

FWS Retirees Association NEWSLETTER



June 2019

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Chesapeake Bay Reunion.

OK folks, mark your calendar and plan to attend the next reunion of the Fish & Wildlife Service retirees. This will be the 19th gathering of former FWS colleagues and friends and will be held in beautiful and historic Annapolis, Maryland. 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 we could schedule our traditional day-long tour or you could schedule side trips of your own. Annapolis also offers relatively easy airport access from either BWI or Washington National airports.

WHERE: Our venue for the Reunion will be 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.

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

the van service 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.

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 Greenwalk 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 is being 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.

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 beginning May 1, 2019 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.

Cutoff date for reservations at these rates is **Oct. 8, 2019**. After that, it's on your own for best price/space available.

REUNION REGISTRATION FEE: The all-inclusive final cost is still to be determined but expect it to be just over \$100 per person that will include 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, sit down banquet with choices, dinner wine and a cash bar.

CURRENT REUNION SCHEDULE:

Saturday, November 9 - Early Arrival; Board member & volunteer work party

Sunday, November 10 – Retiree Arrival Day

2 -6 p.m. Registration begin

4 p.m. Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife

Monday, November 11 – Day 1 of Reunion

8:30 am–5 p.m. General Sessions

6 – 10 p.m. Evening Icebreaker Social

Tuesday, November 12 - Day 2 of Reunion

All Day. Off-site Field Trip

Wednesday, November 13 - Day 3 of Reunion:

8:30 am–3 p.m. General Session

5:00 p.m. Cash bar open

6- 10 p.m. Reunion Banquet with Guest Speaker
Silent Auction

Thursday, November 14 - Departure / Travel day

8:30 am - Reunion Wrap-up

8:30 am – 4 p.m. Heritage Committee meeting

Board/Volunteers – Clean-up and repack

PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS AND EVENTS: The specific topics for the panels and presentations are still being developed by the Board in coordination with Region 5 personnel as are the details on the all-day field trip. As soon as we have more concrete info to share, we will let all our retirees know. Details will be posted on our website as they become known. Check www.fwsretirees.org for the latest.

We do have a confirmed guest speaker for our Evening Banquet. Former FWS Director and fellow retiree **Lynn Greenwalt** has agreed and looks forward to imparting his perspectives on all things fish and wildlife. We are sure his will be a most interesting and enlightening presentation.

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 Raffle; 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. Details to follow. 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

Happenings.

FWS Deputy Director Jim Kurth to Retire. We received word from Jim on May 22nd that he has decided to retire effective June 1st of this year. In his announcement, Jim indicated that Margaret Everson, the Principle Deputy Director exercising authority for the Director has indicated that she would be making some leadership changes and that she asked Jim what he wanted to do next in his career and if he was interested in other positions. After some thought, Jim decided that there were no positions which offered more challenge or responsibility than the one he currently holds and that it was time to move on. So, after 41 years of public service, Jim will be retiring.

In his note, Jim reflected on his experiences over the past four decades, working with the world's best professionals in wildlife conservation. He clearly stated that he has no interest in leaving with conflict or bitterness and that he will continue to pray for all the men and women of the FWS and for success in the work they do. He ended his remarks with a heartfelt "Good luck, safe travels, and God bless you all."

Thank You, Jim, for your tireless efforts on behalf of the Service and its mission. To quote a television character "You done good!"

Bernhardt Accused of Ethics Violations. Interior Secretary David Bernhardt is being accused by the non-partisan Campaign Legal Center and others of using his positions at Interior (both as Deputy Secretary and afterwards as Secretary) to push for policies and actions by the Department that would greatly benefit his former clients, the Westlands Water District. Mr. Bernhardt was a long-time lobbyist for the District which describes itself as the country's largest water supply district and which provides water to agricultural lands in the western San Joaquin Valley. Specifically, Mr. Barnhardt directed the Mid-Pacific region of the Bureau of Reclamation to begin the process of weakening protections for endangered fishes in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to free up water for agriculture, mostly in the Westlands Water District.

This is not the first time he has been accused of ethics violations. While under consideration for a position in the Trump administration, Barnhardt de-registered as a lobbyist yet continued to lobby for Westlands for six months thereafter right up to the time he was nominated for the position of Deputy Interior Secretary.

Travel & Leisure.

Slovenia and Croatia Small Ship Adventure. Sandy Tucker has lined up a Road Scholar small ship cruise to interesting sites in Slovenia and Croatia. Dates are September 4 through 16, 2019. This trip involves moderate activity, mostly walking at sites being visited. Be sure to check out the flyer and its links at the end of this newsletter and if you think this is the trip for you, let Sandy know (sstuck1050@gmail.com).

Cuba in 2020?. 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.

Get Up Front Info on Travel Opportunities. If you are interested in travel with fellow retirees, you can be among the first to know of planned ventures if you checked the Travel Box on your *membership application/renewal*

form. Those that do may be contacted by those planning upcoming trips for retirees while others may hear of those opportunities only after it is too late to sign up. However, if you are interested in potential travel opportunities and have not already checked the Travel Box, go to our website and update your preferences by filling out a new membership application/renewal form. Good idea if you don't want to be left out. These travel ventures are not planned by the Association but by individual members of the Association who reach out primarily to those retirees who have previously expressed their interest.

