

FWS Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER



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Board Business.

Message from the Chair. Greetings from the Board of Directors of your FWS Retirees Association! The phrase



"I hope you are well" has special significance at this time and comes with my sincere wishes for your good health. This newsletter is an example of our connectivity, reaching out to friends from around the country, and keeping in touch. We are also connected with our common passion for the health of our environment. The Board continues to meet via monthly conference calls

and strives to keep the administrative side of this organization healthy, as well. For example, as a non-profit, we have free access to the Google Suites program for cyber storage of the Association's files and we are moving in that direction now. I hope that you visit our website www.fwsretirees.org to renew your membership, and my thanks to those who have already done so. AND, life memberships are always welcome! I am coping with the quarantine as best as any extrovert can!

Cindy Uptegraft Barry

Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife Success. The following story was submitted by fellow retiree Lew Gorman. Lew is on our Youth Mini-grants Committee.

If you have ever been to one of our reunions, you were treated with the opportunity to participate in the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife. Participants go for a nice walk in a natural area close to the reunion site, chat with old friends and colleagues, learn about local wildlife habitats, and then adjourn to supper with fellow reunion participants. The \$30 cost covers the meal and a donation for a project at a local Fish and Wildlife Service refuge or hatchery.



After retiring from the Fish and Wildlife Service at the end of March 2018, I attended my first reunion of the Retirees Association in Annapolis, Maryland that October. I volunteered to coordinate the Walk for Wildlife, found a location at a local county park, Broad Creek Park, and made arrangements for dinner for our group. I also contacted the nearby Friends of Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge group to see if they had any projects where a few hundred dollars from our Association's Walk for Wildlife could help. When Simon Kenyon got back to me a few weeks later, he indicated that two outdoor display cases were needed to mount on both sides of an existing kiosk. The cases would house youth-created posters reflecting a pollinator theme.

Little did I know that this project would do more than hold posters for the pollinator garden program at the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge. In fact, it saved the Friends of the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, sparked a change in leadership, and convinced the US Fish and Wildlife Service that the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge should remain open under the care and leadership of the friends group.

After coordinating the purchase and delivery of the outdoor display cases, the Eastern Neck Friends Group mounted them. I made a follow-up visit to the refuge in February 2020 where I posted a



Retirees Association plaque in the display cases and viewed the posting of the first youth pollinator-themed posters. It was then that the new president of the Friends of Eastern Neck NWR told me the whole story at a meeting of

their Group leadership.

When full time USFWS staff worked at Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, the Friends group operated by taking guidance and direction from the full-time USFWS employees. With budget cuts an ever-present reality, the last USFWS Service employee was transferred away from the refuge leaving the Friends group on their own to manage with guidance from the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, over two hours away. The USFWS regional headquarters in Hadley, Massachusetts was contemplating closing the refuge to the public since there were no full-time employees on site.

This threw the Friends Group into a tizzy. The Friends Group president resigned. The remaining friends group members felt despondent and abandoned. Without any knowledge of the situation, my blind call to see if the Friends Group would like some funding for a project was the spark that reignited the fire in the Friends of Eastern Neck. The leader of the pollinator garden project, Simon Kenyon, stepped up to serve as president. The group committed to a primary mission of keeping the Eastern Neck NWR open.

This meant that volunteers would be organized to run the visitor center that is housed in a restored historic 1930s hunting lodge, operate the bookstore and gift shop, maintain the Bayview and Butterfly Trails, provide classes on pollinator gardening at the Bayscape Garden, develop and operate a youth nature education series, and plan and design the Eastern Neck kayak trail that would circumnavigate the refuge.

What helped prompt the Friends of Eastern Neck to undertake this challenge was the interest that was expressed by our Retirees Association in helping them. Just by offering to help, we gave them hope. We showed that someone in the Fish and Wildlife Service ranks, in this case our Retirees Association, cared.

As I left the meeting at Eastern Neck that February afternoon, I noted to Simon, “Looks like you have a Program Committee?”. He said, “See what the Retirees Association has done?”



Never in my wildest dreams would I have predicted the full impact of those donations received from the Greenwalt Walk for Wildlife.

the They helped save a refuge.

D.C. Booth Railcar. With funding support from the FWS Retirees Association, a replica of one of the original “fish cars” is being repainted in time for the FWS’ 150th Anniversary celebration to be held at the D.C. Booth National Historic Fish Hatchery in Spearfish, South Dakota.

Hatchery Superintendent Carlos Martinez said the rail car is a replica of the original Fish Car No. 3 from 1884, which were once the U.S. government’s way of quickly transporting fish and their eggs to lakes and hatcheries across the country. The 10 original fish cars were recycled during World War II for materials. Thus, a passenger rail car was converted into a historically accurate fish car — based on an original architectural model from 1898. The fish car helps to effectively tell the story of hatcheries.

“This is U.S. Bureau of Fisheries Car No. 3. It’s the only replica of a federal fish car in the country,” Martinez said, adding that the rail car is important to the history of fisheries across the country. “We get people from all over the country coming here just to see the rail car. Train enthusiasts, fisheries historians, they come here specifically to see this. Then they see the rest of the facility and they fall in love with it.”

And the effort is getting a lot of attention in the local press. The attached link tells the story of the restoration being done by one of the painters of the original replica.

https://www.bhpioneer.com/local_news/original-artist-working-to-restore-d-c-booth-fish-car/article_c2cb8cc0-c5ea-11ea-8545-03d239da4b2e.html



Dues Reminder. Hey Retirees, are you caught up on your dues? Many of the good things the Retirees Association is able to do depend on income from your dues payments. Without them, we are unable to produce our newsletters, run our Association website, and keep you abreast on happenings of concern to you. And really, is \$25 per year going to break you? Check out the website www.fwsretirees.org for info on how to renew and pay online.

Happenings.

National Wetlands Month. Did you know that May has been designated National Wetlands Month in the U.S.? Wetlands, whatever the type, are among the most productive ecosystems to be found, both in terms of biomass and of fish and wildlife habitat value. From the tidal wetlands along the East Coast to the riparian swamplands of the south, the prairie potholes and the managed wetlands of California, wetlands are vital to myriad species of fish and wildlife. Hundreds of millions of waterfowl and migratory birds call them home, and more than half of all species listed under the Endangered Species Act are also reliant upon them. Coastal fisheries rely on them as nurseries for some of our most valuable sport and commercial fish species. Yet they also provide incalculable value by filtering runoff to improve water quality, as flood control mechanisms, and by recharging groundwater basins.

