

FWS Retirees Association NEWSLETTER



Winter (February) 2023

2023 Board of Directors

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Board Business

FWS Retirees Reunion 2023 Save the Date

NCTC, Shepherdstown, WV
November 27 – December 1, 2023

We are excited to announce that the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) is hosting our 20th FWS Retirees Association Reunion! It is planned for November 27 to December 1, 2023, at NCTC in Shepherdstown, WV.



Lodging and meal plan estimates are based on the current GSA fiscal year 2023 per diem. Because the reunion is in fiscal year 2024, the rates may slightly change. The estimate is \$98 per night per room for lodging at NCTC and \$54 per day per person for meals. We are also working with NCTC to provide shuttle service

from the airports. We want to make sure that folks travel on Monday and Friday, as we will have a full 3-day agenda, including the Thursday night banquet.

This is a heads-up Save the Date for the Reunion. Please don't call NCTC for lodging yet. We have a block of 100 rooms, and we will soon send more information. Please plan your travel early and lock in your travel dates, as this is right after Thanksgiving. We'll provide more details in future newsletters and posted on our website at <http://www.fwsretirees.org/PastReunions/UpcomingReunion.html> as planning proceeds.



Message from the Chair. With the New Year, we welcome 3 new members elected to the Board of Directors of the Retirees Association! They have all hit-the ground-running by sharing their talents and enthusiasm for the activities of the Board. Conrad Fjetland (Albuquerque), Layne Hamilton (Titusville, FL), and Helen Clough (Juneau, AK) join Lew Gorman (re-elected) as we have a lot to look forward to this year. Helen is the new editor of this newsletter, so please send her articles and ideas to keep our communication of interest to you, both in this newsletter and on our website ([fwsretirees.org](http://www.fwsretirees.org)).

We heard LOUDLY! at the last Retirees reunion (Spearfish, SD) that folks would like to return to the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV, for the next gathering. Therefore, we are pleased to announce that the dates are set! By now, you should have received an email to Save-the-Dates, November 27 – December 1, 2023. It's the only time in the

Fall that they can block 100 rooms to accommodate a group of our size, so make sure that you don't delay to book your travel arrangements as soon as possible. It's the week after Thanksgiving. In a future email, we will be sending you the information needed in order to make your lodging reservations. As always, your ideas for program content are ALWAYS appreciated!

Also, *breaking news!* You heard it here first. Deborah Holle is working with a vendor to have "FWS Retiree" embroidered polo shirts available for purchase on/before the reunion! Once again, an idea that came from attendees at the last reunion. Thank YOU!

Another goal for this year, we hope that our youth project grant applications will pick up. Also, if you know of refuge/hatchery anniversary celebrations that could use a few extra funds, please have those Friends Groups contact us. Application information is on our website.

More information on the following topics will be emailed to all members in the coming months:

- An update of the Association's Bylaws
- A survey of the Association's members to determine if you would like your personal information (name, address, email address) from our database provided to FWS field stations for outreach events

In summary, I want to take a second to thank Steve Rideout for his tenure on the Board as Treasurer of this Association. He is stepping off the Board, but is generously devoting a couple of months to transition his excellence in fiscal responsibility to Board member Doug Frugé. Thanks Steve, and Doug!

All for now, please enjoy this newsletter, and have a great Spring, wherever you are! *Cindy Uptegraft Barry, Chair*

Treasurer's Report

Operating and Reunion Budgets.

The Association budgets regular income and expenses on a calendar year (CY) basis, and we closed our regular operating budget for 2022 in the black with total income of \$8,094.38 (\$1,594.38 more than budgeted) and expenses of \$3,197.60 (\$3,302.40 less than budgeted), for a net income balance for the year of \$4,896.78. Regular dues income was about \$50 short of what we expected, but Lifetime membership income exceeded budget by \$1,500, picking up five total new Lifetime members. We experienced major savings in expenses due to there being no Board Travel expenses during the year and Web Hosting expenses being significantly lower than expected.

Our reunions are budgeted separately from our regular operating income and expenses, as our goal is always to have income from registration fees, silent auction, etc. cover our expenses. In June 2022 we held our first reunion since November 2019 in the Deadwood-Spearfish, SD area. The reunion raised a total of

\$11,348.00 in income, but this reunion being a bit more pricey than usual, our expenses totaled \$13,466.87, with the \$2,118.87 budget deficit comfortably covered from our reserve operating funds.

The Association maintains a main operating checking and a credit card account at Jefferson Security Bank in Shepherdstown, WV, as well as a PayPal account for collecting dues and reunion registration income. At the end of 2022 our net operating accounts totaled \$20,819.03 compared to \$18,113.57 at the end of 2021, for a net gain of \$2,705.46. The operating accounts balance was well above our goal of having at least double our estimated yearly expenses (\$6,500 in 2022) in the "bank".

Grants Budgets

The Association receives two grants from the FWS, one to fund FWS History (formerly Heritage) Committee activities. The Association pays for travel, oral history, Association database management and museum support expenses, and may issue "mini-grants" to field stations for anniversary events from the History Grant funding. The second grant addresses Conservation Career Awareness (CCA) and Youth Programs activities. Funding is provided by the Association largely to FWS field stations through Friends Groups or contracts with supporting NGOs from this grant for career and youth outreach projects.

At the beginning of 2022 there was \$28,742.63 remaining of the \$37,400 received from the FWS in the 2019 amendment for the History Grant. A total of \$17,414.99 was expended in 2022, leaving an \$11,327.64 balance for that grant to be carried into 2023. A new application will be submitted to the FWS this year to supplement that balance and outline our plans to support the latest History Committee Strategic Plan.

There was \$42,800.00 remaining from the 2020 CCA/Youth grant amendment funding. A total of \$18,512.75 was expended from that grant funding in 2022, leaving \$24,287.25 to carry over into 2023. A new application for the CCA/Youth Grant will also be submitted to the FWS later this year for first year funding of a renewed five-year period.

Funds from both grant programs are held in the Association's grant checking account, also at JSB, along with a credit card account for grants-related expenses. Both grant programs are managed from these two accounts. The checking account had a balance of \$9,981.31 at the end of 2022 with \$16,000 in available History Grant funding and \$21,500 in available CCA/Youth Grant funding remaining in the federal government's financial management system. The Association Treasurer can draw from those funds as needed and transfer them to our Grants checking account in order to cover authorized expenses. Expenditures in these grant programs declined substantially in 2020-2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but activity is picking up, and we expect expenses in 2023 to recover to pre-2020 levels.

Prepared by Doug Frugé and Steve Rideout

Membership

We gained 3 more Life Members this quarter and 10 new members for a total of 43 sustaining members this quarter.

Congratulations and a big “Thank You” to Paul Tritaik #58, Gail Carmody # 57 and Patrick McDermott #56, as our newest Life Members. Gail retired from R4, Ecological Services in Florida and Patrick retired from R2 where he worked as an Engineer. Paul and Patrick provided information about themselves that appears at the end of the membership section.

We appreciate all of our 33 sustaining members and welcome our 10 new members to the Retirees Association! Without your continued support through joining and renewing your memberships we would not have reunions, travel opportunities with other FWS retirees, funds for field station projects, and an easy way to keep in touch with our former colleagues and friends in the FWS. Thank you again for your support!