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.

The Izembek Road. We reported on this issue several times in the past. It involves a proposal for a land swap with the King Cove Corporation for lands in Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in order to facilitate the construction of a road that would connect the cities of King Cove and Cold Bay, which are 18 miles apart. Travel now must be by air or sea. With the region frequently impacted by severe weather, King Cove residents want a road to provide another way to reach Cold Bay's airport year-round.

But the road would cross through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, a 311,000-acre home to more than 200 species of wildlife and nine species of fish.

Previous administration policies rejected the idea of a road several times. They maintained there were other options to the road and that Izembek would be irretrievably damaged by its construction. "A road through this critical area would kill the refuge, would kill the wilderness and the intent that was set aside when this was protected back in 1960 by President Dwight Eisenhower," former US Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell had told CNN.

But following the 2016 presidential campaign, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke entered into an exchange agreement for the land swap. That action triggered a lawsuit by the Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges and other wildlife advocacy organizations, against the US Department of Interior, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the King Cove Corporation.

On March 29th of this year, US District Judge Sharon Gleason ruled the administration's plans to build a road through a national wildlife refuge in Alaska violates federal law. The exchange agreement, Gleason ruled, "constituted an unlawful agency action in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act" by changing the

department's policy on the matter without proper justification.

ANWR Oil Lease Sale. Another issue on which we had previously reported. In mid-December 2018, the Trump administration released an environmental assessment that describes its plan to begin selling oil drilling rights to lands within the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, one of the goals of the administration. The plan laid out four options to leasing lands in the refuge for oil drilling, one of which is the "no drilling" alternative. Following an expedited review process, the Department of Interior planned to produce a Final Environmental Impact Statement after which the first lease sale could be held. Interior Department had wanted to hold that lease sale later this year. However, as we reported in February, actual drilling would not likely to occur that soon because of expected lawsuits and additional studies and approvals for the oil development. Now, another fly in the ointment. According to some 59 pages of comments on the document published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in late April, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement failed to adequately consider oil spills, climate change, the welfare of polar bears, or conduct surveys of polar bear denning habitats in its expedited study of proposed drilling in the refuge. They also listed dozens of other information gaps in its comments and implied that the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management wrote the study without properly consulting wildlife regulators.

This unusually harsh criticism from FWS could deal a blow to one of the most high-profile items in President Donald Trump's energy agenda and reflects the pitfalls of the administration's drive to speed up big projects with quicker, shorter environmental studies.

The Alaska Oil Drilling study was among the first of its kind since Trump's Interior Department in 2017 issued an order that assessments under the National Environmental Policy Act be completed within one year and be no longer than 150 pages. In the past, some NEPA studies have taken years to complete and involved multiple studies and thousands of pages of documentation, a major source of frustration for some. However, efforts to streamline the process can also result in major deficiencies and decisions that do not hold up under scrutiny.

"The Service has managed the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and its resources for several decades and has information and expertise that is valuable in formulating a final EIS that can withstand the scrutiny of legal sufficiency," FWS' Alaska Regional Director Greg Siekaniec wrote.

"Imposing the timelines and page limits will mean significant impacts go un-analyzed. Tribal consultation and coordination will likely get shortchanged, important

scientific data will not be considered, and the public's ability to provide meaningful input on alternative courses of action will be compromised," said Geoff Haskett, former Fish & Wildlife Service director for Alaska and president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

Assault to Sage Grouse Plan Continues. The Trump administration is aggressively pressing ahead in expanding federal oil and gas industry leases that could lead to more drilling, both on land and at sea,

In our October 2015 newsletter, we reported on a successful landscape conservation agreement and plan for the greater sage grouse that was negotiated by the many affected parties. FWS had proposed to list the vanishing species under provisions of the Endangered Species Act. That concerned many of local and state entities enough to bring all parties together to develop a plan that would make an endangered species listing unnecessary. Several federal agencies, the many states and private landowners involved agreed to implement crucial conservation and enhancement actions in lieu of listing. All told, some. 67 million acres of sage grouse habitats on federal lands were identified and about 11 million of those acres targeted for some modicum of focused protection. In addition, millions of dollars were to be dedicated to future actions to benefit the sage grouse, actions that will also benefit over 300 other key western species.

However, in June of 2017, then Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke issued a secretarial order convening an interagency task force to review the 98 existing land-use management plans and associated policies created by that agreement to preserve critical sage grouse habitat, with the intent of determining whether they should be altered or rolled back. Zinke said the goal of the review was to evaluate whether the federal government's policies related to the greater sage grouse were compatible with state policies, whether they're beneficial for local economies and jobs, and how they impact production of domestic energy. Zinke said the review will be guided by President Trump's "energy independence" executive order issued in March, aimed at removing environmental regulations governing the oil and gas industry.

