

FWS Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER



October 2019

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Annapolis, Here We come!

If you haven't already made your reservations and registered for the 19th gathering of former FWS colleagues in historic Annapolis on Chesapeake Bay, you better get with it. The reunion begins in a scant few weeks and, rest assured, you don't want to miss this one. We expect the largest turnout ever and have a program that will interest everyone. AND, we have scheduled the Annapolis reunion to dovetail with the world-famous Easton Waterfowl Festival to allow you to double the interest and entertainment value of your trip.

WHEN: Core meeting dates for the FWS Retirees Reunion are Monday, November 11, 2019 through Wednesday, November 13th. However, Sunday afternoon, November 10th will be the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife and Thursday, November 14th will be a wrap-up day as well as the meeting day for the FWS Heritage Committee. A very ambitious schedule of activities and presentations has planned by the Board and the FWS folks in Region 5 so those days will be very full.

These dates were selected to immediately follow the renowned *Easton Waterfowl Festival*. This famous and highly touted annual waterfowl festival, featuring extensive exhibits of original wildlife artistry and sculptured decoys begins Thursday, November 7th and runs through Sunday, November 10th, 2019. To find out more on this wonderful event, check them out at www.waterfowlfestival.org.

WHERE: Our venue is the Annapolis Hilton DoubleTree Hotel. This four-star hotel has complimentary self-parking,

bar/restaurant, Wi-Fi, exercise room, pool (seasonal) plus they have a shuttle van that will deliver you (and pick you up) to places within 5 miles of the hotel meaning you have access to the downtown area, waterfront, shopping, Naval Academy, etc. Many restaurants and shopping opportunities are within walking distance of the hotel.

Annapolis is located on the west shore of the Chesapeake Bay, one of the world's most productive estuarine ecosystems, and is within easy driving distance from several resource attractions on both the eastern and western shores where, in addition to our traditional day-long tours, you could schedule side trips of your own. Annapolis also offers relatively easy airport access from either BWI or Washington National airports.

The hotel **does not** have airport shuttle service to Baltimore-Washington airport. If you're not interested in renting a car, the best bet is to arrange with Super Shuttle, a van service that serves Annapolis. A shared van is about \$45-50 for two people and can be arranged by contacting them at 1-800-258-3826 or at <https://www.supershuttle.com/locations/baltimore-bwi>. Of course, you can always rent a vehicle and avail yourselves of the many attractions in the D.C.-Annapolis - Eastern Shore areas.

LODGING RATES: We have negotiated the following rates for our attendees: A **single** which includes breakfast and all taxes and fees will run \$123.17; a **double** will be \$140.12. Given the location and the proximity to Washington D.C., these are very good rates at a full-service high-quality hotel and is the Government per diem rate. These negotiated special rates are available to our retirees from November 7th through November 15th should you wish to arrive early or depart late to accommodate your own schedule and/or side trips.

Reservations may be made by calling **1-800-222-8733** and referencing group code: **XFW** or online at: https://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/A/ANPDTDT-XFW-20191107/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG Hit Ctrl + click to follow link

The cutoff date for reservations at these rates is **October 15th**. After that, it's on your own for best price/space available.

REGISTRATION FEE: The “*almost all-inclusive*” registration fee is \$125 per person. That fee includes the icebreaker social with microbrew keg beer & soft drinks, cash bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres; field trip transportation with choices of sack lunch; meeting coffee service; and our Reunion Banquet and Silent Auction with guest speaker Former FWS Director Lynn Greenwalt.

The fee does not cover the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife and the reduced entrance fee at the Baltimore Aquarium.

You can register for the reunion and pay online at: <https://form.jotform.com/91564111936962> . Hit Ctrl + click to follow link. The form is self-explanatory and allows full or partial registration and selection of which field trip, sandwich type and banquet meal.

GREENWALT WALK FOR WILDLIFE: Our reunion fundraiser. This is a leisurely 2-mile walk to Broad Creek County Park. After our walk, we will eat at a local restaurant, The Seafood Palace. Non-walkers may take their cars directly to the restaurant to join the walkers. However, space is limited to 30 people - the first thirty to sign up. Cost is \$30 per person which will cover the cost of the meal (drinks not included) and a donation to the local Eastern Neck NWR Friends Group. Their highest priority project is to construct two outdoor display cases to be mounted on the side of existing kiosks that face a Refuge Pollinator Garden. There will be a notice inside each case indicating it was provided by the FWS Retirees Association.

REUNION PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE.

Sunday, November 10. – Retiree Arrival Day

1:00 -7:00 PM. Registration

4:00 PM. Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife: Broad Creek County Park followed by dinner at the Seafood Palace Buffet

Monday, November 11. – Day 1 of Reunion

8:00 AM-4 PM. History Table Open – Bring a piece of history to share. Contact Mark Madison at (304) 616-7905

8:30-9:00 AM. Announcements, housekeeping, and welcoming remarks. Jerry Grover & Robin West.

9:00-10:15 AM. FWS Retirees Association Board-Accomplishment Report and Business Meeting.

10:30-11:00 AM. Presentation: New USFWS Responsibility – Living Monuments.

11:00AM-12:00 Noon. Presentation: Public Affairs – A Historical Perspective. Alan Levitt, Meg Durham, and Mike Smith.

12 Noon-12:20 PM. National Wildlife Refuge Association Business Meeting.

12:20-12:30 PM. Announcements and Field Trip Information.

