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# NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired Conservation Service Employees

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Website: [www.arcse.org](http://www.arcse.org)

**NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC**

Doug Lawrence and Patty Lawrence

"Season's Greetings" from deep in the heart of Capitol Hill. We hope everyone had a fabulous Christmas. We celebrated with our children, grandchildren, and siblings with Zoom and FaceTime. It just wasn't the same as getting together in person, but it was great to see and chat with everyone.

It's worth noting a couple of things before we take a look at where the economy and stock markets are headed in 2021, as well as what NRCS has been up to in the past couple of months.

First, **President-elect Biden** has indicated that he will nominate **Tom Vilsack** to be the Secretary of Agriculture, again. Second, as we prepared this edition of the *Notes from the Potomac*, Congress and the Administration were wrestling over the 2021 budget and a COVID-19 mitigation package to help those who have lost their jobs or businesses.

We hope everyone has a prosperous and healthy new year.

**ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR 2021** – 'Tis the season for thinking about 2021. First let's look at what The Conference Board is predicting for the US economy in 2021. The Conference Board is a 501(c)(3) non-profit business membership and research organization. It has over 1,000 private corporations and other organizations located in 60 countries as members. The Conference Board convenes conferences, conducts economic and business management research, and publishes several widely tracked economic indicators. The conference board may be best known for its index of leading economic indicators. The index is comprised of 10 leading economic indicators which, in general, are good predictors of where the economy might be headed in the next 6 to 12 months. The Index of Leading Economic Indicators includes the following variables:

- **Treasury yield curve** – We have discussed the yield curve before, and its uncanny ability to predict recessions. It's 8 for 8 since 1970. The yield curve compares returns on short-term Treasury bills to returns on long-term Treasury notes. In a healthy economy, returns on short-term notes and bonds are lower than longer-term bonds. When short term returns are higher than long-term returns, the yield curve is said to have "inverted," and this has historically signaled an impending recession.
- **Money Supply** – The index uses the Federal Reserve's inflation-adjusted measure of the M2 money supply.
- **Durable goods orders** – This economic variable tracks durable goods orders (machinery, computers, trucks, aircraft, engines, office furniture, etc.) made by companies, not consumers.
- **Stock market** – Since a company's stock price is a function of its expected earnings, stock prices and broader market indices should be a good measure of how investors view prospects.
- **Manufacturing jobs** – The change in the number of manufacturing jobs is a window into what's happening with new orders for manufactured goods, which is dependent on the future economic expectations of the businesses placing the orders for manufactured goods.
- **Residential building permits** – Building permits have about a 9-month predictive lead time, which is the average time from when a permit application is made until the house is completed.
- **Weekly claims for unemployment** – The weekly claims for unemployment are a good predictor of the what to expect in the monthly jobs reports and associated unemployment rates.
- **The Institute for Supply Management index of new orders** – The index of new orders is based on a survey of about 400 purchasing executives in the manufacturing sector.
- **Leading credit spread** – The leading credit spread monitors six financial indicators such as margin account balances, bank credit, and security repurchases. It is closely correlated to the yield curve in terms of forecasting.
- **Consumer expectations** – Consumer expectations are based on a survey of consumers by the University of Michigan. The survey asks consumers for their 6 to 12-month expectations related to business conditions, jobs, and income. However, most respondents base their future expectations on how well they are doing currently. Therefore, the index of consumer expectations tends to be a lagging indicator.

The Conference Board Leading Economic Index for the US increased 0.6% in November to 109.1 (2016 = 100), following a 0.8% increase in October and a 0.7% increase in September. Although the Leading Economic Index continued rising in November, its pace of improvement has been decelerating in recent months, suggesting a significant moderation in growth as the US economy heads into 2021. Initial claims for unemployment insurance, new orders for manufacturing, residential construction permits, and stock prices made the largest positive contributions to the Index. However, falling average working hours in manufacturing and consumers' worsening outlook underscore the downside risks to growth from a second wave of COVID-19 and high unemployment.

In short, the Leading Economic Index suggests an improving economy, but there are areas of concern within the index. Figure 1 displays The Conference Board's economic outlook for 2021 as well as comparative information for 2019 and 2020.

Figure 1

**THE CONFERENCE BOARD BASE CASE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK, 2019-2020-2021**  
**Percentage Change, Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rates**

	2020				2021				2019	2020	2021
	I Q*	II Q*	III Q*	IV Q	I Q	II Q	III Q	IV Q	ANNUAL	ANNUAL	ANNUAL
Real GDP	-5.0	-31.4	33.1	2.8	0.7	3.5	6.0	4.5	2.2	-3.6	3.6
Real Consumer Spending	-6.9	-33.2	40.6	2.3	1.0	3.9	7.1	4.9	2.4	-3.9	4.3
Residential Investment	19.0	-35.5	62.3	15.0	7.0	6.0	5.0	5.0	-1.7	4.8	9.9
Real Capital Spending	-6.7	-27.2	21.8	6.1	3.5	3.7	4.5	4.8	2.9	-4.5	4.0
Exports	-9.5	-64.4	60.5	8.6	3.0	5.1	7.1	5.1	-0.1	-13.5	3.5

The Conference Board is predicting that real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will increase by 3.6% in 2021, but the first quarter of 2021 will see the growth rate in GDP fall to 0.7%, which is significantly lower than the 2020 4<sup>th</sup> quarter growth rate of 2.8%. Overall, the five variables that are included in The Conference Board's economic outlook for 2021 all indicate that the US economy is expected to recover from the COVID-19 in 2021. I expect that one of the driving forces for the strong performance of the residential investment sector in 2020 and 2021 is historically low mortgage rates. Finally, check out the wild swings in the second and third quarters of 2020. Pretty remarkable.

The Federal Reserve just released its revised economic projections for the end of this year, as well as for 2021. The central bank now expects real gross domestic product to fall just 2.4% in 2020, compared to a decline of 3.7% predicted in September and a decline of 3.6% estimated by The Conference Board. The Fed also upped its 2021 real GDP growth forecast to 4.2% from 4.0%, which is a bit higher than The Conference Board's estimate of 3.6%.

The Fed estimates that the unemployment rate will fall to 6.7% in 2020, which is almost a percentage point below their previous forecast of 7.6%. Moreover, the Fed projects that the unemployment rate should fall to 5.0% in 2021, compared to the Central Bank's previous estimate of 5.5%.

The Fed's Federal Open Market Committee said that it would continue to buy at least \$120 billion of bonds each month "until substantial further progress has been made toward the Committee's maximum employment and price stability goals."

The Fed kept its inflation estimates for 2020 unchanged at 1.2%. The Fed now sees Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) inflation increasing to 1.8% next year, which is slightly above its previous estimate of 1.7%.

The Fed decided to keep interest rates unchanged in its December meeting after slashing them to near-zero in an emergency meeting in March due to the fast-spreading coronavirus.

**STOCK MARKET OUTLOOK FOR 2021** – My guess is that the performance of the US economy is much easier to predict than the performance of the US stock market, in part because the stock market is affected by what **John Maynard Keynes** referred to as "animal spirits." And although Keynes did not coin the term animal spirits, he gave the term an on-ramp to mainstream usage. Here's the passage where he used the term:

Even apart from the instability due to speculation, there is the instability due to the characteristic of human nature that a large proportion of our positive activities depend on spontaneous optimism rather than mathematical expectations, whether moral or hedonistic or economic. Most, probably, of our decisions to do something positive, the full consequences of which will be drawn out over many days to come, can only be taken as the result of animal spirits—a spontaneous urge to action rather than inaction, and not as the outcome of a weighted average of quantitative benefits multiplied by quantitative probabilities.

*The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money, 1936.*

**Table 1 – 2021 Stock Market Forecasts**

Source	S&P 500 Forecasted Change in 2021
CNBC: Survey of 20 Analysts	8% to 22%
Invesco	20%
Goldman Sachs	18%
Oppenheimer	18%
Piper Sandler Companies	16%
BMO	15%
UBS	13%
Barclays	10%
BTIG	10%
CFRA	12%
Factset: Bottom-up Forecast	9%
Deutsche Bank	9%
Morgan Stanley	7%
Wells Fargo Investment Institute	7%
Citigroup	4%
BofA	4%

The median consensus on Wall Street in December 2019 was that the S&P 500 would rise 2.7% in 2020. The actual performance of the S&P 500 will be about 15%. Animal spirits? Partly, but many other forces were at work including massive stimulus support and interest rates that are so low that there are limited opportunities for investment outside of the stock markets.

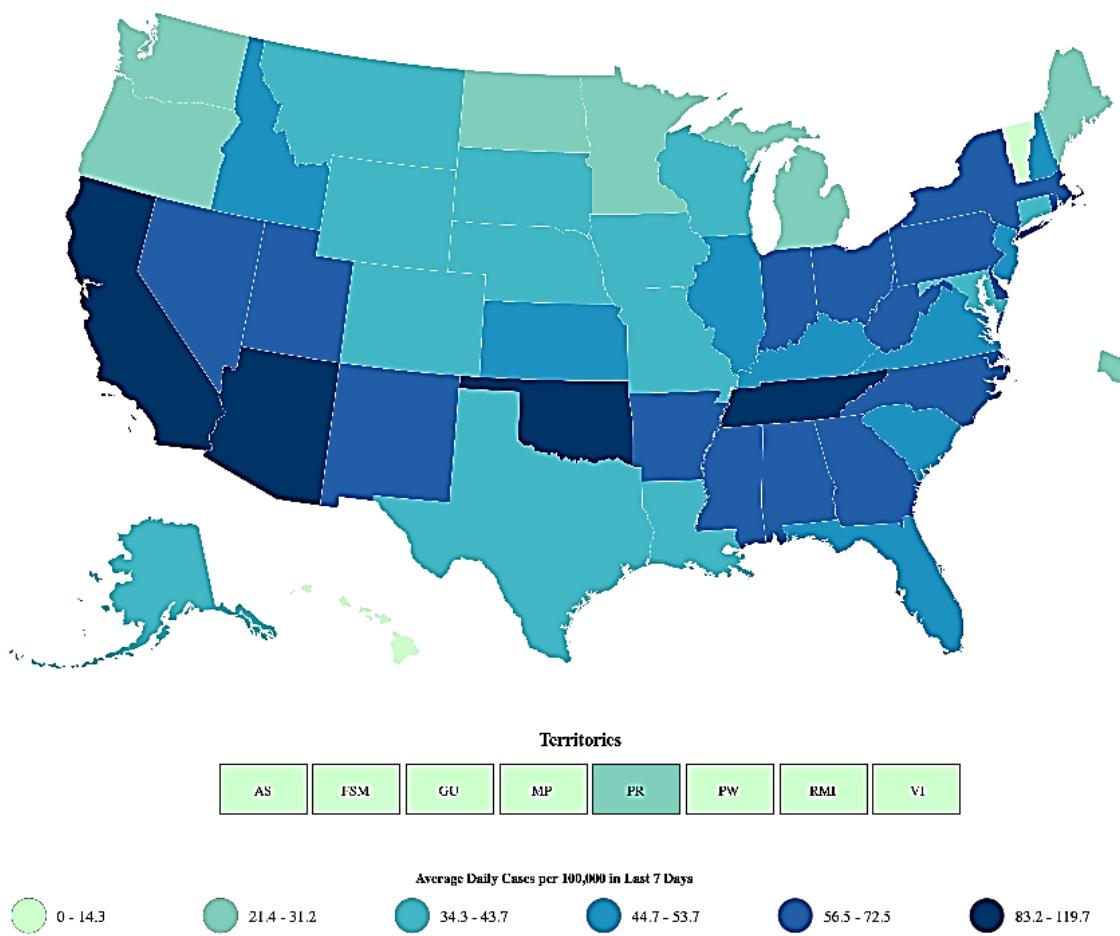
Table 1 provides a summary of several S&P 500 forecasts. All of the forecasts listed in Table 1 anticipate an increase in the S&P 500 from 4% to 22%.

The up-shot is that Wall Street analysts and prominent economists see a rosy-ish 2021 economy. One thing this assessment of the economy doesn't address is growing income and wealth inequality in the US:

- According to Federal Reserve data the top 1% of Americans have a combined net worth of \$34.2 trillion (or 30.4% of all household wealth in the US), while the bottom 50% of the population holds just \$2.1 trillion combined (or 1.9% of all wealth).
- A study published recently by Swiss bank UBS and accounting firm PwC found that the total wealth of the world's 2,189 billionaires soared to a record-setting high of \$10.2 trillion in late July, obliterating the previous record of \$8.9 trillion recorded at the end of 2017.
- A critical factor in the explosion of wealth among wealthier Americans has been access and exposure to the stock market. The Fed estimates that the wealthiest 10% of Americans hold more than 88% of all available equity in corporations and mutual fund shares (with just the top 1% controlling more than twice as much equity as the bottom 50% of Americans).
- The wealth gap between races in the U.S. has also continued to expand. According to the Fed data, white Americans hold nearly 85% of the nation's wealth, versus just 4.1% for Black households. The median net worth of black households in 2016, according to the Federal Reserve's Survey of Consumer Finances, was \$17,150. The median net worth of a white family in 2016 was \$171,000.
- According to **Neel Kashkari**, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, "If we don't support people who have lost their jobs, then they can't pay their bills, and then it ripples through the economy, and the downturn is much worse than it needs to be."

**COVID-19 UPDATE** – Johns Hopkins University data indicate that the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the US has risen since the October "Notes from the Potomac" by 10,539,000 cases to over 19,093,000 (an increase of 123%), and the number of confirmed COVID-19 deaths has grown by 108,900 (an increase of 49%) to about 334,900.