Sustaining Members for September, October, November & December 2022

- ADY, Janet, Meyersville, MD, Retired 2020, R9/NCTC, Division of Education Outreach
- ALBERS, Peter, Traverse City, MI, Retired 2007, R8–Research, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
- BAKER, Denise, Albuquerque, NM, Retired 2018, R2, RO, Ecological Services
- BALLARD, Tina, Estacada, OR, Retired 2015, R1, RO, Division Budget & Finance (R1&R8)
- BEARDMORE, Carol, Phoenix, AZ, Retired 2017, R2, Migratory Birds, Phoenix Office, **New Member**
- BENNETT, Merle O., Bismarck, ND, Retired 1982, R6, Refuges & Wildlife, Bismarck ND Office
- BLAIR, Charles (Cheryle), Brainerd, MN, Retired 2019, R3, RO, Refuges & Wildlife, **New Member**
- BOHAN, Carolyn, Green Valley, AZ, Retired 2011, R1, RO, Refuges & Wildlife
- BURKHART, James (Claudia), Folkston, GA, Retired 2010, R4, Refuges & Wildlife, Okefenokee NWR, **New Member**
- CARMODY, Gail, Panama City Beach, FL, Retired 2010, R4, Ecological Services, Panama City Field Office, **LIFETIME MEMBER #57**
- CHU, Nancy (Lance Hoboy), Silver Spring, MD, R3, RO, Fisheries
- DRIESLEIN, Bob, Houston, MN, Retired 2005, R3, Refuges & Wildlife, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge – **New Member**
- EATON, Robert (Wanda), Johnson City, TN, Retired 2018, R9/WO, Fire Management
- ERNEST, Russ, Clayton, DE, R5, RO, Ecological Services
- FIELDS, Michael (Wanda), Hillsboro, OR, Retired 2020, R1, RO, Information Resources
- FOLLRATH, Tom (Cathy), Loganville, GA, Retired 2004, R3, RO, Refuges & Wildlife, Realty
- FOSTER, Bob (Beverly), Grand Junction, CO, Retired 2002, R3, Refuges & Wildlife
- FREDERICK, Dave (Joyce), Pagosa Springs, CO, Retired 2006, R2, RO, Ecological Services
- FUNDERBURK, Steven (Kathleen Bangert), Easton, MD, Retired 2008, R5, RO, Refuges & Wildlife, Refuge Planning
- GEIGER, Jaime (Amelia), Seabrook Island, NC, Retired 2013, R5, RO, Fisheries
- GUIMOND, Christine (Paul), S. Deerfield, MA, Retired 2019, R5, RO, Ecological Services
- HAMILTON, Layne, Titusville, FL, Retired 2021, R4, Refuges & Wildlife, Merritt Island NWR, **New Member**
- HEFFERNAN, David (Catherine), Littleton, CO, Retired 2003, R6, RO, Refuges & Wildlife
- JOHNSON, Heather (Brad Andres), Laramie, WY, Retired 2022, R6, RO, Partners for Wildlife – **New Member**
- KAUFMAN, Nancy, Santa Teresa, NM, Retired 2006, R2, RO
- KNAPP, Bill (Betsy), Smithville, VA, Retired 2010, R9/WO, Science Advisor
- KNUDSEN, Monty (Diane), Beaverton, OR, Retired 2013, RI, Ecological Services, Oregon Fish & Wildlife Office
- LAMMERS, Kenneth (Dorothy) Cleveland, OH, Retired 2006, R3, Ecological Services, Columbus Field Office
- LANGELIER, Lisa (Bruce Kessler), Cheney, WA, Retired 2013, R1, Refuges & Wildlife, Inland NWR Complex
- LIENESCH, Laila (Paul Pizzichemi), Corvallis, OR, Retired 2022, R1, RO, Refuges & Wildlife, **New Member**
- MARTIN, Patrick (Alice), Louisburg, KS, Retired 2020, R6, Refuges & Wildlife, Marais des Cynes NWR **New Member**
- McDERMOTT, Patrick, Goodyear, AZ, Retired 2016, R2, RO, Administration, Engineering, **LIFETIME MEMBER #56**
- McMAHON, Susan (Terri Phaneuf), Fitchburg, MA, Retired 2012, R5, RO–Refuges & Wildlife
- MESLOW, E. Charles (Rayola Hastings), Retired 1994, R1, Research Leader Oregon Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit
- MONTEFUSCO, Roseann, Belchertown, MA, Retired 2022, R5, RO, Fisheries Office FAC Budget, **New Member**
- PFISTER, Allan (Kathy), Pagosa Springs, CO, Retired 2011, R6, Ecological Services, Grand Junction
- SALTZ, Ron (Jamie Washington) Kailua, HI, Retired 2021, R9/WO, Refuges & Wildlife, NWR System, Realty, **New Member**
- SCHWINDT, Ken (Janice), Fort Collins, CO, Retired 1994, R2, Refuges & Wildlife, Washita/Optima NWR Complex
- SHULL, Alisa (Patrick Connor), Broken Arrow, OK, Retired 2022, R3, RO, Ecological Services
- STRADER, Robert (Candace), Natchez, MS, Retired 2014, R6 Refuges & Wildlife, Lower Mississippi River NWR Complex

- WATTERS, Linda (Linda Watters), Milwaukie, OR, Retired 2009, R1, RO, Refuges & Wildlife
- WEATHERS, Don (Kathy), West Lynn, OR, Retired 2011, R1 RO, Administration–Budget & Finance
- WYNN, Anthony (Adrian Flores) Copperas Cove, TX, Retired 2018, R1, RO –Diversity

Deborah Holle

New Life Members



Pat McDermott PE, Civil Engineer Service: 1990 to 2016. Came to Service after 8+ years with the Bureau of Reclamation from the New Waddell Dam Construction Office, AZ. Joined the Region 3 FWS Staff as a Design Engineer, March of 1990. As a project manager, the design and construct projects I remember the most were the Lamprey Sterilization Facility (Hammond Bay, MI), the Genoa Holding House with dynamic pre-loading of the foundation

(Genoa, WI) and a number of projects at the LaCrosse, Ann Arbor, & Madison Research Centers - pond linings & reroofing projects. Other duties were the Regional Environmental Compliance Coordinator (RECC) 1993 to 2009 (one of the original RECCs getting the program started), and the Region 3 Safety Manager (SM) 1998 to 2009. As the SM I had a great time working with and helping Bob Drieslen, Bill Thrune and Dave Wedan getting the boat safety (MOCC) off the ground in the late 90's. I was an instructor for over 9 years. In 2009, I joined Region 2 Engineering thanks to Regional Engineer Bernie Freeman (RIP Bernie). I had a number of interesting engineering projects around the Region. One was, helping defend a safe drinking water project issue at a Refuge brought by State of AZ lasting 2 years. Another was 2 years in front of an agency of the State of NM getting a new sewer system approved for a Refuge project that I was project manager of. My duties as the Alternate Dam Safety officer let me get out to inspect a number of dams and participate in dam safety drills. I was the RECC (2009 to 2016) and got to visit all the Region 2 Service facilities. I was also the remote R2 - Regional Safety Manager 2012 to 2016, conducting those duties. I retired June 2016, with a plaque showing 37.5 years of service. That included my BOR and Post Office years. [Yes, a Postal Employee. I was told that was why my OPM folder was bright orange.] Post retiring, I was hired at the HQ on a special hire program. My duties were accounting for asbestos & LBP inspections nationwide, and working on updating policies. The one I am most proud of was working with Marilyn Brower, developing the Service policy on Professional Engineering (PE) and licensing. I have continued working for the Service part time. Presently I am assisting in Regions 1 and 8. I am assisting the new RECC. It has been great, but with the pandemic, I have missed out on one of the best parts of working as a RECC. That is visiting each and every facility and seeing first-hand the people doing the Service's Mission work. I look forward to visiting my kids and grandkids more often. Fishing and hunting back in MN where I have lifetime licenses.



Paul Tritaik retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service on September 30, 2020 after 38 years of service. After graduating from the University of Maryland in 1982 with a Bachelor of Science degree, Paul started his career as an animal caretaker at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland, assisting the captive propagation of bald eagles and Andean condors. In 1989, Paul was hired as an outdoor recreation planner at

Okefenokee NWR in Georgia, to help run the public use program. In 1991, Paul became the first refuge manager of the new Bond Swamp NWR in Georgia, a satellite of Piedmont NWR, where he formed new partnerships and initiated management programs. In 1993, Paul was selected to be refuge manager at the first refuge, Pelican Island NWR in Florida, then a satellite of Merritt Island NWR. There, Paul stabilized and restored the historic island, expanded the refuge, restored over 300 acres of coastal habitat, built the Centennial Trail boardwalk, and coordinated the Centennial Celebration in 2003. Paul also served as the first refuge manager of another new refuge, Archie Carr NWR, to coordinate its expansion and partnerships for the nation's largest sea turtle nesting population. In 2008, Paul transferred to J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR as the project leader where he also managed Pine Island NWR, Matlacha Pass NWR, Island Bay NWR, and Caloosahatchee NWR. Paul expanded the "Ding" Darling refuge, restored marsh and mangrove habitat, and added many improvements to visitor facilities, including solar energy. Paul also served many other roles and details, including the Southeast Region's employee representative on the Heritage Committee, a National Friends Group Mentor, and the Southeast Region's Hunting and Fishing Team. Since retirement, Paul has established Tritaik Consulting to assist others pursuing conservation objectives, including the City of Sanibel.

From the Newsletter Editor

Doug Frugé passed the newsletter along to me as he takes over the treasurer role for the board. He will be a hard act to follow. We hope to share more news of individual retiree's lives in upcoming issues.



So, to start off a little bit about my life since retiring in 2013. My retirement has been seeking a better balance between "work" and "play: than I had when working. I joined the board of the River Management Society the day I retired and continue to serve that organization as a long-term volunteer. On the play side, I live in Southeast Alaska and spend most of the summer on my boat with my husband and two dogs fishing for salmon, visiting with friends, and watching the incredible wildlife that surrounds us - from sea otters and humpback whales to brown bears and bald eagles.

Please consider sending us a paragraph or two with photo of your retirement story to communications2023@fwsretirees.org.

Fun Facts & Family Ties

Usually, I include amusing or interesting facts and even short stories here. This time is different. Jim Pilgreen was a Special Agent who passed away on August 29, 2022 in Mississippi. I knew Jim years ago, back in 1978 or 79. He was a friend of Kevin Wood, who I worked with as an Assistant Manager Trainee at Piedmont NWR. I recently was sent an email of Jim's obituary and a link to an article that appear in the Scott County Times, an on-line publication. The author, Jeff North, is a reporter who knew Jim well. He featured Jim for his column, Outdoors in the Sun—Remembering Jim Pilgreen. Jeff North recounted several very funny stories about Agent Pilgreen, Special Agent 279. I thought I would share a portion of his story with you.