Throughout its nearly 150-year history, the Fish and Wildlife Service has been a champion of wetlands. Millions of acres have been acquired by the Services Realty Divisions. They are created and managed in FWS National Wildlife Refuges where they serve as educational resources for the public as well as habitats for wildlife. They are resolutely protected by Ecological Services under the auspices of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. They are widely studied by ecologists as well as students from grade school through college. And they are nationally surveyed as part of the Service's National Wetlands Inventory and accounted periodically in the FWS Status and Trends Reports.

Yet they are continually under threat of adverse development, the latest of which is a change in the regulations that protect them. It is increasingly impingent on those of us who understand their true value to stand up for their continued protection in whatever forum that is available to us, including the political arena. And not just in the month of May but throughout the year and into the future.

Migratory Bird Surveys Cancelled. The following announcement was put out in late April by Ken Richkus,

the Fish and Wildlife Service's Chief of the Division of Migratory Bird Management.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has made the difficult discussion to cancel participation in the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey (WBPHS or May Survey) this year that was scheduled to start in a little over a week. Similarly, the Canadian Wildlife Service and several State and Provincial agencies have also cancelled their participation for 2020. These decisions were not made lightly. I'm sure everyone is aware this important survey has been successfully completed every year since 1955, and the resultant data is used to estimate breeding population size and inform harvest management decisions for many waterfowl species.

This spring, the Service has also cancelled participation in the American Woodcock Singing-ground Survey and the Mid-continent Population Sandhill Crane Survey. Both of these surveys provide important data for harvest decision-making. Similarly, the U.S. Geological Survey has cancelled the North American Breeding Bird Survey, data from which is also important in monitoring bird abundance and regulating harvest of some species.

Decisions to cancel the May Survey and other migratory bird monitoring this spring were based on our priority of protecting the health and safety of the American public, our partners, and our employees. In addition, severe domestic and international travel restrictions also made many operations impossible. While we gave serious consideration to implementation of partial surveys, we concluded that the development of analytical procedures to inform 2021-2022 hunting season recommendations using the most current and complete data was a more defensible and reliable strategy especially given ongoing and unpredictable COVID-19 restrictions. The Service will work with the Flyway Councils and Canadian Wildlife Service to develop alternative, temporary methods for formulating harvest recommendations in the absence of spring 2020 breeding population data. We have already begun developing adjustments to Adaptive Harvest Management strategies for the 2021-2022 duck seasons. Adjustments to goose, sandhill crane, American woodcock, and dove harvest strategies will also be necessary and are being considered.

Current travel restrictions in Canada, unless modified, may also affect many arctic and sub-arctic goose banding program efforts and surveys as well as high-latitude duck banding stations this summer. We are in close communication with the Canadian Wildlife Service and other partners in Canada. We will continue to prepare for summer operations while monitoring the situation, and we will advise you of our summer operating status when we are able.

New Director at Patuxent. Matt Perry provided the following information.

Today, Monday April 27, 2020, Mr. Thomas J. O'Connell became the Director of the new combined Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC) and the Leetown Science Center (LSC).

Mr. O'Connell had been serving as director of LSC for the past 4 years and previously had 22 years with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, including 7 years as Director of the Fisheries Service.

Past Director of PWRC, Dr. John French, will be reporting to the North Atlantic and Appalachian Region. Mr. O'Connell stated in a memo that the specifics of Dr. French's scope of work are still being defined, but he will be playing an important science advisor role for high priority ecosystem science initiatives at the regional and national level. John has also agreed to help in any way that he can with the merger of the two labs.

Dr. Peter Tango, who is on a detail serving as PWRC's Acting Deputy Center Director will continue in this capacity through the duration of his detail that extends to July 1.

Ms. Andrea Ostroff, who has been serving as Deputy Center Director at LSC will be the new Deputy Center Director.

The new name for the combined labs has not been announced.

House Rejects President's Proposed Budget Cuts to DOI and EPA. The Democratic-led House Appropriations Committee in July proposed a funding bump for Interior and EPA, soundly rejecting cuts proposed by President Trump. The committee bill would increase funding for EPA, Interior and related agencies by \$771 million for fiscal 2021, including a \$304 million increase for Interior and a \$318 million increase for the EPA.

In his budget wish-list unveiled earlier this year, President Trump proposed a 26 percent cut to the EPA's budget and a 16 percent cut to the Interior Department budget.

The House panel's budget would provide increases of \$55 million for the National Park Service, \$188 million for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and \$37 million for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

At the EPA, the bill would boost the Superfund program by \$37 million and would increase the agency's environmental justice activities by \$4.8 million, or about 47 percent.

Funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund would no longer discretionary but would be considered mandatory appropriations.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Gets a Boost. Never underestimate what can get done in an election year. Fueled by the desire to improve the re-election chances of two republican senators in tight races (Cory Gardner of Colorado and Steve Daines of Montana), the Senate passed

the most significant conservation legislation in decades in mid-June – the **Great American Outdoors Act**. The package fully and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million annually and also provides billions to address maintenance backlogs on the nation's public lands. And get this. President Trump, who previously proposed slashing LWCF funding by 97 percent in his fiscal 2021 budget, is on board and “eager to sign it”. However, it must first get through the Democrat controlled House which should not be a problem. They have scheduled a vote on the bill for July 22.

When Congress originally authorized the LWCF in 1964, they set the funding at \$900 million to come from royalties from offshore oil and gas drilling and is to be used to pay for a host of conservation projects on public lands. However, they have only fully funded it twice — in 1998 and 2001 — and frequently allocated less than half that amount.

The other part of the package provides \$1.9 billion over five years — or \$9.5 billion total — to address deferred maintenance on the nation's public lands. The National Park Service would get 70 percent of those funds, which would come from otherwise unspent revenues generated from energy production in federal waters and lands.

In addition to the desire to bolster the chances for re-election of Senators Gardner and Daines, advocates for this generally popular bi-partisan initiative touted its economic benefits to bring around some of the more fiscally conservative senate members. Senator Gardner estimates the package would create 100,000 jobs. In the end, the Senate voted 73-25 in favor. All Senate Democrats voted in favor: the dissenting votes were all Republicans

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.

Grey Wolf Populations on the Increase. Some encouraging news for grey wolf aficionados. Recent surveys of wolf populations in several western states indicate they are on the increase despite reduced protections in some states. This includes both the northern grey wolf and the Mexican wolf sub-species found in the southwestern states. However, total numbers of wolves are still too low to consider their populations safe.