12:30-5:00 PM. Free Time.

5:00–7 PM. Evening Icebreaker Social

Tuesday, November 12. - Day 2 of Reunion

8:15 AM. All Day Off-Site Field Trips

1. Patuxent Research Refuge and National Aquarium or

2. Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

Wednesday, November 13. - Day 3 of Reunion:

8:00-8:15 AM. Announcements and Housekeeping

8:15-8:45 AM. Presentation: State of the Service. National Headquarters Speaker TBA

8:45-9:15 AM. Welcome to Region 5. Wendi Weber, Regional Director.

9:15-10:15 AM. Regional Presentations 1. Connecting People with Nature.

Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships.

Genevieve LaRouche, Chesapeake Bay Field Office and Brad Knudsen, Patuxent Research Refuge. An overview of urban wildlife refuge partnerships in R-5 and highlighting the work at Masonville Cove and Baltimore to connect urban audiences with the natural world.

Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation. Marcia Pradines, Chesapeake Marshlands NWR Complex. Highlights of partnership efforts to garner support for fish and wildlife conservation through hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation programs.

10:15-10:30 AM. Break

10:30-11:15 AM. Regional Presentations 2. Aquatic Community.

Blode Dam Removal Project. FWS biologist Julie Devers. One of the largest dam removal projects in Maryland to improve fish passage on the Patapsco River.

eDNA Research at Northeast Fishery Center. Dr. Mike Millard, Center Director. An overview of cutting edge eDNA work at the Center.

11:15AM-12:00 PM. Regional Presentations 3. At-risk Species.

Salt Marsh Sparrow. The Salt Marsh Sparrow Team will share the business plan and species status assessment for this at-risk bird, that is petitioned for listing consideration in 2023. They will share innovative approaches FWS and partners are trying to save this species, threatened by many factors including sea level rise.

Operation Manhattan Project. Dave Hubbard will talk about what the Office of Law Enforcement is doing on an international scale.

12:00-1:15 PM. Lunch

1:15-1:15 PM. Regional Presentations 4. Coastal Resilience.

Prime Hook NWR Restoration. Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge is home to the largest marsh restoration project on the East Coast. After Hurricane Sandy devastated the east coast in 2012, FWS received \$40 million in appropriations to restore this important marsh ecosystem and protect inland communities. Hear from Refuge Manager Al Rizzo about the hydrological and ecological challenges of this restoration effort and the wildlife success.

1:45-4:00 PM. Regional Presentations 5. Landscape Conservation.

Delaware River Basin. - FWS employee Mike Slattery will talk about the FWS's newest legislative authority to provide grants to partners to protect and conserve the basin under the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act.

Chesapeake Bay Program. Jennifer Greiner will talk about this flagship landscape conservation program that FWS, EPA, and the States of Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland have been working on for decades to protect this amazing watershed. Learn about the challenges, successes and opportunities ahead for this program.

Delmarva Restoration and Conservation Network. Genevieve LaRouche and Dan Murphy will provide an overview of this emerging partnership effort to protect this important landscape and the challenges and opportunities.

2:45 – 3:00 PM. Break

3:00 – 4:00 PM. Regional Presentation 5 Landscape Conservation (continued)

Nutria Eradication Project. Marnie Pepper and Dan Murphy from FWS and colleagues at the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service will talk about the largest invasive mammal undertaking on the east coast to eradicate nutria from the Delmarva Peninsula. After more than a decade, the program is in its final phase of monitoring. FWS recently contracted with New Zealand partners to evaluate the program to ensure that nutria are completely gone before declaring success.

4:00 – 4:15 PM. Announcements - Jerry Grover

Evening schedule.

5:00 - 6:00 PM. No-host Bar and Silent Auction.

6:00 - 10:00 PM. Reunion Banquet.

Annual Heritage Committee Award: presented by Committee Chairman, Charlie Wooley:

2019 Recipient: Dr. Matt Perry

Guest Banquet Speaker: Lynn Greenwalt Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1974-1981)

Thursday, November 14.

8:30 AM - 4:30 PM. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Heritage Committee Meeting - Charlie Wooley, Chairman. This is an open meeting; all are welcome to attend.

CONTACTS: For more information on hotel, reservations, arrangements - Jerry Grover: 503-684-1809 [cell 503-702-7007 travel only]. e-mail: Groverjj612@frontier.com

THE SILENT AUCTION: The following is a plea from Cindy Barry who has volunteered to take charge of running the Silent Auction and daily raffles at our Annapolis Reunion:

For the Reunion: Time to gather items for the Silent Auction and Raffle!

A fun part of our Retiree reunions is the Silent Auction and Raffles; these are the Association's biggest fundraisers. I'd like to see this event more popular than ever. We need your help! Our reunion registration fees and dues only cover the costs associated with the reunion and membership services. The Silent Auction is extremely important to continue our efforts on your behalf.

*This year, we are once again asking for donated items (from you or solicited from others), such as significant artwork, books, carvings, artisan jewelry, optics, wine/liquor, overnight lodgings, guided fishing/hunting trips, and other treasures that you may find in your closet, attic, hanging on a wall, and **valuable** to an auction bidder. Does anyone have a NWRS Centennial blanket that is resting in your closet ... willing to have a home in someone else's closet? Limited edition items, no longer publicly available, would be generous donations. Donors will receive a letter from the Association for tax deduction purposes.*

We hope that you will attend the reunion and bring these items with you. However, if unable to attend in person, we will make arrangements for a place to send them. My email address is cynthiabarry@comcast.net I would like to know, in advance, if you are considering a donation, so that I can prepare in advance of the Reunion. Thanks!" I am excited to chair the Silent Auction and Raffle at the Annapolis reunion! You can expect me to "exhibit contagious enthusiasm!" With your help, it will be the best ever!