The following is excerpted from the article Jeff North wrote: Legend has it that there was a prominent farmer, landowner, business man, who owned some of the best overwintering waterfowl habitat in the south. This landowner was obsessed with duck hunting. Stories abound how Jim tried to check and catch the hunters on this piece of property that was fortified and guarded by "employees" stationed on every road leading to the flooded fields and timber where duck guns volleyed and echoed every morning. It was almost impenetrable by the federal warden. Jim was smart and figured out an angle.

Each morning around 2–3 a.m., a freight train made its way through the heart of the delta, and it so happens, these tracks also went through this mecca of waterfowl country. I can't remember exactly if Jim called the railroad and told them he wanted that train to stop at a certain time and place or if he flagged the cruising locomotive down during the predawn darkness. Either way, the train stopped, Pilgreen boarded the iron horse with a canoe, and was dropped off at a predetermined location. He waited and then paddled towards the unsuspecting hunters wearing a Santa Claus hat while singing "Here Comes Santa Claus", all the way. The judge heard the case and made an example out of the hunters. And it probably made for an interesting conversation at the local café the next morning about a duck cop Santa Claus. You have to give Jim credit for thinking outside the box.

Jim was serious about his job. He was on the side of the game and fish and ultimately, on the side of the sportsman. To Jim, there were the "caught" and the uncaught." But he always gave a slight grin when he said it. And come to think of it, with his mustache and reddish beard and hair, he did resemble Santa Claus. Rest in Peace Jim!

For those who knew him, here is the link to Jeff North's column <https://www.sctonline.net/outdoors-sun-remembering-jim-632881244382d> An obituary appears in our passing of colleagues section and Jim's obituary can be found at <https://www.wilsonandknight.com/obituary/james-edward-jim-pilgreen>

If you have anything to share, please email them to Deborah Holle at miamibig99@aol.com or promote@fwsretirees.org. Wives, husbands and other significant others are also invited to submit items. *Deborah Holle*

FWS News

Update on Ding Darling Refuge Hurricane Ian Aftermath

All employees evacuated before the storm. The two employees and their families that lived in the quarters at Tarpon Bay were all displaced for about 5-6 weeks before they could live in the houses again because there was no power, water or sewer on the island. The houses did fine and need some small repairs and they moved in just before Thanksgiving.

Two term employees and six interns lived in trailers at maintenance. All five trailers (staff and interns) were destroyed. The term employees are now working and living in the Florida Panther Bunk house. All interns were sent home before or immediately after the storm. All others permanent staff live off island and some had some had damage and losses to property.

Four of the six Ding Darling Wildlife Society staff lived on island and those that lived on island and lost their homes or rental properties, all continue to be displaced living with family or friends or moved away from Florida.

There were three to seven feet of water in every Refuge building. Most of the buildings are on pilings. The Admin building downstairs had six feet of water and they had to demolish all of downstairs in an effort to save the upstairs. The Visitor Center has no HVAC system, and the roof needs to be replaced but overall is in good shape. They have a portable HVAC system cooling the admin building and visitor center to keep mold away. The Admin building upstairs needs a lot of work before they can move back in.

The wildlife drive did not have a full breach, but a lot of washouts on the shoulders. It will take a sizable amount of funds to put large bridge spans in to replace the water control structures to allow for open flow, as there is no sea grass left in any of the impoundments and the mangroves are severely impaired. The Tarpon Bay Concession is the closest thing to getting back open, but it will only be kayak rentals. They lost the boats and trams, and bikes etc. The Refuge may open the Wildlife Drive to walkers and bikers by March. *From Complex Project Leader Kevin Godsea.*

Recent Red Wolf Recovery Efforts



The story of the red wolf reflects one of the greatest conservation challenges of the 21st century. Wrapped up in legal, political, ecological, budgetary, and social issues and conflicts, red wolf recovery reflects a "master class" in conservation. Within that context, the

Red Wolf Recovery Program just wrapped up a few amazing accomplishments.

On September 27th, the team filed its Phase III Release Plan, outlining plans to release up to 10 captive wolves into the Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population. The team is already out implementing the plan - building acclimation pens, moving red wolves to the area, and initiating trapping to create more breeding pairs. The next day, the team released its draft Recovery Plan: <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2022-09/us-fish-and-wildlife-service-seeks-comment-revised-red-wolf-recovery-plan>- a culmination of nearly a year's work by more than 50 individuals representing federal, state, academic, NGO, private landowner, and other stakeholders.

Then the team hosted two public information meetings the following week. One was held in person in North Carolina, the first in-person meeting on this issue since the pandemic and the second held virtually with more than 150 in attendance. Both were smashing successes, demonstrating the team's dedication, humility, knowledge, and openness.

Alone, any one of these would be a huge accomplishment. Collectively, they are awe-inspiring. Congratulations to Emily Weller, Joe Madison, Luke Lolies, Ryan Nordsven, Morgan Wolf, Pete Benjamin, Lauren Toivonen, Jennifer Koches, Taylor Pool, and all the others working so hard on behalf of the American red wolf! *Courtesy of John Tirpak, PhD Regional Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, South Atlantic-Gulf and Mississippi Basin*

Addition to Silvio O. Conte Refuge in Vermont

The Nature Conservancy announced that its 3,500-acre Glebe Mountain Natural Area will be added to the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, creating the new West River Management Unit. The forested expanse had been a privately owned hunting preserve and the proposed site of a 27-turbine wind farm. In 2019, The Nature Conservancy acquired the land after it was put up for sale. Under The Nature Conservancy's ownership, the property became protected from all development, public access was expanded and the organization worked to restore and enhance its forests and waters.

The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was established in 1997 to conserve, protect and enhance the abundance and diversity of native plant, fish and wildlife species and the ecosystems on which they depend throughout the Connecticut River watershed. The refuge is comprised of nearly 40,000 acres within four New England states: New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The Glebe Mountain area is a high-priority habitat for wildlife, especially black bear, as well as important species like the wood thrush, Blackburnian warblers and Louisiana waterthrush.

The Nature Conservancy's decision to invest in the Conte refuge via its transfer of the parcel reflects its shared goals with the USFWS for biodiversity protection and prioritizing public access. "The addition of the Glebe Mountain property to the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge will establish the West River Division for the benefit of wildlife and people," said Andrew French, Refuge Manager. "Under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stewardship, the property will be made more accessible for expanded and compatible public access and uses. As a new

member of the community, it will continue to be our goal to be viewed as an asset by our neighbors and visitors to this beautiful and ecologically important part of Vermont. We look forward to collaborating with residents, local leadership, state and federal agencies, and others who share an interest in this very special part of the Connecticut River watershed." *From the Nature Conservancy website*

FWS Proposes to delist the Wood Stork



Achieving a major conservation milestone following decades of conservation and large-scale restoration work, the Service is proposing to remove the wood stork from the federal list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. Wood storks (*Mycteria americana*) are

the only species of stork breeding in the United States. The announcement comes as the Endangered Species Act (ESA) turns 50 years old in 2023. The wood stork is recovering as a result of protecting its habitat at a large scale.

The wood stork faced extinction when listed in 1984. The population decreased from 20,000 nesting pairs to less than 5,000 pairs, primarily nesting in south Florida's Everglades and Big Cypress ecosystems. Today, the wood stork breeding population has doubled to 10,000 or more nesting pairs and increased its range, including the coastal plains of Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. The number of nesting colonies more than tripled from 29 to 99 in their expanded range. The ESA requires the Service to implement a post-delisting monitoring plan for a minimum of five years to ensure the species remains stable.

In addition, this proposed delisting reinforces the importance of restoration programs in the Everglades and Big Cypress ecosystems (Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan) and other ecosystem restoration efforts throughout the Southeast. The CERP enacted by Congress in 2000 remains among the highest national conservation priorities for the Service. *From FWS News Release*

Hugh Morrison Pacific Regional Director



Hugh Morrison has been selected as Regional Director of the Pacific Region. Morrison has more than 20 years of experience working for the Service. He began his career as a Presidential Management Fellow in 1997. He most recently was deputy regional director in the Pacific Region. Prior to starting that job in 2020, he worked in headquarters and in multiple other regions. During a hiatus from the Service (2016 to 2019), Morrison worked for a nonprofit coalition comprised of members from the outdoor recreation industry, recreation nonprofits and conservation groups focused on conservation and inclusive outdoor recreation. *From Pacific Region website.*

Retiree Association Anniversary Grants: An Outreach Opportunity

On Saturday, October 15, 2022 the Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge participated in the 30th anniversary celebration at Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Newington, New Hampshire. The USFWS Retirees Association provided a grant to the Friends group to support this important event for purchase of a refuge banner, information posters, and family activities materials.