In **Washington** state, there were a confirmed 145 wolves in 26 packs with at least 10 breeding pairs. This is a modest increase over the previous year's 126 wolves. However,

there is one less stable pack and one less confirmed breeding pair. Also on the downside, there were 21 confirmed wolf mortalities in 2019, including 9 lethal removals for cattle depredations. In 2018 there were only 12 recorded mortalities, including only 4 due to depredations. In



Photo by Gary Kramer 1

In addition, wolves in Washington have been slow to disperse, especially to seemingly viable habitats in the south and west of the state.

Washington has a new wolf management plan that reduces protections for the species.

In neighboring **Oregon**, there were a minimum of 159 wolves and 22 packs recorded. This is a 15 percent increase in the number of wolves over the 2018 surveys and an increase of 6 new packs since 2018. While the overall numbers of wolves are still low, the dispersal of wolves in Oregon has been good.

Another positive is that wolf depredations on livestock has decreased over 40 percent, from 28 in 2018 to just 16 in 2019. No wolves had to be lethally removed for depredations in 2019. However, Oregon's new wolf management plan contains more measures harmful to wolves and some key recovery elements have been eliminated.

The news regarding the re-establishment of the Mexican wolf in **Arizona** and **New Mexico** is also encouraging. The 2020 spring survey indicated a population of at least 163 wolves, a 25 percent increase over the previous year. This is nearly halfway to the FWS goal for recovery of the species. There are about 42 distinct packs, more than half of which produced pups. At least 90 pups were produced in 2019 and they survived at about a 60 percent rate. In addition, 12 captive born pups were placed in wild dens and they too are surviving. This will help to increase the genetic diversity of the population.

Unfortunately, there has also been a spike in the number of cattle kills attributed to wolves in these states. In fact, 2019 recorded the highest of livestock kills in any year since the first captive bred wolves were released in 1998. FWS is working to explain the spike and to counter it.

Wolves – A Sad Note. The winter wolf survey in Oregon that noted the increase in that state's population of *Canis lupus*, also found no trace of OR-7, the wolf that caught the nation's attention for his travels and travails. He was collared and the failure to detect him means he has most likely died. If so, he leaves behind a legacy as well as his

small pack in southwestern Oregon. He was believed to be about 11 years old, not bad for a wolf in the wild.

To refresh your memories, OR-7 (or Journey as he was later to be known to his many admirers throughout the nation) was born into a pack in northeastern Oregon. As wolves are prone to do, when he became of breeding age he left his natal pack and headed out looking for a mate. That search sent him thousands of miles. In 2011, he was recorded in southwest Oregon, the first wolf to have visited the west side of the Cascades in nearly 70 years. He later crossed into California, the first wolf in the state in nearly 90 years, causing quite a stir over whether to welcome him or kill him. He was even seen in the company of coyotes picking off rabbits and such at the edges of a large wildfire. I guess he was just starved for company.

He stayed in California for nearly a year but, not finding love there, returned to southwest Oregon where he eventually found the girl of his dreams and started his own pack. Together, they raised several litters successfully. (One of his sons, apparently with the same wanderlust as his famous father, also left home and after traveling for thousands of miles himself, eventually ventured into California where he was unfortunately shot this past February without establishing his own pack.)

If OR-7 is truly gone from this earth, he has left behind not just his pack but somewhat of a legend. He captured the attention of millions as he roamed safely for countless miles through wilderness and human obstacles, displaying his innate intelligence and a dogged persistence that must certainly be admired. A symbol of wild America surviving, thriving even, against the odds in today's civilization.

Whaling in Decline. This year, for the second year in a row, Iceland, one of only three remaining whaling nations (the others are Japan and Norway), will not hunt any whales.

As public opinion changes and consumption of whale meat declines, commercial whaling may be one step closer to a permanent end in Iceland and possibly the world. For the second year in a row, Iceland, one of three remaining whaling nations, will not hunt any whales. One of the two whaling companies in Iceland has indicated they are never going to hunt them again. The other has not hunted in two years and will not go out again this summer and may well cease to hunt altogether. Their reasons are several and complex, but clearly public opinion has a lot to do with it. Market declines and difficulties are also in play.

But the biggest reason may well be that "whale watching" has become a bigger industry than hunting and consumption. So big, in fact that the government has set aside as a sanctuary for watchers the largest part of Iceland's traditional hunting grounds, an area where about 95 percent of Iceland's recent whale harvests occurred.

That loss of access also coincided with a precipitous decline in domestic consumption of a food that was never terribly popular. By 2018, a Gallup poll conducted for the International Fund for Animal Welfare found that only one percent of Icelanders ate whale meat regularly, while 84 percent claimed never to have eaten it at all.

That lack of enthusiasm for whale meat in Iceland is mirrored in Norway, where the number of whaling vessels dropped by almost half from 2016 to 2017 and the remaining ships kill, process, and sell barely a third of the country's official quota.

Japan may be reluctantly coming along on this trend away from whaling. Consumption of whale meat in Japan has been in steady decline for many years. They consume only about an ounce of whale meat per person per year. In 2019, Japan stopped harvesting in the Antarctic, opting to hunt solely in its own territorial waters. Government subsidies seem to be the only thing keeping their whaling fleet afloat.

Alaskan Lacey Act Prosecution. The owner of an Anchorage, Alaska business was accused of illegally purchasing and selling walrus tusk ivory and tax evasion stemming from 2017, federal prosecutors said.

Walter Earl, 75, faces up to five years in prison and multiple \$250,000 fines after he was charged in April of this year with four felonies in federal court, including three Lacey Act violations, the Anchorage Daily News reported.

The Lacey Act, in force since 1900, prohibits the sale of wildlife or wildlife products taken or possessed in violation of state or foreign law. It is legal to hunt walrus in Alaska, but only by Alaska natives for subsistence and can only be sold to other natives.

California Water Wars Continue. President Trump, and Interior Secretary David Bernhardt in particular, were dealt a major blow in May when a federal judge from the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California temporarily blocked their attempt to unilaterally impose an environmentally disastrous solution to California's lengthy efforts to develop a mutually acceptable plan.

About 83 percent of the state's total water supply emanates in the north but about 75 percent of its demand for water is in the south. In the middle sits the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and giant federal and state pumps, capable of pumping 15,000 cubic feet per second across the Delta to agricultural and municipal water users, much more than the total flow of the rivers feeding it. Although that volume of water has never yet been diverted, annually about three million acre-feet are diverted and water that would naturally flow through the delta and to the sea at times flow in reverse. In addition, flows from upstream storage facilities are, in general, released on schedules benefitting agriculture and damaging to stocks of salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, striped bass and a host of other species.

