to any FWS employee or retiree. We had panels on migratory birds, the National Wetlands Inventory, fishery resource issues along the lower Mississippi River and on retirement legislation, policy, and benefits. We also had talks from retirees on their travels to

French Polynesia and to Cuba, a riveting discussion on the illegal occupation of Malheur NWR, and an update from DC given by Deputy Director Jim Kurth.

Our banquet speaker, Dr. Mark Plotkin, provided an enlightening presentation on his years of work in the Brazilian Amazon Forest, focusing on his study of the native vegetation and the social aspects of the indigenous peoples there. He also connected the loss of Amazonian rainforests to wintering migratory bird habitats and global climate change.

Future Gatherings and Reunions.

At our business meeting in Memphis, the Board decided that our next reunions will be held first on the west coast and then on Chesapeake Bay.

We are planning the big bash on the west coast for spring of 2018, probably in the mid-April – mid-May time period. Efforts so far have focused on the central Oregon coast and on the Puget Sound area of Washington. Please provide us any suggestions you might have for specific venues and for local events and points of interest that we might incorporate into our planning.

We have not yet begun any serious planning for a Chesapeake Bay Reunion in the fall of 2019 but think that one possibility would be to time it to coincide with the Easton Waterfowl Festival. However, we also want to avoid any weather problems. Your thoughts?

*Finally, the 20th Anniversary of NCTC is this fall, October 2017. They are planning a celebration for the week of October 16th. **And**, Retirees are invited to join at what might be called a mini-reunion of our own the same week. Events are being planned for Tuesday through Friday but staying into the weekend won't be a problem. The Heritage Committee will meet Tuesday [Retirees welcome] and with arrival of most Retirees, an evening social gathering. Wednesday an abbreviated Retiree program and Thursday the NCTC ceremony with "Bully," a Teddy Roosevelt evening play. The Service Directorate will also attend. NCTC has set aside 60 rooms for Retirees which will be 'comped' (i.e. no charge) on a first come basis. A meal plan will be available or you can pay as you go. The NCTC airport shuttle will be available on Monday, Tuesday and Friday of that week so transportation to and from Dulles International airport should not be a problem (or a cost). We will need to know in advance how many are interested in attending. Jerry Grover is liaison for this event; please let him know with a quick call at 503-684-1809 or drop him a note at Groverjj612@Frontier.com. As planning progresses and we get more details and info on how to make reservations, we will keep you informed. Stay tuned and think seriously about joining us.*

The Association Wants You!

One of the issues discussed at our Board Meeting in Memphis was the need for greater participation by our members in the affairs of the Association.

The idea to form an “Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Service Employees” arose around 1998 during meetings of the FWS Heritage Committee in D.C and at NCTC. Retirees Jerry Grover, Denny Holland and Jerry French were involved in those meetings and in fleshing out the idea. Subsequently, it was Jerry Grover who undertook the job of crafting the first mission statement and bylaws for the fledgling organization. Those same individuals were also the ones who organized get-togethers at NCTC in 1999, 2000, and 2001 and arranged the first formal “Retiree Reunion” at Spearfish, South Dakota in 2002. It was a huge success with over 300 attendees. The Retirees Association was well underway.

Here we now, nearly 20 years and 12 Retiree Reunions later, with about 3,000 members in our database, our own website and periodic newsletters, a substantial budget to undertake projects to preserve our heritage and to reach out and promote the mission of the Service. We have a formal Memorandum of Agreement with the Service and remain actively involved in matters affecting fish and wildlife resources but with a new-found freedom not available to those still employed in government. We have grown, and hopefully will continue to grow, to become more effective as an organization, and to better meet our member’s needs. From a little acorn a mighty oak can grow. But we are still at the sapling stage in our development.

However, not every FWS retiree is in our database and the vast majority of those who are, are not active in the Association. If we are to be all that we can be, we need some new blood, new ideas, and increased energy and greater participation. If you look around, you will still see many of the same people getting things going. Jerry Grover is a great example. Jerry’s been at it for over 18 years. When these people wear out, who will keep this organization running? Please, don’t look for someone else to step up: look in the mirror. We want YOU!

For starters, connect with any of our Board members today to express your interests (heritage, volunteering, group travel, helping at our reunions, etc.). You should also forward this newsletter or its link to other retirees you know. And finally put our NCTC gathering and the 2018 Reunion on your calendar!

Election of Board Members.

Each year, the terms of three members of the Association's Board of Directors expire. And each year, every dues paying member gets a chance to run for one of those seats or to nominate someone else to run.

In 2016, the terms of Nell Baldacchino, Matt Perry, and Jim McKevitt expired. Jim decided to run for his third term (having already served six years as a director). However, Nell and Matt have decided not to run again and left the Board as of January 2017 although they will still remain active in Association business. Nell Baldacchino has agreed to continue to coordinate the anniversary grants program, and Matt Perry will work to bring retirees from the research program into our fold. A big thank you to both Nell and Matt for their service.

Election for the three expired seats took place in December. We had six candidates for those seats, including Jim. Using our new online ballot system, we were pleased that there was a return rate of over 50% of the eligible voters. Thank you to those dues paying sustaining members for taking the time to vote.