Cindy Uptegraft Barry: (360) 909-4501

Vacation in Maine. Once again, Board member Steve Rideout is offering a one week stay at his three-bedroom



cabin on Lake Ambajejus in northern Maine as one of the items up for grabs in the Silent Auction. The cabin has a full kitchen, dining and living room with large field stone fireplace, ¾ bath, well water, electricity, satellite TV, high

speed internet, and a land line phone. A large lake-side deck offers a spectacular view of Mt. Katahdin, Maine's highest and the centerpiece of 210,000-acre Baxter State Park, only 8 miles from the camp. The cabin also has a canoe and kayak for your use. Just bring your swimsuits, beach towels, and your own food and drink; everything else will be provided.



The lake is part of a connected 5 lake system of over 18,000 acres with myriad islands, coves and great places to swim and fish. There's also whitewater rafting on the nearby West Branch Penobscot River or, should you long for ocean views, Acadia National Park is just a 2 ½ hour trip from the cabin. The cabin will be

available on a mutually agreeable week in July or August 2021.

Candidates for the Board Needed!

We must have a good and active Board to keep this Association running and we need people with new and diverse ideas and viewpoints to step forward. 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. And once a slate of candidates has been identified, every dues-paying member has the opportunity to vote for the candidates of their choice. Elections are normally held in the fall or early winter, with new or re-elected Board members taking their seats in January.

This year, the terms of Board members Rowan Gould, Jim McKevitt, and Robin West expire. While they may again stand for election to the Board, this is the opportunity for others interested in being active and influential in the

Association to throw their hats into the ring. We need new blood and new ideas to keep us going into the future. Ballots with the names and bios of all qualified candidates will be mailed to eligible voters around the middle of November. Voter returns will be accepted through the 18th of December. But a slate of candidates needs to be identified soon. If you yourself are interested in serving on the Board, please let us know directly. Or if you know of someone else that you feel would make a good Board member, confirm their interest first before submitting their name for consideration. Names for candidacy must be submitted by November 15th. Send them to Jim McKevitt at jimmymac@usamedia.tv or phone 530-878-7883.

Happenings.

New Director for FWS Nominated. The White House has nominated Aurelia Skipwith to be the new Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. She has degrees in biology, molecular genetics, and law and began her career with the Monsanto Chemical Company and has held several positions in crop science and corporate affairs. She joined the Trump administration as deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks less than two years ago US law says a director must be, "by reason of scientific education and experience, knowledgeable in the principles of fisheries and wildlife management". However, her background shows no fish, wildlife, habitat, or conservation experience, a prerequisite for the Directors position. This has many conservation groups and former Fish and Wildlife Service employees very concerned and many have written to object to her confirmation.

Westward Ho for BLM. Interior Secretary David Bernhardt announced in late September that a lease has been signed for the new BLM headquarters in Grand Junction, Colorado and that the first moves of key personnel from the current headquarters in Washington, D.C. will begin shortly. The move is the culmination of a decades-long effort, spearheaded by Colorado conservatives, to reshape federal public-lands policy.

All told, 84 percent of the current headquarters leadership in DC will be relocated west by the end of 2020 while only about 60 positions, mostly budget and congressional staff, will remain in D.C.

Initially, 27 senior personnel will be relocated to the new headquarters in Grand Junction and 58 to the Colorado State Office in Lakewood, Colorado. Another 200+ from D.C. will be assigned to other western states, primarily Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and New Mexico. The D.C. employees were informed of the decision in July and have the option of moving or quit; It is unknown how many of the current leadership will opt to resign or retire.

While Interior heralds this as increasing efficiency by moving the decision-making closer to the bulk of BLM's

245 million acres of public lands, others view it as a means of eviscerating the current leadership and focusing the agency on oil, gas, and coal extraction and on cattle grazing.

Travel & Leisure.

Matt Perry has announced two eco-trips upcoming in 2020:

(1) Bahamas - May 17-24, 2020 - Trip is for 8 courageous folks aboard a 75-foot research schooner.

Visit three islands (Cat Island, Little San Salvador, Eleuthera) and collect data on bird populations. Ask for Matt Perry's group to get discount (total cost \$1650, excluding flight cost).

Hit control and click to follow the link to more info on this trip. [home](#) | [coastalbird](#)

(2) Eastern Cuba. You need to hurry on this trip; there are only three openings left (max 15 folks). Former Board member Matt Perry will be leading a citizen scientist birding trip to the east side of Cuba and is looking for up to 15 fellow travelers. The trip is sponsored by the Caribbean Conservation Trust which has 23 years of experience with trips in Cuba. Dates for the adventure are January 23 to February 1, 2020.

Accommodations feature hotels and tourist board approved homestays in Holguin, Santiago de Cuba, and Guantanamo provinces and may include refurbished vintage hotels, modest 3-star facilities, and beach-front bungalows. Meals and local travel are included but travel to Cuba is not. Cost is \$4195 for shared accommodations. For more detailed info, Matt's e-mail is mperry1209@verizon.net or phone 301-249-5305. Follow the link below to see more details: [Cuba Bird Survey](#) | [Eastern Cuba's Mountains, Coast and Colonial Settlements](#) | [Caribbean Conservation Trust](#)

Natural Resource Issues.