The impact on those species has been severe: several species have been extirpated and many others are threatened or endangered. The tug of war between water user interests and environmental interests has been ongoing for decades but the threat of regulation anathema to agriculture in particular has brought all interests to the table, including the powerful Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the equally influential agricultural water districts. One of those districts is the giant Westlands Water District which encompasses 1,150,000 acres south of the delta and whose longtime attorney of record until recently was our very own Secretary of Interior, David Bernhardt.

President Trump visited the area in late February of this year at the behest of agricultural interests to announce that he was ordering the Bureau of Reclamation and the State to reconfigure its water plan. He also ordered the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to review current biological opinions and scientific findings that for a decade extended endangered species protections to many species of fish.

In his speech announcing his order, Trump said the changes to the "outdated scientific research and biological opinions" would now help direct "as much water as possible, which will be a magnificent amount, a massive amount of water for the use of California farmers and ranchers."

"A major obstacle to providing water for the region's farmers has now been totally eliminated by the federal government," Trump said. He signed the order with great flourish in Bakersfield in front of a crowd composed mostly of agricultural water users flanked by House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Rep. Davin Nunes (R-Calif.).

California sued a little more than 24 hours later.

"We applaud the court for hitting pause on the Trump Administration's reckless attempt to expand water export operations at the expense of California's wildlife and habitats," said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra. "Today's victory is critical, but the fight is not over. We have the facts, science, and the law behind us, and we look forward to making our case in court."

NPS Retirees Fight Plan for Killing Alaskan Bears and Wolves.

In 2015, the Obama administration instituted regulations that, for a period of five years, prohibited the killing hibernating bears and their cubs and wolves and their pups in their dens. It also prohibited targeting animals from airplanes or snowmobiles and shooting swimming caribou from boats. The National Park Service has now finalized a rule that would end that ban and allow those appalling practices of to take effect as soon as early July. However, it won't happen without a fight. A group of retired NPS employees opposing those practices has asked the Interior Department to completely abandon that idea.

Former NPS managers who worked in the state said the new rule ignores scientific information on Alaska's wildlife and raises significant legal and policy concerns.

"We are utterly appalled that NPS has adopted this final rule, which is so contrary to its mission," the employees, now affiliated with the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks, wrote in a letter to Interior.

"Alaska is the last place in the United States, if not the world, where large intact ecosystems have been designated for protection, so that they function naturally with little to no direct influence from man," the letter from the former employees states.

The NPS proposal is specifically designed to reduce populations of predators that feed on caribou and moose in order to provide more game for hunters.

The former NPS employees say the agency is abdicating its responsibility under the law to manage hunting practices on federal lands to promote conservation of natural processes. "Under NPS management policies wildlife may only be managed for healthy populations, not to 'achieve human consumptive use goals,'" they said.

Continued Assault on Environmental Regs. Whether by altering officially promulgated regulations that provide environmental protections, often using the coronavirus or economic recovery as a reason, or by issuing Executive Orders, the Trump administration continues its quest to ease environmental strictures to accommodate the industries and business sectors touted by the president. The end result: environmental resources across the land are made more vulnerable by these relaxations.

The following are but a few of the more recent changes:

- On March 26, the Environmental Protection Agency announced a new temporary policy in which it said it would not seek penalties for violations of routine compliance monitoring, integrity testing, sampling, laboratory analysis, training, and reporting or certification obligations in situations where the EPA agrees that COVID-19 was the cause. It specifically cited the offshore oil drilling in the Gulf Coast as an example of an industry needing regulatory relief. Nine states and more than a dozen environmental groups have sued to prevent implementation of this policy and to force compliance with existing safeguards.
- Executive Order 13924, signed on May 19, directs all agencies of the federal government to review their authorities and rescind, modify, waive, or exempt from enforcement all regulations that may inhibit economic recovery from the effects of the corona virus pandemic. Agencies are also to use their discretion to limit enforcement of regulations seen as hindering projects that could contribute to economic recovery.

- Executive Order 13927, signed in June, cited a financial emergency resulting from the corona virus pandemic and directed all federal agencies to use their emergency authorities to facilitate infrastructure projects that could aid in economic recovery. It specifically directed that any emergency discretion to reduce or eliminate regulations contained in the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Clean Water Act be utilized to clear the way for infrastructure and other projects, including projects on federal lands. The Center for Biological Diversity has threatened suit unless the administration immediately rolls back the Order, arguing the laws allow sidestepping environmental review only in fast-moving emergencies like an environmental disaster.
- Also in June, the administration removed the requirement for State Water Quality Certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act unless the States provide such certification within one year of a proposal that would impact their waterways. This limits the ability of a state to assess the water quality effects of a proposal and to develop conditions to prevent any adverse effects, including the power to halt such projects. The final rule from the Environmental Protection Agency was developed to specifically facilitate the construction of pipelines and other energy infrastructure.
- On July 15, the administration announced that revised regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act have been finalized. President Trump announced his intent to make drastic revisions to this crucial piece of environmental legislation as soon as he took office, believing that it unnecessarily hindered implementation of projects he deemed important to economic development. Others, of course, believe that NEPA sorted out damaging or poorly planned projects and made them better for the environment and the country. During the course of revising the regulations, millions of comments reflecting various points of view were received. On the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking alone over 1.12 million comments were received. Some of the more significant revisions now finalized include limiting the time period allowed for completion of NEPA documents (two years for an EIS and one year for an Environmental Assessment), page limits, and one document for all federal agency actions associated with that project. In addition, the assessment of effects is to be

limited to those deemed reasonably foreseeable and close in time to the action. Assessment of cumulative effects is not required and alternatives are to be limited to those deemed economically feasible. **And** assessment of the interactive effects of the proposed project and climate change are **not** to be considered.

The full text of the revisions can be found on the Council on Environmental Quality website www.whitehouse.gov/ceq.

ESA Revisions Challenged. In our October 2019 newsletter, we reported on the drastic revisions to the Endangered Species Act that were promulgated by the Trump administration. Those rules significantly weaken species' protections under ESA, allowing economic factors to be weighed before adding an animal to the list and limiting how aspects such as climate change can be considered in listing decisions. They also weaken protections for threatened species that are at risk of becoming endangered.

Those revisions were almost immediately challenged in court, in one suit by 17 states' Attorneys General and in another by a coalition of 8 major environmental groups. The states argued that the rollback promulgated in the new rules violates a number of laws, including the Endangered Species Act itself, as well as the Administrative Procedures Act, which lays out the rulemaking process, and the National Environmental Policy Act, which requires weighing a wide range of environmental factors before any big projects or rules.

