

FWS Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER

October 2017



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NCTC Celebration a Great Success.

The 145 plus retirees and others who made it to the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia this month had a wonderful experience and the Association wishes to thank our hosts, Jay Slack, Steve Chase, Mark Madison and all the NCTC folks there who made it so enjoyable. The event was a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the formal dedication of NCTC, the “home of the Service.” In our last two Retiree Newsletters and in special mailings in May and September, we described the celebration as an opportunity to hold a concurrent get-together for retirees. NCTC had specifically invited our retirees to join in the celebration and the other planned events. They made our time there most enjoyable. The FWS Heritage Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, October 17th but Tuesday was also arrival day for most of the retirees and their guests. Wednesday was when things really kicked off, starting with a welcome by NCTC Director Jay Slack and continuing with a brief description of NCTC programs aimed at youth from junior high through college who might be interested in a conservation career. That afternoon, we boarded busses for a guided tour of the Antietam battlefield, a crucial point in the American Civil War. After dinner, there was a mini FWS film festival and art display and a campfire at which we dedicated two benches in the memory of Denny Holland, one of the founders of the Retirees Association.

Thursday was also jam-packed. We listened to Acting FWS Deputy Director Greg Sheehan extol the value that

NCTC provides to the active Service and to the thousands of other personnel from various states, foreign countries, and businesses that have availed themselves of the excellent training provided there. Then former Directors Dale Hall and John Turner and former NCTC Director Rick Lemon provided an illuminating history of NCTC, starting with the germination of the idea to create a training center that would consolidate the several training venues in use throughout the U.S. and culminating with the exceptional facility that is there at Shepherdstown today. The new “Gallery Room” (site of the former library) was then dedicated and we were its first users. That afternoon we had fascinating tours of the NCTC Museum and of the NCTC Archives led by FWS Historian Mark Madison and Museum Curator and Archivist Jeanne Harold followed by a trip to the NCTC Auditorium where we were treated to “Bully”, a one-man play starring Case Hicks, about the conservation efforts of Teddy Roosevelt.

The week was capped off with a social in the Commons along with some bluegrass music.

A list of those who attended can be found at the back of this newsletter.

Future Gatherings and Reunions.

Spring 2018. Our next regular FWS Retirees Reunion will be on the central Oregon coast in May 2018. We have booked the week of May 6, 2018 at the Chinook Winds Casino and Resort in Lincoln City. The program is yet to be developed but the accommodations are excellent. Negotiated room rates start at \$99 per night for this venue which sits right on the ocean with six miles of Oregon beach right out the back door. Most of the rooms have an ocean view. Amenities include a sauna and spa, a heated indoor swimming pool, multiple on-site dining venues, headliner entertainment, and a lush 18-hole golf course just a tee shot from the casino. Free transportation to and from the Portland Airport may be available – a work in progress.

Our agenda is still a work in progress but are exploring topics on:

- The status and problems for salmon stocks in the Pacific northwest;
- Salmon predation problems – Sea lions, orcas, others;

- FWS/Tribal Conflicts associated with Service ESA listings and management actions;
- Gray Wolf issues in Oregon – status, depredation problems, lethal vs non-lethal control, etc.;
- Marine mammal entanglements with fishing gear and other contraptions and debris;
- Presentation on the Oregon Coastal Refuges
- Inter- and intra-agency partnerships along the Oregon Coast;
- Roundtable on membership and outreach.
- The work of the FWS Forensics Lab at Ashland.

Tours under consideration include a guided excursion to Pacific tidal pools and/or visits to the Hatfield Marine Science Center at Newport, the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area and Yaquina Lighthouse, the Oregon Coast Aquarium, or the Siletz Bay NWR.

Let us know what topics and possible tours would interest you and we will look into them. We will also keep you fully informed as planning progresses but for now, keep that week open.

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

Election of Board Members.

We must have a good and active Board to keep this Association running and we need people with new and diverse ideas and viewpoints to step forward. Each year, the terms of three members of the Association's Board of Directors expire. And each year, every dues paying member gets a chance to run for one of those seats or to nominate someone else to run. And once a slate of candidates has been identified, every dues paying member has the opportunity to vote for the candidates of their choice. Elections are normally held in the fall or early winter, with new or re-elected Board members taking their seats in January.

This year, the terms of Board members Bob Streeter, Mamie Parker, and John Cornely expire. While they may again stand for election to the Board, this is the opportunity for others interested in being active and influential in the Association to throw their hats into the ring. Ballots with the names and bios of all qualified candidates will be mailed to eligible voters around the middle of November. Voter returns will be accepted through the 18th of December. But a slate of candidates needs to be identified soon. If you yourself are interested in serving on the Board, please let us know directly. Or if you know of someone else that you feel would make a good Board member, confirm their interest first before submitting their name for

consideration. Names for candidacy must be submitted by November 13th. Send them to Jim McKevitt at jimmymac@usamedia.tv or phone 530-878-7883.

The duties of Board members are not onerous. Members meet via conference call every month and a modest commitment of time devoted to Association business is frequently required of members between each conference call. **So**, if you think the functions of the Fish and Wildlife Retirees Association in continued involvement in natural resource issues, preserving the heritage of the Service, and fostering camaraderie among retirees is something that appeals to you, consider running for a seat on our Board of Directors.

Help Us Keep in Touch.

We have over 2600 retirees in our database; about 1650 with e-mail addresses and 970 with only house addresses and/or phone numbers. And there are certainly many other retirees out there who are not in our database at all (perhaps because they do not even know the Association exists).

