

GOVERNING BOARD

PRESIDENT:

Julie MacSwain
1024 E Cascade Ave.
River Falls WI 54022
(651) 472-2453
juliemacswain@gmail.com

PRESIDENT-ELECT:

Mary Podoll
5441 162nd Ave.
Baldwin, ND 58521
(701) 391-7759
podollchristmastrees@outlook.com

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:

Arnold D. King
1900 Canaveral Ct.
Granbury, TX 76048-4370
(817) 578-8177
arnoldldking@hotmail.com

SECRETARY: Jack R. Carlson

2937 Garrett Drive
Fort Collins, CO 80526-6222
(970) 980-7443
pspicata@gmail.com

TREASURER: Donna Beggs

P.O. Box 8965, Moscow, ID
83843
(518) 524-8907
arcse.treas@gmail.com

REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

EAST: Melvin Womack
10307 Scots Landing
Mechanicsville, VA 23116
(804) 803-8940
mwpocket2@comcast.net

WEST: Bill Ward

3029 Nikol Street
Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 769-0280
bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

SOUTH: William Kuenstler

79 Gulf Winds Way
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459
(850) 468-0691
bkuenstler@gmail.com

MIDWEST: Rebecca Fletcher

15 Danridge Drive
Danville, IN 46122-1342
(317) 371-6944
becky_fletcher@sbcglobal.net

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR:

Paul Benedict
190 Nittany South Way
Stephens City, VA 22655
(202) 578-8226
soilwarden@verizon.net

EDITOR: Jerry Bernard

15 Apple Blossom Ct.,
Stafford, VA 22554
(540) 720-5644
jbernard.nrcsret@gmail.com

NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC:

Craig Derickson,
7100 S 31st Place,
Lincoln, NE 68516
402-560-5804
craig.derickson@yahoo.com

SWCS LIAISON

Cheryl K. Simmons
1055 Hazeltine Rd
Moscow, ID 83843
(817) 542-2725
cksoil@aol.com

SR. CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLER: Vacant

WEBMASTER:

David V. Buland
720 Lake View Drive, Crowley,
TX 76036-3956
davidbuland@gmail.com



NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired Conservation Service Employees

Vol. 50, No. 5 Sept/Oct 2023

The **ARCSE Newsletter** is published bi-monthly by the
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1024 E Cascade Ave., River Falls, WI 54022

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

–Julie “JMac” MacSwain

Greetings! It is with much excitement and anticipation that I begin as your President of ARCSE. Time has flown by since I retired from NRCS with 36 years of service to the agency. Now it's my time to give back to others. I look forward to serving you!

Thank you to **Arnold King** for his leadership as President and **Cheryl Simmons** for her leadership as Past President. Please join me in welcoming **Mary Podoll** to the role of President-Elect. We have an outstanding leadership team who continue to help keep ARSCE moving forward.

The ARCSE Board met on August 7th, prior to the annual ARCSE meeting. We approved our budget, which will include increases in our membership fees. The Board concurred with the new dues structure. These fees will increase on January 1st, 2024. The dues will be as follow:

- Annual dues: increase from \$18 to \$25
- Annual hard copy newsletter fee: increase from \$12 to \$15
- Life membership dues:
 - Age 75 or older: from \$125 to \$175
 - Age 65 through 74: from \$200 to \$275
 - Age 64 or younger: from \$250 to \$325

Our **Strategic Plan** and for ARCSE were finalized and approved at our August 7th board meeting in Des Moines. The Strategic plan charts the course for the direction ARCSE will be taking between 2023–2028. A special thank you to the ARCSE Team that worked on the plan, which included **Mary Podoll, Cheryl Simmons, Craig Derickson, Becky Fletcher, and Julie MacSwain**. Please review the Strategic Plan and Plan of work documents which are posted on our arcse.org website (<https://arcsecommunications.wordpress.com/our-organization/>). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