The Trump administration attempted to squelch those challenges and asked the court to dismiss the lawsuits.

However, on May 19, Judge Jon Tigar of the U.S. District Court for Northern California said states made a sufficient case that they would be injured by the rule and allowed the lawsuits to proceed.

Threat to Migratory Bird Treaty Act Proceeding. We reported previously on a December 2017 Department of the Interior Solicitor's opinion that the "incidental" take of migratory birds in an otherwise lawful action does not constitute a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. It would sanction the killing of birds in project operations without legal consequences unless the government can prove the killings are intentional, an almost impossible barrier. It removes any incentive for project developers to take any measures whatsoever to prevent incidental take and has the potential to render this most important piece of wildlife protective legislation absolutely powerless to protect the many species of migratory birds covered by the Act. To put all this in perspective, power lines are estimated to kill 175 million birds each year, communication towers 50 million, oil

waste pits one million and wind farms over 500 thousand. Many of these losses are reasonably preventable.

Now, the Fish and Wildlife Service has formally proposed rulemaking that would enshrine this opinion in federal regulations, meaning the agency will have no leverage to influence activities that result in the deaths of many millions of migratory birds. In their news release announcing the proposed change, FWS cited comments from 28 entities, all of which were in support of the new rule and none that were opposed. FWS has also prepared and published on June 5, 2020 a draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed rule change.

This information was posted on our website www.fwsretirees.org in June and we strongly recommended that our members provide comments.

As all this was transpiring, PEER (Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility) accused FWS of bias on the issue, saying that its January news release citing only favorable comments from entities with advance knowledge of the proposal skewed the process and highlighted the agency's pre-determined decision.

At the same time, a group of retired FWS employees (retired Public Affairs, Communications, and Outreach officers, representing more than 200 years of combined experience) filed a complaint with Interior asking for the Department's Inspector General to investigate whether FWS officials had, among other things –

- Pressured veteran staff to violate their professional ethics and scientific responsibilities in preparing a proposal to reverse the Service's long-standing position;
- Improperly gave advance non-public information to the entities submitting supportive comments in the FWS press release; and
- Violated regulatory requirements of impartiality before the public process had begun.

Apart from the environmental impacts, the complaint cites industry attempts to control what is supposed to be an open, fair, and scientifically based process of rulemaking. The retirees' complaint is stuck in limbo. The IG has informed them that their complaint will not be investigated until they reveal the names of FWS employees who quietly complained.

"The Inspector General investigates anonymous complaints all the time – that's the IG's job," remarked PEER Senior Counsel Peter Jenkins, noting that the retirees had provided a list of employees to interview and communications to review. "Requiring that complainants be named before the IG even asks a question is both outrageous and likely to revictimize the victims."

"It doesn't make any sense for an Inspector General with an anonymous tip hotline to require the names of the employees before they will investigate a complaint," said

David Klinger of Boise, Idaho, a former regional press chief with the FWS. “Increasingly, IGs in the Trump Administration appear to be losing their primary focus – to investigate.”

Atlantic Pipeline Project Dropped. We reported on this project in February 2019 when a three-judge panel held up the 600-mile long pipeline because a poorly written Endangered Species Biological Opinion by the FWS failed to prescribe a limit to incidental take. They also vacated a right-of-way permit issued by the National Park Service for the pipeline because it failed to show that the pipeline crossing of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian Trail was consistent with the purposes of the Parkway and the National Park System. The pipeline would have stretched from West Virginia, through Virginia and into North Carolina.

The energy companies planning the pipeline, Dominion and Duke, announced in July that they have dropped their plans to proceed with the project because of the uncertainty of getting the needed approvals in face of widescale opposition from locals and environmentalists. They had already spent \$3.4 billion on it to date.

Miscellaneous.

Fun Facts. The US Fish & Wildlife Service is preparing for its Sesquicentennial or 150th Anniversary Celebration in 2021. In association with that festivity, the Retiree's Reunion will be held in Spearfish, South Dakota in June. More details will be available as the date gets closer. NCTC is collecting *Fun Facts* from employees and Retirees to help celebrate and preserve our rich heritage. Mark Madison at NCTC would like a minimum of 150 but wants more. If you have any funny stories, interesting facts or anecdotes please send them to Deborah Holle at miamibig99@AOL.com. Deborah is on the Board of Directors and works to promote membership in the Retirees Association and is also on the Heritage Committee. She deeply appreciates the retirees who have sent their Fun Facts to share, such as the following provided by Jerome Smith.

Congress passed the Endangered Species Preservation Act (ESA) in 1966, providing a means for listing native animal species as endangered and giving them limited protection. In 1969, Congress amended the ESA to provide additional protection to species in danger of "worldwide extinction" by prohibiting their importation and subsequent sale in the United States. Did you ever wonder what was the first endangered animal seized under the then new law? Wonder no more. This amendment became law in 1970. Game Management Agent Jerome Smith, with the Division of Law Enforcement (LE) was stationed in South Texas at McAllen. Passage of the ESA and the new amendment gave all of the Agents additional duties. They

were to inform the US Customs Inspectors at the Ports of Entry about the prohibitions imposed by the new Act. While every one knew the majority of the Custom Inspectors would not be able to identify most of the endangered species, he still advised them, if in doubt, to call him. There were no Wildlife Inspectors then and Game Agents job titles were switched later to Special Agents.

As a faithful protector of wildlife, Agent Smith received a call on one of the first days following the implementation of the new law from a Customs Supervisor at the Brownsville Port of Entry. He told him they stopped a tourist entering the US from Mexico with a stuffed turtle and asked if Jerome was interested. Agent Smith said he was very interested and would travel the 60 miles to inspect it. Upon arriving at the Brownsville Port of Entry he was shown the turtle and identified it as a Hawksbill Turtle, a highly endangered species. The Customs Officers talked the tourist into 'abandoning' the turtle and Agent Smith had to officially seize it in order to take possession of it.

*Over the years Agent Smith checked with many other Special Agents about seizures under the ESA and decided that this Hawksbill Turtle, which he seized in Brownsville Texas in early 1970, was the first **Official Seizure** of any kind under the ESA. Agent Smith kept the seized Hawksbill with the seizure tag in his office through all of his official moves. He retired in 1994 from his job in Washington DC, Office of LE and left the turtle with its seizure tag on display. Its been on display for over 60 years.*

Urge Congress to Reform WEP, GPO, and our COLA.