Results. Jim McKevitt was elected to another three-year term and Rowan Gould and Skip Ladd won the two other seats.

A little introduction of our newest Board members.

A native of Oregon and a graduate of Oregon State University (BS, MS, & PhD), **Rowan Gould** retired as Deputy FWS Director in 2015 after an extensive career that began in 1976. He has served in numerous research positions including section chief at the Seattle National Fisheries Research Center and Director at the National Fisheries Research and Development Laboratory in Pennsylvania. Before becoming Deputy Director, Rowan was Assistant Director, Wildlife and Sports Fish Restoration. Other leadership positions include Deputy Assistant Director, Fisheries in DC, Regional Director in Alaska, and Deputy Regional Director for the Pacific Region. In an earlier tour in Alaska, he was both an ARD for Fisheries and Ecological Services and ARD for Refuges and Wildlife.



After retirement, Rowan and his wife, Dee, moved to and now reside in Kingston, Washington, on Puget Sound.

Skip Ladd, a graduate of Colorado State University (BS & MS), retired in 2003 after a career that spanned 27 years with FWS and 3 years with the National Park Service. Beginning in 1972 Skip served with the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center in North Dakota and later as Assistant Manager at the Upper Souris NWR. Other assignments include



stints at the Office of Migratory Bird Management in DC, various positions in Alaska culminating as ARD for Refuges and Wildlife Resources, three years as coordinator for the Southern Sea Otter Recovery Program in California, three years as the Central Flyway representative for the Office of Migratory Bird Management, and nine years as ARD for Refuges and Wildlife Resources in the Mountain - Prairie Region. He then spent three years as an ARD with the National Park Service in the Intermountain Region.

Skip now resides in Pueblo, Colorado.

As is our custom, the successful candidates were welcomed to the Board at our January 2017 Board Conference call. On the same call, the Board got business underway by selecting officers for the year. Bob Streeter will remain as Chairperson, Jim McKevitt as Secretary/Scribe and Gail Carmody as Treasurer. Rowan Gould will serve as Vice Chair.

Resource Issues.

Be Prepared for Change. Unless you've been hiding in a cave, you should be aware that there is a new administration in Washington **and** that the Republican Party is now the majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. What this portends for the environment and for fish and wildlife resources remains to be seen but the rumblings from Congress and some of the cabinet appointments made to date give one pause.

Congress seems poised to eliminate and/or make significant changes to several laws and regulations that have been the bedrock of fish and wildlife for decades, most notably the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act, two the government's most powerful conservation tools.

After decades of complaints that the Endangered Species Act hinders drilling, logging, and other activities, Republicans are readying plans to repeal the law or roll back its influence. Over the past eight years, GOP lawmakers sponsored dozens of measures aimed at curtailing the landmark law or putting species such as gray wolves and sage grouse out of its reach. Almost all were blocked by Democrats and the White House or lawsuits from environmentalists. But now, with Republican control in both Congress and the White House, opponents of the ESA may get their way. "Any species that gets in the way of a congressional initiative or some kind of development will be clearly at risk," said Jamie Rappaport Clark, president of Defenders of Wildlife and a former Fish and Wildlife Service Director under President Bill Clinton. "The political lineup is as unfavorable to the Endangered Species Act as I can remember." And it may have begun already. The new administration in early February delayed the listing of the rusty patched bumblebee as endangered. The Service had already adopted a rule extending endangered status to the bumblebee but a thirty day waiting period was required before it could become effective. But one day before it was to take effect and in keeping with an administration order, the Service postponed that designation at least until March 20, 2017 while it is being reviewed. "The Trump administration has put the rusty patched bumblebee back on the path to extinction. This species is one of the most critically endangered species in the country and we can save it but not if the White House stands in the way" said Rebecca Riley, senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council. And on February 15, 2017, NRDC filed suit against the Department of Interior claiming the delay was itself illegal since it gave no public notice or opportunity for comment and is also a violation of the ESA.

With regard to the Clean Water Act, one of the first things the Trump Administration did was to order that the definition and listing of "waters of the U.S." be removed from the Environmental Protection Agency website, a possible prelude to restricting the provisions that limit filling and destruction of our nation's wetland habitats. And the President's choice to lead the EPA, Scott Pruitt of Oklahoma, is a notorious adversary of that agency having filed numerous lawsuits against it for taking stands that hindered development in his home state.

Trump said in a statement that Pruitt would carry out his mission of cracking down on what he sees as a job-killing, anti-energy agenda at the EPA while ensuring that the agency protects the nation's clean air and water. "For too long, the Environmental

Protection Agency has spent taxpayer dollars on an out-of-control anti-energy agenda that has destroyed millions of jobs, while also undermining our incredible farmers and many other businesses and industries at every turn," Trump said. Also in the statement, Trump said he and Pruitt agree with the need to "rescind all job-destroying executive actions".

We urge all of our members to stay abreast of any proposal that would threaten or diminish our nation's fish, wildlife, and environmental resources.

Government-wide Hiring Freeze. One of the first things President Trump did after being sworn into office was to impose a broad hiring freeze, exempting only national security and public safety positions and the military. While this may be a minor inconvenience for some of the civilian agencies, this will significantly impact the Fish and Wildlife Service and, in particular, the national wildlife refuges it manages. Hundreds of these refuges that provide habitat for species of national significance are already critically understaffed. The following is a September 2016 Associated Press release in its entirety precipitated by a report issued by the non-profit Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER).