The Association strives to keep you abreast of fish and wildlife matters of regional or national significance or of importance to the Fish and Wildlife Service. If there are issues you believe we should become more deeply involved in, let us know.

Arctic NWR Leasing to Begin? In September, the Bureau of Land Management released its final Environmental Impact Statement, with a preferred option to offer lease sales across 1.56 million acres of Alaska's coastal plains and opening Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas exploration. Lease sales could occur by the end of the year, barring challenges from environmental groups opposed to the administration's plans

"After rigorous review, robust public comment, and a consideration of a range of alternatives, today's announcement is a big step to carry out the clear mandate we received from Congress to develop and implement a leasing program for the Coastal Plain, a program the people

of Alaska have been seeking for over 40 years," Interior Secretary David Bernhardt said in a statement.

Under law, after a 30-day waiting period, BLM can open up calls from fossil fuel companies for tracts to bid on and file its finalized Notice of Decision. Officials say they anticipate holding lease sales before the end of the year.

The agency said the preferred plan to lease the entire program area to oil and gas companies would still provide protection for the "many important resources" within the area. It added that 40 operating procedures would also be applied to reduce potential impacts. Any proposed future drilling projects would be subject to additional environmental scrutiny and permitting.

The announcement comes the same day that the House voted 225-193 to ban drilling in ANWR. The House legislation is not expected to pass the GOP-controlled Senate.

Barrier Lifted to Pebble Mine Project in Alaska. As have reported before, this copper-and-gold mine planned near Bristol Bay, Alaska, had been blocked by the Obama administration after scientists from several federal agencies found that the mine would cause "complete loss of" the bay's fish habitat. However, on July 30 of this year, EPA scientists were informed that their agency has removed their objections to the project, eliminating a major roadblock to its implementation. EPA, under the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act, had veto power to stop the project.

With this announcement, coming just days after President Trump met with Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy (a strong proponent of the project) apparently shocked EPA's scientists. Since 2014, the project had been halted because they found that it would cause "complete loss of fish habitat due to elimination, dewatering, and fragmentation of streams, wetlands, and other aquatic resources" in some areas of Bristol Bay. The agency then invoked a rarely used provision of the Clean Water Act that works like a veto, effectively banning mining on the site. Some current and former EPA officials say the decision to remove the Clean Water Act restriction disregards the standard assessment process under the Clean Water Act, ignores scientific evidence, and cuts the scientists out of the process.

Grizzlies Re-Listed. On July 30th, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service restored federal protections to grizzly bears in and around Yellowstone National Park, abiding by a court ruling last year that removal of the bears' threatened status violated the Endangered Species Act. Reinstatement of these bears to the threatened species list capped years of legal wrangling over one of the most iconic animals roaming the Northern Rockies.

The Trump administration's decision to "de-list" the Yellowstone grizzly, formally proposed in 2016 during the Obama era, was based on federal wildlife managers'

findings that the bear's numbers had sufficiently rebounded in recent decades and no longer warranted federal safeguards.

That move, welcomed by big-game hunters and ranchers, applied to about 700 bears in the region, and led to plans for the first licensed trophy hunts for grizzlies in areas adjacent to Yellowstone park in more than 40 years. However, a number of environmental groups and Native American tribes then sued in federal court seeking to overturn the decision, arguing that grizzly populations could plunge again without protection. They cited pressures that hunting and encroaching human development posed to a species that is slow to reproduce. The U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana, sided with the groups, ruling last September that the agency had overstepped its authority and had failed to apply the best available science in its evaluation, including ongoing threats to the bears.

The Fish and Wildlife Service said in a statement that it had employed the "best scientific and commercial data" when it de-listed the Yellowstone grizzlies, which it said had experienced robust population growth, but that it was complying with the judge's order. "There is widespread public support for grizzly bear conservation, and the service continues to collaborate with state, federal, non-governmental, and tribal partners to research, monitor, and manage the iconic species and its habitats," the agency said in a statement.

Fewer than 2,000 grizzlies are estimated to inhabit the Lower 48 states, and the species had remained under federal protection in five other regions outside of Yellowstone.

Ranchers, who argue that a rebounding grizzly population poses a threat to livestock, are a powerful political constituency in the American West.

Wyoming's sole member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Republican Liz Cheney, described Tuesday's action as the "result of excessive litigation pursued by radical environmentalists intent on destroying our Western way of life." She said she would introduce legislation to restore the de-listing by an act of Congress, which would move grizzly management back to the state.

(Excerpted from a Reuters News Article)

Revisions to ESA Regulations. The Trump administration recently announced revisions to the regulations in which the National Marine Fisheries Service and Fish & Wildlife Service administer the Endangered Species Act. These revisions, many at the behest of ranchers and the development community, substantially change some important standards and procedures by which the Services currently implement the ESA.

In the ESA, Congress prohibited the taking of endangered species and authorized both the NMFS and the FWS to promulgate regulations to protect "threatened" species. NMFS has routinely adopted regulations prescribing

prohibitions, protections, or restrictions tailored to that species. FWS on the other hand had adopted a blanket regulation that largely extended the protections afforded "endangered" species to all threatened species, thus generally blurring the distinction between the two categories. A very short summary of the major changes to the previous regs is set forth below:

Economic Impacts. The ESA requires the Services to decide whether to list a species "solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available." Prior to the new rules, the Services made listing decisions "without reference to possible economic or other impacts of such determination." The Services' new rule will inform the public of the economic implications of the Services' listing decisions.