This is an election year and there is no better time to impress upon your representatives in D.C. that you, their constituents, are calling them out on these issues. They have been languishing on the Hill long enough. They need to act on reform legislation to right financial wrongs that affect many government retirees unjustly.

The Windfall Elimination Provision (**WEP**) kicks when the retiree has an entitlement to both Social Security and a federal Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). It reduces the retirees Social Security benefit to less than half of what they would otherwise be entitled. The **GPO** (Government Pension Offset) reduces the amount the pensioner is eligible to receive for unearned social security benefits (e.g. spousal benefits) by two thirds the amount of their federal pension, very often resulting in no benefit at all. These reductions were imposed during the Reagan presidency.

For years, bi-partisan bills to correct these injustices have been introduced in both the House and the Senate but have languished in committee. Bills introduced this year include: H.R. 141/S.521 would repeal both the GPO and the WEP; H.R. 3934 would reform the WEP for affected individuals by providing a \$100 monthly rebate on their social security benefit and \$50 for an affected spouse; and

H.R.4540 would reform the WEP for affected individuals by providing a \$150 monthly rebate on their social security benefit. Both H.R. 3934 and H.R. 4540 would bring relief to more than 1.8 million Social Security beneficiaries. And both change the WEP calculation moving forward. Follow the attached link to see a more detailed analysis of the issue and the introduced legislation that was prepared by NARFE (The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association).

<https://www.narfe.org/pdf/Issue%20Brief%20-%20WEP%20and%20GPO%20Combined.pdf>

These efforts to correct these financial injustices to those affected by the GPO and WEP have stalled long enough. **Its time to Tell Congress to Pass WEP and GPO Reform Legislation This Year.**

The COLA issue is another that needs to be corrected and now is an opportune to get it done, what with congressmen worried about their re-election chances. CSRS pension payment and Social Security benefit adjustments are tied to the Consumer Price Index for Wage Earners (CPI-W) which measures the living costs for goods and services used by working people. CSRS retirees and Social Security beneficiaries are receiving a 1.6% COLA this year. As you probably well know, this will do little to help the millions of federal retirees to cope with increased costs in their retirement, particularly their health care costs and in this current pandemic. But retirees and seniors in general spend much more on health-care related items. These costs are measured much more accurately by the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E). On average the CPI-E is 0.3% more than the CPI-W. There is bi-partisan legislation now in Congress - H.R. 1553: The Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2019 - to address this situation by requiring the federal government to use the CPI-E in calculating the cost of living adjustments for retirement benefits instead of the CPI-W. Let your representative hear from you on this if you want it to be heard and to pass.

First Female Biologist in Early FWS. The following information was received from Gail Carmody.



Dr. Louella E. Cable (1900-1986)
Dr. Louella E. Cable was a pioneer in fisheries conservation. She was described as a modest, poised and soft-spoken individual but tireless scientist. In 1927, she was the first person to study fisheries in pursuit of a master's degree from the University of South Dakota, then hired as the first female biologist

at the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, predecessor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. At the Bureau's Beaufort, NC laboratory, she illustrated and described many aquatic

species. She proved to be a tremendous scientific illustrator despite having no formal artistic training. Dr. Cable was among the first to rear larval marine fish successfully, which paved the way for enhanced study of early fish development. In 1937, Cable joined the Atlantic Coast Shad Investigation team and eventually became lead investigator. The team's work was pivotal in understanding the ecology of American shad and the impacts of pollution on its recovery. Dr. Cable began work at the Great Lakes Fishery Investigation Center in 1950 and earned her PhD at the University of Michigan in 1959. She worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 43 years. Her legacy lives on through her numerous publications and illustrations and an annual scholarship fund established in her name at the University of South Dakota.

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.

Larry John Blus 1933 - 2020. We have received word that Larry Blus passed away at his home in Beaverton, Oregon on July 2nd. He was 86. He was to be cremated and a memorial service scheduled later in Corvallis, Oregon, where he worked for many years at the Cooperative Research Unit at Oregon State University. His early work there was focused on mercury in ducks. He also worked in the contaminants program at Patuxent National Wildlife Research Center in the 70s and 80s.



Randy A. Brown (1958 – 2020). On February 18, 2020, Randy passed away far too early as a result of a terrible affliction known as FTD (Frontal Temporal Degeneration), a very rare and debilitating form of dementia. He was 61 years of age.

Randy was born in Ohio, raised in Arizona, but fell in love with the northern California coast while attending grad school at Humboldt State University in Arcata doing fisheries studies on Redwood Creek in Redwood National Park. After his studies at Humboldt State he worked briefly for the Park Service and as a private consultant before beginning his nearly 30-year career with the Fish and Wildlife Service. He started as a fisheries biologist with the Sacramento Ecological Services Field office, working initially on hydropower projects in the Sierra before turning his focus on the Trinity River. He moved to the Lewiston satellite office to participate in the critical instream flow studies that ultimately resulted in major increases in downstream flows on the Trinity and the restoration of the river's salmon and steelhead fisheries. Those efforts were

subsequently transferred to the Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office and Randy ultimately served as Deputy Field Supervisor for that office working on both the Trinity and Klamath River fisheries as well as other northern California coastal issues.

Randy retired in 2012 after being diagnosed with FTD in 2011.

Randy was the consummate fisheries biologist, passionate about both fish and wildlife resources. He was witty, intelligent, hard-working and fun-loving. Instantly likeable, he was a friend to all who knew or worked with him. He was also an avid cyclist who planned to ride his bicycle on his 100th birthday party. Unfortunately, that was not to be.



Randy leaves behind his wife and life partner, Sandi Paris; son Jordan; stepsons Christian (Mikki) and Scott; stepdaughters Kari and Kristen (Tim); sisters Terri (Rusty) and Judi; and 'Secret Sister' Jacqui. He also leaves behind 4 grandchildren, 7 nieces and nephews and a great many dear friends and former co-workers.

Godspeed, Randy

Patricia Worthing Esperance. Patricia Esperance passed away on March 2, 2020.

Patricia was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and resided there until she left for college. Patricia attended Oklahoma State University where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree, with honors, in Zoology. She accepted a position as a Wildlife Biologist for the US Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) in northern California where she met her husband of 38 years, John Esperance. Continuing her career in wildlife biology, she worked for the US Navy in the San Francisco Bay area as an endangered species specialist covering five western states. In the early 1980's she moved to Colorado to work for the US Fish and Wildlife Service in the Lakewood Colorado Regional Office. During this time, she worked in the endangered species recovery program. In the early 1990's she took a position in the Portland, Oregon Ecological Services Field Office, before returning to the Lakewood Regional Office as the endangered species coordinator within the eight state Rocky Mountain region. She led recovery efforts for such species as the grizzly bear, snowy plover, greenback trout, black-footed ferret and many more mammal, plant and bird species. Patricia retired from the Federal Government in 2004. After retirement, Patricia volunteered, working for the Evergreen Animal Protection League.