Four Parker River Friends Board members and volunteers attended to welcome over 170 visitors and FWS retirees. Robert (Bob) Miller talked about his work at Great Bay NWR as Chief of Realty as did Jim Halpin, the first Great Bay Refuge Manager. They were obviously very proud of their contributions to the refuge and the Service.

It is events like these, linking the past with the present, that provide opportunities to celebrate the USFWS legacy and promote its mission with the conservationists, earth stewards, and citizens of the future. Helping out at events like this is encouraged by the USFWS Retirees Association.



Peggy Lamson, Chair of Board of Selectmen, when Great Bay was established and Right: Jim Halpin, first Refuge Manager

So please share your natural resource knowledge, enthusiasm, and dedication with Friends Groups at Refuges and Hatcheries, as well as local, state and national environmental organizations to help insure a strong connection with nature. It's fun, too. *Low Gorman III, USFWS RA Board Member for Grants and Outreach*

Natural Resource Issues

The Association believes it is important that we keep our readers informed on what we think may be the most important or highest profile fish and wildlife matters of regional or national significance, especially those of major importance to the FWS. While we have no illusions of being comprehensive in selection of articles, we believe those of most interest or significance for fish

and wildlife conservation in the United States should be brought to our members' attention. Please note that we also try to keep our website updated with more expansive information on important fish and wildlife issues. Please visit the website at www.fwsretirees.org.

National Wildlife Refuge Association Campaign to Increase Funding for Refuges

The National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest network of lands and waters dedicated to wildlife conservation, is in crisis. **Over 800 permanent positions have been lost since FY2011, resulting in a 25% loss in capacity.** Many refuges are now closed to the public and completely unmanaged.

In response, [the National Wildlife Refuge Association has launched a campaign to address this dire situation](#). Their goal is to raise awareness of the staffing crisis facing the National Wildlife Refuge System and secure the necessary funding to adequately staff it.

They will be working closely with partners and supporters to advocate for increased funding for the Refuge System. This includes a [recent letter](#) we sent to Shannon Estenoz, Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and Martha Williams, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, outlining the work we will be doing to address the staffing crisis.

As they move forward with this campaign, the Refuge Association will be calling on all refuge supporters to take action and participate in various advocacy efforts to raise awareness about this crisis. Keep an eye out for updates and ways to get involved. *From the National Wildlife Refuge Association*

Spanish Lagoon first in Europe to be recognized with legal rights as a “person”

One of Europe's largest and most endangered saltwater lagoons is facing a less fetid future after Spain's senate voted to grant the threatened ecosystem legal status as a person. The Mar Menor, a protected area off south-east Spain separated from the Mediterranean by a 13-mile sandbar, has been polluted by poor sewage systems, fertilizers and discharge from mining activities. Six years ago, its waters turned green when algal blooms killed off 87% of the vegetation on its seabed.

Dire conditions in the lagoon led more than 640,000 people to back a campaign to safeguard the Mar Menor by having it recognized as a legal “person” that can be protected and preserved by the government and residents. A law to afford it the special protection was approved by congress in July and was ratified by Spain's senate on Wednesday – the first time such a measure had been approved in the Europe. The legislation codifies the lagoon's right “to exist as an ecosystem and to evolve naturally” and recognizes its right to protection, conservation and restoration. A total of 1,600 sq km (620 square miles) of the lagoon and the nearby Mediterranean coastline will now be legally represented by a group of caretakers made up of local officials, local citizens and scientists who work in the area. The grassroots group that pushed the measure hopes this will improve the ability to defend

the lagoon from further degradation. There have been similar moves that have seen bodies of water in Ecuador, Colombia and India granted legal privileges. *Information from The Guardian and Science*

What's happening to the Great Salt Lake?

The Great Salt Lake, the largest remaining saline lake in the Western Hemisphere, is disappearing. The lake has shrunk by two thirds since the late 1980s and hit its lowest level in recorded history in fall 2022. The receding water exposed 800 square miles of lake bed salted with natural and manmade toxins, including mercury, arsenic, and selenium.

The Great Salt Lake, like the other saline lakes, is a "terminal lake" —because the rain, snow runoff, and other water that feeds the lakes have no exit point. It loses some 2-million-acre feet of water through evaporation each year, and in 2022 only about 1.2 million acre-feet flowed into the lake. Rapid population growth in Salt Lake City and the surrounding Wasatch Front valley has combined with the changing climate, lengthy drought in the U.S. West, and diversion of the feeder rivers to farms to keep the lake from being replenished.

The situation improved over the winter with an average snowpack in the surrounding mountains that, when it melts, could raise the lake level by maybe 3 feet. But that's just a band-aid. A recent study from Brigham Young University warned that without action, the Great Salt Lake could "evaporate into a system of lifeless finger lakes within five years, on its way to becoming the Great Toxic Dustbowl."

The U.S. Geological Survey and its partners have identified 20 saline lakes, including the Great Salt Lake, as ecosystems in need of saving in four states of the Great Basin — California, Nevada, Oregon, and California. The saline lakes may not be potable or teeming with sportfish, but they aren't lifeless either. The brine shrimp and flies that live in the Great Salt Lake are an important food source for the 10,000 migratory birds that flock to its placid waters.

Utah and the federal government are pouring money into researching the issue to come up with long-term solutions, and Utah is also taking short-term steps to stave off disaster. President



Biden in late December signed the bipartisan [Saline Lake Ecosystems in the Great Basin States Program Act](#), which allocates \$25 million over five years to USGS to establish a program to "assess, monitor, and benefit the hydrology of saline lakes in the Great Basin," plus the migratory birds and

wildlife that depend on those ecosystems. Efforts to save the Great Salt Lake and other Great Basin lakes also got \$40 million from Utah's Legislature last year and \$10 million from the federal government through a defense spending earmark for the Army Corps of Engineers. *Information from the on-line publication, The Week*

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Updates

The Department of Justice (DOJ) filed its opposition to the plaintiffs' motion for summary judgment in the federal lawsuit by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) and the State of Alaska that challenged the moratorium on oil and gas development in the Coastal Plain. The Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges has intervened along with many conservation organizations and Tribal governments on behalf of the Biden administration. Trustees for Alaska will be filing their reply brief this month in support of the DOJ.



On February 8, 2023, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) filed notice in the Federal Register regarding the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the December 2021 SF 299 application by Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation (KIC) for a winter

Right-of-Way (ROW) across the tundra in a wilderness study area (<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/arctic>). The draft EA is scheduled for September 2023 followed by a public comment period. We expect this to be a lengthy process that will require compliance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act regarding potential impacts on polar bears and a full EIS process. This may result in a requirement for an incidental take permit, which could become a major problem for the ROW application. It should be noted that the request for a winter Right-of-Way across the Refuge may have implications for the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and the Izembek road controversy. *From the Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges Newsletter (February 14, 2023)*

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Land Exchange

On December 13, 2022, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in its en banc (full court) review of the appeal by the DOJ and the State of a second successful lawsuit that had stopped the land transfer for the proposed Izembek road. Their decision to rehear the case en banc nullified the previous panel decision and began the road proponents appeal anew. Assuming the panel decision could come as early as late March, the Izembek coalition is working diligently to convince Secretary Haaland to withdraw the land exchange before the Ninth Circuit issues a decision. *From the Friends of Alaska National Refuges Newsletter (February 14, 2023)*

PFAS a Concern in Consuming Freshwater Fish

Eating just one serving of freshwater fish each year could have the same effect as drinking water heavily polluted with "forever chemicals" for an entire month, a new study finds. The equivalent month-long amount of water would be contaminated at levels 2,400 times greater than what's recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) drinking water health advisories, according a study published recently in *Environmental Research*.

The research added that locally caught freshwater fish are far more polluted than commercial catches with per- and polyfluorinated substances (PFAS) — so-called forever chemicals that are notorious for their persistence in the body and the environment. PFAS are key ingredients in jet fuel firefighting foam, industrial discharge and many household products, including certain types of food packaging. For decades, they have leached into drinking water supplies while also contaminating irrigated crops and fish that inhabit local waterways. Fish consumption has long been identified as a route of exposure to PFAS, according to the study. Researchers first identified such contamination in catfish that inhabited the Tennessee River in 1979. The study is the first analysis to connect U.S. fish consumption to blood levels of PFAS, while also comparing PFAS levels in freshwater fish with those in commercial seafood samples. Researchers evaluated the presence of different types of PFAS in 501 fish fillet samples, collected across the U.S. from 2013 to 2015. For more information see the report in Environmental Research, “Locally caught freshwater fish across the United States are likely a significant source of exposure to PFOS and other perfluorinated compounds” by Nadia Barbo, Tasha Stoiber, Olga V. Naidenko and David Q. Andrews. A summary article was published in The Hill on January 17, 2023. *Information shared by Doug Frugé*

Notes From the Field and Other Things

This is the section formerly called “Miscellaneous”. We welcome your contributions of stories or articles on just about anything that may be of interest to FWS Retirees. Just send them to Helen Clough at communications2023@fwsretirees.org.