Now, on March 15th of this year, the administration announced a final decision to lift protections for the greater sage grouse on nearly nine million acres targeted for various protections in the 2015 plan to provide more leasing opportunities to oil, gas and mining industries. This will allow oil and natural gas operations to more easily conduct horizontal drilling in sage grouse habitat. This new decision eliminates or weakens protections on 75 percent of the sagebrush focal areas in the original plan.

Legislation of Interest to Retirees.

Just a few of the many pieces of current federal legislation that should be of interest to our members. For full details on certain bills and on their status, we urge you to follow up on your own.

H.R. 141/S 521: The Social Security Fairness Act of 2019. These bills would repeal the **Windfall Elimination Provision** and the **Government Pension Offset**. The WEP and the GPO, enacted in the Reagan administration, severely reduce the Social Security benefits of CSRS retirees who would otherwise be entitled to full benefits under both programs, either by virtue of employment outside of the federal sector (WEP) or as the spouse of a Social Security recipient (GPO). Both bills have bipartisan sponsors and support.

H.R. 1254: The Equal COLA Act. Provides FERS retirees with the same annual cost of living adjustments as CSRS retirees. Currently, they receive a lesser COLA.

H.R. 1553: The Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2019. This bill would require both the Social Security and federal retirement programs to use the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E) to calculate annual cost of living adjustments for both programs. The CPI-E takes into account that seniors spend more for healthcare and its use would result in larger cost of living adjustments for retirees.

Miscellaneous.

FWS to Celebrate 150th Anniversary. The Fish and Wildlife Service 150th Anniversary is 2021 and will be celebrated in various ways throughout the year. This is a major milestone in the Service's history and will be sure to include events of interest to all FWS retirees. FWS has set aside the week of June 21 to June 26 of 2021 for special celebratory events to be held at the D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery and Archives in Spearfish, South Dakota. The Retirees Association has agreed to lend its support in this celebration and will hold its 2021 Retiree Reunion there. In addition, the FWS Heritage Committee will hold its annual meeting at Spearfish the same week. Be sure to mark your calendars as these are certain to be "Special Events."

Also, to help celebrate the 150th anniversary, the FWS Heritage Committee has suggested that retirees dig into their past recollections and come up with "**Fun Facts.**" A fun fact can cover a variety of interesting or unusual subjects about field stations, fish, wildlife species, research projects, partnerships with other agencies, or other subjects related to the FWS. For example, do you know what the first endangered species was? Or when it was listed?

Board member Deborah Holle, also a member of the Heritage Committee, has provided the following as an example:

I've started researching a few fun facts from some of the field stations I was at. Have you ever been to a movie and thought you recognized somewhere you worked? The National Wildlife Refuges of the Florida Keys are famous for endangered species and beautiful sunsets over gorgeous tropical waters. But did you know that several movies have been filmed with the refuges as a backdrop? That is the beginning of a Fun Fact.

Refuges as Movie Sets

PT109 was filmed in 1962 near the Headquarters of National Key Deer Refuge, at Big Pine Key, Florida. Jack C. Watson reported in an early annual narrative that they watched the filming on Little Munson Island, now called Little Palm Island. The construction for the movie set, buildings, and running of water and power to the island lead locals to believe that there were plans to invade Cuba. In 1988/89 the James Bond movie, License to Kill, was filmed in Key West and Great White Heron NWR. The movie people wanted a Special Use Permit from the Refuge to film in Great White Heron NWR and Key West NWR (near Key West). It was explained that, as long as they didn't harass the birds, go onto any of the Refuge islands, or damage sea grass beds, they didn't need any permits. However, they were insistent and one was issued for filming boating scenes.

In 1995 or so they also filmed True Lies with Arnold Schwarzenegger in the Keys. I've watched it numerous times and recognized much of the scenery, most of the movie filmed in the Keys was the iconic old 7mile bridge at Pigeon Key.

Another Fun Fact was submitted by retiree wildlife biologist Tom Wilmers and is shown below.

Forged by the Sea: More than a Navy slogan

Key West National Wildlife Refuge (KWNWR) was established in 1908. Its islands were once owned by the Navy. Over the years, several of the Marquesas Keys in KWNWR were used for military training. For example, beginning in 1940, some were used as bombing and strafing targets. In the early 1960s, the Navy built an observation tower on a Marquesas island to monitor the offshore, strafing and bombing exercises in adjacent State-owned waters. With the advent of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, both the Marquesas Keys and the nearby State-owned waters were closed to allow for round-the-clock military exercises.

Save for a couple dock pilings, during my first Marquesas visit in 1985 there was no sign of any past Navy activity — or so I thought. In 1990, while conducting a sea turtle nesting survey, I noticed that a green turtle (a rare nester in KWNWR) had crawled beyond the narrow beach and dune and attempted to nest at the edge of the woods. The turtle's body pit indicated the nesting attempt had been

aborted. I noticed a piece of exposed metal beneath the body pit and futilely tried to remove it for inspection. I pierced the sand repeatedly with a stick to gauge the metal's dimensions. About hundreds of probes and 25 feet later the old Jaws movie line "You're going to need a bigger boat" came to mind.