Patricia and John lived in the Evergreen, Colorado, area, where they enjoyed hiking the Rocky Mountains in the spring and, in their earlier years, skiing and snowshoeing during the winter. Patricia was an avid birder. She traveled around the world birding, seeing over 2300 different species of birds, the country of Ecuador being her favorite birding area.

She is survived by her husband John, brother Robert, sisters Barbara and Carol and many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers the family request that donations be made to the Evergreen Animal Protection League, PO box 2517, Evergreen, CO 80437.

Truman James Fergin (1935 – 2009). We were informed by Matt Perry that Truman Fergin passed away in 2009. He was a Wildlife Biologist who served with both the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Army Corps of Engineers. He worked in the contaminants program at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center during the 70s and 80s. Because of the lengthy time period since his death, no obituary was found.

Jane Groves (1926 – 2020). Jane Groves passed away in her sleep at her Sacramento, California home on April 4, 2020. She was 93 years of age. She had been in hospice care provided by her niece, Karen Ingels when she passed (Karen is also a retired FWS employee). Jane had been an administrative assistant in the Sacramento Ecological Services Office, responsible primarily for accounting time and attendance and leave records. She had been with the office since 1974, retiring in 1990.



Jane was born on December 14, 1926 in Chicago, Illinois to Harry and Olga Wildeman. She attended the University of Illinois from which she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. She held several positions before joining FWS in the Sacramento Ecological Services Field Office in 1974 and soon made herself indispensable to its operation.

When not working, Jane enjoyed spending time at a family home on a beaver pond at Blackwood Creek in the Lake Tahoe area. Jane also volunteered at the Sacramento and Monterey Jazz festivals along with several other FWS retirees. She also volunteered with Campfire and with the American Red Cross.

Jane is survived by her sister, Claire Ingles and her husband Bob, and her niece Karen Ingles of Lake Oswego, Oregon as well as many retired FWS friends.

At her request, Jane was cremated and her ashes were to be scattered on the beaver pond at Blackwood Lake in the Lake Tahoe area

Frank McGilvrey (1931 – 2020). Frank McGilvrey, longtime Patuxent employee, volunteer, and friend of many, died on June 16, 2020, after a short illness. Some of his early work with the USFWS was conducted at Bosque del Apache and the Aleutian Island National Wildlife Refuges. Frank began work at Patuxent Research Refuge in the early 1960s as a waterfowl biologist working with Fran Uhler. The two men pioneered many studies dealing with impoundment management and waterfowl behavior. Of most significance was the water drawdown plan of impoundments that created large quantities of wetland plant species for food used by southern migrating ducks, but also good habitat for wading birds and shorebirds during the spring to fall drawdown. The process became known as "moist-soil management" and was adopted by state and federal refuges throughout the country.



Frank also pioneered work with nest structures for ducks, especially starling-deterrent structures for wood ducks. Associated with these nesting structure studies was an interesting imprinting study that, through modified behavior, resulted in mallards and black ducks nesting in nest boxes instead of on the ground. In this way, predation by racoons could be greatly reduced. Frank also did extensive field studies in Chesapeake Bay and was involved with early studies of the canvasback in the 1970s.



Frank left Patuxent in the late 1970s and worked with the USFWS Division of Ecological Services in Washington and was heavily involved on permit and wetland delineation issues during the 1980-90s. When he retired, he returned to Patuxent as a volunteer and took over waterfowl surveys and studies that he had begun in the 1960s.

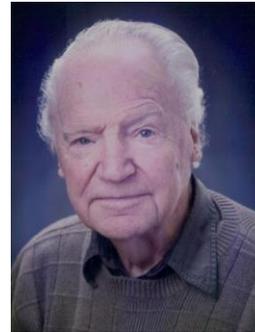
This included weekly waterfowl counts and maintaining duck and goose nest structures on all impoundments on the 13,000-acre refuge. To accomplish this task, he devoted many hours of volunteer time and trained numerous assistants with the work. He was awarded the Volunteer of the Year award in 2014 and when he stopped his work in 2018, he had conducted a total of 28,000 volunteer hours for the benefit of the Patuxent Research Refuge.

Frank was well-known for his enthusiasm and professionalism. Despite a sometimes-gruff demeanor, he was respected and liked by all. One person when hearing of his death, said Frank was a "gentle soul." Another described him as "wonderful teacher and mentor to countless volunteers and interns and a friend to all of us."

Lisa Olsen (1966 – 2019). Lisa Olson, a Human Resources Specialist for the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Region 3 Midwest Regional Office for 14 years, passed away peacefully from sudden onset cancer on November 25, 2019. She was only 53 years of age and had worked for the Federal Government for a total of 34 years. She is survived by her sons, Jacob & Nicholas; parents, Thomas & Sally Wigstrom; a brother, Thomas Wigstrom, Jr. and a sister, Kathleen Wigstrom Lutz; and many other relatives & friends. A Celebration of Life was held on November 30th at the River Valley Christian Church in Lake Elmo, Minnesota.



Robert Giles Personius (1922 – 2019). Bob Personius, moved on from this life surrounded by family, music and love on November 17, 2019.



Born in Valley City, North Dakota in 1922 to Veronica and Giles Personius, and later moving to Bismarck where he graduated from high school, Bob enjoyed hunting, fishing and exploring the rivers, marshes and prairies of North Dakota. After serving in combat in World War II in the 104th Infantry Division in France, Belgium and Germany, and earning a Bronze Star, Bob earned a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management at Oregon State University where he met and married Mary Dolores "Dee" Brown. Bob then earned a M.S. in Fisheries at the University of Minnesota where he and Dee started a family.

Bob never abandoned his life-long love of conservation biology. He dedicated his career to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service including stints in Washington DC, as Assistant Refuge Manager for Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in Illinois, Refuge Manager for the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin and Refuge Manager for the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge in California. Bob's landmark work in wildlife management left an indelible impression upon his family with dinner time visits from conservation greats such as George Archibald and Fran Hamerstrom. Bob often recalled his favorite memories from his federal service as those during the ten years their family lived in the old farmhouse on the edge of the marsh in Horicon National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin.