The CDC map below displays the average daily number of cases in the last seven days per 100,000 people. The states of California, Arizona, Oklahoma, and Tennessee are leading the nation in COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people.



The very good news, as you no doubt are aware, is that the US has begun the vaccination process. And **Dr. Anthony Fauci** indicated earlier this month that COVID-19 vaccine should be available on demand to the general public by April 2021.

**CONSERVATION PROGRAMS UPDATE**—The last two months of the year saw continued conservation emphasis on water resources, conservation practice updates, outreach and collaboration, and wildlife and grasslands. The Department closed out the year with a release of highlights across the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Agencies.

## Program Activity

**WATERSMART INITIATIVE (WSI)** – On November 5, 2020, The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced selection of 31 priority areas to receive \$13 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding as part of the WaterSMART Initiative (WSI). Through WSI, NRCS collaborates with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to coordinate investments in priority areas for improving cumulative impact in water conservation and drought resilience. A full list of the priority areas can be found here:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/eqip/?cid=nrcseprd1685421>

**Conservation Reserve Program and CRP Grasslands** – Signup for the general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the CRP Grasslands starts early in 2021. The General CRP signup will be open from **January 4, 2021, to February 12, 2021** and includes increased opportunities for enrollment of wildlife habitat through the State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative. Signup for CRP Grasslands runs from **March 15, 2021 to April 23, 2021**. You can read the full release at:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2020/usda-to-open-signup-for-the-conservation-reserve-program-and-crp-grasslands-in-early-2021>

## Outreach and Collaboration

**Water Quantity in the West** – The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) hosted a virtual open public listening session on December 17, 2020 to gather public input about water quantity in the West as it relates to the most pressing water-related needs and issues related to operations and how NRCS programs and partnerships might assist. Feedback may be provided in writing before January 19, 2021. For more information on the event and providing feedback, go to:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/12/03/2020-26525/virtual-public-listening-session-natural-resources-conservation-service-programs-and-western-water>

**Public Input on Defining Nonindustrial Private Forest Land Eligibility** – On December 17, 2020, NRCS published a request for public input on guidance for agency staff concerning the identification of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land (NIPF) for NRCS conservation programs. Input on the technical guidance is being accepted through January 19, 2021. Electronic comments must be submitted under Docket no. NRCS-2020-0009 at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/12/17/2020-27703/guidance-for-identification-of-nonindustrial-private-forest-land-nipf>

**Conservation Practice Standard Updates** – On November 10, 2020, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced the completion of updates or revisions to 58 conservation practice standards following a public comment process. The revised standards cover a range of practices, including irrigation water management, heavy use area protection, and composting facilities. During the review process, NRCS added two new conservation practices addressing wastewater treatment and wildlife habitat planning and maintained 18 interim conservation practice standards that are being tested to establish and document natural resource benefits. Updated or new national conservation practice standards are released with National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP) notices available at:

<https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/viewerFS.aspx?hid=22299>

## The 2020 Roundup

On December 16, 2020, USDA released a roundup of 2020 farm program activities, highlighting the department's contributions to helping farmers and ranchers weather a tough 2020. Farm Production and Conservation Under Secretary Northey noted that "We continue to admire and support the resiliency of farmers and ranchers during challenging times." Conservation highlights included in the release include:

- The new processes for electronic signatures to ensure producer and field staff could use electronic tools safely and securely.
- The selection and training of beginning farmer and rancher coordinators who will represent the entire portfolio of USDA programs for new farmers and ranchers. You can see the list here: <https://www.farmers.gov/manage/newfarmers/coordinators>
- The award of first-ever grants and cooperative agreements that support urban agriculture.
- The formation of new FSA County Committees focused on urban agriculture issues. The first five locations were Richmond, VA, Philadelphia, PA, Cleveland, OH, Portland, OR, and Albuquerque, NM. Six additional locations (Atlanta, GA, Dallas, TX, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN, New Orleans, LA, Phoenix, AZ, and St. Louis, MO) were announced on December 17, 2020. FSA will begin accepting nominations for committee members in June 2021 with nominations due August 2, 2021. You can see more at: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2020/usda-announces-six-more-farm-service-agency-county-committees-for-urban-agriculture-requests-nominations>.
- NRCS worked with producers to voluntarily implement conservation practices on 19.3 million acres of working lands, providing more than \$1.8 billion in financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program.
- NRCS helped producers enroll 230,000 acres of new easements into the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, and FSA helped producers enroll 3.4 million acres in the year's Conservation Reserve Program signup.
- The FPAC Business Center streamlined processes and improved mission support delivery. FPAC agencies are currently staffed at 91% of the hiring ceiling, compared with 88% in 2018. FPAC agencies have 1,200-plus more staff on-board in 2020 than in 2019.
- You can read the full roundup of highlights here: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1717843>

**FARMERS.GOV** – USDA's farmers.gov site highlights the importance of conservation to the productivity and sustainability of America's working and non-working lands. It offers tools and information on resource concerns, as well as available technical and financial assistance for producers to help address conservation concerns or plan for the future. It also includes a "Conservation at Work" video series highlighting conservation practices and the farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners applying them. You can check it all out at:

<https://www.farmers.gov/conserv>

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Cheryl Simmons, <http://www.arcse.org/>*

We hope you all had a wonderful holiday celebration!

The Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) and Women in Natural Resources (WiN) are interested in working with ARCSE to support student activities. We are actively accepting contributions through mail or PayPal

(<https://www.paypal.com/us/home>) on the [arcse.org](http://arcse.org) webpage to consider another year of funding for a student intern. ARCSE also signed an MOU with SWCS to join in some membership activities.

Our purpose is to keep retirees in touch with other ARCSE members and to exchange experiences, ideas, and activities, and to alert members of retiree activities at local, state, and national levels. To encourage continued support of sound soil and water conservation programs carried out by NRCS and other agencies, and to keep retirees informed of current conservation legislation, budgets, and program changes.

I continue to enjoy how shared work experience and agency history can cross many lines that often separate us. In addition to staying connected, I enjoy meeting many conservationists anew. Join us in this great new year; 2021 is headed our way!



*The photo is from a Holiday Card from an ARCSE member. Thank you*

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*Paul Benedict, Membership Chair*

### New Member

Debra Vonnahme—Arcadia, Iowa

### Membership Dues

The 2021 Membership Dues Notice went out with the Nov/Dec ARCSE Newsletter.

As of December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, about 39% of members paying annual dues had submitted their 2021 dues. And, of members receiving a hard copy of the ARCS newsletter, about 70% had paid \$12 for that service in 2021. Many members contributed additional amounts to support the association. Your prompt payment of dues, fees and generous contributions is greatly appreciated.

If you are receiving a hard copy and have not yet paid your 2021 dues or hard copy fee, here is a reminder on how to decipher the information on your label. **See payment example labels below.** 1. If the first number to the right of your name on your mailing label is "20", "20C", or lower, your dues are due! Numbers like "21C", "21", or higher

indicate that your dues are paid for 2021. Numbers "999" indicate life members or honorary members, and your dues are paid. 2. If the second number to the right of your name on your mailing label is "H20," an additional payment of \$12 is required to continue receiving a printed copy of the newsletter. If it is "H21" or above, no additional payment is required to continue receiving a printed copy of the newsletter.

### New Life Members

Donald E. Weaver—Richmond, Indiana  
Rita (Mueller) Williams—Fair Grove, Missouri

### ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES

Member	\$18 per year
Affiliate	\$18 per year
Life (One – time payment)	
Age 64 or younger	\$250
Age 65 thru 74	\$200
Age 75 or older	\$125

*NOTE: Dues payment includes receipt of the bimonthly electronic newsletter only. All members (both life members and those who pay annual dues) who desire a hard copy of the newsletter must pay an additional fee of \$12.00 per year.*

*Please submit Dues to ARCSE at P.O. Box 8965 Moscow, ID 83843*

----Sample Labels-----

\*\*\*\*\*ALL FOR ADC 123

0000123-11223

JOHN Q. PUBLIC, 999, H20

11 GRANITE MOUNTAIN, ANYWHERE, USA 01010-1010

\*\*\*\*\*ALL FOR ADC 456

0000456-44556

JAMES P. PUBLIC, 20, H20

11 GRANITE MOUNTAIN, ANYWHERE, USA 00101-1010

For your convenience, ARCSE annual dues and hard copy fees can be paid by credit card or by PayPal: <http://www.arcse.org/nFORMS.htm>. You still can pay by check as in the past. Mail checks to: ARCSE, PO Box 8965, Moscow, ID 83843.

Membership applications are also available at the above website.

**DEADLINE FOR MARCH/APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS FEBRUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2021**

## ALABAMA

*Earl North, ARCSE Representative*

*Email: [earl.norton@charter.net](mailto:earl.norton@charter.net)*

Current news regarding our retirees is short. A small group is meeting monthly for breakfast in Auburn. **Morris Gillespie**, retired information specialist for Alabama, spent about a month in the hospital following gall bladder surgery and complications and has now returned home in Auburn. The other good news, as far as we know, is that all of our other retirees are well and looking forward to Christmas and New Year's holidays and 2021.

As in previous reports we are featuring one of our retirees who is staying active and enjoying retirement, **Charles Love**. In 2017, Charles retired from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service after 40 years of dedicated service.

Charles transferred from the Indianapolis, IN Soil Survey Regional Office in 2002, to serve as Alabama State Soil Scientist and Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA) Soil Survey Leader for the Southeast Coastal Plain and Caribbean Soil Survey region (MLRA Office-15), headquartered in Auburn, AL. He was responsible for the direction and management of the soil survey quality assurance efforts for MO-15 (MLRA Office) region (in portions of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Caribbean areas), and technical leadership for the Alabama Soil Survey Program. From 2012 to the close of his career, he served as the Soil Survey Regional Director for Region 7.



Before these positions, Charles served as Soil Data Quality Specialist on the Region 11 MLRA Regional Team headquartered in Indianapolis, IN. He provided technical support and training within Region 11, mainly the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. As a Field Soil Scientist, he served in six different locations in Central and Western Illinois. He served as the Soil Survey Project Leader in Bowling Green, MO. He also served in one of the first MLRA Soil Survey Project Leader positions in the state of Illinois, Springfield, IL.

Charles worked as a Forester Technician Trainee with the U.S. Forest Service in the States of Washington, Oregon, and Wyoming, while a student at Tennessee State University. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Agronomy and Soil Science from Tennessee State University at Nashville, TN.

Charles' dedication to the agency, his love of soil science, and serving the people went beyond any title he ever held. Charles was a true pioneer in the field of soil science. He not only loved being a leader in the field but also enjoyed teaching and mentoring young soil scientists and watching the evolution of the field of soil science. He was instrumental in the essence and success of Soil Survey Region 7, NRCS, and USDA.

Charles continues to be a member of soil science organizations, including the Professional Soil Classifier Association of Alabama (PSCAA), and the Illinois Soil Classifiers Association. Presently, he is serving on the 2021 National Soil Survey Steering Planning Committee, which is planning the conference to be hosted by Auburn University's College of Agriculture in June, 2021.

Charles is a native of Jackson, TN, where he grew up in a farming community. He and his wife, **Alice**, and their daughter, **Princess** continue to live in the Auburn area. Charles is enjoying spending quality time with family and friends and serving as a volunteer on various local community organizations. He hopes to spend more time traveling across this beautiful country soon.



**Charles Love, Alice, and Princess**

## ARIZONA

**Ken Cookson, ARCSE Representative**

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**Chris Williams Report**—My wife and I have limited our activities to avoid chances of getting the virus!

**Ken Cookson Report**—Like many people during this pandemic we have limited what we do. We cancelled all planned trips in 2020. We are trying to follow the CDC guidelines and wear a mask any time we are out shopping. Fortunately, our golf course has not been closed, so I have been playing a lot of golf. We have also done a lot of reading.

In October, 2018 my wife and I were on a Viking Long Boat Cruise of the Rhine River. We were at one of our stops, Cologne, Germany, when my wife and I were on our way to the Chocolate Museum, when she fell and fractured her pelvis. She was in a hospital in Cologne for 41 days. When we got back to Tucson, she was in a hospital for another three days followed by 19 days in a Rehab facility. When she left the Rehab facility, she was told that her recovery would be a marathon and not a sprint.

Two years later she can do everything she was doing before, but maybe not to the same degree. Probably our being two years older would make a little difference. It has been a long recovery and we have been thankful for all the people who worked and provided her support during this process.

## ARKANSAS

**Ralph Mashburn, ARCSE Representative**

**Email:** [ralphmashburn@gmail.com](mailto:ralphmashburn@gmail.com)

**Ralph and Nancy Mashburn with the surprise Christmas wreath graciously sent to them by his old SCS buddy, Dudley Williams. Dudley, Ralph, Dick Babeu, Bob Caldwell, Jim Mitchell, Harris Judy, Ed Riekert, Dan Maxim, Larry Knight, and Jim Thornton were among the ones who all enjoyed working together years ago on the New York Water Resources staff. Most of them still keep in touch. This newsletter helps them do that.**



**Dick and Lori Babeu wait their turn to watch the Christmas Star using the telescope brought to Ralph and Nancy's backyard by their grandson, Nathan Burroughs. All wore masks until they had hot chocolate, roasted marshmallows, and ate hot dogs around the fire pit.**

## CALIFORNIA

**Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [bluegrassbillward@gmail.com](mailto:bluegrassbillward@gmail.com)

**Greetings from California.** We want to wish all our fellow retirees across the nation the best in this New Year. I know none of us are sad to say goodbye (and good riddance!) to 2020.