Whenever we have news to provide (newsletters, reunion information, anything that might be of interest to FWS retirees), we communicate electronically with each retiree in our database who has an e-mail address. We use snail mail to reach dues paying members without e-mail addresses (cost precludes the use of snail mail for non-dues paying members). And obviously we cannot reach anyone not in our database.

Compounding the problem is incorrect contact information for many who are in our database. For example, reports from our last mass mailing (news of the NCTC anniversary Celebration) showed that we were only able to reach 1184 members out of the 1635 we attempted to reach electronically. Our e-mails to over 300 of those we tried to reach bounced, primarily because the e-mail address was incorrect (invalid or old address). Another 175 were rejected without even being sent because the intended recipient had supposedly unsubscribed (declined to receive e-mails from the Association). We found that most of those were on the unsubscribe list were there by mistake and we are working to correct that problem.

But the bottom line is this: We are not reaching many FWS retirees, those who are not in our database and others who have incomplete or outdated contact information in our database. If you are **not** regularly receiving news from the Association or know of someone else who is not receiving our mailings, ***please let us know***. You may contact Kelle Quist, our database manager (kquist1@verizon.net) or any of our board members (contact info on the first page of this newsletter).

Newest Life Members.

Bill Wilen has become the latest retiree to opt for Life Membership in the FWS Retirees Association. You may

remember Bill as the leader of the Service's **National Wetlands Inventory** about which he gave a presentation at last fall's FWS Retirees Reunion in Memphis. As a Life Member, Bill is contributing significantly to the efforts of the Association and is to be commended. Thanks, Bill.

We also need to recognize Jim and Jacque Tisdale. They became life members at our Memphis reunion. Won't you also consider a tax deductible Life Membership to help support **your** Association so we can do more of the things you want us to do?

Resource Issues.

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

The Izembek Road.

The Washington Post reported in October that the Department of Interior is quietly negotiating with Alaskan officials on a land swap that would enable the construction of a road through a designated wilderness area in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. The 12-mile long, one lane gravel road would bisect the refuge in an area of tundra and wetlands that are vital feeding ground for migrating birds as well as bears, caribou and other species.

The 315,000 acre Izembek NWR was established in 1960 and more than 95% of it has been designated as wilderness. During spring and fall migrations, it hosts nearly all of the world's population of emperor geese and Pacific black brant while in winter, it is home to tens of thousands of sea ducks including the threatened Steller's eider.

The road has been an issue for decades. Its purpose would be to connect King Cove, an isolated community of fewer than 1,000 inhabitants located on the tip of the Alaska Peninsula, with the town of Cold Bay which has a regional airport that can accommodate jet aircraft. A road would allow winter evacuations of patients to that hub airport in medical emergencies. While only one of several options, locals prefer the road alternative.

Environmentalists and several native Alaskan tribes, however, warn that the road would impact habitat essential to migration patterns of migratory waterfowl and other wildlife. This past spring, FWS completed an analysis of the two routes through the refuge being considered by Alaskan authorities. That analysis concluded that either route would have "major" impacts on brant, tundra swans, emperor geese, bears, fish and, potentially, caribou.

Opponents are also concerned with the precedent of permitting a road in a wilderness area. "If they can pull this off in Alaska, the entire Lower 48 is at risk," said Jamie Rappaport Clark of the Defenders of Wildlife. Defenders had used a Freedom of Information Act request to learn that the discussions about the proposed land swap were being

intentionally kept from public view. The exchange of outside lands for refuge lands to be used for the road right-of-way would greatly facilitate its construction. Previously, the House of Representatives in July had passed legislation authorizing the road but passage in the Senate was certain to face much stiffer opposition.

Mining Projects Resurrected.

Two significant mining proposals are being breathed new life in the Trump administration. These are the Pebble Mine Project in the Aleutians and the Twin Metals lease in Minnesota. Both projects were considered dead in previous administrations.

The massive Pebble Mine proposal, a gold, copper, and molybdenum extraction project in Alaska's Bristol Bay watershed would, if approved, be the world's largest open pit mine at two miles wide and 1500 feet deep. It would have serious implications for Bristol Bay's fishery, the world's largest wild run of salmon, and for the wildlife and human populations that depend on it. For a thorough description of the resources involved and the potential effects to those resources, follow the link www.savebristolbay.com to the Orvis website review.

Although no guarantee of project approval, EPA recently reached agreement with the Canadian company that is proposing the mine, to open the review process, something that had been denied by the Obama administration. There was an excellent article on the status of the proposal in the May 12 edition of the Washington Post. Go online and check it out.

The other large project being reconsidered is the Twin Metals lease renewal. Denied renewal by the Obama administration, the mining lease area is located on the southwest border of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. Minnesota congressmen and company officials met with Interior Secretary Zinke in April asking that the decision to deny renewal of the lease be reversed and came away expressing optimism that they will be successful in their bid. Keep an eye on this one.

Interior's Review of U.S. National Monument.

In our June 2017 Newsletter, we advised you that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke was conducting a review of the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine as part of a larger review of all of the nation's National Monuments. The review was requested by President Trump (who believes that the monuments constitute a "massive federal land grab") with the goal of reducing the extent of those federally protected lands and increasing the exploitation of their timber, oil, gas and mineral resources. That review has been completed and the Secretary has submitted his draft report and recommendations to the president. While not released publicly, copies of the report obtained by several newspapers indicate the following recommendations were made:

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In a related matter, the House Committee on Natural Resources is marking up a bill (HR 3990) that would radically alter the Antiquities Act, the law that allows presidents to establish national monuments. The bill, introduced by Representative Rob Bishop (R-Utah), would impose acreage limits, narrow the definition of what deserves protection, and preclude monuments in marine areas. Its provisions would have prevented the establishment of many existing popular national parks and monuments, including the very first national monument that was established by Teddy Roosevelt, Devil's Tower. Studies show that more than 180 national parks and monuments would not have been created had the provisions of this bill been in force at the time of their establishment. Nearly half of all national parks in the United States today were initially protected through the Antiquities Act.