Adventure Travel with FWS Retirees. As we emerge from our COVID cocoons and get back out into the world, we would like to tell you of a couple of FWS Retirees travel opportunities. Many of us have wanted to journey on a safari to Africa. Today’s safaris are not of the *Out of Africa* mold – but are still filled with adventure and fantastic wildlife viewing. Both trips are booked with Africa Through Your Lens, a company that has been hosting FWS Retirees in South Africa for over 10 years. We have two such adventures to share with you scheduled for 2023 and 2024.

KwaZulu Natal, St. Lucia Wetlands, Indian Ocean, and ChaZen Game Reserve

Dates: Depart US October 2 and return October 14, 2023

Price: \$4,100 plus round-trip airfare to Johannesburg.

Includes: all lodging, in-country transportation, meals, wine/beer with lunch and dinner, entry fees, and tips



Itinerary: Upon arrival we will venture to ChaZen Game Reserve (a private game reserve owned by our hosts the Viljoens) for the first half of our safari. This 40,000-acre reserve is home to a breeding program for the African lion and endangered Africa painted dog.

Also, there is an amazing array of South African ungulates: impala, kudu, eland, cape buffalo, black and blue wildebeest, sable and many more. We will return to Johannesburg to catch a short flight to Durban (included in cost) to the east coast of South Africa and the KwaZulu Natal region. Potential activities include plenty of wildlife viewing with daily game drives to nearby wildlife reserves (Hluhluwe/iMfolozi Park, swim/picnic at the Indian Ocean, St. Lucia Wetlands, night game viewing in Isimanagaliso, and Hippo cruise.

ChaZen Volunteer Safari/Pilanesburg National Park

Dates: Depart US January 22 and return February 2, 2024

Price: \$2,750 plus airfare to Johannesburg

Includes: all lodging, in-country transportation, meals, wine/beer with lunch and dinner, entry fees and tips

Itinerary: If you want to do some good with your travel time and dollars, plus enjoy a wonderful safari experience, this is the trip for you! Since 2011, FWS retirees have participated in this do-good adventure. Volunteer work is at ChaZen Game Reserve (a private reserve owned by our hosts the Viljoens). Past projects have included habitat restoration, relocating wildlife, assisting in the breeding programs, trail maintenance, and general repairs. The workday is usually in the mornings with the afternoons spent in free time before a late afternoon game drive and sundowner. The last few days of this volunteer experience is spent in the Pilanesburg National Park area north of Johannesburg. Here we should see elephants, hippos, and possibly a leopard!

If you are interested in either of these trips, contact Donna Stanek at dstanek0418@hotmail.com or give her a call at: 505-917-2023. *Contributed by Donna Stanek.*

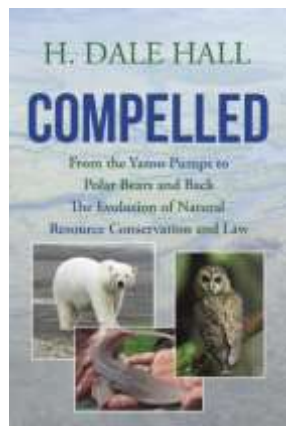
Former Region 2 Solicitor Passes Away

Lotario “Terry” Ortega, former Regional Solicitor in Albuquerque passed away January 28, 2023 at the age of 100. *Information shared by Pete Stine.*

FWS Authors

FWS employees who have written books lately include Dale Hall and Harold Duebbert.

Compelled by H. Dale Hall



“*Compelled* is a remarkable book about conservation, merging biography, storytelling and America’s complex legal system as seen through the eyes of a dedicated public servant. If you want to make a difference in the future of conservation policy and law, this is the place to start your journey.” Jeff Trandahl, CEO/Executive Director National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

A must-read for any outdoor enthusiast, *Compelled* by H. Dale Hall follows the journey of a young U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist thrust into the controversial world of national conservation issues and the methods used to resolve them. You'll read a first-hand account of the court challenge to the U.S. Clean Water Act, about the harm of environmental pollutants in federal water development projects, the history of conservation in the U.S. led by hunters and anglers, the history of the northern spotted owl and the U.S. Endangered Species Act, about western water wars, and how polar bears became America's first threatened species under the ESA as a result of global warming. Hall also discusses the best way to overcome these complex issues – through cooperative efforts and building trust between seemingly opposing interests.

The book is available from Ducks unlimited at <https://www.ducks.org/compelled> or Bass Pro at <https://www.basspro.com/shop/en/compelled-book-by-h-dale-hall>.

My Lifetime Among Waterfowl. Hunter, Decoy Maker, Wildlife Biologist by Harold Duebbert

From John Cornely: A new book has been published recently about a friend's FWS career, his duck, goose, and crane hunting, and his decoy carving. His name is Harold Duebbert. He passed away before it was published, but his daughter, friends, and colleagues finished it. It is heavy on hunting, but very well done. He held summer jobs at N.D. refuges while in school. He was the refuge Biologist at Malheur in the mid-1960s, then was an excellent researcher at Northern Prairie.

Waterfowl hunting in North America experienced two great eras. The first occurred in the last three decades of the 19th century when autumn skies were filled with waterfowl and hunters had access to remote areas such as the northern prairies via rail cars. Harold recounted this first era in his 2003 book, *Wildfowling in Dakota: 1873-1903*. By the early 20th century, waterfowl populations were declining and in the 1930s "Dust Bowl" drought brought further drastic declines in duck populations across the Prairie Pothole Region that constituted 10 percent of the waterfowl breeding habitat but produced 40 percent of the continent's migratory ducks in average years. When water returned to the prairies at the end of the 1930s, prairie nesting duck populations rebounded dramatically, initiating a second great era of duck hunting just as Harold was beginning his life as a waterfowl hunter in 1940. Harold lived this second great era of waterfowl hunting as a hunter, decoy maker, and wildlife biologist, and he documented it in his 56 years of hunting journals. Now readers may re-live it as he takes them back to those bygone years. Hardcover book with over 150 photos. The book can be ordered at <https://www.haroldduebbert.com/>

Passing of Colleagues

If you are aware of the passing of any retired or active FWS employees, including those who left the Service before retirement, please let us know so we can pass that information on to our readers. If you can provide us with links to online obituaries, that

would be most helpful, and should be sent to Helen Clough at communications2023@fwsretirees.org.

Mike Brickley



Mike age 60 of Bloomington, MN passed away peacefully November 29, 2022 surrounded by family and friends. Mike grew up in Inver Grove Heights and graduated from Simley High School in 1980. He went on to earn a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Minnesota. Mike would spend his 17-year career working at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Mike was part of the Region 3 engineering team and later part of the Infrastructure Management Division team in Refuges, serving as a mechanical engineer. Mike's first federal job was with the Division of Engineering at the Whipple Federal Building in 2005. Mike worked on more than 100 projects for the region during his career, including upgrading facilities across the region with operational equipment that was essential for meeting our mission. He poured his expertise into developing plans to clean up lead, remove asbestos and other contaminants that posed a risk to the health of employees and visitors. Mike also designed several photovoltaic systems for regional facilities, gearing us up early on for green energy and efficient facilities. In that vein, Mike managed the region's energy portfolio and assisted his peers across the country with energy data management and won numerous national awards for that effort.

Mike lived as a quadriplegic for 41 years, but he did not let that define him; he led a rich and fulfilling life with a career, hobbies, and a family who cherished him. He enjoyed fantasy football, traveling, and spending time with his family, friends, and dog, Sophie. Those who he loved will remember his positive attitude, and can look to him for inspiration when facing hardship. Mike was preceded in death by his parents, John and Marlene. He is survived by his wife, Brandi; daughter, Jessica (Charles) Lee; siblings, Bob (Marie), Jim (Sue), and Mark (Tesa); friend and caregiver, Gedas Sutas; and many nieces, nephews, family, and friends. *Information provided by Peggy Nelson*

Joe Carroll (1938 – 2022)



Joseph Dunn "Joe" Carroll, Jr. of Vero Beach, Florida, passed away on October 14, 2022 after a long illness. Joe was born in Newark, NJ, on May 23, 1938 to Angela Milano and Joseph Carroll, Sr. Joe graduated in 1956 from Columbia High School. He attended the University of Maine and was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity, a source of many lifelong friends. Summers were spent as a fisheries aid with the New Jersey Fish

and Game Department. He graduated in 1960 with a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management.

After graduation, Joe was hired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). However, in 1961, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, reaching the rank of SP4 Medic. After discharge, he returned to the FWS, later becoming Field Supervisor of the Vero Beach Field Office which originally served parts of Georgia, all of Florida, as well as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Joe's first supervisor was Art Marshall, under whom he conducted many benthic habitat surveys to assess Army Corps dredge permit applications, including the controversial Cross Florida Barge Canal, which was ultimately denied, and the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project, which helped initiate restoration of the Everglades and Kissimmee River. Joe's bird surveys were instrumental in rescuing Pelican Island from dredge and fill construction for tract housing in adjacent wetlands.