Limits to Critical Habitat. Another of the changes states that an area must at a minimum be "habitat" before it can be considered as potential "critical habitat." This will prevent designating land not previously occupied by that species as "critical habitat".

Protections for Threatened Species. FWS has also now adopted a revised rule, only applicable to new species which are threatened, applying protections tailored to that species, and especially to how much habitat that threatened species may require.

Species Impacts. Both NMFS and FWS have clarified that actions damaging habitat for a threatened or endangered species must be judged on the scale of the *entire* listed species, not on some limited portion of previously designated critical habitat.

Bison Reserve Proposal Scaled Back. A conservation group trying to create the largest nature reserve in the Lower 48 U.S. states said in September it was scaling back its request to expand bison grazing in Montana because of strong opposition from ranchers and Republican lawmakers.

The group's long-term goal remains unchanged: A 5,000-square-mile expanse of public and private lands with at least 10,000 bison in the north-central area of the state. But that would happen more slowly than anticipated after the idea encountered resistance from landowners worried the reserve was displacing ranching families who have lived in the area for generations.

Founded in 2001, the American Prairie Reserve is located along the Missouri River near the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge. Its current holdings support about 850 bison.

The Reserve's revised application to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management would allow bison to graze on about 94 square miles of public lands instead of the 450 square miles originally requested. The Bozeman-based group said it does not want neighboring landowners to feel "bulldozed." The revised application would also allow only seasonal

grazing on most of the land instead of the year-round grazing originally requested. And it reduces the amount of interior fencing to be removed — to allow bison and other wildlife to roam more freely — from 300 miles to 40 miles. However, even under the revised application, the Reserve’s herd would increase by about 1000 animals. They propose to keep it at that for about 10 years before seeking additional changes.

The revised application is subject to approval by the Bureau of Land Management which will undertake an environmental analysis before a final decision on the permit is made.

Miscellaneous.

FEHB Premiums to Increase Significantly in 2020.

Premiums for the federal Employees Health Benefits program are set to rise by an average 5.6 percent for participants in 2020. This is a relatively large increase compared to the 1.3 percent increase in 2019. The governments share of the contribution for 2020 will increase by an average of 3.2 percent.

Open Season will run from November 11 through December 9, 2019.

FWS Retiree Author. Since his retirement in 1990, which ended a 32-year career at J. N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Charles LeBuff has authored and coauthored 15 books. The subject matter of four of his titles is related to the national wildlife refuge system. A 16th book, a wildlife-related historical novel, is in the works. So far, the most notable among LeBuff’s published books are Arcadia Publishing’s *J. N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge* (2011) and the most recently published (The History Press, 2018), *Preserving Sanibel and Captiva Islands: The Conservation Story*, coauthored with Southwest Florida historian, Betty Anholt. His best-selling book, *Sanybel Light* (1998) is about “A wildlife life on a Florida barrier island.” His other titles cover the biology of a variety of Florida’s herpetofauna including sea turtles and the American crocodile. LeBuff’s *Everglades Wildlife Barons* is a unique biography about two of America’s leading wildlife personalities who thrived in the mid 20th century. His venture into the fiction genre led off with publication of *The Calusan* in 2004. This three-part novel is historical fiction aimed at readers who are interested in Florida Cracker cowboys, early archaeology, and the Spanish contact with Native Americans, in particular the Calusa Indians. A three-book modern Florida crime series (The L. G. Clark Trilogy) was spun off from *The Calusan* in 2017 and follows a story line with roots in *The Calusan* as it weaves through five centuries. All of LeBuff’s books are sold by Amazon as paper editions and many are also available in the eBook format from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and iBooks.

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.

Henry Baldwin (1935 – 2019). Henry Baldwin of Laurel, Maryland, passed away on June 30, 2019. He was born in the same town in 1935.

Henry was a well-known and liked mechanic in the Facilities Section of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center from which he retired.



Henry enjoyed volunteering at Patuxent, fishing, working on the farm, doing odd jobs, including hauling with his dump truck, and spending time with his wife and daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren. Henry never met a stranger and was always there with a fun story to tell!

He is survived by his wife Margaret, daughters Cindy (Josh) Fox, Nancy (Brian) Sasser, Angie (Jonathan) Wright, grandchildren William, Charles, and Patrick Fox; Sean, Marissa, and Tanya Sasser. Also survived by sisters Mary Spencer and Janet Baldwin and numerous nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews and great-great-nieces and nephews.

A funeral Mass for Henry was held on July 8, 2019 at St. Mary of the Mills Catholic Church in Laurel where he was a member of the Knights of Columbus.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center. Please make checks payable to Johns Hopkins University with a memo indicating that this gift is in memory of Henry Baldwin to the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center, PO Box 17029 Baltimore, MD 21297-1029 or make a gift online at <https://secure.jhu.edu/form/kimmel>.

John J. Connors (1942 – 2019). John passed away on September 20, 2019 at the age of 77. John was a longtime realty specialist with the Division of Realty in Region 3 and was involved in the acquisition of thousands of acres for the National Wildlife Refuge System. John is survived by his wife, Joan; kids, Katie (Jim) and Shawn; granddaughter, Lucy; sister, Mary (Ed); cousin, Earla; other family members and many, many friends. Memorial services were held for John on September 27 at Woodridge Church in Medina, Minnesota. In lieu of flowers, memorials would be preferred to “Bibles for Missions Thrift Center” at 4713 36th Avenue in North Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55422.