Over hundreds of feet my stick quivered like a dowsing rod as it struck metal hidden beneath the sand. I was in awe and perplexed — it was as if the dune had been paved with metal and then covered with sand. After digging and exposing a desk-sized section of the metal, I noted it was thick and had symmetric holes cut in it. I had a National Geographic moment of discovery, as if I had discovered uranium.

Silly me. "Marston matting? No, never heard of it," I replied to a Navy representative. Turns out the Navy had used Marston matting (aka perforated steel planking or PSP) to create a landing pad for helicopters near the observation tower. The steel mats interlock; each weigh about 66 pounds. The Navy had removed most, but clearly not all, the PSP panels removed decades ago.

I love it when a plan comes together. The Refuge lacked the equipment and personnel to tackle the project. The Navy could not have been more willing to help. On the day of the scheduled work project — 25 miles offshore — I arrived early at the Marquesas with 2 Refuge volunteers. We cheered when, right on schedule, 9 Navy personnel and boats arrived with shovels, winches and chains. The cavalry had arrived!

It was one of those priceless backbreaking projects fueled by shared inspiration and a strong sense of purpose. The mats, their holes entwined with plant roots, proved formidable foes. We laboriously removed 60 PSP mats that day. But even after considerable digging and using paired winches and chains, about 20 other panels could not be extricated due to imbedded roots.

During annual nest surveys over the next 22 years, 2 successful green turtle nests were found in the area where the PSP mats had been removed.

Interagency cooperation — more than trite buzzwords. Forged by the Sea — more than a Navy slogan.

As retirees, you should also have some of the most interesting fun facts. Please help us celebrate our 150th anniversary with a bang and lots of fun and interesting facts about our diverse and varied agency. After all we are one of the oldest conservation agencies in the world dedicated to preserving wildlife and their habitats. If you have one, please email it to Mark Madison at history@fws.gov. Don't forget to include your name as you will get credit for your submission. Fun Facts will be available on a web site for Retirees to view this summer!

OPM-GSA Merger. The proposal to merge OPM and GSA continues with GSA poised to take over many of the personnel policy functions of OPM. OPM would end up transferring its programmatic functions to the General Services Administration and its personnel policy function to the Executive Office of the President.

The following is a summary, prepared by NARFE, of the testimony NARFE President Ken Thomas provided the House Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations at a hearing on May 21, 2019.

Thomas took issue with the administration's argument that the reorganization would better align OPM's resources to its mission. He pointed out, "Whether the administration likes it or not, administering federal retirement health care and insurance programs are a key part of OPM's responsibilities." If the plan is meant to ensure greater focus on workforce management, "the administration needs to explain how OPM's remaining functions will receive the attention and resources they deserve." Thomas also noted that the administration had yet to provide the evidence necessary to make a convincing case for the merger.

Thomas noted that the proposal threatens the independence of OPM and "raises red flags that the move is intended to exert undue political influence on personnel decisions." A new head of human capital management and civil service policy would be named at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and while the person in that position would be presidentially appointed, he or she would not be Senate-confirmed and independent of the administration, unlike the current OPM director. This raises concerns that current safeguards against politically motivated personnel decisions could be removed, undermining the merit-based civil service.

Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle echoed NARFE's apprehension and expressed skepticism with the plan. Subcommittee Chairman Gerry Connolly, D-VA, argued that the proposal is "short-sighted, inadequate and unconvincing," and that "the administration has not provided this committee with a clear and convincing reason for dismantling this key federal agency." Subcommittee Ranking Member Mark Meadows, R-NC, was interested in having a "more effective and efficient" personnel agency without dismantling it. Many members of the committee also noted their frustration that they had yet to receive most of the documents they had previously requested from OPM to justify the merger.

Margaret Weichert, the deputy director of management for OMB and acting director of OPM, gave testimony supporting the administration's proposal, but every other witness voiced concerns with the merger. Notably, the

Government Accountability Office, OPM's inspector general and former OPM Director Linda Springer, who served during the George W. Bush administration, all took issue with the lack of supporting evidence and analysis to justify the plan.

Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Federal Law Enforcement Retiree.

West Virginia does not tax the retirement earnings of state law enforcement officials but does not exempt the retirement earnings of other law enforcement officials. That seemed unfair to retired U.S. Marshal James Dawson and he filed suit.

On February 20, the U.S. Supreme Court (the Court) issued a unanimous 9-0 decision in the *Dawson v. Steager* case, reversing West Virginia's discriminatory taxation of a Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) annuity earned through similar work as a law-enforcement officer. The Court held that West Virginia law unlawfully discriminates against Dawson as prohibited by the doctrine of intergovernmental tax immunity. The Court found that a state is in violation of the law when it treats its own retired state employees differently than it does retired federal employees and there is "no significant differences between the two classes" (as held in *Davis v. Michigan*) to justify the differential treatment.

The Court's decision to overturn West Virginia's inequitable state tax law also sends an unambiguous message to all state governments that unfair tax treatment of federal annuitants is not permitted.