Joe served on the Habitat & Environmental Protection Advisory Committee for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and was a founding member of the Florida legislatively-established Subcommittee on Managed Marshes where he represented the FWS for about 25 years and then continued for several years as an emeritus member. Joe's valuable insights were extremely helpful in meeting the mutual objectives of saltmarsh management for mosquito control and environmental enhancement. Joe helped save tarpon in the impoundment at Bee Gum Point from a proposed development in Indian River Shores that was ultimately purchased for a nature preserve, still inhabited by tarpon, and treasured by local residents.

Joe retired from the FWS in 1994 and opened Carroll and Associates, an environmental consulting firm that operated from 1995-2015, specializing in endangered species, particularly Florida Scrub-Jays and Bald Eagles. Joe was a member of the Board of Directors for both Audubon of Florida and the Pelican Island Audubon Society, and organized and coordinated the local Audubon Jay Watch monitoring program as well as Bald Eagle nest monitoring in St. Lucie County. Joe also served on Indian River County Conservation Lands Advisory Committee.

Joe was also a founding member of the Vero Beach Volunteer Ambulance Squad and organizer of the YMCA Men's Softball League. Joe also voluntarily conducted monthly bird counts at the Indian River Club Golf Course. His professional and volunteer work was recognized with various honors including the American Motors Conservationist of the Year Award (1977), U.S. Department of Interior Meritorious Service Award (1977), Pelican Island Audubon Society Phyllis Stockburger Award (2013), and the Audubon Jay Watch Volunteer of the Year Award (2015). Furthermore, the Indian River Board of County Commissioners approved construction of an overlook in the Wabasso Scrub Conservation Area to be named the "Joe Carroll Overlook".

Joe is survived by his wife, Faith Higgins Carroll; son, James (Pamela) Carroll of Williamsburg, VA; son, Timothy (Kristine) Carroll of Alpharetta, GA; stepson David S. Mitchell, Jr, Bluffton, SC; granddaughter, Kaleigh (Ryan) Yosca, Stafford, VA; grandson, Jackson (Abigail) Carroll, Holly Springs, NC; granddaughter, Madelyn Carroll, Alpharetta, GA; and four great grandchildren, Emery and Eli Carroll; and Wesley and Cooper Joseph Yosca. Joe is also survived by his sister, Kathy (Tony) Carroll, Florham Park, NJ; brother, William (Janice) Carroll, St.

Petersburg, FL; sister, Elizabeth (Ralph) Viviano, Wabasso, FL; Adele (Keith Winnard) Carroll, Berkeley, CA; and brother Christopher (Yolanda) Carroll, Encinitas, CA. *Prepared by Paul Tritaik with help from Faith Higgins Carroll, Bob Bruce, Ruth Stanbridge, Doug Carlson and Dr. Grant Gilmore*

Liz Ann Rumanes Chebib (1959 – 2022)



Elizabeth Ann ("Liz Ann") Rumanes Chebib, 62, of Atlanta, Georgia, passed away peacefully on January 15, 2022, in Atlanta, Georgia. Liz Ann was born in Atlanta, GA, to Elizabeth Simon and Louis Rumanes on November 1st, 1959, and grew up surrounded by her large loving Lebanese family, including many aunts, uncles and cousins. She graduated from Lakeside High school in Atlanta, GA in 1978. She married the love of her life, Antoine ("Tony") Chebib on August 15th, 1993 in Atlanta, GA. Together, Tony and Liz Ann owned and operated Lawrence's Café, a Lebanese restaurant in Atlanta, GA, for over 32 years. She was an adoring wife and loving mother.

For over 35 years, Liz Ann was a Regional Graphic Designer for the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service based in the Regional Office in Atlanta, GA. She was adored by her colleagues. She excelled as a graphic designer, perfecting nearly every brochure, pamphlet, invitation, and flyer that she worked on to help anyone needing her expertise. Her friendly customer service left everyone she encountered smiling.

She was a proud, lifelong patron of St. Joseph's Maronite Catholic Church, and a lifelong member of the Cedar Club of Atlanta. Liz Ann was fun-loving, creative, an animal lover, and enjoyed gardening in her free time. She had a positive and loving spirit. She had a wonderful smile and sense of humor, with a deep desire to help others.

Liz Ann was preceded in death by her mother and father; her uncle, Joseph Simon; her adoring aunts, Lucy Najjar and Eva Solomon; and her cherished cousin, Gary Solomon.

Liz Ann is survived by her husband, Tony, her beloved daughters, Kalie and Emily Chebib and many loving relatives and friends.

Prepared by Paul Tritaik

Harold Duebbert



Harold F Duebbert, born June 30, 1929 in Wellington, Missouri, passed away January 18, 2022. Many were blessed to know him as a gentle, loving, kind and peace-loving man who cherished his family and friends. He had a deep appreciation for the simple, serene, sacred moments as he basked in the magnificence of God's Creation.

After graduating from Central Missouri State College in 1951, Harold served his country in the U.S. Army (Korean War.) Upon his return, he earned his Master's Degree, majoring in Wildlife

Management at the University of Missouri (Columbia.) He married Sheila (Uerling) in 1958 and they moved to Oakes, North Dakota where his storied career as a wildlife biologist began with the ND Game and Fish Department.

An avid waterfowler, Harold enjoyed a successful career as a wildlife biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center in Jamestown, ND) for over twenty years. Time with his family was his greatest delight; hunting, woodworking, biking, gardening, camping, canoeing, cooking the birds from his hunts, canning the goods from his gardens, and reading also brought joy to his heart. He found his greatest spiritual connection and moments of peace when embraced in the quiet solitude of the Dakota Prairie.

Harold's retirement years were spent traveling, attending his grandchildren's significant life events, hunting in North Dakota and Canada, ice fishing, and the other activities that brought peace to his heart. His first book, "Wildfowling in Dakota 1873-1903" was published in 2003; his second book, "My Lifetime Among Waterfowl", his personal hunting memoir covering 65 years, will soon go to press. [Note: see information on this book elsewhere in this newsletter.] An accomplished duck decoy maker, he hand-carved and painted over 200 unique pieces of art, most of which were gifted to family and friends.

Harold is survived by his wife, June Duebbert (Fergus Falls, MN); daughters Julie (Tracy) Nelson Wanzek (Jamestown, ND) and Karen (Mike) Eischens (Excelsior, MN); their mom, Sheila Duebbert; June's family and his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

William (Bill) Harrison



Bill (age 84) died Saturday, November 19, 2023 from Parkinson's complications, with which he lived for many years. A farm kid from Kansas who loved the outdoors. Bill was cheerful, hardworking with a quick wit, athletic, and up for any adventure. An original environmentalist, Bill was trained at Fort Hays State University as a botanist. He spent a career protecting wildlife, including endangered species and their habitats with The Bureau of Land Management and The Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Department of the Interior.

A 52-year member of The Basilica of Saint Mary, Bill spent countless hours on a variety of volunteer projects at The Basilica. Also, a 50 +year resident of East Isles, Bill was involved in many civic and neighborhood organizations, most recently a tireless advocate for the Mid-Town Greenway.

Bill treasured time at his winter retreat on Sanibel Island, Florida with family and friends. He will be missed for his energy, practical advice, knowledge of the natural world and can-do attitude. In his final years, Bill loved being surrounded by his children and grandchildren for family gatherings.

He is preceded in death by his parents Fern and Leland, brother Douglas and daughter Gretchen. He is survived by his wife of 62 years Karen and their children Sydney, (John Olsen), Leah, (Bob Stich), Jason, (Kari Harrison), 4 grandchildren Harrison Olsen, Brady Stich, Maxine and Miles Harrison. Also survived by cousin David Stagg, brother in-law John Jackson and sister-in-law Bonnie Harber.

George Gee (1937 – 2022)



Dr. George Francis Gee, 85, passed away on September 22, 2022 at his home after battling Parkinson's disease for many years. George was born in Milton, Massachusetts on April 15, 1937, son of the late Francis and Winnie Gee. He attended local schools in Stoughton, Massachusetts through the eighth grade and received his secondary education at Norfolk County Agricultural School of Walpole, Massachusetts. He obtained his undergraduate degree from the

University of Massachusetts and his master's degree from the University of Maine.

While attending the University of Maine, George met the love of his life, Mae O. Smith, and they were married on August 31, 1963, in Woodland, Maine. While in the Air Force, they were moved to Georgia, where he completed his doctoral studies at the University of Georgia in environmental and reproductive physiology. They moved to Texas, where they had two children, Valerie and George.

After three years of teaching and research involving the proposed Manned Orbiting Laboratory (as an officer in the U.S. Air Force), George went to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (WRC) in Laurel, Maryland during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. George joined the Endangered Species Research Program, as an Animal Physiologist. He conducted research supporting the recovery of endangered Whooping Cranes, Mississippi Sandhill Cranes, and Masked Bobwhites, and he served on the Recovery Teams for those species. He also oversaw the captive-propagation program at Patuxent WRC for the Aleutian Canada Goose and served as an advisor to the recovery teams for the Everglade Snail Kite, Dusky Seaside Sparrow, Bali Mynah, and Puerto Rican Parrot. Furthermore, he served on graduate committees for both Master and PhD candidates in the United States and Canada.