The bill also includes language that would give the president authority to shrink national monuments designated by previous presidents, seemingly an admission that he does not currently have that authority

Your support for continued federal protection for our national parks and monuments is essential. Don't sit back and let these incursions on our nation's natural resources take hold!

NOTE! As we finished this newsletter, we learned that President Trump has indicated to Utah Senator Orrin Hatch that he will make substantial reductions in the size of both Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments. The extent of the reductions was not announced.

Yellowstone Grizzlies De-listing.

In June, Interior announced that grizzly bears in and around Yellowstone National Park no longer warranted the protection of the Endangered Species Act and would be de-listed. Numbers in the area have increased from 136 bears in 1975 to an estimated 700 individuals today.

While de-listing at this time may be appropriate, the real challenge will be the development and enforcement of management plans by the states involved. Failure to closely monitor the status of the population and take necessary action to prevent their subsequent decline in the future could lead to re-listing and renewed federal oversight of this iconic species.

Secretary Zinke Issues Order to Expand Access to Interior Lands.

Secretarial Order 3356, issued this month, directs all Interior bureaus to:

- Within 120 days produce a plan to expand access for hunting and fishing on BLM, USFWS and NPS land.

- Amend national monument management plans to ensure the public's right to hunt, fish and target shoot.
- Expand educational outreach programs for underrepresented communities such as veterans, minorities, and youth.
- In a manner that respects the rights and privacy of the owners of non-public lands, identify lands within their purview where access to Department lands, particularly access for hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, and other forms of outdoor recreation, is currently limited (including areas of Department land that may be impractical or effectively impossible to access via public roads or trails under current conditions, but where there may be an opportunity to gain access through an easement, right-of-way, or acquisition), and provide a report detailing such lands to the Deputy Secretary.
- Within 365 days, cooperate, coordinate, create, make available, and continuously update online a single "one stop" Department site database of available opportunities for hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on Department lands.
- Improve wildlife management through collaboration with state, Tribal, territorial, and conservation partners.

Just a month earlier, Secretary Zinke announced a proposal to open or expand opportunities at 10 national wildlife refuges. If finalized, this would bring the number of refuges where the public may hunt up to 373, and up to 312 where fishing would be permitted. Acting FWS Director Greg Sheehan commented that the Service "is happy to expand hunting and fishing opportunities where they are compatible with wildlife management goals."

Hunting and/or fishing will expand or be opened on the following refuges:

- Savannah River NWR (Georgia & South Carolina)
- Patoka River NWR (Indiana):
- Minnesota Valley NWR (Minnesota)
- Des Lacs NWR (North Dakota): Open to moose hunting for the first time.
- Upper Souris NWR (North Dakota): Open to moose and turkey hunting for the first time.
- Sequoyah NWR (Oklahoma)
- Baskett Slough NWR (Oregon)
- Siletz Bay NWR (Oregon): Open to sport fishing for the first time.
- Horicon NWR (Wisconsin)
- Fox River NWR (Wisconsin)

A 30 day public comment period ended in early September.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants.

In September, Interior Secretary Zinke announced that the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission had approved \$21.9 million in grants for the FWS and its partners to conserve, enhance or restore more than 92,000 acres of lands for waterfowl, shorebirds, and other birds in 16 states. The grants, made through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), will be matched by more than \$45 million in partner funds.

In addition to providing vital habitat for fish, wildlife and a variety of plants, wetlands buffer communities from the effects of storms and floods, and contribute to the \$156 billion hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation industries.

This year's projects include:

- **Prairie Lakes IX Wetland Initiative:** \$1 million. More than 25 partners will help conserve over 2,000 acres of habitat in the Prairie Pothole Region of Iowa through protection, restoration and enhancement activities. All acreage will be open to hunting and other recreation.
- **Russell Sage WMA Kennedy Tract Enhancement:** \$999,939 to conserve and enhance 2,672 acres of forested wetlands and marsh in Mississippi and Louisiana, part of a region which hosts 60% of bird species in the continental U.S. Activities include an enhancement project on an active rice farm
- **Wetlands of the Sacramento Valley II:** \$1 million to restore and enhance 2,314 acres of critical wintering waterfowl habitat in California. Partners include several ranches, sporting clubs, conservation organizations, and a state agency.

The Commission also heard a report on 32 small NAWCA grants, which were approved by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council in February. This year, \$3.6 million in grants were matched by \$10.9 million in partner funds.

Suit over Federal Predator Control Activities.