David W. Fruge' (1947 - 2019). Dave Fruge' passed away on August 26, 2019 in Altoona, Pennsylvania from complications associated with Parkinson's Disease.



Dave was born and raised in Crowley, Louisiana, the son of Daniel Joseph Fruge' and Yvonne Marie Sigur Fruge'. He was the oldest of five children. He was also the first grandchild and formed an unbreakable bond with his Paw Paw, Daniel Fruge', joining him on countless trips to his camp at Lake Authur and to his rice farm near Shelby, Mississippi. He was a 1964 graduate of St. Michael High School, where he was awarded All State honors in football. Dave earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology from the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette and a Master's degree in Ichthyology from Northeastern Louisiana University in Monroe. While in college, Dave met Deborah Kneidinger, the girl who would steal his heart and become his wife and the mother of their only child, Brian.

Dave had a 33-year career with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, eventually serving as Field Supervisor at the Lafayette Ecological Services Field Office. He retired from the Service in 2003 and then joined the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources as Director of the Coastal Management Division, finally retiring in 2013. During his career, Dave headed up the then newly formed Atchafalaya National Heritage Area Program, and, was named Conservationist of the Year by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

Dave was an avid outdoorsman, loving to hunt and fish and bird watch with family and friends until his illness made that impossible. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Debbie, his three brothers Richard D. Fruge' (Christine), Michael A. Fruge' (Donna), Philip A. Fruge' (Kay), and, his sister Leah Denise Fruge' Mire (Michael). He was preceded

in death by his son, Brian Daniel Fruge', who died in 2018, He was also preceded in death by his parents, by his father-in-law, mother-in-law, and brother-in-law.

A memorial mass was held on September 28th at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Lafayette, Louisiana. Inurnment will take place in a private service at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Parkinson's Foundation, 200 SE 1st Street, Suite 800, Miami, FL 33131 (www.parkinson.org)

Terrence Joseph Merkel (1927 – 2019). Terry Merkel passed away in Prescott, Arizona on May 28, 2019 at the age of 92 after a brief struggle with a deadly form of Leukemia. He was born February 2, 1927 in Cleveland, Ohio to Albert and Marian Merkel.



Terry was a professional fisheries biologist having received his B.S. degree in biology from the University of San Francisco and his M.S. in zoology from the University of California Berkley. He worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service primarily in the Southwest and on Indian Reservations, including a stint as project leader in the Gallup, New Mexico Fisheries Resources Office. His was, at the time, the only FRO in New Mexico and focused primarily on fisheries on the Navajo Nation. He later worked in Region 1. After his retirement he moved to Flagstaff, Arizona with his wife, Louise. He volunteered for more than 20 years in the zoology department at the Museum of Northern Arizona where he received many awards including Museum Fellow and the J. Ferrell Colton Outstanding Alumni Award for staff. In 2014, the museum named the Terrence Merkel Zoology Laboratory in his honor for his many contributions promoting the understanding and archival preservation of the biodiversity of the Colorado Plateau in relation to Western North America.

Terry also received a certificate and plaque from the Chairman of the Navajo Nation in recognition and appreciation of his years of service to the Tribe's natural resources in fishery management.

Terry is survived by his loving and dedicated wife Louise Merkel; nieces Christine (Rob) Evers and Annie Jarabek; and grandnieces Danica Evers, Alexandra (Hrvoje) Viduc, and Erica Evers.

A visitation for Terry was held at Ruffner Wakelin Prescott Chapel in Prescott on June 2nd and a funeral mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church the following day. Graveside services were held on June 5th at Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Flagstaff, Arizona.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations in Terry's name to the Museum of Northern Arizona.

Terrence (Terry) Ott (1956 – 2019). Terry Ott passed away unexpectedly in Marquette, Michigan, on July 18, 2019.

Terry was born in Saginaw, Michigan, the son of Thomas and Barbara Ott. Following graduation from high school, he attended Lake Superior State College, obtaining a Bachelors' degree in Biology. He worked as a fish health specialist for the



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Ludington, Michigan and ended his career in at the La Crosse Fish health Center in Wisconsin on June 1, 2015 after 33 years of dedicated service.

Terry enjoyed camping, fishing, and hunting. As retirement drew near, he took up golf and thoroughly enjoyed golfing with numerous relatives and friends. After retirement, Terry and his wife of 31 years, Linda, enjoyed traveling, by car or plane, visiting friends and relatives. They both enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the United States while making new memories but, unfortunately, leaving behind many unfulfilled vacation adventures.

Family was important to Terry and he was blessed with caring parents as well as siblings who provided laughter, love, and support. He loved being a father to his girls Sara and Katelyn. He guided each one to become independent and successful all the while letting them know how much they were loved. Terry was always on the end of the phone or popping around at a moment's notice to assist with any project, great or small, and offer advice even when not asked.