**California Update on Coronavirus:** Like many parts of the Country California has certainly taken a turn for the worse when it comes to the Coronavirus. In one month's time beginning in mid-November, COVID hospitalizations increased by a factor of almost 4, and COVID ICU cases by a factor of 3. This led to a regional stay-at-home order being issued by Governor Gavin Newsome on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. This order broke the state into five broad regions (see below) and used the criteria that when ICU capacity fell to 15% of capacity, all but essential services would be severely impacted for the entire region for a minimum three-week period.

The restrictions include significant stay-at-home orders, limiting travel to essential business, limiting group size gatherings, no indoor dining, prohibiting gatherings with members of other households, and many more. Three regions went below these

thresholds by mid-December, with the new restrictions now affecting about 90 percent of California's total population of some 40 million. One region, the San Joaquin Valley, essentially "hit the bottom" with no ICU availability remaining. Lots of challenges lie ahead of us, but the amazing success in developing a vaccine and getting distribution started is a great way to go into the New Year.

### California Retiree's Monthly Zoom Get-together.

With the election in November we took a break from our monthly Zoom sessions but resumed our Zoom practice on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. A small group of retirees enjoyed connecting before the Christmas Holiday began to take over everybody's attention. Most everybody reported they were doing well, being safe, which means not doing a whole lot. We welcomed **Jack Bramhall**, Forester from Red Bluff, to his first CA retiree Zoom meeting.



California 5 Region area and ICU availability by Region



Those participating shown in the screen shot included: Top row L-R, Jack Bramhall, Bill Ward, Harold Honeyfield; Bottom Row L-R, Al Cerna, Ed Schmidt, Walt Sykes.

I am still planning on getting a Zoom session together of retirees from the CA Eng/Design and WNTC staffs who worked together for many years on important projects for California. I hope to have that take place mid to late January.

### General Guidance using Zoom Video Teleconferencing – by Bill Ward

As folks can probably tell from my contributions to our newsletter, I am a big fan of using Zoom to keep our retirees connected. In just six months' time of using it, I personally have learned just how much some of our retirees, including myself, really enjoy seeing and sharing with each other this way. I can also tell you that Zoom is not hard to learn.

I was recently asked if I could put together some kind of "How to Zoom" Guide geared to help our State reps and retirees who might be interested in the idea but may be reluctant because they do not know how to get started. I have in fact

completed a first draft of this document and just this month sent a copy to all our Board members for initial review and comment.

This document was developed to provide guidance to NRCS State Retiree Reps as well as all NRCS retirees who wish to encourage and provide more opportunities to stay connected with their fellow retirees using Zoom. It was specifically put together for use by retirees who may be new to Zoom and do not have Zoom downloaded on their computer.

I will be sharing it with California Retirees and West Region ARCSE State reps prior to the end of the calendar year. I would be happy to share it with any ARCSE members who would like a copy. Just drop me an email.

Well, that is it from California, until next time, wishing all retirees the best and to be safe!

Bill Ward, bluegrassbillward@gmail.com  
California ARCSE Representative  
PE, Former Design Staff Leader, Davis, CA

## COLORADO

**Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [pspicata@gmail.com](mailto:pspicata@gmail.com)**

**Ivan Wilkinson news from Estes Park:**

"On October 22<sup>nd</sup> our concern for the virus was temporarily interrupted by the threat of forest fires to Estes Park and surrounding areas. At 11:30am we received an alert for mandatory evacuation. **Ginger** and I each took a car about 1pm, as did nearly everyone else in EP. It was pitch black and took until 3pm to reach the entrance to Big Thompson Canyon (about five miles) headed for Loveland. You may imagine what it is like to leave your home and all your belongings, not knowing when you will return and if there would be anything left when you did. We stayed with our daughter and family in Aurora for a week. We are much more fortunate than many on the west side of the continental divide who lost everything."



*Estes Park and the Cameron Peak Fire*



*Mid-day Fort Collins, September 7<sup>th</sup>.*

For those of us on flatter ground along the Front Range we also "enjoyed" several days of smoke this fall, the backyard photo at 1 pm on September 7<sup>th</sup>. Watering restrictions were applied for a short period through October due in part to uncertainty about watershed impacts to the Fort Collins water supply. A good accounting of the fire can be read here: <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/cameron-peak-fire>.

**IOWA****Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative**Email: [amjens1@gmail.com](mailto:amjens1@gmail.com)**Jim Wolfe with the two nice bucks he got this year**

After 54 years of deer hunting, **Jim Wolfe** tagged his two biggest bucks this year. The biggest one was shot in the early muzzleloader season. The second one was taken in the first shotgun season. All those wildlife conservation practices that SCS/NRCS recommended and that he installed on his farm over the years have paid off. Jim said these are both getting shoulder-mounted and will join the "herd" in his man cave. Jim was the DC in Cresco (Howard County) for 20 years. Congratulations Jim! I know it isn't nice to be envious, but ...

Thanks to **Marty Adkins** for the following: "We are all fine here in Knoxville, although we are looking forward to the day when we can spend a little less time here and a little more time traveling to see our kids and grandkids. In the meantime, we are grateful for our weekly family Zoom calls and daily group chat exchanges with them. I am continuing to work with my son **Drew** on his/our volunteer projects. His main project right now is with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He is digitizing construction progress and technical documentation photos taken when the Lake Red Rock dam was being built in the 1960s. These photos are still used during dam maintenance and renovation work and will be for many years to come. So far, he has scanned and logged 1,800 photos. He still has more than 1,000 to scan, so we have some of our winter days spoken for."

I had a nice visit with **John Chenoweth** the other day. He and **Carolyn** are healthy and doing well. Their son recently accepted a position with a hospital in Pella, IA. John said that in March, he and Carolyn plan to move back to Iowa from Arkansas. We'll welcome them back to Iowa.

Thanks to **Lyle Asell** for the following: "I know you are always looking for newsletter items, so thought I would share my newest hobby, animal training. So far, I have trained a ground hog (woodchuck) that comes out into a hay field next to our house to run every time I shoot at it. The next trick we are working on is for it to sit quietly, and not smile, while I reload. On another topic, we have a local banquet/catering business in Chariton that has adjusted to COVID-19. Every Wednesday they work with a local group (firemen, service clubs, churches, etc.) to serve drive-through meals. The groups help prepare the food, sell tickets, and deliver as people drive in. **Thelma (Russ Saxton** was her Father-in-law, but she is a whole lot easier to get along with) covers her expenses, then splits the profits with the group. So far, the least any group has made is \$1,100. So it helps her and the community and gives people a chance to 'eat out' safely."

During the past couple of months, we have been saddened by the loss of several of our retiree family. **Volney Smith** passed away on November 16<sup>th</sup>. He was the Assistant State Conservation Engineer for many years. **Gene Eyberg** also passed away on November 16<sup>th</sup>. He was a long time Soil Conservation Technician in southern Iowa, most recently in Atlantic. **Dortha Borts** also passed away on November 16<sup>th</sup>. She was the wife of **Don Borts** who was a longtime District Conservationist in southeast Iowa. **Beverly Miller** passed away on November 14<sup>th</sup>. She was on the Administrative Staff in the State Office. **Kevin Kordick** passed away on November 28<sup>th</sup>. He was the current District Conservationist in Boone.

**KANSAS****Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative**Email: [rlull2@cox.net](mailto:rlull2@cox.net)

What a year this has been for everyone, and it appears the pandemic will continue well into the new year. However, hope is on the way. As is the case with many families, we will not be celebrating Christmas with any of our family, as travel to other states would be required. We might participate in the community dinner by picking up our meals at the event site and dining at home. Usually, 4,000 to 5,000 meals are served.

The Kansas State Office was closed several days as a result of employees being exposed to the virus. Periodically I learn of retirees having COVID-19; however, I am happy to report that all have recovered.

**John Ourada** (former State Conservation Engineer), who served as judge at a polling site in the November general election, was featured in a picture in the Salina Journal assisting a 109-year-old voter place her vote. She stated that she has voted in every election since 1932, with **President Franklin Roosevelt** being the first president she voted for.

**Lawrence and Phyllis Wetter** celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. They have four children and are blessed with six grandchildren. Both Lawrence and Phyllis worked for the SCS/NRCS. Lawrence enjoys woodworking and gardening, and Phyllis enjoys sewing.

I have been notified that four are expected to join our retirement ranks during the holiday season. They will be reported in the March/April newsletter.

We have had two retirees pass away. **Duane "Dewey" T. Georend**, died on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. He was the District Conservationist in the Salina Field Office from 1973 to his retirement in 1992. His wife, **Ernestine**, survives. **Kenneth F. Sherraden** passed away on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. He retired in December, 2002 as a Natural Resources Specialist in the Kansas State Office in Salina. **Janet**, his spouse, survives.

Two spouses were also lost. **Charlene Vance Jorgensen** died on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020. She was the spouse of **George** who retired in 1984 as the District Conservationist in the Troy Field Office and preceded her in death. **Laura Elaine Badger**, spouse of **Thomas Badger**, passed away on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. **Tom** was the Area Conservationist in the Manhattan Area Office and retired in 2001 while on detail to the State Conservation Commission.

## MID-ATLANTIC STATES

**Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC**

**Ken Carter, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [duckheadone@gmail.com](mailto:duckheadone@gmail.com)**

From **Barbara Osgood**: How we have dealt with COVID-289 days of isolation as of Christmas Day, 2020.



*Learning to make my own Cosmo*



*Deliveries!*



*Sunday Pants!*



*An assortment of Masks*



*The company of dogs*



*A garden to tend*



*The generosity of Neighbors and Friends*



*Zoom*

## MISSOURI

**Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative**

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**Dennis Shirk:** Merry Christmas, everyone. We are well and we had a wonderful Christmas with our family. Sixteen out of the 20 of us were here, and a beautiful warm day so we could scatter out. God has blessed us greatly. See ya down the trail. Merry Christmas and a happy new year to everyone.

**Jerold Crowder:** Not much going on here. Been through a brutal year, but we'll get by. Hoping for the vaccine soon.

**Alton Taylor:** Well, the Navy shut down in Virginia Beach, so our grandson and wife and my newest great grandson will not make it to Missouri for Christmas. I sure need to get a hold of that young man before he starts walking. The rest of the families will be in Missouri between Christmas and new years. West Texas is still dry. Insurance claims seem to be the number one income source. Most are going to be able to start over one more time. It's starting to feel like winter is here. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

**Paula Price:** Looking forward to Christmas! **Holly** and **Rylee** are in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and **Jordin** is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Holly and Rylee are both vivacious little girls who are soaking up all knowledge like sponges. Jordin is quite the volleyball player. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade team at Excelsior Springs Middle School went unbeaten in their games this fall. If you are at the AHHA Tonka State Park, please look for Jordin Price's name on a fishing sport recognition plaque. It was added during Summer 2020. Fortunately, when I was ill with COVID-19, my case was very minimal. Everyone, have a blessed Christmas and holiday season! I just returned today from one of my happy places, The Cliffs of Long Creek south of Branson. The Christmas light displays were wonderful. May 2021 bring you good health and happiness.

**Craig King:** We are surviving the (hopefully once in a lifetime) year we are having. We are fortunate that the kids have been able to attend school in person. Kudos to the administration and everyone involved for this. Feel so sorry for the kids that have to do virtual learning. They are suffering. Anyway, Weston King finished his football season 12-1, losing in the semi-final game. The team broke in the new field and facilities at Palmyra, going undefeated. It was a fun ride to say the least. He received multiple honors: All Conference, All District, All State, and Quincy Herald Whig Player of the year. He has accomplished this while being on the honor roll with a 3.8 GPA. His senior class of boys are one-of-a-kind. He is in a boot now. He asked his mom after the last game if he could go see our doctor because his leg was hurting. Found out he had a fractured fibula, from the third game. Glad he got his toughness from his mom. He has committed to The University of Central Missouri to play football and further his academic career. He will be pursuing an Agronomy Degree. **Candra** had a good fall season in softball as a freshman. She ended up being a designated hitter on varsity and hit very well in district play, including a home run in the championship game. She is playing basketball now and enjoying it. Getting some varsity time and making an impact. We have been so fortunate that the kids have gotten the chance to play, with precautions of course. Since football was outside, it wasn't as hard, but most people wore a mask. Basketball and wrestling are a little different: it's 2-4 tickets per player, and masks for the fans are mandated. We have also had in-school learning, thankfully. The students pay the price with virtual. **Andrea** is working from home mostly, so she has her little corner in the great room as a make-shift office. I get in on a few teleconferences (as I am strolling through the room). It's nice to hear some familiar voices, but I quickly head for the door. Don't miss the other part. Her work stays busy, especially with the COVID-19 issue. It has taken a lot of extra time dealing with who's sick, quarantined, which office is closed, etc. I kept busy this fall hauling grain for a neighbor. It was a super fall for harvest. I am waiting on an overhead door to finish my lean-to I built onto our shop. COVID-19 has slowed production down.

*I finished a bridge that crossed a ditch behind our house: 35-foot span. I used power poles and cable. Don't worry Dave and Reese, I used the proper formula to build it safe to cross with my ATV. I also brought my dad's '56 Chevy Truck home yesterday, finally. Had it restored. People are correct—you only want to go through this once. Ok, I have written enough for now. From our house to yours, may The Good Lord bring you peace and strength in these uncertain times. "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year."*



**Bill Pauls:** Hope the entire NRCS family have a happy Holiday Season. We here at the lake are coronavirus fear-free. Biggest year at the lake ever! Just do what your mother always told you to do (i.e., wash hands, use soap, stay home if sick, don't cough on others, etc.). I have recently had successful major surgery (prostate) and am recovering well. Hope to get back to a full marathon schedule sometime next year. Only got two in this year but blessed to have had those. Still busy with volunteering, church, and Knights of Columbus. **Kris** and the rest of our family are doing well, and we are looking forward to Christmas with our entire gang gathered. We were saddened to hear of the passing of **Carol McCarthy**, our deep

sympathy to **John**. We are praying for our country. Hopefully patriotism and traditional American values will win out. The environment of the lake is very cathartic and reassuring. We are truly blessed and Thankful! Merry Christmas, One and All!