A new suit against the USDA's Division of Wildlife Services (formerly FWS's Division of Animal Damage Control) has been filed in federal court in northern California by several environmental groups alleging that their practices of lethal control are cruel, ineffective and unnecessary. The groups, led by the Center for Biological Diversity, seek to force Wildlife Services to **Sage Grouse Plan Being Weakened.**

In our October 2015 newsletter, we reported on a new landscape scale plan covering eleven western states that obviated the necessity for listing the greater sage grouse under provisions of the Endangered Species Act. The plan was developed with the active involvement of all affected stakeholder groups and is being implemented by them as a way to avoid the complications and restrictions often associated with listed endangered species. States had implemented regulatory actions to ensure development

adequately addresses the bird's habitat needs. Private landowners, under the auspices of the Natural Resource Conservation Service's *Sage Grouse Initiative*, had been implementing crucial conservation and enhancement measures. Federal land management agencies revised their land use plans to promote sage grouse conservation and had begun implementation of conservation actions. Under the plan, tens of millions of acres of vital habitats were protected and hundreds of millions of dollars had already been spent and/or dedicated to future actions, actions that will also benefit over 300 other key western species. And the process used to develop the plan, and the plan itself, were touted by then Interior Secretary Sally Jewell.

Now however, the Trump administration has opened the door to industry-friendly changes to the plan. In early August, a document outlining recommended changes to the plan was released by Interior Secretary Zinke. Among other things, the changes backed off on requirements to keep rangeland grasses and shrubs at a prescribed minimum height. This would reduce habitat values for the sage grouse but would permit ranchers to increase grazing on lands occupied by the birds.

Representatives of the ranching and energy industries cheered this policy shift while wildlife advocates warn that the proposed changes would undercut a hard-won struggle to protect the greater sage grouse. Apparently, many of those affected by the original plan believe the threat of listing the sage grouse under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act is not as serious a factor in the current administration.

California Condors Continue Comeback.

Thirty years ago, the last remaining 22 California were taken from the wild and sent to zoos in San Diego and Los Angeles as a last ditch effort to save the species from extinction. Their numbers had declined precipitously as a result of lead poisoning, habitat loss, and hunting. Those factors, plus an extremely slow reproduction rate, seemed to spell doom for the species. The zoos were a major part of a captive breeding program which scientists hoped would one day allow for release and re-population in the wild.

Fast forward to 2017 and there are now an estimated 450 California condors, including about 270 in the wild. This past summer, the first "third generation condor to be born in the wild" was observed, indicating that perhaps the species will again become self-sustaining and not require continued captive breeding and release. In addition to those birds in the condor sanctuary at Big Sur on the central California coast and the few in Arizona, Utah and in Mexico, this past summer also saw condors roosting at Blue Ridge National Wildlife Refuge in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. And plans are to make releases in 2019 in the Redwood National Park on the northern California

coast. Is it unreasonable to think that someday this magnificent bird will be seen again throughout its historic range from British Columbia to Mexico?

Santa Ana Refuge.

We have recently learned that surveys and soil samples are being taken in the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge by the Army Corps of Engineers in preparation for possible construction of a massive wall along the US-Mexican border wall, construction of which is a major part of the administration's agenda. This little refuge (2,088 acres) in the lower Rio Grande valley of Texas is an important oasis for native flora and fauna in an area where almost all of the native habitats have been lost. These include several threatened and endangered species such as the endangered jaguarundi and endangered ocelot.

As we learned during presentations at our Corpus Christi reunion, projects along the border, such as the proposed wall, do not have to undergo environmental review, thanks to a law passed during the Bush administration. That means no endangered species protections, no wetlands protections or mitigation, no public review.

An article on this threat was published in the Dallas Morning News on August 16, 2017. Go online to read it. Also, the July 27 edition of *Wingtips*, the publication of the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp has an outstanding article with a lot of factual information. Its on their website www.friendsofthestamp.org.

Patuxent Whooping Crane Program Ended.

After 51 years, the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's monumental work to save the iconic whooping crane has come to an end. The captive breeding, rearing, and release program at Patuxent has been at the forefront of the international effort to save this magnificent bird from extinction but has now been cut from the budget. While the end of the program in the not-too-distant future was somewhat anticipated, this dramatic termination caught many researchers and human surrogate parents by surprise. The U.S. Geological Survey, which runs Patuxent and the crane program feels they have fulfilled its mission and that the recovery of the species will continue. We can only hope that they are right.

This year's crop of 6-7 month old chicks has been flown to Louisiana to be released into the wild while the 70 plus adult breeding birds at Patuxent are being sent to other facilities.

When first begun in 1966, numbers of whooping cranes were at a critical low. In the 1940s, the total worldwide population was estimated at only 20 birds. Due to the heroic efforts by Patuxent researchers along with several partner organizations, the current population is about 600 birds.

And the program was one of the most popular in American conservation history, with people from all over the world

following their progress and the truly unique methods employed to rear and release cranes back into their native habitats. Chicks were "adopted" by human surrogates dressed in white coveralls and with white hoods and were fed by these strange parents using a puppet crane head, all to prevent them from imprinting on humans. Later, when re-introduction of reared chicks became part of the program, these surrogates helped teach them to fly using an ultralight aircraft that they would follow. Eventually, this aircraft, manned by a white-garbed pilot would lead the birds from rearing locations to wintering grounds in Louisiana and Florida. Their epic journeys were recorded with TV cameras and viewed across the nation.

As you might expect, the abrupt closure of the Patuxent program has left a void in the hearts of the staff there, many of whom have been a part of this effort for nearly 30 years. But they should all feel justly proud of the work they have done and what they have accomplished. Well done, Patuxent!

Miscellaneous.

Combined Federal Campaign.

The combined federal campaign is underway from October 2, 2017 to January 12, 2018 and now federal annuitants can contribute. OPM is now authorized to solicit Federal annuitants and military retirees to continue to use the CFC for charitable giving after they leave Federal service with recurring gifts from their annuity. With that in mind, please consider the appeal shown below.