PORTLAND, Ore. — Hundreds of national wildlife refuges that provide critical habitat for migratory birds and other species are crippled by a staffing shortage that has curtailed educational programs, hampered the fight against invasive species and weakened security at facilities that attract nearly 50 million visitors annually, a group of public employees and law enforcement said Wednesday.

Staffing at the nation's 565 wildlife refuges and related properties shrank nearly 15 percent in the past decade, and more than one-third of those locations don't have any staff on site, the Washington, D.C.-based Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility said. More than half of the refuges no longer have their own manager and have been combined into massive "complexes" that are overseen by someone who might be hundreds of miles away, said Jeff Ruch, executive director of the nonprofit alliance.

The report raises concerns about low staffing levels given the recent armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in remote southeast Oregon. More than two dozen occupied the refuge's headquarters in January, launching a 41-day standoff with authorities that ended two weeks after one of them was fatally shot.

The occupiers were protesting the prosecution of two ranchers who set fires on federal lands. Seven of them are now on trial in federal court in Portland.

The crisis set off alarm bells and prompted officials to spend \$6 million from an already tight budget to move law enforcement officers to preserves scattered in remote locations across the West, said David Houghton, president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. Many refuges are patrolled by a single officer who covers several states.

Some refuge managers have since sent their law enforcement officers to additional training or updated security plans.

"People are paying attention to that whole dynamic. I only have one law enforcement officer here and she covers the entire range of refuges, and she's by herself," said Michelle Potter, who

manages seven refuges and three other habitats in and around Long Island, New York. "I worry about safety."

Vanessa Kauffman, a spokesman for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, declined to comment on the study but did acknowledge a tight budget in a phone interview with the AP. The agency oversees the refuge system.

"The budget determines the staff, and if you have attrition and you have a shortened budget, you're not going to be able to replace staff," said Kauffman. "We do what we can."

The refuges, as well as 178 other federally protected areas dedicated to waterfowl habitat and wetland preservation, attract 47.5 million visitors a year for bird-watching, hunting, fishing and educational activities, but their primary mission is the preservation of critical habitat for fragile species. Many, but not all, are in remote areas.

Because they are focused on wildlife preservation, refuges are less well known by the public than their flashier, selfie-friendly cousins at the National Park Service, yet they have expanded rapidly in recent years as funding has shrunk. Since 2010, the overall refuge budget dropped by \$17 million to \$486 million while the system added more than 700 million acres, said Houghton.

Much of that expansion comes from the addition of two massive marine monuments, including one designated in the Atlantic Ocean last week by President Barack Obama that includes 5,000 square miles of underwater canyons and mountains off the New England coast.

Meanwhile, existing refuges are struggling to complete their mission with a staff so pared down that some can't keep on volunteers because there's no one to manage them.

In Rhode Island, for example, a refuge complex cut educational programs for school children by 20 percent, lost its visitor center manager and hasn't been able to treat huge swaths of land for invasive species.

Charlie Vandemoer oversees five refuges in Rhode Island but has security from only one officer who also patrols refuges in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

He relies on more than 23,000 volunteer hours a year to get the most critical work done and recently sent his solitary law enforcement officer for additional training.

"If it wasn't for volunteers, they'd have to shut the doors," said Marvin Plenert, a retired manager in Portland who used to oversee the Western region. "It's pathetic, is what it is."

New Secretary of the Interior?? President Donald Trump's has chosen Montana Republican Representative. Ryan Zinke as his nominee to lead the Interior Department. In the House, Zinke has been a member of the Natural Resources committee but has also faced criticism from environmental and conservation groups since joining the House in 2015.

Trump transition spokesman Jason Miller praised Zinke in a call with reporters. *"Congressman Zinke is a strong advocate for American energy independence. And he supports an all-encompassing energy policy that includes renewable, fossil fuels and alternative energy. Additionally, Congressman Zinke believes we need to find a way to cut through bureaucracy to ensure our nation's parks, forests, and other public areas are properly maintained and used effectively."* His confirmation is not expected to run into much opposition.

Zinke is an avid sportsman, an avocation he has stated will guide his stewardship of the nation's public lands. During a confirmation hearing in January, Zinke shared some of his feelings about the nation's public lands, noting, *"Today those lands provide Americans the opportunity to hike, fish, camp, recreate, and enjoy the great outdoors. It was on these lands that my father [taught me] to hunt and fish and the boy scouts taught me the principles and environmental stewardship and the importance of public access"*.

Later in the hearing, Zinke emphasized the importance of using the nation's public lands for multiple purposes but also the need for public access to ensure that hunting and fishing on them remain open to all Americans and to future generations. He is concerned about access to them being cut off and deplores closed roads, fences and lack of access.

It appears that, unlike many of his GOP colleagues in the west, Zinke is not predisposed to disposal of public lands to state or private interests but may be open to additional multiple uses such as mineral and energy extraction.

Alaska National Wildlife Refuges Rule under Threat.