**Mike Blaine:** Hello from Blaine hill and merry Christmas! **Pam** and I are wintering pretty well. We both had COVID-19 at the end of November, but our cases were very slight, and we had no long-lasting effects. Pam did lose her sense of taste and smell for a few days. Other than that, we were just constantly tired until we recovered. We plan to try to see our kids and grandkids over the holidays. That will involve some travel so hope we don't get into any traveling difficulties with the current surge of COVID-19. I'm running low on firewood, and that is a priority in the near future! Best wishes to all and may God bless your holiday time

We are sad to announce the following recent deaths: **David Wright**, Retired District Conservationist in Hickory and St Clair Counties; **Jerry McElhiney**, long time area engineer at Warrensburg; **Carol McCarthy**, wife of retired state agronomist **John McCarthy**. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

## MONTANA

**Dick Gooby, ARCSE Representative**

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### Montana Big Sky Report

**Gooby Ranch Merry Christmas Report:** We delivered a half of beef to **Shirly Elliott**. She said she is healthy as a horse and strong as a horse from eating the delicious healthy Gooby Beef.

We thought last year was tough, but this year was a lot tougher. By having to wear a face mask all year, I was nearly totally dehydrated. Every time I wanted to drink something, I had to drink through the face mask. Half of whatever I was trying to drink would spill down my shirt. Mary Ann spent a lot of time washing clothes.

Last year we bought **Irene**, The Mountain Climbing Machine. What they didn't tell us was her real name is – Ha Ha Catch Me If You Can. If you want to go riding today, you better start catching Irene yesterday. Walk into the pasture with a halter and she's in the next county. But she can't resist oats. **Mary Ann** goes out with a pan of oats. Irene sneaks up, stretches her neck, stretches her head, stretches her lips and sucks up a mouthful before Mary Ann can put the pan down to catch her. Now Mary Ann has a new technique. She goes out with the oats in a deep bucket. She squats down with the bucket between her knees. When Irene sticks her head in the bucket, Mary Ann leaps up and throws both arms around her neck. Irene usually does two rounds of the pasture with Mary Ann swinging around her neck like a giant cow bell before Irene gives up. I'm thinking of changing Mary Ann's name to Mary Belle.

At Halloween, because of coronavirus, we knew a lot of parents weren't going to let their children go trick or treating so there was going to be a lot of candy not given out. The people would probably end up eating the candy and gain a lot of weight. So, we decided to do a community service by going trick or treating and save them from eating all that leftover candy. Our only problem was to figure out how to have Mary Ann look and act like a 12-year-old. She got her welding helmet, the rest of her welding clothes and gloves. She made a face mask that looked like a 12-year-old. We shut all our lights off and headed to town.

Since I have anti-virus protection on my computer, I had Mary Ann pack it with her to keep her from getting COVID-19. I stayed in the pickup and followed her around town as she knocked on doors and got goodies. I had her hop, skip and turn cartwheels so she looked like she was 12 years old. With all her welding gear on, no one could tell she was a little bit older.

When Mary Ann got a sack full of goodies, she put it in the back of the pickup. After she had gone to all the houses, we headed for home. We quarantined the pickup out in a field for 14 days of isolation before we started eating the candy. Here it is getting close to Christmas and we still have a ton of candy and I have only gained seven pounds. Mary Ann hasn't gained any weight, but her work production went up 2.14 %

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a super duper good New Year in 2021.

## NEBRASKA

**Norm Kempf, Jim Culver, ARCSE Representatives**

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Our Lincoln SCS/NRCS Retirees Club plans to do our first Zoom meeting for our January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting. **Harold Klaege**, President of the Lincoln NARFF Chapter, will be assisting with the Zoom meeting. Due to the COVID-19 our Lincoln SCS/NRCS Retirees Club has not met since February for our normal breakfast at Stauffers on the third Wednesday morning of each month.

The weather was great this year, as **Lou Buller** has been deer hunting at his favorite place on the Platte River in central Nebraska for over 50 years. This year Lou was accompanied by his son for a week of enjoyable hunting along with some quality father-son relationships.

**Norman Kempf** has been hunting in the Black Hills of SD for over 40 years. This year he gave up the hunt and returned his license due to COVID 19 concerns. He did get a NE deer. Norman also reports that, due to COVID 19 concerns, his family will have a Zoom meeting instead of a jolly Christmas party. This will include family members from SD, MN, MT, NE, Australia, and Kenya.

**Joe Calder** reported that due to COVID-19, he had not played much golf this year but did manage to get to play with his son Randy a couple of times. Joe indicated he had been doing most of the grocery shopping in recent months.

**Dave Camper**, another biker in our group, indicated he had been taking advantage of the many excellent bike trails in the Lincoln area, along with taking his dog on daily walks.

**Jim Carr** has made excellent progress following heart surgery earlier this year. Jim had been meeting weekly with a group of colleagues for several years but indicated they had stopped all meetings for at least the next three or four weeks as the COVID-19 has accelerated in our area. Jim is looking forward to 2021 and being able to get back on the golf course again. Jim has played in the Senior Golf League for many years.

**Bill Hance** has provided ministry assistance to the state and regional correction facilities for a good number of years. Due to the virus, he now assists only two or three Saturdays during the month because the high rate of incidence of COVID-19 in these facilities.

**Steve Stover** and his family will do a Zoom-like Christmas this year, like a lot of other people around the country. Steve has a son, who is an Aero Space Engineer, and daughter in Cincinnati, Ohio and family in Houston, TX.

**Harold Klaege** will again be assisting AARP in a volunteer capacity to work with people in need of assistance to do the state and federal income taxes. During these challenging times an effort is underway to train Harold and others on the changes and processes to use as they plan to provide this free service again to those in need. Harold, who retired as NRCS State Conservationist for Kansas, reported that a close professional friend in Salina, KS—72 years old—had passed due to COVID-19.

**Arlis Plummer**, a recently retired Professional Engineer at the NRCS Nebraska State Office, said she had been working part time as a member of the ACES program. She is working only part time and said that having lots of free time was great!

**Arnold Mendenhall** over the years has been quite active in Wachiska Audubon Society activities. He said they use Zoom to do many of their meetings—some of the nightly meetings can get to be rather long.

**Kay Westerman** currently lives in the Legacy. She noted that they are very secure and do an excellent job of monitoring and keeping their environment safe with respect to the virus issues. Kay has a granddaughter who recently graduated from Union college in Lincoln as an RN. She is now employed by Bryan Hospital and working in the COVID-19 care area.

**Verlon K. "Tony" Vrana**, one of our long-time active members, 95, died on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Tony was born in Seward, NE. He had a distinguished career of 32 years with SCS-USDA. See the In Memoriam section for more details.



*Vicki Scheinost is a very experienced hunter and proudly displays the results of another excellent quality hunting experience.*



*Another successful deer hunting experience for Steve Scheinost in southeast Nebraska. Steve has a very special eye for being able to make that very long accurate shot. This year Steve said that the shot taken was one of the longest accurate shots he had ever taken.*

**Steve Scheinost and members of his family taking a break after a very successful deer hunting venture in southeast Nebraska. Left to right, Steve Scheinost; daughter, Vicki; grandson, Colton; and son-in-law Blaine.**



**Craig Derickson**, Nebraska State Conservationist for the past 10 years, is retiring on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 after 35 years of Federal Service. Craig has been successful at a number of positions over his career. He was with ARS-USDA, Farm manager and soil scientist with University of Nebraska prior to joining SCS (now NRCS) in 1985 as a soil scientist. Later positions include District Conservationists, Area Resource Conservationists, Assistant State Conservationist-Nebraska, and Regional Technical Coordinator. He moved to Washington DC in 2002 to serve on the development of conservation programs introduced in the 2002 Farm Bill. He was selected as State Conservationist for Pennsylvania in 2005. He later served as NRCS Deputy Chief for Programs. In 2010 he returned to Lincoln, NE as State Conservationist for Nebraska. Over the years Craig had an outstanding career in leading the conservation activities at the local, state, and national level. In February, 2020 Craig was recognized as the Outstanding State Conservationist of the Year by the National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA).

We are looking forward to Craig being an active member of our SCS/NRCS Retirees Lincoln Club!

*Francis King celebrates her 100 years birthday December 31, 2020. Frances has been an active member of our SCS/NRCS Retirees Lincoln Club. Frances worked at the National Financial Center and Nebraska Administrative Services during her outstanding productive career.*



A special congratulations to one of our long-time members, **Frances King**. Frances will be 100 years young on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020! Frances worked in the SCS Nebraska State Office Administrative Services prior to her retirement. She had an outstanding career as manager and lead person working in the contracts and procurement sections.

Several fun activities are planned to celebrate Frances' 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Many of her friends are sending individual birthday cards to her as appreciation for her quality contribution to our Lincoln SCSCS Retirees Club over the years.

Frances King was born in Kansas on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1920. She moved to Alliance, Nebraska in 1931. She excelled in gymnastics at Alliance High School and graduated in 1939. Frances worked for the Soil Conservation Service in Lincoln, NE. In 1972 she relocated to New Orleans to work at the National Financial Center. She returned to Lincoln in 1978 to work in the Nebraska SCS State office administrative services section. She retired in 1988. Frances was an active member of the Retired Federal Employees (NARFEE). She held various offices including the President of the Capital City Chapter. She was also a past president of the SCS/NRCS Lincoln Retirees Club which meets monthly. Frances has been very active in the Mount Zion Baptist Church over the years, having served in several responsible leadership positions.

Frances received a "Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday!" letter from the United State Office of Personnel Management, signed by Kenneth J. Zawodny, Associate Director of OPM Retirement Services, in December 2020.

#### **Some comments by people who enjoyed working with Frances:**

**Gus Dornbusch**, Director of Midwest Regional Technical Center and **Donna Dornbusch**, Personnel Staff, Nebraska State Office: "We appreciate Frances because you could always count on her to do good work. We also appreciated her hardy laugh and her smiles. She is a special person who touched many of us in her 100 years."

**Jim Culver**, State Soil Scientist: Frances was always an enjoyable competent person to work with. She was invaluable in helping with the many different kinds of cooperative soil survey agreements we had with the various Natural Resource Conservation Districts and County Commissioners.

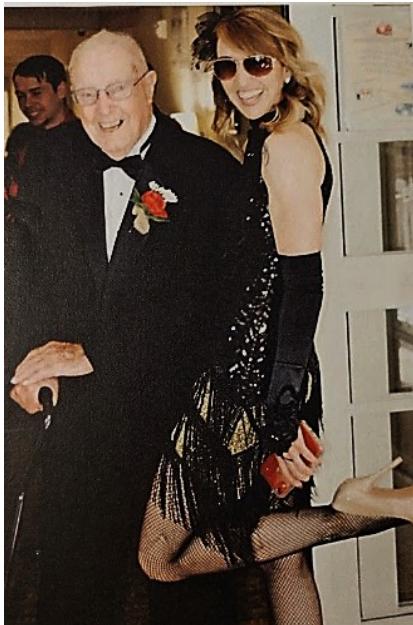
## NORTH CAROLINA

**Jim Canterbury ARCSE Representative**

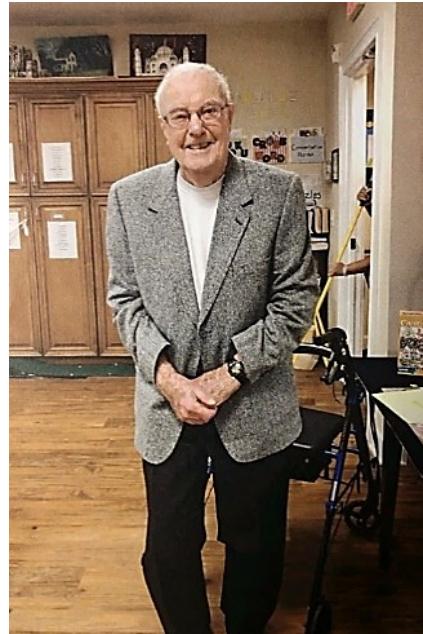
Email: [jhcanter@bellsouth.net](mailto:jhcanter@bellsouth.net)

Senior Conservationist **Craig Right**, former State Conservationist in West Virginia, turned 95 August 22<sup>nd</sup>. 2020. **George Norris**, who talks with Craig periodically, says that Craig now resides at Mebane Ridge Assisted Living Center, Mebane, NC. George reports that Craig is doing well, as these pictures will attest.

Craig said that the picture of him and his "date," Executive Director for the Mebane Assisted Living Center, was dressed in 1920s attire for a "Senior Prom" that the facility held recently for their residents. Craig commented that his "date" was born three years after he retired. Craig is referred to as the "Governor" at the facility.



*Craig Right and his "Date" in the 1920's attire for the "Senior Prom"*



*Craig on a normal day. He says that blue jeans and a golf shirt are more normal.*

## OREGON

**Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative**

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A request to my retiree email list asking for news resulted in a response of no news but things were fine, just hunkered down waiting for the vaccine so things can get back to normal. COVID-19 has put a damper on many things we enjoy during the holidays. Fortunately, some aspects of the holiday season can still be fully enjoyed even during a pandemic.



*Christmas ships, Portland, OR.*

Here in the Portland area, one thing we can do without risk is enjoy the Christmas Ship Parade. This tradition began in 1954 with one lone sailboat from the Portland Yacht Club. The fleet now averages about 55 to 60 boats between the Columbia and Willamette River fleets. Boats have displays that are brightly lit and can be seen from bank to bank on each river.