An Appeal from Six Former Directors

*Dear Fish and Wildlife Service Employees,
Every fall, the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) provides the opportunity for government employees to designate payroll deductions to support many non-profits that aid causes and communities. As former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Directors, we encourage you to participate in the upcoming Combined Federal Campaign and we ask that you please consider designating the **National Wildlife Refuge Association (CFC #10076)** as a recipient of your contributions.*

For over 40 years, the Refuge Association has been a strong and independent voice for our National Wildlife Refuge System but also partners and coastal programs, international affairs, law enforcement, migratory birds, and endangered species. The Refuge Association chairs the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a coalition of 23 wildlife, sporting, conservation, and scientific organizations. Since CARE's founding in 1995, refuge O&M budgets have increased by over 180%. The Association provides support across the Service, including:

- *Growing grassroots support by nurturing Refuge Friends' organizations;*

- *Mentoring the Partners for Conservation organization, and cultivating strong partnerships with ranchers and landowners in key landscapes, like greater sage grouse country;*
- *Advancing the Service's Urban and Community Centered Wildlife Conservation vision;*
- *Stopping Congressional action to remove lands from Vieques and Monomoy NWRs;*
- *Convening experts to identify and address the status of At-Risk Species;*
- *Coordinating applications to the NFWF Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund and RESTORE Council to acquire and restore habitat along the Gulf coast;*
- *Supporting the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Migratory Bird Conservation Fund as essential tools for habitat protection, nationwide;*
- *Defending marine monuments, and Izembek and Arctic NWRs, in Alaska;*

The Refuge Association (CFC#10076) deserves and needs your support. Please consider it in your CFC giving list. Learn more about their work and successes at <http://refugeassociation.org/>.

As always, you have our greatest appreciation and admiration for what you do every day. Your dedicated public service is ever inspiring, and we are grateful that you chose the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and wildlife conservation as a career. What you do is so very important, and we are proud to continue our association with you, by calling ourselves former Directors.

Sincerely,

*Lynn Greenwalt, John Turner, Jamie Rappaport Clark,
Dale Hall, Steve Williams, and Dan Ashe*

Interior Employees Disloyal???

At a meeting of the National Petroleum Council in Washington, D.C., Interior Secretary Zinke remarked that 30% of the employees of the Department were “not loyal to the flag”, ostensibly meaning not loyal to the Trump administration and to him. In response to that outrageous statement, the Retirees Association joined with the Public Lands Foundation and the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks in signing letters for publication in the op-ed sections of the Washington Post and Montana news outlets expressing our collective disapproval. The letter to the Washington Post is shown below. The letters to Montana news outlets are similar but tailored slightly for Montana readers.

We, the undersigned, are writing to express our strongest objections to Secretary Zinke's reported remarks that 30% of the 70,000 employees at the Department of the Interior are “not loyal to the flag.” The Secretary's disrespectful remarks were made at the National Petroleum Council meeting in Washington, D.C., on September 25, 2017.

As organizations comprised almost entirely of retired professional employees of the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, our collective experience has been that the overwhelming majority of employees of these agencies are highly dedicated to our great nation and to fulfillment of their respective agency missions regardless of which political party occupies the White House. Employee commitment to mission and country is not a partisan issue.

The Secretary's remarks reveal a profound lack of knowledge of and respect for the important and honorable role played by thousands of Interior employees who are among the most dedicated employees in the federal government. Saying that over 20,000 employees in his department are “not loyal to the flag” is simply ludicrous, and deeply insulting. The longstanding tradition of Interior employee commitment to each of their respective missions is highly desirable and should not be misinterpreted as disloyal or subversive to our national interests.

We truly hope that the Secretary's words were not simply partisan political pandering to an audience comprised primarily of energy industry representatives. Taken at face value, Zinke's disrespectful and divisive comments reveal far more about his leadership style, values, and lack of regard for the irreplaceable resources now increasingly vulnerable to his political zeal than about the quality of employees at Interior. He owes a sincere apology to the employees he has disrespected. And he owes America a duty to uphold the diverse mission, nature and professionalism of the Department of Interior which is so woven into the fabric of our great Nation.

Maureen Finnerty, Chair

Coalition to Protect America's National Parks

Jesse Juen, President

Public Lands Foundation

Robert Streeter, Chair

*Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Service
Employees*

Massive Interior Reorganization.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke announced in late April that as many as 50 Senior Executive Service members in Interior would be moved to other positions and/or to other agencies. An Interior spokesman stated moves are intended to better serve the Department's operations by matching Senior Executive skill sets with mission and operational requirements. According to former FWS Director Dan Ashe, forced moves of the magnitude directed by Secretary Zinke are unprecedented in his experience. Those who received notices include Interior's top climate policy official, Joel Clement, who directs the Office of Policy Analysis, as well as five senior Fish and Wildlife Service

officials, nearly a quarter of FWS's career SES staff. The



FWS people are Assistant Director for International Affairs, Bryan Arroyo,; Southwest Regional Director, Benjamin Tuggle; Southeast Regional Director, Cindy Dohner; Betsy

Hildebrandt, Assistant Director for External Affairs; and Bill Woody, Chief of Law Enforcement.

Although touted as a means of better matching personnel with new assignments, climate scientist Joel Clement was sent to an accounting position for which he claims he has no experience or expertise and he subsequently resigned and filed suit claiming the move was illegal and retaliatory, intended to silence his work on the effects of climate change on Alaskan natives. Cindy Dohner also chose to resign rather than accept her re-assignment.

FWS Headquarters moving to Denver???