Terry will be dearly missed by his wife, Linda, and beloved daughters Sarah and Katelyn. He also leaves behind his mother, Barbara; brother Patrick (Rebecca) Ott and sister Lori (Raymond Sr.); sister-in-law Janet Post-Bell (Jack); nieces Chelsea (Aaron) Salas and Sydney Foster; nephews Benjamin Ott and Raymond Foster Jr., as well as countless other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his father, Thomas Ott, and his best friend, Basil, the Yorkie.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on July 26th, at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Onalaska, Wisconsin. Visitation was the night before. Honoring Terry's wishes his remains were cremated.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to Mayo Clinic Health System-Cancer Center, 700 West Avenue, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Luther (Luke) Poellnitz. Long-time Patuxent employee

Luther "Luke" Poellnitz died on October 1, 2019.

Luke worked at Patuxent for many years as a courier and also an information transfer assistant.

Although no obituary has been found as of this writing, Luke's daughter has relayed the following information regarding his funeral arrangements:

Luke will be laid to rest on October 11th, 2019. There will be a viewing at 10:30 AM and the Funeral Service will begin at 11:30 AM at the Maple Springs Baptist Church, 4131 Belt Road, Capitol Heights, Maryland, 20743.

Don Redfearn (1932 – 2019). No obituary for Don has been found but his granddaughter, Kelsey Gallager, notified that Don passed away on September 3rd, 2019 at the age of 87. Don will be cremated and his remains scattered with those of his wife, Evelyn, and son Danny. There will be no service per Don's wishes.

Don started his career as a clerk at the Bitter Lake NWR in New Mexico. He served on several refuges in the western states, including manager of Ouray National Wildlife Refuge in Utah and the National Elk Refuge in Wyoming. He also had assignments in the Albuquerque and Anchorage regional offices. After retirement, Don was active with the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the Blue Goose Alliance. He and his wife, Evelyn, gave a lot of volunteer time to the Bosque and Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuges in their retirement years.

Should you wish to express your condolences or share fond memories, Kelsey's address is: 6221 Mint Springs, Warrenton VA 20187. The family would appreciate it.

John Rogers (1924 – 2019). John Patrick Rogers, 95, died at his home in Columbia, Maryland, on September 14, 2019



with his family at his side. John was born to Robert Lewis Rogers and Marion Elizabeth Higgins Rogers in Boston, Massachusetts, on March 20, 1924.

After graduating from the Beverly (Massachusetts) High School in 1942. John served in the U.S. Army during World War II from 1943 to 1945 as an anti-aircraft gunner attached to the 3rd Armored Division. They landed on Omaha Beach on June 23, 1944, and fought in France, Belgium, and Germany. He was awarded the Bronze Star.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Botany from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA, in 1950, and a

Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, in 1962.

He married Sarah Ann Joyner on December 30, 1959 at the Society of Friends (Quakers) Meeting House in Azalia, Indiana, and for a few years thereafter the couple split their time between Columbia, Missouri and the Delta Waterfowl Research Station in Erickson, Manitoba, where John was completing field work for his doctoral dissertation.

John was widely regarded as an expert in migratory birds. From 1951 to 1955 he worked for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Game, where he studied the ecology of the wood duck and subsequently co-authored a book about this species in the state. He left Massachusetts for graduate school, and after completing his Ph.D., he became an Assistant Professor with the University of Missouri and Director of the Gaylord Memorial Wildlife Laboratory in Puxico, Missouri, from 1961 to 1966.

John began his career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a staff specialist in wetland ecology in Washington, DC, in 1966. In 1968, he became Assistant Director of the Migratory Bird Population Station in Laurel, MD. In 1972 he became the first Chief of the Office of Migratory Bird Management, also in Washington, D.C., a position he held until 1984. During that time, he led efforts to strengthen cooperative relationships with the Flyway Councils, introduce the non-toxic shot program for waterfowl hunting, develop a North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and prepare a major environmental review of the annual sport hunting of migratory birds. He actively participated in the development of a bilateral migratory bird treaty with the Soviet Union and in the subsequent development of a protocol to amend the migratory bird treaty with Canada. He was a major participant in the conduct of international wildlife management programs with Canada and Mexico, including cooperative efforts to survey migratory bird populations in North America.

In 1984, John moved to the FWS regional office in Anchorage, Alaska, where he served as the Assistant Regional Director for Refuges and Wildlife until his retirement in 1992, providing critical leadership in the management of 77 million acres of National Wildlife Refuges for the ongoing benefit of wildlife resources that used these lands and waters each year. He was the key architect of the important Yukon-Kuskokwim Goose Management Plan that brought Alaska Natives and sport hunters together to conserve dwindling and important goose populations.

Throughout his career, he was recognized for a unique ability to achieve consensus among people with differing views and agendas. He was a valued mentor and a role model for many leaders that followed him in the wildlife conservation field.

He was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1971. In 1981, he was awarded the U.S. Department of Interior's highest citation, the Distinguished Service Award. He was the recipient of a Ducks Unlimited Wetland Conservation Achievement Award in 1992.

Throughout his life, he was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed being immersed in the natural world in the companionship of family, friends, and colleagues. He enjoyed cross country skiing, and was a competitive skeet shooter, even during bitterly cold Alaska winters, and he travelled frequently to participate in competitive meets. He was truly at home in Alaska, not only because of its vast natural treasures, but also its unique people, fascinating history and culture.

After retirement, he combined two of his abiding interests, nature and art, and developed into an accomplished artist. For the last two decades of his life, he produced a wide variety of drawings, paintings, and sculptures, many strongly influenced by his love of the natural world. In 2002, he was one of five judges responsible for selecting the winner of the Federal Duck Stamp art competition in Washington, DC. In 2005, after 20 years of adventures in Alaska, John and his late wife, Sarah, relocated to Maryland.