Another is the White Stag sign that has been a downtown Portland landmark since 1940. During Christmas the nose of the stag glows red in imitation of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. I have a memory of one year there being a flap on the radio about the red nose not being turned on. I was in training session at an eastside motel near the Willamette River with a view of the sign from its conference room. Probably shouldn't have been but while looking out the window I saw the moment when the red nose light was switched to on for the first time that holiday season.



Stag sign



*Lights at the Portland, OR Zoo.*

I am sure I am not the only one that enjoys listening to Christmas music. This, of course, can be done risk free at home or while driving. At least one Portland radio station plays Christmas music 24/7, this year beginning before Thanksgiving. One carol that is most likely unique to this part of the world is *Christmas in the Northwest*. Two verses of the carol follow:

Christmas in the Northwest  
Is a gift that we can share  
Christmas in the Northwest  
Is a child's answered prayer

And even if you take away the presents  
I still would have a tree  
For Christmas in the Northwest  
Is a gift God wrapped in green.

Now that vaccines have been approved, surely it won't be long until we can once again meet for quarterly lunches.

Wishing everyone Happy Holidays.

## TEXAS NORTH

*Arnold King, ARCSE Representative*

*Email: [arnolddking@hotmail.com](mailto:arnolddking@hotmail.com)*

No big news to report, but now that the vaccinations have begun, we should begin to rapidly recover and hopefully have our monthly luncheon meetings and routine activities. The planning group will soon get together and plan our annual statewide reunion at New Braunfels. We are assuming things will be somewhat normal by May 2021. But who knows, we might have to cancel it again if the hotel isn't available by that time. Attendance continues to decline due to lack of interest by the new retirees, but we plan to continue for a few more years, expecting a revival to occur.

**Willeene** and I have a transatlantic cruise planned for November 2022. Our regular three-couple group have this one planned and will include an extra three days in London where the cruise will begin. Again, assuming London is open for business, we will leave from London and tour Portugal and Spain, returning to Miami Florida.

I received a message from **Larry Butler**, retired state conservationist for Texas, who recently completed his book based primarily on experiences he encountered during his career. He titled it "Out on the Land—Sharing Conservation Secrets." He shared stories about people he worked with, technology development, career development, and circumstances that influenced his life as a conservationist. Larry says it contains stories most of us can identify with and things that might be beneficial to young employees, not experiencing what most of us did during our careers with SCS and NRCS. If interested, you can obtain a copy at <http://www.outontheland.com>.

## WASHINGTON

**Ken Kaul, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [kenkaul@icloud.com](mailto:kenkaul@icloud.com)

We are saddened at the passing of **Lennie Husa** and **Jud Melton**. They left a legacy on the land.

Some snow in the mountains, rain in the valley. The ski resorts are crying for more snow. It will not be a White Christmas. We are looking forward to the day when we meet in person again.



*Stefan and Kathy Fechter getting ready to the Christmas light parade Pueblo El Mirage Golf & RV Resort.*

## WEST VIRGINIA

**Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [pegreesewv@gmail.com](mailto:pegreesewv@gmail.com)



*Tim Ridley retiring*

**Tim Ridley**, Dam Safety Engineer with 33 years of NRCS West Virginia service, is retiring December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Tim spent most of his career planning and implementing watershed projects throughout WV and serving as morale officer for many of those years. Those who worked with Tim appreciate his hard work and guidance.

We are planning a virtual celebration with Tim later in the month. If you would like to contribute to the celebration of Tim's career, please send contributions towards a gift to Andy Deichert at 609-B Bute Road, Uniontown, PA 15401 or towards a scrapbook (in the form of emails, cards, letters, photos, stories, and retirement advice) to [kathy.r.allen@usda.gov](mailto:kathy.r.allen@usda.gov) by December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

**Jim Michael, Retired Assistant State Conservationist for Virginia**, is the recipient of the top honor provided by the West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts. The Eastern Panhandle Conservation District's **Sherry Duncan** shared the following write-up: The Carroll Greene Award was presented to **James R. Michael** of the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at the Quarterly Meeting of the West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts. The award recognizes conservation district supervisors who are doing an outstanding job promoting wise conservation practices in their local district.



Mr. Jim Michael is a 1957 graduate of West Virginia University College of Agriculture. Mr. Michael completed a successful 35-year career with the USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS), serving in West Virginia and Virginia. He has been an active member of the Soil and Water Conservation Society for 52 years serving as president of the WV Chapter (1971) and the Virginia Chapter (1986) and was designated a Fellow of the Society performing exceptional service in advocating the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources. After his retirement from SCS in 1990 as an Assistant State Conservationist,

Mr. Michael was appointed to the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District Board, following the lead of his stepfather, **Paul D. Myers**, who was a supervisor for 40 years. Mr. Michael and his wife **Jackie** own and operate a 284-acre farm and rent an additional 200 acres near Berkeley Springs for their cattle, hay, and grain operation, where many soil and water quality practices have been implemented. The operation is now operating as Michael Farms LLC with **Brad and Beth Michael** partnering, providing farm operation leadership.

Mr. Michael is a member of the Morgan County Farm Bureau and Sleepy Creek Watershed Association. He is a member of the Cacapon State Park and WV Association of State Park foundations.

*Current Conservation History*—Mr. Michael is known for his ability to make connections and how to follow through on a project or idea. This resonates not only in his personal committees and endeavors that he is involved with, but also with his involvement with the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District (EPCD). When a connection needs to be made with local, state, or national legislators, he is able to make the contact when no one else can. Mr. Michael is on the phone daily with legislators of all levels to ensure that WV and the EPCD are being recognized and receiving the support needed to further conservation efforts. The annual legislative forum would not be the success that it is today without his support and follow-through with each legislator. He is also a faithful attendee of Ag Day at the Capitol in Charleston and is responsible for setting up meeting times for the Eastern Panhandle with legislators. His attendance is also regular at county commission meetings, asking for program and monetary support for the various EPCD projects. His support and leadership of EPCD's annual Watershed Group Forum has grown to an outreach event that brings in individuals, agencies, and organizations from the multi-state region. This forum has grown to one of the most favored events in the area for watershed highlights and networking due in majority to Mr. Michael's leadership and commitment.

Mr. Michael also provides strong support for the Chesapeake Bay Program in West Virginia. He places emphasis on establishment of local watershed associations to improve and manage water quality. In Morgan County, the Sleepy Creek and Warm Springs Run watershed associations have developed outstanding programs, featuring stream bank protection, community tree plantings, and replacement of failing home septic systems. From sourcing outside grants to finding public partners, Mr. Michael is able to make connections that may have been missed or overseen by others. This has led to an increase in septic pumping in the Sleepy Creek Watershed and has also led to more public outreach with events such as town-wide festivals and activities.

Through his commitment, he also represented West Virginia at the national level in the "Choose Clean Water Coalition Chesapeake Bay Day" at Capitol Hill. Through his effort, senators Shelley Moore Capito and Joe Manchin pledged financial support.

Mr. Michael is also very interested and active in West Virginia's dam infrastructure. He has regular conversations with local, state, and national representatives to express his concerns on the funding and maintenance that is currently ongoing with this critical resource. He is currently working with West Virginia Division of Highways for the current 522 Bypass which will affect several of the watershed dam structures.

He also takes his watershed work across the state as chair of the Water Resources Committee with the WV Association of Conservation Districts. This committee has grown to include at least one supervisor per district. Mr. Michael is also working closely with Brian Farkas, executive director of the West Virginia Conservation Agency, to promote and develop the Emergency Watershed Protection Program; Operation, Maintenance, and Repair; watershed dams; and stream protection and restoration with emphasis on working with local governments in all divisions.

Mr. Michael is currently the vice-chairman of the EPCD Board of Supervisors and is the chairman of the watershed and legislative committees and also serves on the budget and finance, education, and equipment committees.

Mr. Michael is very pleased to be nominated for this honor, as he had the opportunity to work with Carroll Greene. With 59 years in the field of conservation, Mr. Michael has been able to witness first-hand the changes in conservation and is able to share those experiences with the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District and beyond.

**Sam Sheets** filled gaps and added interesting background on items from the last newsletter: "I was not aware of the passing of **Jim Wilson** or **Harvey Mitchell**. It was an honor to have worked with them. They were excellent employees.

In looking over the list of past inductees to the Hall of Fame, I spotted two SCSer's who were not mentioned. **Ross Mellinger** was inducted in 1997, and **John Cooper** was inducted in 2012. I did not know Ross but had heard of him. I did know John Cooper. When I first started with SCS, John was kind of the official photographer at state SCS meetings. He had a great big "press camara." He not only took excellent group pictures, but he also took pictures of the farmers and practices installed and wrote a lot of news articles.

It is mentioned in the write-up for John that he was the first to build a hilltop pond fed by diversions to collect water. There are still some of these ponds in Roane county. When I first came to Roane, I had the occasion to work with a farmer who had recently purchased a farm. I looked through the files and found the conservation plan that John had developed with the previous landowner. On the conservation plan map, he had marked the location for a "planned pond" in a saddle on top of the ridge. We put it into the new conservation plan and the pond was constructed probably 20 years after John had recognized the potential of the site.

There may be other SCS inductees. I just clicked on the names of the ones which looked familiar."

## SENIOR CONSERVATIONISTS

*Prepared by Marc Safley, Senior Conservationist Chronicler*

*They have reached the minimum age of 83 years and have completed the Senior Conservationist Questionnaire. See IN-MEMORIAM for the Senior Conservationists who have left us since the last Newsletter. Please help us identify retirees who should be named Senior Conservationists. Please provide their contact information to your ARCSE Representative or Regional Vice-President. No new Senior Conservationists have been named as of this issue.*

## SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

### Senior Conservationist

#### Jesse Charles Bush

Senior Conservationist Jesse Bush was born October 13, 1935, in Montgomery, Alabama. He grew up on his family's corn-and-peanut farm near Eufaula, AL. He attended elementary and high school grades at Baker Hill, AL. He enrolled in Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University) with plans to major in civil engineering. However, he received a scholarship from Sears Roebuck that shifted his orientation to agricultural engineering. He graduated with a B.S. in Agricultural Engineering in 1958. While in college he worked part time at the USDA-ARS National Tillage Machinery Laboratory located on the campus. During the summer of 1956 Jesse worked as a Student Trainee at Hamilton, AL. Jesse served eight years in the National Guard and was honorably discharged.

Jesse began his full-time career with SCS as an Area Engineer Trainee at Decatur, AL, in 1958. He worked there for a year, then was made Area Engineer at Winfield, AL, where he worked for one year. In 1960 he accepted the position of Project Engineer for small watershed construction at Enterprise, AL, and was in that job of a year. In 1961 he took the job of Area Engineer/Project Engineer at Dadeville, AL, where he also served as acting Area Conservationist for seven months in 1969 before moving to Anniston, AL, as Area Engineer/Project Engineer. He served the Anniston Area until 1977 when he joined the River Basin Study Staff at the SCS Alabama State Office at Auburn. He was on that staff as Agricultural/Civil Engineer until 1980.

Jesse was then named Leader of the newly formed National Aquaculture Activity Team which was headquartered at Auburn. He led that staff until 1982 when he took the job of Soil Conservationist/Planning Engineer on the Water Resources Planning Staff at the SCS Alabama State Office. Jesse retired from that position with SCS in 1992.

Following his retirement, from 1993 until 2008, Jesse worked in private consultancy as a Certified Professional Engineer. This work dealt with structures such as those for water retention and channel stabilization. During this time, he also provided expert testimony in legal disputes. Jesse's first wife, **Shirley**, passed away in January of 1981. Jesse has been married to **Glenda** since December 1982. He has two sons (one deceased), a daughter, and a stepson. Jesse has seven grandchildren.

Jesse indicates that his hobbies are landscape maintenance, plant propagation, travel, and adventure. He and his wife have traveled to 49 of the 50 states plus Canada, Mexico, and Panama. They are active members of First United Methodist Church in Opelika, AL. Jesse says that he feels blessed to have had a career in conservation with SCS.