The House of Representatives in February initiated action to overturn an Obama-era rule which greatly restricted the hunting of bears, wolves and other predators on more than 76 million acres of refuge land in Alaska. The House resolution passed by a 225-193 margin, mostly along party lines, sending it to the Senate for consideration.

Under the rule issued last year by the Fish and Wildlife Service, hunting of predators is not allowed on Alaska's 16 national wildlife refuges *"unless it is determined to be necessary to meet refuge purposes, is consistent with federal laws and policy, and is based on sound science in response to a conservation concern."* And even then, it bans killing bear cubs or adult females with cubs, baiting brown bears, taking bears using snares and traps, and aerial shooting of bears and wolves on these same refuges. The rule was issued in response to a state law that promoted extreme predator control and approved shooting over bait, shooting females bears and cubs, targeting bears and wolves from planes; and killing wolves and wolf pups in their dens. Said then Director Dan Ashe, the state law was *"inconsistent with the laws guiding management of our National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska."*

Following the House vote, Jamie Clark, president and CEO of Defenders of Wildlife and former FWS Director, blasted lawmakers for *"running roughshod over public lands."* She went on to add that *"Americans expect our national wildlife refuges to be managed for their conservation values for all wildlife, not just those species of particular interest to a few."*

National Bison Range. On January 18, 2017, the Fish and Wildlife Service published a notice in the Federal Register that it intends to prepare a Conservation Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement on the management of the National Bison Range in Moiese, Montana. And in that notice, the Service indicated that their preferred alternative for management of the NBR is for a Congressional transfer of the range to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe of the Flathead Reservation to be held in trust for the tribe by the Secretary of the Interior. Deadline for comments on the Notice to Prepare was February 14, 2017 but we urge you to be alert for

any meetings or documents that arise out of this effort by the Service to divest itself of the refuge. There will be opportunities for input into any decision on this issue, both through the planning process and the political process. As you may recall, the Retirees Association opposed the removal of the NBR from the FWS Wildlife Refuge System in a letter to Director Dan Ashe, dated March 25, 2016.

Mexican Wolf – The Saga Continues. In previous newsletters, we informed you of the conflict between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of New Mexico over the Service's plan to re-introduce additional captive-bred endangered Mexican wolves into New Mexico to increase the gene pool and aid in the species' recovery. New Mexico refused to issue a permit for the release and in late May a federal judge issued a temporary injunction halting the release until FWS obtained said state permit. Well, on January 18, two days before Donald Trump's inauguration, the Justice Department, on behalf of FWS, filed an appeal with the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn that injunction. The government contends that the law allows the government to go against the state's wishes if necessary to save a listed species. While the appeal focuses specifically on this controversy, the larger issue is a looming battle over state's rights and the ESA.

All this is happening at a time that the ESA itself is under attack, and even should the government prevail in this appeal, it remains to be seen whether or not the new administration will continue the fight or whether the republican-controlled congress will take legislative action to thwart the Service. One New Mexico lawmaker has already introduced a rider to an appropriations bill that would de-fund the entire Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, a provision the minority Democrats would attempt to remove. Finally, in February federal and state biologists announced that the population of wolves in eastern Arizona and western New Mexico last year had rebounded to 113, the most since the species returned to the wild in 1998. It had dropped to 97 at the end of 2015, the result of illegal shootings and lower pup survival that year.

"We are encouraged by these numbers, but these 2016 results demonstrate we are still not out of the woods with this experimental population," FWS Regional Director Benjamin Tuggle said in a news release.

Passing of Colleagues

If you are aware of the passing of any retired FWS employee, including those who left the Service because of organizational or late career changes, please let us know so that we can pass that information on to our readers.

Irvin Ailes (1944 – 2016). Retired FWS Biologist Irvin Ailes, 72, passed away October 29, 2016, a victim of dementia. Born in Buena Vista, Indiana, Irvin was one of 7 children living in a one-bedroom home without running water. He attended a one-room school where the first assignment each morning was to chop wood for the stove.

Upon graduation from high school, Irvin served four years in the U.S. Air Force. After his discharge, he married Marilyn Stevens and moved north. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Alaska and followed this with his

Master's degree, also in Wildlife Biology, from the University of Wisconsin.

While in Alaska, he held a summer job researching shorebirds of the Arctic tundra near Prudhoe Bay. Based with the oil exploration camp, he spent his days alone on the tundra with the bears, wolves, and other wildlife, and with the shorebirds he learned to love. His master's thesis followed up on this love with a study of the Upland Sandpiper.



His first permanent job was with the Bureau of Land Management in Utah at St. George and at Escalante. He joined the Fish & Wildlife Service in 1977, first at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge on the Virginia/North Carolina line for two years before moving to the Chincoteague NWR, where he remained until he retired in 2004. Here he worked with Delmarva fox squirrels, piping plovers, the famous horses, Phragmites weed invasion, migrant and resident raptors, bark beetles, etc. For three years he also served with the waterfowl survey to determine duck breeding success in the prairie pothole country. He also surveyed sea birds from Florida to Canada by small aircraft.

As a volunteer, Irvin organized the Wachapreague Christmas Bird Count for several decades, and with his wife ran the breeding bird censuses both on the refuge and throughout northern Accomack County. He was also a member of the Eastern Shore Bird Club, Community Tennis Association of Chincoteague, Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Wastewatchers of the Eastern Shore (A Keep America Beautiful Affiliate), the Accomack Community Band, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay area.