George was best known for establishing techniques to artificially inseminate wild birds as well as cryopreservation and storage of avian semen. George worked with scientists at the adjoining Beltsville Agriculture Research Center and mastered the technique with wild birds. Although he worked with several avian species, his main thrust was with the endangered whooping cranes. These breakthrough advances led to a greater number of fertile eggs produced and sometimes multiple clutches from the same female.

George worked closely with the International Crane Foundation (ICF), especially Dr. George Archibald, who headed ICF's crane captive-breeding and conservation programs. This collaboration with ICF helped them to establish a state-of-the art propagation facility. The first crane they produced by artificial insemination was appropriately called "Gee-Whiz."

After retiring George became an Emeritus Wildlife Biologist, Patuxent WRC, and a Director of the Whooping Crane Conservation Association. In his Emeritus position he taught and consulted within the Fish and Wildlife Service and with scientists at zoos and universities. He also authored numerous scientific papers that advanced the field of avian reproductive physiology.

After retiring, George and Mae built their retirement home in Crawford, Maine, on Crawford Lake. George was active in the PTA (serving as a local president often and several other elected positions in the PTA County Council), in county athletics (coach, manager, and league president), and in many church activities. His hobbies included bird watching, fishing, and gardening.

George was highly regarded by his colleagues, assistants, and everyone else that was fortunate enough to come in contact with him. He was a kind and gentle person with a great sense of humor. George was a team player with a professional demeanor and a sincere passion for wildlife. He was always thinking outside the box and pushing the envelope on such projects as whooping crane semen cryopreservation and the use of portable incubators heated with hot water bottles.

In addition to his parents, his beloved wife Mae and sister-in-law Barbara Andrews predeceased George. Surviving are his daughter, Valerie Hagans and husband Danny of Stedman, NC; a son, George B. Gee and his wife Arica of Chester, NH; two wonderful grandchildren, April and Faith Gee, both of Chester, NH; one sister, Alice Seggelin and her husband Richard of Halifax, MA; brother-in-law, James Andrews of Savannah, GA; three nephews, Jay and Jeffrey Andrews, and Eric Seggelin; one niece, Lauretta Place; and many cousins and dear friends.
Prepared by Matt Perry and Paul Tritaik with help from Dr. James Carpenter, Roddy Gabel, and Joanna Taylor

Karen A. (Schultz) Leppert



Karen A. (Schultz) Leppert, 84, of Lansing, passed away on November 29, 2022. Karen Alyce (Schultz) Leppert was born on March 17, 1938, in Waukon, IA to Enid Evelyn (Peters) and Alvin H. Schultz. She graduated from Lansing Public High School in 1956. On September 10, 1957, married Kenneth J. Leppert. They lived in Ames, IA, while Ken attended Iowa State University and Karen worked at the Iowa State Highway Commission. While raising their children, Karen was a homemaker. After her children were raised, Karen began working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Lansing District, in 1980 and transferred to the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in 1984, retiring in 2004.

She dearly loved her husband, children and spouses, grandchildren and spouses, and great-grandchildren. She especially enjoyed celebrating family birthdays, special events, and holidays with her family. They enjoyed twelve years at Lake Neshonoc Campground, numerous family vacations, and outings on the Mississippi River. She enjoyed their home and decorating for the holidays. An outstanding cook and baker, Karen made almost everything from scratch.

Karen is survived by her husband, Ken; six children: Kimberly (Paul) Mauss of Onalaska, WI, Kristin (Terry) Heiderscheit of Rochester, MN, Kyle (Laura) Leppert of Onalaska, WI, Kathy (John) Reinhart of La Crosse, WI, Kari (John) Adank of Onalaska, WI, and Kraig (Marc) Leppert of Onalaska, WI; thirteen grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren. Survivors also include her sisters and brothers-in-law: Corrine Burke, Diane and Carl Clancy, Kay and Bob Troendle, and Gwen and Jim Loveless; along with many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and many friends. Karen was preceded in death by her parents; her mother-in-law; father-in-law; her brother-in-law, Donald; sister-in-law, Eleanora; and several cousins. *Information provided by Peggy Nelson*

Sue Matthews

Our friend, Sue Matthews died of natural causes on December 1, 2022 in Todos Santos, Baja California. Mexico. She was, at that time, active with a local sea turtle rescue group. Her beloved golden retriever, Scout, was by her side. Sue's family had deep roots in the South, where she grew up in old New Orleans. She obtained a master's degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Washington. She moved to Alaska in 1975, where she married her former husband, John Matthews.

Sue was a peripatetic adventurer, basing herself in Alaska and Huson, Montana for much of her life. You might have known her as a groundbreaking Wildlife Manager with the US Fish and Wildlife where she became the first female manager of any Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge, serving in the remote Tetlin Wildlife Refuge or as a guide for Lindblad Expeditions along the Inland Passage of Alaska, the Bering Sea to Japan, and later, on the Antarctica cruises.

Sue appreciated all things artistic, weaving, paintings, ceramics, jewelry, and photography. She admired those who were proactive in fighting for human and animal rights. Sue was connected to horses and horse people in Montana and Arizona, serving as Dunrovin Ranch's manager in 2007. She was a conservationist to the core, an educator, and a terrific conversationalist at her best. She served as the Chair of the Board of the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council and represented the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, where she was sent to South Africa to support their wilderness training activities.

Most of us appreciated Sue as a talented storyteller. She had a strong Joie de vivre. If you knew her at all, you appreciated her quick wit, mischievous greetings, and sparkling blue eyes. She was outgoing with a hearty laugh and a delightfully wicked sense of humor. *Written by Colleen Matt, Heather Britton and SuzAnne Miller*

James Edward “Jim” Pilgreen (1950-2022)



Jim Pilgreen, age 71 (October 13, 1950 - August 29, 2022) was born on October 13, 1950 in Clarksdale, MS, to the late T.K. Pilgreen and Doris Pilgreen and resided in Carroll County since 1991. He was a graduate of Mississippi Delta Community College (MDCC), where he played football, was named Mr. MDCC and was inducted into the Football Hall of Fame in 2013. He then attended and graduated from Delta State University where he also played football and

earned his Bachelor's degree in Wildlife Biology. He retired from the US Fish and Wildlife Service after serving 32 years as Special Agent 279. Jim was part of details throughout the United States and Canada working cases that involved animals from Manatee to Walrus, but his favorite was ducks. He loved telling anyone who would listen about the lengths he would go to catch an outlaw. He was blessed to have a job that he truly loved and had a passion for. He was the best story-teller and a legend that others will tell stories about for years to come.

He was a member of the Carrollton Baptist Church where he served as a deacon. He loved his church family with all his heart. He loved being involved and making sure everyone did everything right. He took his role as lead goose very seriously. He is an adored husband and father and was the Godly example that any man should be. Some of his favorite things were his family, especially his grand-babies, his church, the outdoors, taking others hunting, baseball, Lego and a good dessert. We find peace in knowing that he is resting in the arms of Jesus.

He is preceded in death by his parents, and a sister, Martha Pilgreen. He is survived by his wife, Barbara Zona Russell Pilgreen of Carrollton, MS; two daughters, Meredith Blair (Michael) Russell of Pontotoc, MS, and Jessica (Kelvin) Rosata of McComb, MS; son, Jim Tom (Jacquelyn) Pilgreen of Flora, MS; step son, Les Graves of Liberty, MS; sister, Nancy (Dave) Hergert of Scottsbluff, NE; nine grandchildren, Brayden Russell, Courtney Dunnam, Maci Russell, Jake Haygood, Jax Toler, Randi Toler, Stella James Pilgreen, Raylee Graves, and Kenzie Graves; great grandchild, Ava Leigh Dunnam; three special nephews, Matthew Hergert, Jon Hergert, and Bryan Adderholt; and his loving belgian malinois, *Lego*. *For one story of Jim's legendary career see the Fun Facts and Family Ties section of this newsletter.*

Jim Shaw (1934 – 2022)



On November 28, 2022, James H. Shaw, beloved husband, father, grandfather, and brother, passed away. He was 87 years old. Jim was born on December 12, 1934 in Irondequoit, New York (near Rochester) to James Hoover Shaw, Sr. and Evelyn Mae Shaw. He grew up in Irondequoit, on the shores of Lake Ontario, hunting, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors with his uncles. He earned money during

high school by trapping muskrats and mink. He graduated from Irondequoit High School in 1952 and New York State Ranger School in 1954. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry with a minor in Wildlife at Syracuse University's College of Forestry in 1957. He then joined the Air National Guard in Syracuse (the fighter interceptor wing) in a pilot slot. He spent six years in the U.S. Air Force in the active Air Force Reserves.