## OBITUARY INFORMATION

**Paul Benedict, Membership  
Chair**

*When you receive word of someone passing, with little other information provided to you, obituaries can often be found by doing an advanced search using Google, using the full name of the deceased. If you do not have access to the web, Paul Benedict will be glad to do the search. PLEASE SEND DEATH NOTICES AND OBITUARY INFORMATION DIRECTLY TO PAUL AT [soilwarden@verizon.net](mailto:soilwarden@verizon.net). Always include the position or the spouse's position with SCS/NRCS.*

Surname	Year	<i>In-Memoriam</i> (Note: These are recent notices. For a complete list, please see <a href="http://www.arcse.org">www.arcse.org</a> )
Borts	2020	<b>Dortha Borts</b> (82) of Sigourney, Iowa passed away November 16, 2020, at the Sigourney Health Care Center. Dortha was the wife of retired USDA-Soil Conservation Service District Conservationist Don Borts. She and Don were married January 19, 1963. In addition to Don, she is survived by their three children and three grandchildren.
Bradshaw	2020	<b>Lloyd C. Bradshaw</b> (72) of Rexburg, Idaho passed away at Madison Memorial Hospital on November 24, 2020. He was born in Wendell, Idaho on June 27, 1948, to <b>Reuben Clark Bradshaw</b> and <b>Mary Louise Crowther</b> . Lloyd grew up on a dairy farm in Richfield, Idaho, where he learned to work hard milking cows and doing farm chores. He served an honorable mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to North Argentina and Bolivia. After returning from his mission, Lloyd attended Ricks College where he participated in and enjoyed being on the rodeo team. On June 12, 1970, Lloyd married his high school sweetheart, <b>Krisitie May Arave</b> in the Idaho Falls Temple. He then attended Idaho State University and after graduation started his career with the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service serving many years as the District Conservationist in Rexburg. He worked at that career for thirty-one years and retired at the age of fifty-five. He was then able to fill his time with family, saddle making and cowboying. He was an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and served in various callings over the years. Lloyd is survived by his loving wife, <b>Krisitie</b> ; Sons: <b>Ryan (Jody)</b> , <b>Clint (Misha)</b> , <b>Kyle (Kristy)</b> , <b>Jake (Sabrina)</b> ; Daughters <b>Kerry (Jeff)</b> , and <b>Amanda (Jeremiah)</b> ; 26 grandchildren; and 2 great-granddaughters.
Clark	2020	Conservation Partner <b>Frank Halsted "Hal" Clark</b> (88) of Elk City, Oklahoma (formerly of Guymon, Oklahoma) passed away November 23, 2020 in Elk City. Hal Clark was born in Bartlesville, Oklahoma on January 10, 1932 to <b>Frank T. and Nellie Clark</b> . They moved often with his father's work responsibilities as a geologist. He attended Texas Tech University and earned a degree in Animal Science and Range Management. He married <b>Patricia Brown</b> in Oklahoma City on February 1, 1953. Hal served on numerous committees and commissions whose goal has been improving economic conditions and quality of life for Oklahoma citizens, including serving on the Cimarron County Conservation District Board for 50 years and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission for 17 years. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Conservation Hall of Fame in 1997. He received the Governor's Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Award in 2017. He is survived by his wife, <b>Pat</b> ; daughter and son-in-law, <b>Jan</b> and <b>Tim Israel</b> of Elk City; daughter-in-law, <b>Marlene Henson</b> of Guymon; 7 grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren.

<b>Coombes</b>	<b>2020</b>	ARCSE member <b>Raymond Eugene Coombes</b> (72) of Paris, Illinois, passed away July 15, 2020 at Gibson Family Center for Hospice Care in Terre Haute, Indiana. He was born September 25, 1947 in Danville, Illinois, the son of <b>Paul and Mary (Brewer) Coombes</b> . He married <b>Paula Hoffman</b> on July 22, 1972 in Walnut, Illinois, and she survives. Ray was a United States Army veteran of the Vietnam War, serving in Vietnam and later in Germany. He worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation for 42 years, starting as a Soil Conservation Technician in Tuscola, Illinois and retiring in 2008 as District Conservationist in Paris, Illinois. He was a member of First Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Hume American Legion Post 369, and was a former member of the Edgar County 4-H Association Board. He was also a judge for the Edgar County 4-H Fair for several years. He enjoyed woodworking and following his retirement, he took on the task of mowing lawns for several people. He never missed any of his grandchildren's events and he was a Fighting Illini Fan. In addition to his wife Paula, Ray is survived by two children, <b>Steve (Jill) Coombes</b> of Paris, Illinois and <b>Mary (Deron) Hearn</b> of Hume, Illinois and eight grandchildren. He was preceded in death by one son, <b>Brad Foy</b> . The family suggests that memorials be made to the Edgar County 4-H Association or the Hume American Legion Post 369.
<b>Craig</b>	<b>2020</b>	Senior Conservationist <b>Clell Dean Craig</b> (97) of Carrollton, Missouri passed away December 2, 2020, at Carroll House in Carrollton. He was born June 19, 1923, in Ridgeway, Missouri, to <b>Harley and Oletha (Landis)</b> . Clell grew up on a farm outside of Ridgeway, Missouri. Upon graduation from high school, Clell entered the military, and he served his country honorably in the United States Army during World War II as a mechanic. Clell was united in marriage to <b>Virginia Ila Hamilton</b> in Troy, Kansas, on September 1, 1946. Clell and Virginia shared 61 years of marriage before departing him in death on February 17, 2008. Clell was employed as a soil conservation technician for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service and later worked at Charlie's Texaco Service Station in Carrollton. Clell enjoyed camping, fishing, and playing cards. He especially enjoyed the many fishing trips to Canada and Devils Lake, South Dakota, where their traveling gang had many great times. Clell is survived by a son, <b>Gerald Craig</b> of Carrollton, Missouri and a grandson, <b>Jason Appleberry</b> of Carrollton. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Virginia and a son, <b>Larry Craig</b> . In Clell's memory, and as an expression of sympathy, memorial contributions may be made to Veterans of Foreign Wars, Pence-Lovell-England Post #1773, Carrollton, Missouri.
<b>Decker</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Denise Marie Decker, Ph.D</b> (71) of Washington, DC passed away November 4, 2020. Denise was born blind on March 9, 1949. She overcame this adversity and dedicated her life to using her blindness as a tool for public service to give back to the many family, friends, co-workers, and mentors who provided support and assistance to her throughout her life. She had a Bachelor of Arts degree from State University of New York, two Masters of Arts degrees and a Ph. D from the University of Wisconsin, and two Fulbright Foundation & American Association of University Women Ph.D. Fellowships. From 1979 to 1989 she worked for the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, Agency for International Development (AID) where she wrote and implemented workshops to teach independent living skills to people with disabilities living in Brasilia, Brazil. Partners then went on to use her workshop in eight other Latin American countries and awarded Dr. Decker the Program Development Award for her hard work and stunning contributions. In 1989 she began work with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation Service, first working in the Human Resources Division. She then held several other positions at National headquarters including Customer Service Manager, Human Capital Manager, and Senior Policy Analyst. Her last eight years before her retirement in 2018 were as a Senior Legislative Analyst, in the Legislative Affairs Division where she prepared Chief's congressional testimony; responded to Congressional inquiries; trained congressional liaisons; briefed congressional members and staff. <b>Leslie Deavers</b> , current Chief of Staff for Associate Chief, worked with Denise in Legislative Affairs and remembers her this way: "She was the type of person who would take on any assignment and was always eager to learn new things and pitch in. Before heading home in the evenings, she would often pop in with her dog Wonder to say good evening and chat a little about life. Denise would always have some fascinating stories about world travels, her work in the community, educating children about seeing eye dogs, and other activities that highlighted her life experiences. Words do not adequately express my feelings of loss at her sudden passing. She was a gem; a marvelous woman who gave much to those around her."
<b>Derickson</b>	<b>2020</b>	Conservation Partner, Senior Conservationist and Honorary Member <b>Eugene "Gene" Derickson</b> (101) of Hamilton, Ohio passed away May 10, 2020 at Berkeley Square Retirement Community in Hamilton. He was born in Riley, Ohio on April 30, 1919, the son of the <b>Wilbur H. and Elsie (Vizedom) Derickson</b> . He received his Bachelor of Science degree from The Ohio State University in 1941. After graduation he served as Farm Security Supervisor, United States Department of Agriculture at Findlay, Ohio. In 1944 he returned to Butler County to farm until he purchased a dairy farm in 1953 at Baltimore, Ohio. Gene returned to Government Services in 1955 as a Soil and Water Conservationist in Lancaster, Ohio. In 1959 he accepted the position of Associate Executive Secretary of the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission which was associated with The Ohio State University. In 1969 Gene was appointed Assistant Chief of the division of Soil and Water Districts, Ohio Department of Natural Resources. He served as President of the Ohio Chapter of the Soil Conservation Society of America. One of the awards that he has especially cherished was the awarding of being named "Fellow" by this international organization. Upon retirement he received "special recognition" by the General Assembly for "Outstanding Achievement" in Soil and Water Conservation. Gene retired in 1983 and moved to Tavares, Florida. Gene married <b>Helen Lyle of Cadis</b> , Ohio on March 22, 1941. They celebrated 61 years of marriage before her passing on August 26, 2002. In January of 2004 he married <b>Freda Stumpf-Kinlyaloc</b> of Hamilton. Gene is survived by his wife Freda; son <b>Dr. James L. Derickson (Cheryl)</b> of Arizona; daughter <b>Karen J. Fetter (Jack)</b> of Grover Hill, Ohio; stepdaughter <b>Linda (Steve) Alexander</b> of Middletown, Ohio. He also leaves 6 grandchildren, one step-granddaughter and 15 great grandchildren.
<b>Eyberg</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>William (Gene) Eugene Eyberg</b> (93) of Atlantic, Iowa passed away November 16, 2020. Gene was born on October 31, 1927, to <b>Roy G. and Frances J. Eyberg</b> in rural Union County, Iowa. Gene attended The Army Specialized Training Program at South Dakota State as an Army Reservist in 1945 and entered into active duty in December of 1945. After discharge from the service in December of 1946, he worked as a clerk for the State Patrol Office in Creston, Iowa. Gene married <b>Kathleen R. Erickson</b> in Creston, Iowa, on December 14, 1947, at which time they farmed in Afton until 1965 and together had ten children. After leaving the farm he owned a gas route for a short time and was then offered a job with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS), which enabled him to follow his passion of working with the land. He served in Creston and later transferred to Indianola, Iowa (1970)

		<p>and finished in Atlantic (1975). He retired from SCS in 1990. Community and church were important to him and he gave back by being active and serving in or on various clubs, boards and councils. These include 4H (leader), Extension Council, Union County Fair Board, Afton Methodist Church, the Councils of the local Lutheran Church of America in Indianola and Atlantic, Atlantic City Council for two terms and 20 years on the SIRHA Executive Board in Creston. Gene was preceded in death by daughter-in-law, <b>Susan Eyberg</b>; grandchildren, <b>Todd Vanderpluym, Jordan Eyberg, Jamie and Ann Eyberg, Josh Gower and Josh Vanderpluym</b>. He is survived by Kathleen, his wife of 73 years; children, <b>Bill (Connie), Kathy (Bob) Bye, Steve, Jim (Kristi), Jeff (Julie), Jane (Mike) Ohnemus, Deb Miller, Patti (Steve) Grant, Jill (Paul) Hans, Judy (Dennis) Kinen</b>; 19 grandchildren; and 26 great-grandchildren.</p>
<b>Fisher</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Henry Fisher</b> (84) of Columbus, Ohio passed away November 14, 2020. He received geology degrees from Brooklyn College and Missouri School of Mines. He worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service as a geologist, retiring in 2004. He was a square dance and contra caller, wood worker, piano player, and rock collector. He enjoyed life. He is survived by wife, <b>Goldie Fisher</b> ; daughter, <b>Deborah (Daniel Beck) Fisher</b> ; son, <b>Martin (Stephanie) Fisher</b> ; granddaughters, <b>Lauren Fisher, Paulina Fisher</b> and <b>Ada Beck</b> ; and grandson, <b>Ezra Beck</b> . A private graveside service was held on November 15 at New Tifereth Israel Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Henry's memory may be made to Congregation Tifereth Israel at <a href="http://www.tiferethisrael.org">www.tiferethisrael.org</a> .
<b>Goerend</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Duane T. Goerend</b> (84) of Salina, Kansas passed away November 30, 2020. He was born September 1, 1936 in St. Lucas, Iowa. He served in the United States Air Force. He then worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, including working as District Conservationist in Salina. He was preceded in death by daughter, Pamela Schick and grandson Justin Willingham. Survivors include his wife, Ernestine Goerend, children, Kimberly Willingham, and Linda (David) Rohleder, both of Salina, son-in-law, Bradley Schick, 3 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.
<b>Husa</b>	<b>2020</b>	Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Veikko Lennie Husa</b> (95) of Spokane Valley, Washington passed away November 7, 2020. Lennie was born July 18, 1925 on the family homestead in the Finnish farming community of Belden, North Dakota. Riding on a wooden box between the two front seats of a Model A, he arrived in Washington State at age 10 with his family after the farm blew away during the dust bowl years. He graduated Rochester High School in 1943, just in time to be drafted for World War II. Lennie served as a Private in Intelligence & Reconnaissance in the 345th Infantry Regiment in the 87th Infantry Division in Patton's Third Army, fighting across France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany. He experienced numerous major engagements, including the Battle of the Bulge, though never spoke of his hardships with his family until about 50 years later. On the GI Bill, he attended Washington State College (now University) and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering in 1950. In his first job with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in the Puyallup office, he met the love of his life, <b>Florence Seeley</b> . They were married on March 24, 1951. Active in the community, Lennie was involved in the Boy Scouts, the United Methodist Church, the Spokane Professional Engineers, square dancing with the Crosstailers club, the Spokane Chapter of the Finlandia Foundation, served on the Board of Directors for the Model Irrigation District, and many other activities. He was Engineer of the Year for the Inland Empire Chapter of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers in 1975. After retiring from the Soil Conservation Service in 1981 as State Design Engineer, he and Florence travelled widely through the U.S. and Europe. He was preceded in death by grandson <b>Jamie Funke</b> . He is survived by his wife Florence, his son <b>Darwin Husa (Jean)</b> , of Poulsbo, Washington, daughter <b>Cheryl Sampson (David)</b> of Spokane Valley, Washington, son <b>Craig Husa (Susan)</b> of Fall City, Washington, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.
<b>Johnson</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Ray Johnson, Jr.</b> (86) of Mt. Sterling, Kentucky passed away December 23, 2020 at the UK Medical Center in Lexington, Kentucky due to the COVID-19 virus. He was born in Sonora, Kentucky on December 2, 1934 the son of <b>Ray and Katherine Skaggs Johnson, Sr.</b> He was a veteran of the US Army having served during the Korean War. He worked in many locations across Kentucky for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, retiring in 1993 as Area Conservationist in Mt. Sterling. He was a member of the Rolling Hills Church of Christ. He loved University of Kentucky basketball and was a member of the Optimist and Lions Clubs. He is survived by his wife, <b>Anita Adkins Johnson</b> of Mt. Sterling; one son, <b>James Kevin Johnson</b> of Mt. Sterling; a daughter, <b>Kimbrley Renee Barnes (Steve)</b> of Mt. Sterling; three grandchildren, <b>Justin Mitchell Johnson, Robert Matthew Johnson</b> , and <b>William Fields Johnson</b> .
<b>Kenney</b>	<b>2020</b>	District Conservationist <b>Harry Junior Kenney</b> (49) of Newcomerstown, Ohio passed away with his family by his side on November 20, 2020 at Union Hospital, following a battle with coronavirus. He was born November 13, 1971, to <b>Harry Arthur Kenney</b> and <b>Carole Yvonne Lawver</b> . Harry earned a bachelor's degree in Conservation of Natural Resources from The Ohio State University in 1995. "Ham" or "Hammer" as so many knew him, was beloved by those who had the privilege to make his acquaintance. His warm smile and hearty laugh were staples of a vibrant attitude that made him a wonderful husband, father, friend and so much more. Harry spent his time working as a District Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in New Philadelphia, Ohio, earning his rank after his initial employment in 1999. He found the most happiness working on his family's farm, tending to cows that he called his "girls," keeping things running smoothly, and making hay with his father, brothers-in-law, and nephew. Ham is survived by his wife of 26 years, <b>Tracie</b> , who he took care of through sickness and health, and his two daughters, <b>Madison (Nick) McWilliams</b> of Newcomerstown and <b>Allison (Brandon) Anderson</b> of Port Washington, Ohio. Harry was also expected to be a grandfather soon, something he greatly looked forward to. An active member of King's United Methodist, memorial contributions are asked to be made in his memory to the church at 5651 Kings Ridge Road, Newcomerstown, OH 43832.
<b>Kordick</b>	<b>2020</b>	District Conservationist <b>Kevin Wayne Kordick</b> (55) of Boone, Iowa, passed away suddenly on November 28, 2020, in Ames, Iowa. Kevin was the son of <b>Wayne and Barbara Jeanne (Bryan) Kordick</b> , born on December 8, 1964, in Corning, Iowa. He graduated with a degree in Agri-Business in 1987 at Northwest Missouri State University. Kevin spent his working years as a soil & water conservationist. He worked in a variety of places, including Red Oak and Oakland, Iowa, before taking a position with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in 1992. Kevin started in the Albia office and later held positions in the Humboldt, Jefferson, Boone and Webster City, Iowa offices. On February 22, 1992, Kevin married Julie Maher at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Corning, Iowa. Kevin and Julie made their home in Boone where they raised two sons, <b>Matthew Austin</b> and <b>Andrew Ryan</b> . Kevin's proudest moments were watching his sons play sports. His passion and love of the outdoors and conservation