For recreation, Irvin enjoyed camping and traveling with his wife Marilyn, daughter Charisa, and son Clinton. They traveled each year across the country to visit family in Indiana and California, exploring our country in the process, including camping in all 50 states and many of Canada's provinces (even camping at -40°F). He also explored foreign countries, staying in youth hostels and doing lots of hiking. At home, he enjoyed bike riding and jogging on the refuge and working in the woods around his home.

His many years of hard work to preserve the beauty of the country in general, and the Eastern Shore in particular, have certainly left this world a better place.

John Barastad (1951 – 2016). John Helge Barastad passed away on October 4, 2016 at the University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City.

John was born July 10, 1951 in Sioux City, Iowa and grew up in Yankton, South Dakota where he enjoyed hunting and fishing and spending time with his family. Rumor has it he may even have skipped school a few times to go hunting. Fishing for paddlefish was something he particularly enjoyed.



His love of the outdoors would eventually lead to a 31 year career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. After high school, he enlisted in the Navy, serving on the USS Nautilus- the world's first nuclear powered submarine. After his discharge from the

Navy and armed with the G.I. Bill, John went to college at South Dakota State University for a degree in Fish and Wildlife, and Education. It was there where he met future wife, Susan. They were married in 1978 at her family home in Grafton, North Dakota.

After graduation, wildlife jobs were scarce so initially he put his Education degree to work and taught high school biology in Wisconsin. He started with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service after he and Sue moved to the Green Bay area. Here, son Cory joined the family in 1987. The family lived in Wisconsin for 12 years.

In 1992, a FWS career move took the family to the St. James, Minnesota where second son, Casey, joined the family. In 2000, John was transferred to Thief River Falls, Minnesota, to work at Lake Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge. There, John and the boys dove head first into involvement with the Boy Scouts of America. John served as Scout Master for 8 years and it was a point of great pride that both boys achieved their Eagle rank.

In 2009, the family moved to Idaho Falls, where John transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Complex office in Chubbuck as Deputy Project Leader overseeing the operations of five area National Wildlife Refuges and Waterfowl Production Areas. John retired from the service in December 2015.

Being involved in the Idaho Alpine Club for hikes, skiing, snowshoeing, paddling, meetings enriched John's love of the outdoors. A favorite hideaway was the family cabin in Island Park. Among his many interests and activities were mountain man rendezvous, cooking, gun building, and photography. He loved spending time with Cory while duck hunting and with Casey at fiddle contests. There was never a dull moment in his life.

John is survived by wife Sue, sons Cory and Casey, brothers Bob and Fred, sister Brenda and numerous in-laws, nieces and nephews. A celebration of his life was held at an open house at the family home. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Friends of Camas National Wildlife Refuge at www.friendsofcamas.org.

Russel (Russ) Clapper (1922 – 2016). Russel W. Clapper, age 94, of Anahuac, Texas passed away of Alzheimers on Saturday, December 10, 2016 at San Jacinto Hospital in Baytown, Texas. His wife Jeanne of 67 years predeceased him by four years.



Russ was employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 42 years, starting as a GS-4 clerk and rising to become Project Leader of a major National Wildlife Refuge complex without a formal degree. He served as Refuge Manager at Bitter Lake NWR in New Mexico from 1958 to 1963 before moving to Texas as the first manager of the Anahuac National

Wildlife Refuge where he guided the refuge through its first quarter century. The federal government established the refuge in 1963 with 9,853 acres of coastal prairie marshland in southern Chambers County. During Russ' tenure at Anahuac, land acquisitions expanded that refuge to 24,293 acres. When he retired in 1987, Russ was overseeing 79,711 acres and was manager of the Anahuac refuge, the McFaddin and Texas Point

refuges along the Texas coast near Beaumont, and the Moody National Wildlife Refuge at Smith Point. He also briefly oversaw the Brazoria and San Bernard NWRs when they were first acquired in the late 1960's.

Russ' major emphasis during his career was to preserve the marshlands and wetlands along the upper Texas coast, which are critical to the many species of waterfowl and shorebirds in the nation's central flyway. The Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge now attracts thousands of visitors each year including bird-watchers, photographers, students, hunters, fishermen and nature lovers of all sorts and, to a large degree, put the town of Anahuac on the map. Russ and Jeanne's contributions to the community are found in the prolific wildlife of the three refuges and the beautiful artwork found in homes and businesses of this area and across the country.

Russ is survived by his sons Rob Clapper and wife Georgia, Doug Clapper and wife Lena, five grandchildren, seven great grandchildren, and a host of other family and friends.

Funeral services for Russ were held on December 17, 2016 at the First Baptist Church in Anahuac, following which he was interred in the Anahuac Cemetery.

George Jonkel (1927 – 2016). George Matthew Jonkel, of



Fountain, Florida, passed away November 20, 2016 at Bay Medical Center, Panama City, Florida. The cause of his death was congestive heart failure.