LE Outreach efforts. Since 2015, Federal Wildlife Officer Greg Smith of the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement has been involved in a major public outreach effort involving the Wildlife on Wheels (WOW) trailer program and he wants to be sure that our FWS retirees are aware of the program. It may also be of use for our Retirees Association in some of our educational efforts.

A copy of a flyer describing the WOW program is attached at the back of this newsletter.

Kentucky Woodlands NWR – Info Wanted. Retiree Richard Hines has been writing for several magazines and about five years ago started gathering information on the Kentucky Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge. This 65,000-acre refuge was one of the larger refuges east of Mississippi and was in operation from 1938 until 1965 when it was transferred from USFWS to TVA. He asks if anyone has photos or information about the refuge that he could include in his book project. Richard's e-mail address is richardhines.outdoors@gmail.com.

President's FY2020 Budget Hurts Feds and Retirees.

In mid-March, President Trump released his FY20 budget request. It includes more than \$177.1 billion in cuts to the earned pay and benefits of federal employees and retirees to fund things like his border wall.

He proposes a calendar year 2020 pay freeze which, unlike the extensive list of other proposed cuts to federal pay and benefits, he can enact without prior congressional approval. Absent congressional action, a pay freeze would take effect come the first pay period of next year. However, Congress can enact a pay increase for 2020 through the appropriations process.

His attacks on retirees go even further than just 2020.

- He proposes NO COLAs for current and future FERS retirees. This would cost the typical FERS retiree \$250,000 over 30 years.
- He wants to reduce COLAs for CSRS retirees by 0.5% per year. This would cost the typical CSRS retiree \$170,000 over 30 years.
- Together, these two proposals would cost retirees more than \$56 billion over ten years and much more thereafter.
- The FERS Annuity Supplement, which benefits FERS retirees who mandatorily retire before being eligible for Social Security (such as law enforcement personnel and air traffic controllers) would be eliminated. Over 30 years, this would cost these retirees \$18 billion.
- Current employee's contributions to the FERS retirement system would be increased by 1% per year for the next six years.
- He would reduce working age and retirement age benefits for employees with a service-related disability.

FWS Retiree Author. Who knew we had such talent in our ranks? Seems as if retirement has awakened the writer in some of us.

Conrad Fjetland, a former Navy officer, retired lawyer, and grandfather, in addition to being a retired Fish and Wildlife Service manager, now works on his writing full-time at his home in Show Low, Arizona.

Con recently completed and had published his new book, "*Morgan: Rebirth of the Human Race, book 1.*" Its a gripping science fiction drama about mankind's battle for survival, a portrait of a hardy species encountering their biggest obstacle to their continued existence. The novel features Morgan Parker, chief ecologist for the habitat evaluation team aboard the interplanetary vessel Mayflower.

Con writes, "It is not often that a species of life plummets to the very brink of extinction only to rise and flourish once again, but then, the species known as man is no ordinary

species. The mission is to find a planet to colonize where people can live free from the decadent conditions on Earth. But the second planet of Epsilon Eridani will not meet their needs. They must decide what to do next, but they have no idea how important that decision will be, not only to their survival but to the survival of humanity itself.”

Published by Covenant Books, Con’s new book is an intriguing work of speculative science fiction that at once explores the inspiring innovation of the human species as well as the charming flaws, needs, and inefficiencies that both complicates things and makes their story worth telling. Three more books in the series are coming soon.

Readers can purchase “*Morgan: Rebirth of the Human Race, book 1*” at bookstores everywhere, or online at the Apple iTunes store, Amazon, or Barnes and Noble. Personally signed copies can be purchased from the author by contacting him through his Facebook page or emailing him at conradfjetland2@gmail.com.

Stewart Udall. Stewart Udall was the Secretary of Interior from 1961 to 1969 and a stalwart in the environmental movement of the mid-20th century. He died in 2010.

Much has been written about his life, career and the impact he has had on all of us. The following is a review prepared by Board member Robin West of a new book on Secretary Udall

With Distance in His Eyes – The Environmental Life and Legacy of Stewart Udall.

This book by Scott Raymond Einberger was recently released by the University of Nevada Press (ISBN 978-1-943859-62-7). This well written account of one of our nation’s most productive Secretary of Interior, is a good reminder of what can be accomplished by a motivated leader with strong values and who employs strategic thinking. Udall lead the Department of Interior from 1961 to 1969 and contributed greatly to growing the National Wildlife Refuge System as well as the National Park System, played a significant role in wilderness and wild and scenic river protection, battled to fight harmful use of pesticides, and shifted the role of the Bureau of Land Management to manage for wildlife and watersheds as well as natural resource development (establishing a lasting multiple use philosophy). At a time when it seems much of the nation’s hard-fought environmental progress is being reversed, it is especially important to understand how, why, and when this progress was made. Students of conservation history should add this account to their library. The hardbound book (292 pp including photographs) is available from Amazon for \$24.56. Buyers may also contact the author directly at scott_einberger@yahoo.com if they desire a signed copy.

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.