		emanated through teaching his sons to hunt, fish and show respect for the land. He also made great contributions to the local 4-H shooting sports club and assisted with youth baseball in Boone. Kevin was very active in the National Wild Turkey Federation, joining in 2006 and serving as treasurer since 2008. Kevin loved the Kansas City Chiefs and was an avid Chicago Cubs fan. Kevin was a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Boone. Those left to cherish Kevin's memory include his wife <b>Julie (Maher)</b> ; sons, Matthew and Andrew; and his mother, <b>Jeanne Kordick</b> of Corning. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be directed to the National Wildlife Turkey Federation. National Wildlife Turkey Federation, P.O. Box 530, Edgefield, SC 29824.
Kramer	2020	<b>Ivo J. Kramer</b> (82) of Wapakoneta, Ohio passed away November 16, 2020 at Vancrest of St. Marys in St. Marys, Ohio. Ivo was born on May 16, 1938 at home in Wapakoneta, Ohio to <b>John and Emma (Lindhaus) Kramer</b> . On October 25, 1958 he married <b>Camille Frost</b> , who survives at VanCrest of St. Marys. Ivo retired after 52 years of public service with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation Service. Many know Ivo's son <b>Tony Kramer</b> who held several national leadership positions with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Ivo was a devoted agriculturalist, who was proud to teach evening ag classes at The Ohio State University. Ivo also served his community by being an Auglaize County Commissioner for 12 years. He loved helping people and talking with all the area farmers. When not working or farming, Ivo could usually be found fishing, his favorite pastime. He also loved watching The Ohio State University Buckeyes and the Cleveland Browns football, and the Cincinnati Reds baseball. Ivo was a dedicated member of St. Joseph Catholic Church, but his true treasure was his family. A loyal husband and loving dad, grandpa, and great-grandpa, Ivo will be greatly missed. Survivors also include four children, <b>Tony (Cathy) Kramer</b> , of Front Royal, Virginia, and <b>Laurie (Randy) Barhorst</b> , <b>Kris (Lynn) Gerstner</b> , and <b>Kelly (Jerry) Krebs</b> , all of Wapakoneta, Ohio; 10 grandchildren, <b>Allison (Matthew) Patrick</b> , <b>John Kramer</b> , <b>Sarah (John) Okland</b> , <b>Sherri (Justin) Rogers</b> , <b>Jodi (Chris) Wibley</b> , <b>Dr. Emily (Christopher) Post</b> , <b>David Gerstner</b> , <b>Jon (Dr. Megan Rutledge) Krebs</b> , <b>Justin (Tatum Willoughby) Krebs</b> , and <b>Kaitlin Camille Krebs</b> . A Mass of Christian Burial was held November 20, 2020 at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Wapakoneta, with <b>Father Sean Wilson</b> officiating followed by interment at St. Joseph Cemetery, Wapakoneta.
Lovelace	2020	Former NRCS employee, <b>Anthony (Tony) Benjamin Lovelace</b> (50) of Alva, Oklahoma passed away December 13, 2020 at Integris Bass Hospital in Enid, Oklahoma. Tony was born on May 25, 1970, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to <b>Sandy and Michael Lovelace</b> . He went to Northwestern Oklahoma State University where he played football as an offensive lineman all four years. He graduated from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in 1992 with a Bachelors' Degree in Ag Business. Anthony continued his education at Oklahoma State University where he obtained his Masters' Degree in Animal Science. Tony worked as a Soil Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for several years in Alva and Clinton, Oklahoma. He then left the agency and became a teacher where taught science and history at Waynoka and Freedom, Oklahoma and taught history in Alva. He also wrote articles for several tractor enthusiast magazines and was an amazing photographer. Tony is survived by his wife, <b>Sherrye Lovelace</b> of Alva, and his daughter and son-in-law, <b>John and Lindsey Carson</b> and their three children, <b>Kadence, Addie, and Eli</b> of Williamsburg, Virginia and his sons <b>Brenden Smith</b> and <b>Trenten Smith</b> of Portales, New Mexico. Additionally, he is survived by his mother, <b>Sandra Lovelace</b> of Mustang, Oklahoma.
McElhiney	2020	Life Member <b>Gerald Jerry McElhiney</b> (90) of John Knox Village (JKV) in Lee's Summit, Missouri passed away November 6, 2020. Jerry was born on October 7, 1930, in Bethany, Missouri. He served in the United States Air Force from 1950-1954 and was stationed with the 8th Bomb Squadron during the Korean War. Jerry married <b>Mary Lee Booth</b> on August 19, 1956, in Bethany, Missouri. They lived in Columbia, Missouri, while Jerry attended the University of Missouri. Jerry graduated on June 7, 1960 with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering and a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. He worked as a Civil Engineer for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). During his career, Jerry earned his Professional Engineering license and was named NRCS Engineer of the Year for the state of Missouri. One of his most memorable and favorite projects was being the lead engineer of the 1993 Flood Reclamation of the tie-back levees and drainage ways in counties bordering the Missouri River between Kansas City and Columbia, Missouri. He retired with 43 years of service on January 3, 1997. Jerry and Mary lived in Warrensburg, Missouri, from 1960 to 1998 where he volunteered for Warrensburg United Methodist Church Board and Warrensburg Kiwanis Club. He was also chairman of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights Committee for three years and served on the Mid-America Regional Council of Kansas City. Jerry held his private pilot's license and enjoyed flying. Following retirement, they moved to Tucson, Arizona, and lived there for 14 years. Jerry was president of the board of the Golden Goose thrift store in Catalina, Arizona, and was awarded the Daily Points of Light Volunteer Award created by the administration of President George H. Bush. Jerry and Mary returned home to Missouri in 2012 and moved to John Knox Village. Jerry participated in many JKV activities. In 2014, Jerry had the privilege of taking an Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. for Korean war veterans. At the age of 84, Jerry checked an item off his bucket list by completing a tandem sky diving jump. Jerry enjoyed serving the residents of JKV and working in the garden along- side other residents. He rediscovered his love of singing and recorded three CD's: Favorite Songs, a Christmas Album, and Christian music. He is survived by his wife, Mary, and daughters <b>Julie McElhiney</b> (Lee's Summit, Missouri) and <b>Michelle (McElhiney) Midboe</b> of Fort Belvoir, Virginia. He is also survived by six grandchildren: <b>Lauren, Grant, Faith, Lance, Joy, and Charity Rose Midboe</b> . The family requests charitable donations be made in memory of Jerry McElhiney to the John Knox Village Foundation, 400 NW Murray Road, Lee's Summit, MO, 64081.
Melton	2020	<b>Judson L. Melton</b> (85) of Post Falls, Idaho passed away at home November 17, 2020. Jud was born on December 30, 1934 in Cordova, Alabama to <b>Floyd and Grace Melton</b> . During WWII, the family moved to the west coast so Floyd could work in the ship-works and at Hanford, California. They moved to Cheney, Washington after the War. Jud graduated from the State College of Washington (Now Washington State University) in 1958, with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. While in college, he joined the Washington Air National Guard and served in the Guard for 20 years, retiring in 1978. He married <b>Jerry Graham</b> in 1958 and went to work for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS). In 1962, while working for the SCS, he had the opportunity to attend flight school and flew in fighter interceptors for the Air National Guard. He and Jerry had three children: <b>Jeff Melton</b> , <b>Jennifer Valdez</b> , and <b>Julie Reathaford</b> . In 1977, Jud married Karen Morrison and added two more daughters, <b>Sherry Morrison</b> and <b>Debbie Edmiston</b> . In 1983, the family moved to Post Falls and began a thirty+-year remodel on an old home. He retired