John is survived by his two sons, Robert Cebren and his wife Patricia Louise Rice and Michael John and his wife Margaret Yao-Mei Peng, both of Maryland; his three beloved grandchildren, Matthew Zen-Kong Rogers, John Zen-Jie Rogers, and Sophia Zen-Mei Rogers; and his niece Maureen Mary Palmer Archer and her husband Kerry Russell Archer.

A celebration of John's life will be held at 1pm on Saturday, Oct 19, 2019, at the Sandy Spring Museum, 17901 Bentley Road, Sandy Spring, MD.

Memorial donations may be made to The Nature Conservancy, 4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22203-1606, (800-628-6860, <https://www.nature.org/memorialgiving/>); or Ducks Unlimited, Inc., One Waterfowl Way, Memphis, TN 38120, (800-453-8257, <https://www.ducks.org/get-involved/memorial-giving>).

Robert Seemel. We've received information that Bob Seemel of Anchorage, Alaska, passed away on April 2, 2019. No other information is available.

Arden John Trandahl (1932 - 2019). Arden Trandahl,



former Director of the D.C. Booth National Fish Hatchery and Archives died on Sunday, February 10th, 2019, in Spearfish, South Dakota, surrounded by family. He was 86.

Arden was born to Ann and Joe Trandahl on December 31st, 1932. He graduated

from high school in Wabasso, MN in 1950. He graduated from SDSU in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in Fisheries and Wildlife. He retired from the US Fish and Wildlife Service after many decades. Arden was the first project leader at the DC Booth Fish Hatchery and Archives in Spearfish.

Arden and Sylvia Wersal were married on July 26th, 1955. Sylvia and Arden always wanted and were blessed with a large family including their nine children, Barb and Tim Storbeck, Maria and Alex Norman, Pam Rothleutner, Tom and Robyn Trandahl, Dana Trandahl, Jeff Trandahl, Tina and Tom Garske, Brenda Trandahl, and Lara Trandahl. Their grandchildren are Tyler Holzwarth, Kirby and Dan Anderson, Michael Rothleutner, Joseph Rothleutner, Melaynee Trandahl, TJ and Lumi Trandahl, Nicholas and Brittany Trandahl, Grace Trandahl, Sierra Zimmer, Will Ryan, John Ryan, Turi Ryan, Trevor Lee, Ryan and Samantha Lee, Trey Rice, Seth Rice, Chad Trandahl, and Hunter Wood. Their great-grandchildren are River, Huxley, Taite, Thad, Tyson, Triton, Payten, Naomi, Reece, Sophia, Lily, Holly, Story, Bella, Tommy, Micah, Rayden, and Kinley.

Arden grew up with six siblings including Marilyn, Joanne, Yvonne, Edward and Sandy, Pat, and Mary and Marlin.

A Memorial Mass for Arden was held on February 14th at St Joseph Catholic Church in Spearfish. Private family inurnment has taken place at Black Hills National Cemetery. In honor of his memory, a memorial has been established to support the DC Booth Historical Fish Hatchery, and may be sent to the Trandahl Family, 48 Pearson Drive, Spearfish, SD 57783.

James Willis Warren (1934 - 2019). We just received word that Jim Warren passed away September 7 in Vancouver, WA. When he retired, he was the Region One Fish Health Coordinator and champion of the regional integrated fish health program involving the states and tribes in the Northwest. One claim to fame is that he was the only Service person ever permanently assigned to support biological aspects of NASA's space program and the Apollo XI and XII moon rock missions. He was one of a very small cadre of individuals in the U.S. with a grasp of

the total biology and management of fish health issues as a true scientific fish health professional. A fisheries program graduate from Oregon State U., he began his 38-year Fish and Wildlife Service career in the Fisheries program at the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery in Cook, Washington, after a stint as an Army artillery officer,

No obituary has been found.

Others Who Passed.

Often we learn of others in the fish and wildlife and conservation communities who are not FWS retirees but whose passing may be of concern to our members.

Kendra Chan (1993 – 2019). Kendra Chan, a biologist with the Ventura, California, Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service, along with her father Scott, was among the 33 people who perished when the dive boat Conception burned off the coast of Santa Cruz Island on Labor Day weekend. She was just 26 years of age.



Kendra grew up in Santa Clara and was always enthralled by the natural world. She earned a degree in Evolution, Ecology, and Biodiversity from the University of California at Davis in 2015. Although with the Service for only three years, seemed to be a bright and rising star., conducting surveys on everything from brown pelicans to monarch butterflies. She was also a volunteer with Beachcombers, gathering data on dead mammals and birds along the shoreline. She was in training with the Reef Check Foundation to survey the health of coral reefs.

The Ventura Office issued a statement on her passing: “Kendra was a remarkable human being. Her positive energy enriched the lives of those she touched through her love of nature, wildlife, and the outdoors. She was a force for good and led a life that made the world around her a better place.”

The statement also mentioned Kendra's love of the ocean and various marine activities, from surfing to scuba diving. “her passion, curiosity, and enthusiasm for all living things – from tiny skeleton shrimp to the tidewater goby – were infectious. We will miss her dearly and will carry her energy with us in the days ahead.”

Kendra was interviewed in a video for Womens History month in 2018 by the Ventura Office. A link to that video is below:

<https://youtu.be/zPz5lbVengU>