Dennis Anderson (1946 – 2019). Dennis "Andy" Anderson died of an aortic embolism on May 3, 2019 while

returning from a successful turkey hunt in South Dakota with his brother. Andy was born in Canton, Ohio on February 27, 1946 to Dale and Iris Anderson and was only 73 years of age when he died



Andy received his Bachelor of Science degree from Utah State University in 1968 and did a year of post-graduate work at Oregon State University. He started his career with the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1969 as a Fishery Biologist assigned to the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin. He attended training courses at Leetown, West Virginia and at Spearfish, South Dakota (and later taught courses at both facilities). In 1974, Andy was assigned as Assistant Director of the Fish Disease Control Center in Fort Morgan, Colorado and later made Director of the Center, a position he held for many years. Prior to his retirement, he also spent some time in the Denver Regional Office. In the course of his FWS career, Andy also taught courses across the country and trained biologists from Mexico and Canada.

Retirement was good for Andy, giving him time to relax at his beloved river property near Fort Morgan, for hunting (he reloaded his own shells), boating and camping. He was a follower of the Colorado Rockies Baseball team and would often travel to Arizona for their spring training camps.

Andy was a loving husband to Carol and a devoted father to their children Tifni Schlundt of St. Louis, Missouri, Todd of St. Johns, Florida, and Thad of Fort Collins, Colorado. Andy and Carol have seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Andy is survived by his brother, Alan of Bridgeport, West Virginia, and his sister Linda Salmon of Carmel, Indiana. He also leaves his dear friends, Rodger Stark and Duane Fritzler. He was preceded in death by his brother Gary, and son-in-law Mike Schlundt.

There was a brief memorial for Andy at the Heer Mortuary Fort Morgan Chapel on Thursday, May 9th followed by a lunch at St. Charles the Martyr Episcopal Church.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Bird Habitat

Conservation, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS-MB, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

Thomas Owen Duncan (1928 – 2019). Tom Duncan died peacefully on February 7, 2019 at then age of 90 surrounded by his family who cherished his love, kindness, creativity, enthusiasm, and sense of humor.

Tom was born in Washington, D.C., on June 5, 1928, to William Wirt and Delta Given (Bahrenburg) Duncan. His family moved to Oklahoma City, where he graduated from Classen High School in 1946. Two days after graduation he joined the U.S. Marine Corps and served for three years as an aircraft armorer in fighter squadron VMF 323 (Death Rattlers) at El Toro Marine Air Station. He continued his education following military service, graduating from Oklahoma A&M College with a Bachelor of Science degree. in Wildlife Conservation.



Tom's 30-year career as a Fishery Research Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service included assignments at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma; Yellowstone Lake in Yellowstone National Park; in Alaska at Cook Inlet, Bristol Bay and Lake Tustumena; and at Seattle's Montlake Fishery Laboratory. He met Margaret Anne (Peg) Officer while stationed in Seattle and they married in 1956, in West Bend, Iowa.

Following a brief period at the Department of the Interior in Washington, DC, Tom and Peg moved to Arkansas in 1962, where he served as Chief of the South-Central Reservoir Investigations at Beaver Reservoir and later at DeGray Lake in Arkadelphia where he and Peg made their home more than 40 years.

An artist and collector, Tom loved waterfowl, hunting and fishing, books, antiques, gardening, painting, drawing, carving birds, and writing about these interests. He drew inspiration for his wildlife drawings and paintings from artist Bob Hines, his friend and colleague. Following retirement, he studied art at Henderson State University. His artwork won recognition as Best of Show at the Festival of Two Rivers in Arkadelphia and was twice selected for the Delta Art Exhibit at the Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock. He attended many of the early FWS Retirees Reunions and often donated frameable prints of his art for the Retirees silent auction which was very popular with the attendees.

Tom was a member of the Kappa Sigma fraternity, the Kiwanis Club of Fayetteville, the Caddo River Art Guild and a former board member of Group Living Inc. in Arkadelphia. He belonged to the First United Methodist Church of Arkadelphia.

Tom is survived by his wife Peg; their daughters Susan Margaret Daniell (Douglas) of Eugene, Oregon; Catherine Anne Duncan (Darryl Wise) of St. Augustine, Florida; Sarah Jane Riley (Kevin) of Hot Springs, Arkansas; Nancy Jo Duncan (Kathy Hurley) of Asheville, North Carolina; and grandsons, Owen Daniell, Guinness Riley, and Finnegan Riley. He was preceded in death by his brother William W. Duncan Jr.

A visitation and memorial service was held on Saturday, April 20th at the First United Methodist Church in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

Terry Grosz (1941 – 2019). Terry Grosz peacefully passed away on February 5, 2019 at Life Care of Evergreen in Colorado.

Terry was born in Toppenish, Washington on June 22, 1941, but moved early in his childhood to the little California Sierra Mountain community of Quincy with his mother and younger sister. It was in Quincy that Terry gained his love for the outdoors, hunting, fishing, and enjoying nature. Until his stepfather entered their lives, Terry, his mother, and sister lived in poverty. From the age of nine, he spent his summers and weekends looking for jobs to help earn money to give to his mother to help her pay their bills.