George, or Duke as he preferred to be called, was born in Chicago, Illinois, on July 8, 1927. His family moved to Wisconsin where Duke graduated from

Neillsville High School. After graduation, he served his country in the Army and then the Army Reserves from 1946 until 1952. Duke married Jean Dickson of Missoula, Montana, in 1948 and started college at the University of Minnesota. He later transferred to the University of Montana in Missoula where he received his BS in 1952 and his MS in Wildlife Technology in 1954.

Duke started his professional career with the Montana Fish & Game Department and then with the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in Bismarck, North Dakota. In 1963, he transferred to Huron, South Dakota, and set up the Fish & Wildlife Wetlands Acquisition Office for preservation of waterfowl habitat. In 1971, he was made Chief of the Bird Banding Laboratory in the FWS Office of Migratory Bird Management at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland. During this employment, Duke contributed to scientific advancement of bird banding and bird population studies, working with ornithologists in Brazil, India and China in establishing their banding programs. He also traveled to Antarctica for a specific penguin research study. An intrepid and inquisitive traveler, he forged new contacts and made many close friends in distant points of the world. He served as chairman of the South Dakota chapter of The Nature Conservancy, secretary of the Raptor Research Foundation, an officer of The Wildlife Society and member of The American Ornithologists Union and the South Dakota Ornithologists.

After retirement from the Service, Duke and Jean moved to Fountain, Florida, where they raised blueberries and grapes, and enjoyed their new post as Florida naturalists.

Duke was predeceased by his wife, Jean, his sister, Theo, and his brother, Dr. Charles Jonkel. He is survived by his children, Rhonda Lee, Susan, Elise, Philip, and Laura, and by his five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren as well many nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends

The family would appreciate your consideration of memorial gifts to The Nature Conservancy, The University of Montana Wildlife Program, Bay County Conservancy or the charitable organization of your choice.

Karen Moleski Kilpatrick (1956 – 2016). Karen

Kilpatrick, 59 years of age, was surrounded by family and friends when she passed away at home on August 24, 2016. Karen was born on December 1, 1956 to George and Leona Moleski in Tucson, Arizona.

Karen graduated from Georgia Tech in 1978. She then served two years as a member of the Peace Corps in the



Central African Republic. Karen moved to Natchitoches in 1981 to work as a fisheries biologist for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. She was appointed manager of Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery in 1999, making her the second female hatchery manager in the nation. Karen was instrumental in the early days of the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership and in moving the NFH program into rare and endangered aquatic species culture.

In December 2011 she retired from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service after 30 years of service. She was also active in numerous social organizations including Service League of Natchitoches, P.E.O., and The Women's Resource Center. She was also honored as Natchitoches' Woman of the Year.

She is survived by her children, Ryan Daniel Kilpatrick and Jared Young Kilpatrick and wife Kemper, by her siblings, Carol O'Brien, Nancy Haus, and Kevin Moleski. She was preceded in death by her parents and her sister, Leona.

Karen requested memorial donations be made to the NSU Foundation for the Arnold R. Kilpatrick Scholarship Fund in lieu of flowers.

Hank Pattee (1948 – 2016). Dr. Hank Patee died on



November 1, 2016 of kidney failure related to Parkinson's Disease. Hank was born in Dinuba, California, on June 16, 1948, to the late Martin and Nellie Pattee. He earned a Doctorate degree from Texas A & M, and worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a wildlife biologist at the Patuxent

Wildlife Research Center until his retirement. Hank conducted research during the 1970-90s at Patuxent dealing with contaminants and also with endangered species. He was leader of the California Condor program at Patuxent's California field station for a while. He also conducted studies on the Delmarva Fox squirrel

In addition to his wife of 38 years, Colleen Pattee, Hank is survived by his son Chad Pattee and his wife Megan and their son Ace. He is also survived by his sister Janelle Cochran. He was predeceased by his siblings Marty Pattee and Jeannine Wiebe. A celebration of life was held at the Donaldson Funeral Home in Laurel, Maryland, on November 6, 2016. Memorial contributions may be made to the Parkinson's Disease Foundation, Season's Hospice or the American Red Cross.

Dan Searcy (1944 – 2016). Dan Mitchell Searcy, a resident of Canton, Georgia, died on September 22, 2016, in an Atlanta hospital after an extended illness. He was 72.

Dan was born July 29, 1944, son of the late Wade Watson Searcy and Mavie Skipper Searcy. He was raised in Abbeville, Georgia, and was a 1962 graduate of Abbeville High School. He graduated from Auburn University in 1968 with a B.S. Degree in Wildlife Science. While at Auburn, he was a member of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. He retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service after thirty years of service. During his career, he worked in Alabama, Maryland, Illinois, Washington, DC, Louisiana, and Georgia. He had a passion for all varieties of wildlife.

Surviving relatives include his loving wife of fifty years, Linda Nelson Searcy; four children, Shea White (Jim); Mandy Rusch (Greg); Jennifer Roeder (Scott); and Blake Searcy (Jamie) as well as eight grandchildren, several nieces and nephews, and countless friends. Graveside services for Dan were held at the Abbeville Memorial Cemetery.

Dan possessed a great fondness for family time and the great outdoors. For this reason, memorial contributions may be made to Camp Sunshine (an outdoor retreat for children suffering from cancer and their families), 1850 Clairmont Road, Decatur, Georgia 30033.