Jim was hired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in 1957 and started in Realty at the Region 5 Regional Office in Boston, Massachusetts. One of the projects he worked on was acquiring Little Island Beach at Brigantine NWR (now part of Edwin B. Forsythe NWR), in New Jersey. Another was establishing Erie NWR, in northwestern Pennsylvania, where Jim did the appraisal work and negotiations, as well as serving as interim refuge manager for the new refuge. Jim was also responsible for making additions to Montezuma NWR in upstate New York and Missisquoi NWR in Vermont.

Jim transferred to Region 3 Regional Office in Minneapolis, Minnesota where he made additions to the Ottawa NWR in Ohio and to Swan Lake NWR in Missouri. Jim also did appraisals for Federal Aid helping states acquire lands under the Pittman-Robertson Act. He worked on trying to save the prairie potholes from development, preserving the wetlands for migrating waterfowl. One of Jim's contributions was helping test the prototype cannon net trap, which became an important tool for waterfowl banding.

Jim met the love of his life, Rose, in Minneapolis and they married in November 1964. They built their lives together, raising three children (Laura, Julia, and Steven) and living all over the United States from Boston to Alaska.

In 1968, Jim transferred to Region 1 Regional Office in Portland, Oregon as Chief Appraiser in Realty, where he was instrumental in establishing San Francisco Bay, San Pablo Bay, and Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuges in California. He also worked on the additions to Baskett Slough, William L. Finley, and Ankeny National Wildlife Refuges in Oregon.

Jim then transferred to the Area Office in Anchorage, Alaska in 1970 where he served as Program Manager in charge of Fisheries Service, Animal Damage Control, Realty, Budget, Migratory Birds, Endangered Species, and Federal Aid. One of the most consequential projects he did was going out to Buldir Island, near the end of the Aleutian Islands, to band the last known breeding population of Aleutian Canada Geese for the first time on one of the last islands free of invasive red foxes to determine the migration routes of the geese and their wintering areas. This was critical in the successful recovery of this endangered species.

In 1976 Jim was selected as Assistant Regional Director for Federal Assistance and Endangered Species for Region 5 in Boston and then in 1979 he was transferred to Region 1 in Portland as Chief of Realty. Jim acquired the Hudson Ranch for the establishment of Bitter Creek NWR where the last six wild California condors in the wild were found and eventually captured for successful captive propagation instrumental to their recovery and eventual reintroduction. He helped establish the Bear Valley

NWR in southern Oregon, to protect an important wintering bald eagle roost and old growth forest from logging through a controversial court-ordered condemnation that rekindled anti-federal sentiment at the time. It got so bad that Jim and others received death threats and required police escorts at times. Bear Valley NWR is now a popular local destination. Jim helped establish Tijuana Slough NWR on the eve of a spending freeze to protect one of the last intact wetlands in southern California.

Jim helped establish several refuges in Hawaii against internal opposition including Kilauea Point NWR for Laysan Albatross and other migratory seabirds, Kealia Pond NWR for endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, and Big Island NWR Complex for endemic forest birds. Jim worked hard on Kilauea Point NWR and overcame many internal obstacles, but was ultimately presented with a lovely photo of the area by the President of the Trust for Public Lands during the ceremony celebrating the donation of 101-acre Crater Hill and purchase of 37-acre Mokolea Point. Jim's greatest reward was the respect and appreciation of the Hawaiian people as they proudly celebrated the Transfer of Deed on March 8, 1988.

Jim also helped create Siletz Bay NWR in Oregon during a moratorium on new refuges because of a land donation. Other proud achievements included establishing Ash Meadows NWR in Nevada, and Stiegerwald Lake and Pierce National Wildlife Refuges in Oregon. Pierce was also created by a land donation for Canada Goose habitat in the Columbia River Gorge.

Of all the places he worked and enjoyed, Alaska was the highlight of his career. He cared deeply about protecting endangered species and was passionate about preserving their natural habitats. It was a perfect career for someone who enjoyed the outdoors. Jim retired in 1990 after spending 33 years acquiring lands for National Wildlife Refuges and dedicating his life to preserving beautiful spaces for future generations. Jim loved his work, but was frustrated with internal politics that got in the way of conservation. Jim was loyal to his employees. He considered most of them family. When there was a spending freeze, Jim had to release several employees. It hurt him deeply. He spent hours assisting each one with new employment.

The FWS in Region 1 was a closeknit group. Employees held a yearly Clam Bake at Fort Stevens State Park where most came camping for the weekend. There were games for young and old and lots of laughter and fun. The picnics at Rooster Rock and other gatherings always included the families. His children fondly remember these outings with their "Dad's work."

Jim was an avid hunter and loved his camping trips. He enjoyed crabbing, clamming and fishing and loved teaching his grandchildren about marine life. He was also passionate about flying and enjoyed his time with fellow pilots in the air. He also planted over 400 trees on his own property. Jim loved to putter around his shop and tinker with his two Model A Fords. He was a creative inventor who could repurpose anything. He told the truth, sometimes with brutal honesty, and he was loyal to a fault. He was always there to lend a helping hand with quiet acts of kindness.

Jim was active in the Newport Airport Committee, Bay City Cruisers, Gentleman's Club, Oregon Hunter's Association, Big Timber Rifle and Pistol Club, Portland's Model A Ford Club - Beaver Chapter, Lincoln County Land Legacy Committee, Airport Master Plan Committee, Oregon Fish and Wildlife, and the Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Service Employees, where he volunteered at several Retiree Reunions. At the Lincoln City, Oregon reunion in 2018, he gathered artifacts from others plus some of his own to display. Attendees had fun reminiscing. Jim also enjoyed volunteering at Siletz Bay NWR, near his home, and recognizing the donor for saving this parcel of land for future generations. It is now a local treasure for birders, hikers, and others using it daily.

Jim is survived by his loving wife Rose, daughters Laura and Julia, son Steven, sister Margaret Marante, and five grandchildren. Jim was preceded in death by brothers Richard and Michael. *Prepared by Paul Tritaik with help from Rose Shaw, Cindy Uptegraft Barry and John Cornely*

James W. Spann



James W. Spann (Jim), 88 of Richlands, NC, passed away on October 4, 2022, in Fayetteville, NC. He died peacefully, surrounded by his family, after having bravely battled pancreatic cancer.

Jim was born in Forsyth County, but spent most of his early life in Trenton, North Carolina. From a young age he worked on the family farm and in the local grocery store. He attended the local schools. After graduation from High School, he served in the U.S. Army and later graduated from North Carolina State University with a BS in

Wildlife Conservation and Management. He moved to Maryland and began work at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, returning home briefly to marry Sue (Banks) Spann in 1961.

He had a life-long career as a biologist at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and attended graduate school at the University of Maryland. He was a dedicated scientist, who published many important papers in *Science*, *Nature*, and other scientific publications. In 1969, he was one of the researchers, who published a paper in the scientific journal *Nature* called "Marked DDE Impairment of Mallard Reproduction in Controlled Studies." This paper documented clearly that metabolites of DDT were linked with the phenomenon of eggshell thinning in birds. It remains one of the most important scientific papers ever published on the effects of environmental pollutants on wildlife. He worked at Patuxent for over 40 years and had many close friends and colleagues.

Jim planted a vegetable garden every year and greatly enjoyed working the land and growing food for his family. He was an airplane enthusiast, enjoyed airshows, and took flying lessons in hopes of being a pilot.

Jim loved to travel in his leisure time in the United States and other countries. Most notably he went on a European tour at the age of 82, seeing eight countries and walking at least 15 miles a day! He loved his family and enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, attending their games or piano recitals. He is survived by his wife, Sue, of 60 years, daughter Julie, and grandchildren. Both Sue and Julie worked for the USFWS at Patuxent when Jim was there. He was dearly loved by many and will be greatly missed.

Fall 2022 Newsletter Corrections

A slightly revised version of the Fall 2022 Association Newsletter has been posted on our website correcting a few details about the Spearfish reunion - a corrected attendee list, history awards recipients and the name of the inductee to the Fish Culture Hall of Fame. The same corrections have been made on our website.

Are You up to Date on Your Dues?

The Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees Association depends primarily on dues and income generated at our reunions to maintain its operations. We receive no funding from the federal government or outside sources of funding for the day-to-day activities of keeping the organization functioning. Please help keep YOUR Retirees Association going and active by paying your dues each year. If you're not sure whether you've paid your dues yet for this year or not, click on [Membership List and Dues Status](#) to find out.

This Newsletter was compiled by Newsletter Editor Helen Clough with contributions from other Board, Association members and others.

If you have information or would like to contribute articles that would be of interest to Association members for inclusion in future newsletters, please contact Helen at communications@fwsretirees.org.

Also, be sure to visit our website for more up-to-date information at www.fwsretirees.org



Reunion – Spearfish, SD



Above photos from our recent reunion in Spearfish – hope to see you at the next one at NCTC



You can join the ranks of these Lifetime members! Visit the "Join Us" tab on the website for more information. This plaque is proudly displayed at the National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, WV.