It was in eighth grade that Terry met Donna who was to become the co-author of his life little more than eight years later when he took Donna's hand on February 3, 1963.

In high school, Terry excelled at football, baseball, and track. Additionally, he played the trombone in the dance band and was the student body president his senior year. In the summers, Terry worked in the timber industry and fought wildland fires in Plumas and Sierra counties to earn money for college.

Terry graduated from Quincy High School in 1959 and attended Humboldt State University where he earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Wildlife Management in 1964 and his Master of Science Degree in 1966.

He worked as a Game Warden for the California Department of Fish and Game for four years before joining the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1970, first serving as a U.S. Game Management Agent and later as a Special Agent in California. In 1974, Terry was promoted to a Senior Resident Agent who was responsible for the supervision of special agents and field enforcement of federal wildlife laws in North and South Dakota.

In 1976, Terry transferred to Washington D.C. as Senior Special agent where he served as the Endangered Species Desk Officer and Foreign Liaison Officer. He represented the U.S. Government in travels to Great Britain and

Southeast Asia. Then, in 1979, it was on to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he served as an Assistant Special Agent in Charge.

Finally, in 1981, he was promoted and transferred to Denver, Colorado, as the Special Agent in Charge of Region 6, a resource-rich, eight-state region encompassing more than 750,000 square miles encompassing North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana. He remained in this position until his retirement in 1998 after a 32-year career in state and federal wildlife law enforcement.

In 1999, Terry began his second career as a writer with the publishing of his first wildlife law enforcement true-life adventure book, titled "Wildlife Wars". Since then 13 additional wildlife law enforcement adventure books have been published. In addition, Terry wrote eleven Mountain Man and Western historical novels. He had a two-hour movie film credit on the reality-based TV series "Wildlife Wars", filmed in 2003 and released nationwide. This was based on a number of his true-life wildlife law enforcement adventures involving his very active career as a state and federal wildlife officer.

Terry earned many awards and honors during his lengthy career which included, but were not limited to:

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Meritorious Service Award in 1996;
- The first federal employee to be honored with the "Guy Bradley Award" which was presented by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in 1989 for excellence in the field of wildlife law enforcement;
- The Humboldt State University Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1995; and
- An Honorary Doctorate Degree in Environmental Stewardship from Unity College in Maine in 2002.

Terry is survived by his wife, Donna, to whom he was married for more than 56 years; son Rich (Bismarck) of North Dakota; daughter Kimberlee Jackson of Chandler, Arizona; daughter-in-law Lisa Grosz of Centennial, Colorado; three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his father, Ernie Grosz; his mother, Alberta (Dresden) Barnes; his stepfather, Otis Barnes; his sister, Nancy (Grosz) Barbea; and his adult son, Christopher Grosz.

His family fondly remembers his love of hunting and fishing, barbecuing, being creative in the kitchen, storytelling, his knowledge of the "critters", his patriotism, love of history, his sense of humor, and deep faith in God. In lieu of flowers or plants, Terry asked that memorials be made to St. Jude's Children Hospital. They wish to extend their gratitude to the staff of Life Care of Colorado of Evergreen and Mount Evans Hospice for their care of Terry in the last days of his life and to friends who have supported

Terry and the family every mile of this long journey to eternity.

A Celebration of Terry's Life was held on Friday, February 22, 2019 at Our Lady of the Pines Catholic Church in Conifer, Colorado. A private family committal service was held at Olinger Mount Lindo Cemetery, Morrison, Colorado.

David James Lenhart (1930 – 2019). Dave Lenhart was born on November 6, 1930 and died in Portland, Oregon on February 7, 2019 at the age of 88 years. Dave had been in poor health for some time. His wife Judy and his children were with him when he died.

Dave, originally from California, attended Fullerton Junior College and Humboldt State University in Arcata, California. His education was interrupted in 1952 when he was drafted into the U.S. Army where he served stateside in the Army Veterinary Corps during the Korean War. After his tour, he returned to Humboldt State and received his Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife.

Shortly after graduating in 1955, he joined the Fish and Wildlife Service and enjoyed a career of some 33 years, beginning as a GS-5 doing creel surveys in Alaska and later doing bird and fish counts and waterfowl surveys in the Columbia and Snake River Basin in Oregon and Washington. As he moved up the ranks, he went to work as a wildlife biologist in the Division of River Basin Studies, first in the Portland Regional Office (1958 – 1961) and then in the Sacramento Field Office (from 1961 to 1966). He returned to Portland in 1966 and remained there for the duration of his career, working in the Division of Wildlife Services responsible for chemical and pesticide use on refuges and hatcheries; and in the Division of Ecological Services primarily working as the Oil Spill Response Coordinator and as the Environmental Contaminants Coordinator. He retired from the Service in 1986.

A service with full military honors was held for Dave at the Willamette National Cemetery on February 19, 2019. In lieu of flowers, Dave can be remembered by a donation to the Wildlife Department of Humboldt State University in California.