Glen Smart (1932 – 2017). Glen Smart was born in Rector, Arkansas to William and Edith Smart on August 9, 1932 and passed away at Cape Girardeau, Missouri on January 6, 2017.

After graduating from high school in Campbell, Missouri, Glen attended Southeast Missouri State University where he received his BS degree in teaching and Zoology. He then received a MS degree in Zoology from the University of Missouri. He married Patricia Ann Thompson in Campbell in 1957.

After serving as an aerial photographer in the U.S. Air Force for four years, Glen started his professional career as a research biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, working primarily with endangered species. He was part of the original Whooping Crane recovery program in the 1960's as well as working on the beginnings of the California Condor recovery program. He



worked with other endangered species, but these two programs gave him the most pride. One of his proudest moments was three years ago when a pair of Whooping Cranes stopped at a lake near his home and he got to watch them with his son and granddaughters. He was with the USFWS service for his whole career and retired in 1990.

Glen is survived by his wife of 59 years, Pat, sons Michael (Emily) and Phillip, two granddaughters, and many nieces,

nephews, and friends. He was buried with full military honors at Woodlawn Cemetery in Campbell.

Alan Mark Strand (1943 – 2016). Allan Strand, 73, of Bandera, Texas, passed away on December 13, 2016 in San Antonio, Texas. He was born in Bowbells, North Dakota, to Mark Allan and Inez Strand on May 25, 1943. He married Alpee Liliane Pesch on April 23, 1966 in Butzbach, Germany.



Allan graduated from Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Biology. He also held a Master of Science degree in Environmental Toxicology. He retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2013 with 23 years of service, beginning as a Contaminants Specialist and then leading the Corpus Christi Ecological Services Field Office as Field Supervisor. Allan loved hunting and

fishing and had retired to a ranch in Bandera in the Texas Hill Country to watch after the wildlife.

He was truly a leader of people and a strategic thinker and implementer. Under his direction, a large settlement was reached after decades and remediation implemented for Alcoa's mercury contamination of Lavaca Bay. He was instrumental in helping conserve Shamrock Island in Corpus Christi Bay, a major colonial water bird rookery on the South Texas coast. He laid the foundation of good relationships and information sharing with private ranch owners in South Texas and led the way to accomplish landscape conservation for endangered species. Prior to joining the Service, he had extensive private industry experience obtaining and managing hunting leases on large ranches.

Allan served his country honorably in the Army for over eight years during the Vietnam conflict and was awarded 2 purple hearts, 1 bronze star and 1 Silver Star.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Alpee Strand; daughter, Alisha Strand-Mueller and her husband, Mark; son, Erik Strand; sister, Debra Higgins and her family; grandchild, Cadence Mueller. Allan was preceded in death by his parents.

Funeral services and interment for Allan were held on December 30, 2016 in Bandera. Memorials may be made in his name to The Nature Conservancy by calling 877-812-3698, and tell the operator you wish to make a monetary tribute in the name of Allan Strand, and include the zip code, 78003.

Cleveland Vaughn (1944 – 2016). Retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent Cleveland Vaughn passed away in Omaha, Nebraska, on November 4, 2016 after a long bout with stomach cancer.



Known as Cleve to all his friends, he worked much of his career in Nebraska. He and his wife Shirley lived in Omaha.

He was always a hard working guy with a great personality and

lots of fun to be around. He will be missed by all of us who called him friend.

He is survived by his wife, Shirley, son, Derek and two daughters, Monica and Janae. Also survived by his five grandchildren, three brothers and one sister, and a host of other relatives. Funeral services were held at the Zion Baptist Church in Omaha and he was interred in Forest Lawn Cemetery. Memorials are requested to Zion Baptist Church, 2215 Grant Street in Omaha.

Guy W. Willey, Sr. (1930 - 2017) Guy Willey of Cambridge, Maryland, passed away peacefully on January 16, 2017 at his home with his family and companion by his side.



Born October 3, 1930 in Cambridge, he was a son of the late Joseph Willey, Jr. and Estella Olivia Mills.

After graduation from Cambridge High School in 1948, Guy began working at the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge as a clerk. In 1951 Guy left his job at the refuge to serve his country in the U. S. Army during the Korean War. After being stationed in Germany he was discharged in 1953 with military honors. Upon returning home he also returned to his job at Blackwater NWR.

In 1956 Guy married the former Fay Erskine. Fay passed away in 2002.

It was Guy's love of nature and wildlife led him to his career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He retired in September of 1985 as a biological technician, after a span of thirty-three years and eight months. His career was dedicated to protecting the marsh ecosystems at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. Guy contributed significantly to the recovery of the American bald eagle in Maryland. He established the protected-area concept for nesting sites, which is used nationwide.

After his retirement from the refuge in 1985, Guy continued his efforts in conservation of wildlife resources. Known as the "Squirrel Man", he worked twenty years as a contractor for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources helping to restore the Delmarva Fox Squirrel population.

At the age of 80, Guy began capturing the local flora and fauna he loved through his amateur photography. He also enjoyed taking candid photos of friends and his family.

Guy was a recipient of many conservation awards recognizing his dedication and contributions to wildlife conservation. He received the Gulf Oil Conservation Award in 1985, and was presented the U.S. Department of the Interior Distinguished Service Award in 1986.