After retiring from federal service, Bob settled in Anacortes, Washington with Dee in 1989 and built their dream house overlooking Puget Sound. Dee passed away in

1997, but Bob was fortunate to meet a second remarkable woman in Ermalinda Guzman while visiting a decoy show in California. They married on Nov. 27, 1999 and continued to enjoy the Anacortes area often spotted at garage sales, the library, music, theater and dining venues in the area.

Bob was a lifelong decoy collector and duck hunter who loved to make an annual fall hunting pilgrimage with his sons and a few high school buddies to the Prairie Pothole region of North Dakota and Canada.



Bob bestowed upon his children a love of the outdoors, literature, conservation, science and art. He loved sharing a cold wind-swept duck blind, fishing boat, or mountain hike to an alpine lake with friends and family. He loved to sing, had a quick wit, and was always known and loved as a "character." He was blessed in later years with a growing family of grandchildren and great grandchildren and passed along to them a rich history of memories of his life and times.

Bob is survived by his second wife of 20 years, Ermalinda; his children Janet Lynn, David, Stephen Francis, Timothy Lee, and Mark; his grandchildren and great-grandchildren Margaret, Mei Lei, Robert, Ross, DeeAnna, Forest, Hans Hjelle, Thomas, Michael and Maximus; and his sister Eileen (Walen). He will be remembered in their hearts and minds for his love of the outdoors, conservation, science and the arts.

Judy Pulliam (1948 – 2020). Former Retirees Association Board Chair Judy Pulliam passed away at her home in Big Canoe, Georgia on May 16, 2020 following a prolonged battle with Parkinson's Disease. She leaves behind husband James, son Matthew of Columbia, Missouri, four grandsons, one granddaughter and one great grand daughter.



Judy was born Judy Lynn Jones August 5, 1948 in Harrison, Arkansas. She was predeceased by her parents, Buell and Dayne Jones, and sister Barbara Mitchell. The family moved to Kansas City in the 1950s where Judy graduated from Northeast High School in 1966. Shortly after graduation, she began to work for the Federal Aviation Administration and in the early 70's moved to San Diego, California where she was employed by Naval Investigative Services. In late 1972, Judy returned to Kansas City and started her career with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an Administrative Technician in the Kansas City Area

Office. She was promoted and transferred to the Sacramento, California, Area Office as Administrative Officer in 1976. In 1980, she transferred to the Great Lakes National Fisheries Research Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where she served as Administrative Officer until December 1990. She was promoted and transferred to the Southeast Regional Office of the FWS as the Assistant Regional Director for Budget and Administration. Her responsibilities involved supervision of the Divisions of Human Resources, Engineering, Property Management, Budget and Finance, Safety, Contracting, and Information Technology.

For her outstanding career Judy was awarded the Meritorious Service Award in June 2001.

Judy retired in September 2003. She continued her connection with the Service as the Southeast Region's representative to the FWS Heritage Committee. She was a lifetime member of the FWS Retirees Association and served as Chairperson of the Association's Board in 2005-2007 and again in 2011 -2012. Judy's husband, Jim shared a quote from Judy on her FWS career " I thoroughly enjoyed my 30+ years with the Service. Not only was the work enjoyable (for the most part) but the dedicated people I met along the way were amazing."

Thomas E. Smith (1931 – 2020). Tom Smith of Lake Jackson, Texas died of pneumonia on April 5, 2020 in a Houston rehab facility. Tom was former Chief of Realty in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Albuquerque Regional Office.



A native of Ohio, Tom's work in conservation spanned 62 years and resulted in the establishment and expansion of hundreds of wildlife refuges, conservation areas and conservation easements. During his 36-year career with FWS, he personally directed and successfully completed the purchase of more than 1 million acres of land in the western United States for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System. He received numerous awards including the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award and the President's Public Service Award from The Nature Conservancy. Since his retirement from the Service in 1994, he worked as a Land Preservation Consultant for the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. He continued to work to form partnerships with state and local agencies, non-profit conservation organizations, corporations and landowners to conserve thousands of acres of land for wildlife throughout the western states. He had been most recently identifying and appraising potential lands for conservation on the Texas coast.

A very nice tribute to Tom's efforts on behalf of wildlife lands was provided by the Sierra Club (follow the attached link)

<https://www.sierraclub.org/texas/houston/blog/2020/04/gr-eat-wildlife-protector-rides-sunset>

Tom was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, Helen Smith, and son, Glen Smith. He is survived by his daughter Jean Smith Chavez (Matthew) of Austin, Texas, and granddaughter Erica Gibson (Stephen Cohen) of Portland, Oregon. Remembrances may be made to: Cradle of Texas Conservancy, Land Conservation Fund, 300 S. 15th Street, West Columbia,

Sally Gerianne Zodrow (1967 – 2020). Sally Zodrow

passed away at her Brandon, Wisconsin home on March 24, 2020 at the age of 52. She was born on November 10, 1967, in Ripon, the daughter of Harry "Bud" and Joanne Zodrow. Sally graduated in 1986 as the salutatorian of her class at Princeton High School. For 5 years, she proudly served her country in the United States Air Force as an air traffic controller. Sally also served in Turkey during the Gulf War. She returned to Wisconsin and continued her education attending the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. In 1995, she graduated magna cum laude with a degree in biology.



Sally worked for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as a biologist technician for 26 years before retiring in 2017. She spent most of her career at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota and retired from Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. She will be remembered for her dedication to conserving our natural resources, her fun-loving nature, and for being a good friend to many.

She was also proud that for several years during the summer, she fought fires in Northern California, Oregon, and Montana.

Sally enjoyed gardening, hunting, fishing, kayaking and traveling. She loved to explore the refuges and waterfowl production areas in the fall with her dog, Meg.

Those Sally leaves behind to cherish her memory include her mother, Joanne Zodrow of Princeton; brother, Richard (Jessica) Zodrow of Princeton; nephew, Tyler Zodrow of Princeton; other relatives and many friends. She was preceded in death by her father, Harry Zodrow and brother, Thomas Zodrow.

A memorial Mass will be held at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Princeton at a later date. Condolences can be sent to: The Zodrow Family, N4098 Wicks Landing Road, Princeton, Wisconsin 54968. A memorial has been established to the following organizations: The Green Lake Area Animal Shelter, N6217 Busse Rd. Green Lake, WI 54941; Friends of Sherburne NWLR, 17076 293rd Avenue NW Zimmerman, MN 55398; Wisconsin Fish and Wildlife Scholarship.

This Newsletter was prepared by Board member Jim McKevitt jimmymac@usamedia.tv. If you have information that would be of interest to our readers, please contact me.

Also, be sure to visit our website for some more current happenings at www.fwsretirees.org.