According to the E&E News, Interior Secretary told senior USGS executives at a July meeting in Denver that he plans to move the headquarters of three Interior agencies to Denver, the moves to commence in fiscal year 2019. The agencies are the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Most of the work of BLM and USBR are in the west while FWS is nationwide and has much of its work east of the Mississippi.

Zinke believes such a move makes sense as part of a reorganization and budget cutting exercise. He previously indicated a desire to eliminate 4000 full-time DOI positions to meet the recommendations of the Trump administration's fiscal 2018 budget request and believes the department is top-heavy with managers. He said there should be more lower-graded positions and they should be in the field, closer to the workload.

Zinke also floated the idea of establishing regional "joint management areas" (JMAs) based on watersheds and would have field stations in those watersheds report to their respective JMA. Leadership at the JMAs could change or rotate between agencies in that JMA.

The idea of moving headquarters is not new, especially for BLM and USBR. Recently, Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) and Rep. Scott Tipton (R-Colo.) introduced legislation that would shift BLM's headquarters from Washington to one of 12 Western states, with their preference being Grand Junction, Colorado. Interior Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt also has expressed support for moving BLM's headquarters out west. However the case for moving FWS headquarters to Colorado is not as easily justified.

Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus (1931 – 2017).

Cecil Dale Andrus, Secretary of the Interior under President Jimmy Carter and a four-term governor of the state of Idaho, died at his home in Boise, Idaho on August 24, 2017 from complications due to lung cancer. He was 85 years of age. Mr. Andrus served as Interior Secretary from 1977 to 1981 and was noted for his conservation ethic and efforts to protect and preserve the nation's natural resources.

Cecil Andrus was born in Hood River, Oregon on Aug. 25, 1931 to Hal and Dorothy Johnson Andrus. His father was a sawmill operator. He graduated from high school in Eugene, Oregon, before enrolling in Oregon State College (now Oregon State University) where he studied engineering. In 1949 Mr. Andrus married his high school sweetheart, Carol May. He later served in the Korean War, flying with a patrol bomber squadron. Looking for work after his service, the family moved to Orofino, Idaho in 1955, where he found a job in a timber mill.

In 1961, at age 29, Mr. Andrus unseated a Republican to become the youngest state senator in Idaho history. He was elected governor in 1970, beating another Republican, by only 10,000 votes after opposing a proposed molybdenum mining project in the White Cloud Mountains east of Boise. He was reelected four years later in a landslide.

It was midway through his second term that he was tapped by President Carter to be the Secretary of the Interior. At the time of his appointment as Secretary, the Department of the Interior was considered pro- development in the west where it controlled large swaths of public lands. His arrival heralded a new era when he is reported to have proclaimed that "The domination of the department by mining, oil, timber, grazing and other interests is over." He also stated that the era of dam-building in the west was a thing of the past. Almost immediately, he won new restrictions on strip-mining, hard-rock mining and offshore drilling. He also established moratoriums on logging near Redwood National Park in California and on leases for oil- and gas-drilling in Alaska's Cook Inlet.

But most would agree that the signature accomplishment of his tenure was the aside of 103 million acres of Alaska for federal protection, some of which became the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Also under his watch, the Carter administration designated 56 million acres of the land as national monuments — more than doubling the size of the national park system. "We developed America by giving away resources," Mr. Andrus once said in an interview. "When we got to the Pacific Ocean, we looked back over our shoulders and said, 'Oh, my God, look what we've done.' But in Alaska we had the opportunity to do it right the first time."

Mr. Andrus returned to Idaho soon after Carter left office in 1981 and succeeded in winning two more terms as Idaho's governor.

Cecil Andrus was buried after a private funeral and after being honored by lying in state at the Capitol Rotunda in Boise. A public memorial was later held at Boise State University. In addition to his wife and his daughter Tracy, Mr. Andrus is survived by two other daughters, Tana Andrus-Watson and Kelly Andrus; a brother, Steve; a sister, Margaret Gardner; three grandchildren; and one great-granddaughter. At the family's request, donations in his name may be made to the endowed Cecil D. Andrus Chair for Environment and Public Lands at the Cecil D. Andrus Center for Public Policy at Boise State University,

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.

Rita Bekaert (1932 – 2017). Rita J. Passmore (Bekaert), born October 26, 1932 in California Junction, Iowa, passed

away on June 29, 2017, in Kingman, Arizona.

Rita worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in various administrative positions in the

regional directorate wing (front office) of the regional office in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was fondly remembered as the first person you met as you entered the RD wing. All who knew her enjoyed her sense of humor and sometime not so reverent wit. She was a lively and youthful spirit, laughed often, and loved to dance. Rita retired from by FWS in Albuquerque after 30 years of service and she and her husband, Duke, moved to Kingman, Arizona where she spent her remaining years dedicated to the love and care of her family.

Rita was preceded in death by her husband of 49 years,

Duke J. Bekaert Sr. She is survived by her three children; Duke J. Bekaert Jr., David Bekaert, and Lisa Grant; her sister; Jeannette; seven grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.



Jack Lowell Dean (1931 – 2017).

Jack Lowell Dean, 86, of Sterling, Alaska, passed away on October 10, 2017. Jack was cremated and his ashes will be scattered by his survivors in the spring.

Jack was born April 2, 1931 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He led a life of many adventures which included two tours of duty in the Korean War, during which he received the third highest honor in combat, the Silver Star Medal.

After graduating from the University of Minnesota, he embarked on a 30-year career as a fishery biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This led him to the creation of noteworthy sport fishery programs for the Navajos and several other tribes in New Mexico.