Surviving Guy are his children Bambi Corkran (Stuart Shelly), Guy W. Willey, Jr. (Robin), Robbie Willey, and Tracy Hill (Ian Hogg). He also leaves behind five grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and his very special companion Cindy Bech.

A private committal service with military honors was held at the Maryland Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery where he was interred.

The Association of Retired U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Employees
Annual Meeting and Reunion, October 2-6, 2016
Memphis, Tennessee

Who was there. Over 120 of your former colleagues now retired, active FWS employees and others were part of the festivities at Memphis and helped to make it the success that it was. Attendees included:

Retirees

Gail Baker and Doyle Bruner
Nell and Joe Baldacchino
Ken Butts
Gail Carmody and Linda Hopfensberger
Richard and Nancy Coon
John Cornely
Earl Cunningham
Bob and June Fields
Don and LuAnn Fortenbery and guests Craig and Chris Fortenbery
John and Terri Gallegos
Phil and Nelda Garrett
Blayne and Bobbi Graves
Lynn and Judy Greenwalt
Judy and Jerry Grover
Warren and Sharon Hagenbuck
Dale and Sarah Hall
Bruce Halstead
Kathy Holland and guests Valentina and Reed Evans
Deborah Holle-Friggel and Terry Friggel
Jack and Yvonne Key and guest Marianna Sathrum
Skip Ladd
Bob and Bonnie Jacobsen
Tom and Joan McAndrews
June McIlwain and Tim Jackson
Jim McKevitt
Bob and Irma Miller
Dick and Sheila Moore
Nancy Morrissey and Patty Vick
Allan and Kathleen Mueller
Mamie Parker and guests (2)
Matt Perry
Dennis Peters
Walt and Kelle Quist
Paul Schmidt
Larry and Carleen Shanks
Dave and Tammy Sharp
Jim and Rose Shaw
Rollin Siegfried

Donna Stanek
Bob and Cathy Stevens
Charles and Holly Storrs
Bob and Karen Streeter
Jim and Jacque Tisdale
Sandy Tucker
Rolf and Ginnie Wallenstrom
Linda and Russell Watters
Wayne and Marilyn Weir
Bill Wilen

Active FWS Personnel

Steve Chase, NCTC
Randy Cook, Region 4
Barry Davis, Region 4, and spouse
Greg Dehmer, Region 3
Tara Escarciga, Region 4
Suzanne Fellows, HQ
Kevin Foerster, Region 1
Libby Herland, Region 5
Jim Kurth, HQ
Rachel Levin, HQ
Mike Johnson, HQ
Mark Madison, NCTC, and Heidi Madison
Keith (Steve) McKnight, Region 4
Mike Oetker, Region 4
Angie Rodgers, Region 4
Denise Sheehan, HQ
Jay Slack, NCTC
Paul Tritaik, Region 4
Amber Zimmerman, Region 2

Others

Gretchen Benjamin, TNC
Doug Brinkley, Author
Jessica Klement, NAFRE
Mark Plotkin, Amazon Conservation Team
Bill Reeves, Tennessee Wildlife Resources
Scott Yaich, DU
Memphis Mayor's Representative

FWS RETIREES ASSOCIATION



*Why join?
Keep connected to USFWS, renew friendships,
make new friends with similar interests,
travel to unique wild places, and/or
do volunteer work for fish and wildlife conservation.¹*

Membership Application/Renewal/Update

Fill out and mail OR use online form and PayPal on our website at <http://www.fwsretirees.org/>

Please complete each section in **BLOCK LETTERS** using Black Ink

This is a: New Application ___ Renewal ___ Information Update ___ (CHECK ONE)

Name: _____ Spouse/Partner: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ email _____ @ _____

FWS Program (at retirement) _____

Office and Region _____ Retirement Date _____

YOUR INTEREST AREA(S), PLEASE CHECK:

- Heritage – oral and written histories, artifacts, photo records; celebrate station anniversaries
- Mentoring – youth activities, new employees;
- Communication - newsletter articles, web page, Friends Groups, members, current employees
- Membership – Regional captain, recruiting; marketing
- Travel with other members – national and international volunteer projects
- Reunion location – site selection, tours, program, auction, Walk for Wildlife

DUES (TAX DEDUCTIBLE): 1-yr - \$25.00 2-yr - \$50.00 3-yr - \$75.00* 5-yr - \$100 Lifetime - \$500

Get me in the database! I'm a new retiree! No dues needed!

Send a membership pin (one per member only)

**Make check payable to and mail completed applications to:
Treasurer, FWS Retirees Association, PO Box 27896, Panama City, FL. 32411**

A retiree is any person who worked for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and has now retired, including their spouses or partners.

If you were caught up in a reorganization, retired from another agency, or took on a second career, but still consider yourself part of the FWS family, you are an eligible retiree.

Among these are colleagues that were formerly in Research, Animal Damage Control, or certain National Fish Hatcheries transferred to State operation

¹ By adding your name to the Retirees database, you will continue to enjoy FW News and Refuge Update and will receive announcements of other fun and rewarding Retirees activities. No dues are required to be added to the database. You will have voting membership privileges for one year. Dues are voluntary and support Association activities. We hope that you will join in the future!