		from the Soil Conservation Service in 1994. Jud is survived by his wife, children, 9 grandchildren, and 1 great-granddaughter. Jud enjoyed gardening, water-skiing, football, and his grandchildren.
<b>Milan</b>	<b>2020</b>	Husband and wife <b>Jose Milan</b> (48) and <b>Sara Milan</b> (44) of Austin, Texas were killed instantly in a head-on collision with a pickup truck driven by an allegedly drunk driver on November 24, 2020 near Haskell, Texas. The driver of the pickup committed suicide at the crash scene, according to a Texas Department of Public Safety news release. Sara was the daughter of retired SCS/NRCS State Soil Scientist, <b>Mike Risinger</b> . Jose and Sara's 9-year-old son <b>Eli</b> was in the back seat and only sustained seat belt burns and associated bruising. He is doing ok. Their other son, <b>Ander</b> , had stayed at Sara's mother's house and was not in the car. A GoFundMe site has been established for the benefit of Eli and Ander: <a href="https://gf.me/u/zad43a">https://gf.me/u/zad43a</a> .
<b>Miller</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Beverly J. Miller</b> (81) of Des Moines, Iowa passed away peacefully on November 14, 2020, at Mercy Hospice in Johnston, Iowa. She was born in Leon, Iowa, on November 18, 1938, the middle child and only daughter born to <b>James Lavonne</b> and <b>Edith Smith</b> . Beverly graduated from Lincoln High School where she met <b>Darhol Miller</b> . They were married in 1955. Together they enjoyed camping and spending time with one another. Beverly worked in the Administrative Section of the State Office for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Beverly loved tending to her flowers, caring for her little home, and had a special place in her heart for her beloved cat, Toby. She was also an Iowa Hawkeye fan. Beverly is survived by her daughter, <b>Deborah (Rick)</b> of Des Moines; three grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Darhol, who passed away in 2013.
<b>Neel</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>James "Jim" D. Neel</b> (78) of Lakewood, Colorado passed away October 2, 2020. Jim was the husband of <b>Linda Neel</b> who worked many years with the National Association of Conservation Districts and then later with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service.
<b>Newberger</b>	<b>2019</b>	Life Member and Senior Conservationist, <b>George J. Newberger</b> (96) of Shalersville, Ohio, passed away December 17, 2019, joining his late wife <b>Helen Cuthbertson Newberger</b> , who had pre-deceased him in 2013. George was born September 3, 1923. He appreciated and enjoyed his long life, and recently declared there had been "so many best days ever", not merely one. To him, though, "in life, as in sports, being last sucks": he was the last survivor of the six children of <b>Aloysious and Lucy Miltner Newberger</b> , the Shalersville High School Class of 1941, and of the husbands in an eight-family potluck dinner 'gang' that met for over 60 years. In 1943 George entered the US Army. He became a pilot as part of the US Army Air Corps. His time in the military lead to two life changing events: he met and married Helen Cuthbertson Newberger of Moorhead Minnesota, and he was able to attend Ohio State University on the GI Bill. He graduated with a degree in agriculture. He was a soil conservationist with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service for over 31 years. He initially worked in Portage County Ohio and eventually was assigned to Wyandot County Ohio from 1968-1976. He had many hobbies including being a nature photographer, astronomer, traveler, and wood worker/cabinet maker. He was a member of the Dahlia Society and, like his father, and now his daughter, grew hundreds of dahlias. He enjoyed sharing bouquets with Immaculate Conception Church and various local businesses and agencies. He was an avid member of the Ohio Bluebird Society; he built and maintained blue bird nesting boxes in our area to help re-establish bluebirds in this area. He was at least a 12-gallon blood donor to the American Red Cross; he was a member of the choir and funeral choir at Immaculate Conception Church. He is survived by his three daughters: <b>Nancy Polz (Robert)</b> of Shalersville, Ohio, <b>Mary Lou</b> of Charleston West Virginia, and <b>Deb Call (Terry)</b> of Upper Sandusky, Ohio; 5 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.
<b>Nicholson</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>John Charles Nicholson</b> (71) of Lynchburg, Virginia passed away November 27, 2020. John was born in Washington, D.C. being the youngest son of the late <b>Robert</b> and <b>Mary Nicholson</b> . He was the husband of <b>Betty Nicholson</b> of Lynchburg. He retired as a resource soil scientist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in 2015. He is survived by his wife and his children, <b>John Nicholson Jr.</b> , and <b>Cathleen Key</b> . He is also survived by four grandchildren, <b>John</b> , <b>Lena</b> , <b>John III</b> and <b>Zella</b> , who were the light of his life. John was an active member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.
<b>Nolte</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Ardith E. Nolte</b> (83) of Upper Arlington, Ohio passed away November 30, 2020 at Kobacker House in Columbus, Ohio. Ardit was the wife ARCSE Life Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Byron H. Nolte</b> , who retired in 1988 as Area Engineer for the USDA-Soil Conservationist Service. Ardit was born September 21, 1937 in Holstein, Missouri, the daughter of <b>Werner</b> and <b>Lillie Knapheide</b> . She graduated from the Deaconess Hospital School of Nursing, St. Louis, Missouri in 1958. Later she completed a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing and a master of arts degree in Health Education from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. Ardit was employed as a school nurse in Columbus Public Schools for 27 years. In her retirement she served as a Stephens Minister and a Facilitator for an Alzheimer's support group. She was a member of Riverside United Methodist Church and Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honorary Society. In addition to her husband Byron, Ardit is survived by daughters <b>Ann (Mark) Albers</b> and <b>Jan (Pete) Ruma, Jr.</b> , and grandchildren: <b>Christopher</b> and <b>Nicholas Albers</b> , and Nicholas and Monica Ruma.
<b>Rhoads</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Clifford "Bud" Rhoads</b> (88) of Ardmore, Oklahoma passed away November 2, 2020. Bud was born December 12, 1931 to <b>Mary Ellen (Bryant)</b> and <b>Roy Herman Rhoads</b> in Grandfield, Oklahoma. He grew up in Randlett, Oklahoma. He attended Cameron University before enrolling at Oklahoma A&M. On December 24, 1953 he married the love of his life, <b>Vallene "Val" Perryman</b> in Burkburnett, Texas. In 1956 Bud began working for the USDA-Soil Conservation and remained there until his retirement in 1993. He worked as a Soil Scientist and then District Conservationist in Shattuck, Fairview, Frederick, Hinton, and Chandler and finally Ardmore, Oklahoma. Bud and Val were members of the First Baptist Church of Ardmore. Bud enjoyed watching all sports, especially football, fishing, and watching Fox News. He was loved by many and will be greatly missed. He is survived by his wife, Vallene Rhoads; daughters <b>Terri (W.R.) Howard</b> and <b>Sherri (Rod) Brown</b> ; grandchildren <b>Cary Howard</b> , <b>Creede Howard</b> , <b>Allison Medrano</b> and <b>Abby Dorcee</b> ; 6 great grandchildren; and 1 great-great grandchild.
<b>Rice</b>	<b>2020</b>	Senior Conservationist <b>C. Erwin Rice</b> (98) of Marcellus, New York passed away at home May 15, 2020. Erwin was a Navy Veteran of World War II and Korea, where he was a Lieutenant Commander and a pilot instructor. In between he graduated in 1949 from New York State College of Forestry (known today as State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, or SUNY-ESF). He worked 28 years for the USDA-Soil

		Conservation Service, retiring in 1979 as a Soil Survey Project Leader. Erwin was one of two people in New York State to receive The Million Acre Award, for individually mapping over one million acres of soils. He was a member and past Deacon of the Marcellus First Presbyterian Church. His wife <b>Gwenn</b> of 62 years died in 2018. Surviving are his children <b>June (Bruce) Bigler</b> ; <b>David (Judi) Rice</b> and <b>James (Claire) Rice</b> ; five grandchildren <b>Amanda</b> and <b>Benjamin Bigler</b> , <b>Katie Onderdonk</b> , <b>Jacqueline</b> and <b>Jonathan Rice</b> .
<b>Richardson</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>James H. Richardson</b> (86) of Columbus, Ohio passed away December 7, 2020. He was born in Versailles, Kentucky, the son of <b>H.K. and Ruth T. Richardson</b> . Jim was a graduate of the University of Kentucky. He had a long career with the USDA- Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS). He retired as Assistant State Conservationist for Administration at the Ohio State Office in Columbus. After retirement, he worked for several years as a legal assistant. James was preceded in death by his wife of 61 years, <b>Betsy Paynter Richardson</b> in 2017. They were the parents of three children and several grandchildren who survive him. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church. He served as a volunteer at Mt. Carmel East Hospital following his retirement.
<b>Smith</b>	<b>2020</b>	Senior Conservationist <b>Volney Hammers Smith</b> (92) of Harlan, Iowa, and formerly of Waukee, Iowa and West Des Moines, Iowa passed away November 16, 2020, at Myrtue Medical Center in Harlan after contracting COVID 19. Volney was born on June 11, 1928 in Ames, Iowa, the son of <b>Claude Wallace Smith</b> and <b>Frances Marion Hammers Smith Kemp</b> . His parents divorced at a young age and he grew up on his grandfather's farm in Malvern, Iowa. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering in 1949, from Iowa State College, now Iowa State University. In 1950, Volney enlisted in the US Air Force, where he served until his retirement from the Air Force Reserve in 1973. He attained the rank of Major and was the recipient of the Air Force Commendation medal. Following his tour of active duty, Volney began his extensive career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, where he retired in 1988 as the Assistant State Conservation Engineer in Iowa. Volney was united in marriage to <b>Margaret Wilma Young</b> in Des Moines, Iowa on April 3, 1954. They were blessed with three children. Upon retirement, they enjoyed traveling and were able to explore all 50 of the United States. He was actively involved in the Johnston Evangelical Free Church and Grace Baptist Church. His hobbies were: genealogy, gardening, reading, watching Jeopardy!, and traveling. He thrived on maintaining personal relationships with friends and family, always ready to attend special events; especially for his grandchildren. Volney was preceded in death by his wife Margaret in 2002. Left to cherish his memory are his children: <b>Kathryn Smith</b> of Des Moines, <b>Paul (Gina) Smith</b> of Harlan, <b>Neal (Cindy) Smith</b> of Harlan; grandchildren: <b>Jason Smith</b> of Chicago, Illinois, <b>Alissa Smith</b> of South Hadley, Massachusetts, <b>Austin Smith</b> of Ankeny, Iowa, and <b>Grant Smith</b> of New London, Connecticut.
<b>Vrana</b>	<b>2020</b>	Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Verlon K. "Tony" Vrana</b> (95) of Seward, Nebraska passed away on November 8, 2020 in Lincoln, Nebraska. He was born in Seward on June 25, 1925 to <b>Anton and Florence (Walker) Vrana</b> . The family moved to the Vrana farm north of Garland, Nebraska when Tony was 6 years old. He farmed with his parents until joining the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 1948. He was united in marriage to <b>Elaine Flowerday</b> on June 5, 1949 and they lived in Seward where their four children were born. In 1958 he transferred with SCS to Lincoln, where he also attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In 1962 he was promoted to USDA SCS national headquarters in Washington D.C. and attended George Washington University where he received a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Business Administration degrees. He advanced to the Senior Executive Service as SCS Associate Deputy Chief for Administration. Following over 32 years of federal service, he and Elaine returned to Nebraska where Tony served as Director of the Planning Division for the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission for 9 years. He then served for three years as Executive Vice President of the Soil and Water Conservation Society in Ankeny, Iowa. Following their time in Iowa, Tony and Elaine returned to Seward and enjoyed wonderful retirement years. He was active in environmental, civic, religious, and fraternal organizations. A long-time board member of the Cattle Bank & Trust, he also served several terms on the Seward City Council. He was also proud to be a part of the planning committee for the new Seward library. He loved interacting with other people and was well respected for his compassionate and common-sense approach to various issues. He was recognized with numerous awards including the Masonic Grand Master's Humanitarian Award, was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, and selected for the 2017 Seward County Community Service Award. Tony and Elaine's travels took them to all 50 states, most of Europe and North America, as well as China. He took great joy in connecting with locals and fellow travelers. Tony is survived by his wife of 71 years, Elaine, and their children: <b>Verlon Vrana</b> of Richmond, Virginia; <b>Tim (Laura) Vrana</b> of Columbus, Indiana; <b>Carolyn (Ben) Hughes</b> of Seward, Nebraska, and <b>Jon (Mary) Vrana</b> of Burke, Virginia; grandchildren: <b>Julie (John) Owens</b> of Seward, Nebraska; <b>Heather Vrana</b> of Gainesville, Florida; <b>Tony Vrana</b> of Chapel Hill, North Carolina; <b>Maggie Vrana</b> of Atlanta, Georgia; and <b>Anna Vrana</b> of Burke, Virginia; and Great-grandchildren: <b>Sadie</b> and <b>Jack Owens</b> . Memorials to Seward Memorial Library or The Center for Rural Affairs.
<b>Waldrip</b>	<b>2020</b>	Honorary Member and Senior Conservationist <b>Byron Thomas Waldrip</b> (103) of Kingston, Tennessee passed away May 31, 2020 at his home. This beloved husband, father, brother, and friend was born in Independence County, AR on August 8, 1916, the only son of <b>Thomas Revery Waldrip</b> and <b>Monnie Smith Waldrip</b> . After attending the University of Arkansas and graduating in 1939, he married the love of his life, <b>Flo Dena Pollard</b> , on Christmas Day, 1940. He served proudly with the U.S. Army during World War II and enjoyed a long and distinguished career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. During his career, he provided loving homes for his family in Columbus, Mississippi; Spartanburg, South Carolina; Lexington, Kentucky; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and North Little Rock, Arkansas. He was preceded in death by wife, <b>Flo Dena Waldrip</b> and son, <b>Byron Thomas Waldrip, Jr.</b> He is survived by daughter, <b>Deanna Karen (Joe) Williams</b> of Bixby, Oklahoma; son, <b>William Gary Waldrip (Sandy)</b> of Kingston, Tennessee; grandchildren: <b>Deanna Lynn Coberly</b> of Tulsa, Oklahoma; <b>Pamela Jean Williams</b> of Frisco, Texas; <b>Bonnie Jean Waldrip</b> of Brunswick, Georgia; <b>Graham Thomas Waldrip</b> of Knoxville, Tennessee; <b>Sarah Morganne Waldrip</b> of Stuttgart, Germany; and great-granddaughter, <b>Cadence Jo Coberly</b> , of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Byron was a member of the Kingston Church of Christ. Interment was in Blue Springs Cemetery at Magness, Arkansas. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the American Cancer Society or the Kingston Church of Christ.
<b>Webber</b>	<b>2020</b>	Honorary and Lifetime Member and Senior Conservationist <b>(Ray) Dale Webber</b> (96) of Logan, Utah passed away October 26, 2020 at his home. Dale was born May 5, 1924, in Logan, Utah, to <b>Albert Webber</b> and <b>Marie Havertz Webber</b> . During his senior year in high school, he took night classes in aircraft mechanics at Utah State University.

		<p>When he joined the United States Army Air Corp, he was well trained to lead a team of mechanics whose responsibility was to keep the airplanes in top condition. Dale was very diligent and checked each plane after it had been made ready for another mission. Dale served in the Pacific where he was on the islands of Laite in the Philippines, Beiat, and other islands on the way to Japan. When they flew into Japan, there were Japanese planes on the runway. Dale hoped they knew the war was over! Dale studied soil conservation at Utah State University and graduated in 1950. He was hired by the USDA-Soil Conservation Service where his employment took him to several locations in Utah. Eventually, he was asked to work in the United States Secretary of Agriculture's office as a Foreign Affairs Officer to oversee the foreign program. Dale spent time in many countries, especially in Asia. After his retirement, he returned to Logan. He would always correct you if you talked about dirt. It was soil. Dale married <b>Bobbie Lou Painter</b> on November 19, 1949. Bobbie died of cancer. He married <b>Shirley Baugh</b> on March 22, 1980. She died of cancer, also. He eloped with <b>Mattie Ann Robison</b> to Europe where they spent their honeymoon after being married by the ship's Captain. She died of causes incident to age. Dale was active in the Lions Club, Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Boy Scouts. He contributed often to Utah State University and was a member of the Old Main Society. Dale loved to play golf until later in life when he injured his back. He was proud of his hole-in-one at the Bloomington Country Club and the Logan Country Club.</p>
Wright	2020	<p><b>David Lee Wright</b> (64) of Hermitage, Missouri passed away November 30, 2020, at Citizens Memorial Hospital, Bolivar, Missouri. David was born Nov. 1, 1956, in Waynesville, Missouri, the son of <b>James E. and Lois Allen Wright</b>. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1976-1979. He had retired from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service as District Conservationist for Hickory and St. Clair Counties. Survivors include his wife, <b>Karen Wright</b>; two sons, <b>Brian Wright</b> of Hermitage, and <b>Bradly Wright</b> of Warsaw; Missouri; and five grandchildren. Burial with full military honors was held at Nemo Cemetery, Hermitage, under the direction of Hathaway-Peterman Funeral Home, Wheatland, Missouri.</p>



Reflections of the Grand Tetons, WY