A highlight of Jack's career was his seven years in Yellowstone National Park where his nationally recognized implementation of catch and release fishing remains in place today. His last posting before retirement brought him to Alaska in 1982. His passion for fish and fishing led him to continue to his work on projects, such as research on Arctic Char, right up to the time of his passing from cancer. Other notable accomplishments include prowess as a canoeist and a fish life list which detailed the landing of more than 77 distinct species of freshwater fish over the course of his lifetime. He was the author of two books, one about his time in Korea and the other an autobiography.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Betty; daughter Wendy and son Mark, both in Colorado; two grandchildren, Logan and Arica Dean, both also in Colorado. His surviving sister, Joyce Jordan, lives in Burnsville, Minnesota.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you send any tributes in Jack's name to The Sierra Club or The Wilderness Society.

George H Gard, Jr. (1930 – 2016). George Gard died on October 4, 2016 at St. Clare's Hospital in Weston, Wisconsin. He was 86.

George was born February 21, 1930 to Donald & Avida Gard in Lebanon, Missouri. At the age of 2, following his mother's death, George moved to Fergus Falls, Minnesota to live with his grandparents, George & Julia Gard. He attended the local schools there and graduated from high school in 1948.

He enlisted in U.S. Army on January 16, 1951, served as a Supply Sergeant in Korea and was honorably discharged on September 21, 1952. Following his service, George attended North Dakota State University. He graduated in



1957 with a major in Zoology and minors in Botany and Entomology.

George married Elaine Way in May of 1953. They were happily married for 63 years.

George was a biologist (and artist) with the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Division of Wildlife Refuges, working in North Dakota, Minnesota, and Michigan and being involved in the Wetlands Program in Fergus Falls, Minnesota and Stevens Point, Wisconsin. He also designed and illustrated several Federal publications. He retired from the Service in 1981.

Following retirement, his love for art continued where he taught several art classes in his free time. Every fall for about 10 years, he taught a two week art course at an elder hostel in northern Wisconsin. He spent 20 plus years on projects that involved portraits of inductees into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame and portrait posters of chairpersons for United Way. George also had a love for music, playing various instruments for 30 years with the Grenadier Band at the local senior center. He also enjoyed running, walking, snorkeling, reading, and spending time with his grandchildren.

He is survived by wife, Elaine; children, Paul Gard, Gail Custer, and Linda Hammerschmidt; nine grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, one brother, and two sisters. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, parents, and one sister.

A memorial service for George was held on October, 7, 2016 at the Boston Funeral Home and he was later buried at the Forest Cemetery. Memorials may be made in Georges' name to the Alzheimer's Association.

Blaine Graves. As we finished this newsletter, we were just informed of the death of Blaine Graves, longtime Refuges Division stalwart in the Portland Regional Office. A graduate of Oregon State University, Blaine retired in the 1990s. Blaine and Bobbi were with us at the Memphis reunion. We will include a complete obituary in our next mailing.

Olive S. Heidt (1916 – 2017). Olive Heidt passed away at age 100 in Springfield, Massachusetts on June 11, 2017. Olive was born on June 23, 1916 in Bridgeport, Connecticut. After completing schooling in Massachusetts, Olive began her long career of public service with the U.S. Government in 1941. She worked as a clerk typist at the Department of the Navy in Washington, DC during World War II and later as a stenographer for the Department of State, including a stint posted to London, England. After returning to the Nation's Capital, she was employed in the Department of the Interior as a secretary with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the 1960's. She served in the Office of Cooperative Wildlife Research Units and the Division of Wildlife Research for many years. Olive retired and returned home to Chicopee, Massachusetts in 1989. She

was interred at the family plot at Hillcrest Park Cemetery in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Laura Jenkins (1961 – 2017). Laura G. Jenkins, 56, of Panama City Beach, Florida passed away Saturday, July 1, 2017.

Laura was born Jan. 23, 1961, in Galion, Ohio, attended Galion High School and graduated from Science Hill High School in Johnson City, Tennessee. Next came Tennessee Technological University where she obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture & Natural Resources Management. She was employed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as a Fisheries Biologist for 32 years. Her FWS career took her to Panama City Beach in 1984 where she became an avid scuba diver. She was a member of the Panama City Dive Club, the Florida Native Plant Society, as well as a past president of the St. Andrew Bay Watch. Laura was a certified Master Gardener and enjoyed horseback riding, gardening, and animals. She was a spiritual person of faith and loved her family with all of her heart. Laura was preceded in death by her husband, Wallace T. Jenkins, and her mother, Mary S. Gedeon. Those left to cherish her memory include her father, Donald M. Gedeon; brothers Donald and Martin Gedeon; sister, Michele Vidulich; nieces, Melanie, Alisa, Elizabeth, Renee and Sidney; and nephew, Donnie; step-daughter, Jennifer James; step-sons, Mark and Greg Jenkins; grandchildren, Tiffani, Adam, Courtney, Wyatt and Zachary; and great-grandchildren, Kyleigh and Hayleigh.

A Celebration of Life service for Laura was held on July 8, 2017 in Panama City Beach. Memorial contributions in Laura's name may be made to St. Andrew Bay Watch/RMA, P.O. Box 15028, Panama City, FL 32406, or by visiting www.standrewbaywatch.org.

Jerome L. (Jerry) Johnson (1936 – 2017). Jerry Johnson passed away in Arlington, Texas on May 17, 2017 at the age of 80 after a year-long battle with pancreatic cancer. Jerry was born in Watertown South Dakota on October 22, 1936 to Lenart and Ruth Johnson but the family moved and he grew up in nearby Milbank. He attended schools in Milbank and moved on to South Dakota State University in Brookings where he earned both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees.