Michael Allen Hendrix (1943 – 2019). Mike Hendrix of Winder, Georgia passed away on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at the age of 76 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Mike was born in Greensboro, North Carolina on January 23, 1943, the son of the late Norman "Red" and Irelene Kistler Hendrix. He graduated from North Carolina State University and worked as a fishery biologist for the U.S.



Fish and Wildlife Service for 37 years. His career included being manager at Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery in New Hampshire. He was a gardener, fisherman, sports fan, traveler, and devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

Mike is survived by his wife of 54 years, Camilla Ann Moore Hendrix. Also surviving him are his children, Michael A. Hendrix, Jr. (Karen) of Levant, Maine, Kenneth Hendrix (Laura) of Otis, Maine, Jennifer Hendrix Sherer (Todd) of Suwanee, Georgia; grandchildren, Wyatt, Samantha, Kolby, Hayden, Hunter, Whitney (Eddie), Kendra, and Maddie. He was preceded in death by his sister, Mary Laura Hendrix Thayer.

The family has chosen cremation with no services at this time. The family requests those desiring to make a memorial donation in Michael's name may do so to the American Cancer Society. Condolences may be sent to or viewed at www.wagesfuneralhome.com. The Wages

Funeral Service of Lawrenceville, Georgia has been entrusted with the arrangements.

John Wolfe (1945 – 2018). We received word from John's wife that he had passed on June 3, 2018 in Vancouver, Washington. John was a Vietnam War veteran who began his career with the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1977 at the Ecological Services office in Laguna Niguel, California and later moved to the Regional Office in Portland, Oregon from which he retired.

Others.

We are frequently informed of others who have died but are unable to find an obituary or enough information to compose one. We will simply report on their passing.

Arnie Kruse of Jamestown, North Dakota

Marvin Mansfield of Fergus Falls, Minnesota

Elliot Sutta of Centennial, Colorado

Hidden Coves & Ancient Treasures by Sea
Slovenia and Croatia Cruise
Sep. 4-16, 2019



You asked for more opportunities to travel, so here's another 2019 international opportunity that we learned a few FWS Retirees have already signed up for!

How about an active cruise with Road Scholar to Slovenia and Croatia?

The trip is on a 36-passenger small ship. It is open now and the sooner you sign-up the greater the chance of FWS Retirees filling the ship! You book independently by using the links below. Since this is not an exclusive trip, we are not keeping a waiting list this time. If you sign up, let Sandy Tucker know so we can connect all the retirees who are cruising - s4andyg4rry@bellsouth.net

Overview:

<https://www.road scholar.org/find-an-adventure/22587/slovenia-and-croatia-hidden-coves-and-ancient-treasures-by-sea>

Daily Schedule:

<https://www.road scholar.org/find-an-adventure/22587/slovenia-and-croatia-hidden-coves-and-ancient-treasures-by-sea/itinerary/>

Program Reviews:

<https://www.road scholar.org/find-an-adventure/22587/slovenia-and-croatia-hidden-coves-and-ancient-treasures-by-sea/reviews/>

There's an extended trip too that includes Plitvice National Park, a world heritage site.

<https://www.road scholar.org/find-an-adventure/23227/Extension-Croatia--s-Capital-and-Beautiful-Lakes>

WILDLIFE ON WHEELS (WOW)

Refuge Law Enforcement's Outreach Trailer



Above: A visitor enjoying the WOW wildlife decoys.

More than **57,000**
educational contacts made
since 2015

10,000 road miles
covered between 2017-2018

WOW has **10** robotic
wildlife decoys on display

A LEGACY OF OUTREACH

Since 2015, Federal Wildlife Officer (FWO) Greg Smith has dedicated his time to Refuge Law Enforcement outreach through the WOW trailer program. He has coordinated with FWOs from around the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), to visit state fairs, schools, scouting events, parades and wildlife events to show visitors the "tools of the trade" in combating wildlife and other natural resource crimes.

ENGAGING EXHIBITS

The Division of Refuge Law Enforcement (DRLE) WOW trailer and exhibit afford visitors a first hand opportunity to physically stand next to a towering 12 foot tall moose, a 700 lbs. elk, and many other full size remote controlled wildlife decoys used in catching illegal people hunting illegally.




100,000
contacts anticipated in 2019

34 outreach events attended since 2015

7 FWS regions in 2019 will have access to a WOW trailer

Above: Visitors with one of the WOW wildlife decoys.



Above: The WOW trailer includes an interactive exhibit of animal furs and bones.

THE FUTURE OF "WOW" OUTREACH

Three new WOW trailers will be deployed to the regions in 2019. Regions 1 and 8 will share a trailer, regions 2 and 6 will share one, and regions 3 and 5 will share a third WOW trailer. The fourth trailer is stationed at FLETC and will be utilized in region 4. Once these additional WOW trailers are deployed, the DRLE has estimated an additional 100,000 educational contacts in 2019!

Public outreach is an integral part of 21st century policing. The WOW trailers are an outreach tool that allows Federal Wildlife Officers from across the country to support and connect with their communities.



If you are interested in having the WOW trailer come to your next event contact Greg Smith at greg_o_smith@fws.gov.