Jerry married Cheri Nawroth in 1961, a 55-year marriage that produced three daughters and seven grandchildren,

Jerry had a 31 year career with the Fish and Wildlife Service, starting with Ecological Services in 1962 at the Salt Lake City Field Office. From there, his career took him to FWS offices Cincinnati, Ohio, Grand Island, Nebraska, and Kansas

City, Missouri, before culminating at the Fort Worth, Texas, Ecological Services Field Office where he served as Field Supervisor from 1976 until he retired in 1993. Jerry was among a cadre of Ecological Services supervisors of that period who were tasked with implementing many relatively new environmental laws and regulations in the face of tremendous development and political pressure. His career was marked by his stalwart devotion to protection of the fish and wildlife resources where ever he served but also by his cheerful demeanor and broad smile. He was widely respected by his peers.

Memorial services for Jerry were held at Shepherd of Life Lutheran Church in Arlington, Texas. Jerry is. Survived by



his wife, Cheri; daughters, Shares Johnson, Deborah and husband, Brian Dolenz, Renae and husband, Aaron Boswell; and seven wonderful grandchildren, Josh, Kristina, Devin, Mitchell, Max, Stephanie, and Blake.

Janice Marie Stumpff (Williams) Fyffe

(1940 – 2017). Former FWS employee Jan Williams passed away in North Charleston, South Carolina on May 6, 2017 at the age of 76. Not much information on her time with the Service is available.

Jan was born and raised in Oklahoma and worked for the Fish and wildlife Service in the Albuquerque Regional Office, at one time in the Division of Finance and at another time as budget analyst in the Division of Refuges. She later married Ray Fyffe but moved to South Carolina shortly after his death to be closer to her son, Craig.

Jan was preceded in death by her brother Eugene, one sister, Madalyn, her two sons Chip and David Harris, and her husband Ray Fyffe. She is survived by her son Craig Harris and his wife Chris of South Carolina, her step-son Ray Fyffe Jr., her sisters Jamie, Pat, Libby, Carol, and Donna, all of Oklahoma.



Attendees

Adamcik, Bob
Baldacchino, Nell & Joe
Banks, Roger & Gail
Barry, Cindy
Bartel, Jim & Debie
Bennett, Jewel
Bloxom, Victoria (Tori) & Bob
+Jaime
Boggs, James & Laura
Bolton, Hannibal
Bright, Larry
Burnett, Drew
Carmody, Gail
Carter, Pat
Chase, Steve
Clough, Helen & Rollin Young

Cole, Frank
Cornely, John
Coon, Richard & Nancy
Davenport, Ann
Dehmer, Greg
Drager, Patti
Earnest, Russ
Enlow, Dale & Alice
Epstein, Marc
Fields, Bob & June
Foster, Dorothy
Fowler, Ronald & Dorothy
Gabel, Roddy
Gillett, Jim
Gould, Rowan
Graham, Kathleen

Gravatt, Glenn
Greenwalt, Lynn & Judy
Gregory, April
Grover, Jerry & Judy
Guinee, Roger
Haglan, Bill & Betty
Hall, Dale & Sarah
Hartwig, Bill & Donna
Hartzog, Grady
Herland, Libby
Hicks, Case
Hobbs, Margaret
Holland, Colleen & Grant Greenwalt
+ Patrick, Max, Cassidy
Holland, Kathy
Holle, Deborah & Terry Friggle

Jacobs, Judy
Knauer, William
Kopp, Tanner
Kurth, Jim
Ladd, Skip
Lassuy, Dennis & Judy Jacobs
Lemon, Rick
Madison, Mark
Mayne, Karen
McIlwain, June
McKevitt, Jim
Meggers, Gary & Darlene
Moore, Craig & Linda
Morgan, David
Moriarty, Marvin
Morrissey, Nancy
Ogden, Wendall
Oland, Jim
Olson, Norm & Jan
Ouchley, Kelby & Amy

Palmisano, Bill
Perkuchin, Don & Carol
Perry, Cyndi
Perry, Matt
Quist, Walter & Kelle
Reisenbichler, Reg
Rideout, Stephen & Carol
Saito, Teiko (Irene) & Don Barry
Schwindt, Ken & Janice
Shake, Bill & Deanna
Sheehan, Greg
Smith, David
Smith, Frank & Robin
Souheaver, Elizabeth
Stalnaker, Clair & Dorothy Foster
Stanek, Donna + 1
Stewart, Mendall
Storrs, Charles
Strader, Bob & Candy
Streeter, Bob & Karen

Tisdale, Jim & Jacque
Toffoli, Carol plus 1
Tritak, Paul
Tucker, Sandy & Garry
Turner, John
Vick, Patty
Villanueva, Terry & Gid Honsinger
Wallenstrom, Rolf and Ginnie
Wallenstrom, Jeff
West, Robin & Shannon
Westervelt, Miriam
Wilcox, Warren
Wilen, Bill
Womack, Mona & Ed ?
Wooley, Charlie
Wunderly, Steve
Yoshioka, Beverly and Paul
Zimmerman, Amber

FWS RETIREES ASSOCIATION



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

Membership Application/Renewal/Update

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

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

This is a: New Application____ Renewal____ Information Update____ (CHECK ONE)

Name: _____ Spouse/Partner: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ email _____ @ _____

FWS Program (at retirement) _____

Office and Region _____ Retirement Date _____

YOUR INTEREST AREA(S), PLEASE CHECK:

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

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

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

Send a membership pin (one per member only)

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

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

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

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

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