The 49th annual meeting of ARCSE took place in Des Moines, Iowa on August 7th. This year's event drew several NRCS retirees and NRCS employees. A special thank you to **Mark Jensen**, Iowa NRCS retiree and ARCSE Representative, for his role in local arrangements, and to **Jack Carlson** and **Cheryl Simmons** who served on the ARCSE committee for planning the event. *Please read Mark Jensen's report of our annual meeting.*

A joint Memo of Understanding (MOU) from **NRCS Chief Terry Cosby** and **ARCSE President Julie MacSwain** was sent to all employees of NRCS on August 8th. **Jerry Bernard**, Editor for ARCSE, sent emails to members along with a copy of the signed MOU and our ARCSE directory. Retired conservation employees hold a wealth of institutional knowledge and experience, and members of ARCSE are eager to continue contributing to NRCS's mission in wisdom of ARCSE's members and speed up the process of distribution of the Inflation Reduction Act workload across all employees. Please stay tuned for additional details and information about the mentorship program that will be announced in your states in the coming months. A full copy of the MOU is available on our ARCSE website at https://arcsecommunications.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/nrcs-arcse-mou-full-signed_final.pdf.

ARCSE is doing what we can to reach out to our members. If you have access to Facebook, please follow us on Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees. And, we have a presence on Flickr. Search for ARCSE Communications. And don't forget to check our ARCSE website. **David Buhland** has been working hard to keep this up-to-date for our membership. In closing, I challenge each ARSCE member to give a membership application to those who are newly retired. Let's push to increase our membership prior to the end of the year before the new membership rates go into effect. Membership has so many benefits, including networking, connectivity, mentorship, life-long learning, socialization, and giving back, to name a few. We also need all of you to continue to provide news from your states for the newsletter. Staying connected and involved in retirement is important for well-being. Cheers to working with you down the road



DEADLINE FOR THE NOV/DEC 2023 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS OCT 25TH, 2023.

NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

–Craig Derickson, retired USDA-NRCS

Readers may recall previous coverage of Congressional actions to pass the (FY) 2023 appropriations bill at the very last minute in late December 2023, and then resolution of the debt ceiling crisis in June of 2023. Reaching agreement on these complex budget issues has been made more difficult by the divided and partisan environment that lawmakers are working in.

Now, Congress is facing two very challenging budget issues that need to be resolved by September 30th, 2023. The first challenge is for Congress to once again reach agreement on an FY 2024 appropriations bill before the current fiscal year ends (September 30th). The second and even more challenging issue for Congress is the expiration of the current Farm Bill on September 30th, 2023. Complicating this already complex task is the fact that nearly one-third of current members of Congress are new and will be working on a farm bill for the first time.

Outlook on a new Farm Bill

The current Farm Bill – the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 – is set to expire on September 30th, 2023. Congress needs to pass a new Farm Bill or extend the current Farm Bill to avoid placing a number of agricultural programs on hold. If current Farm Bill legislation expires, or a new Farm Bill is not passed and/or permanent legislation not appealed, farm policy would revert back to permanent legislation from the 1940s. Farm commodity programs enacted in the 1940s that used supply controls and price regimes would be very costly if used today.

According to the **Farm Bill for America's Families** organization, “Americans depend on the success of farmers and ranchers to keep our food safe, abundant and affordable. The farm bill impacts everything from the land we grow our food, fiber and fuel on, to the farmers growing it, and to the well-being of all who rely on these American grown products.

The farm bill is the most significant piece of legislation for farmers and our food supply. It plays a critical role in protecting farmers' livelihoods and making sure Americans have safe, nutritious food, including by supporting those facing hunger. The farm bill gives farmers and ranchers the tools they need to keep our farms and food supply secure and sustainable.

The farm bill's impact extends beyond the farm by protecting our nation's food supply – providing millions of jobs; ensuring access to nutrition for families facing hunger; protecting farms from risks (like weather disasters); advancing conservation efforts; and spurring innovation through agricultural research.” For more information see: <https://farmbillforamericasfamilies.com/>.

The House and Senate wrapped up most of their work on new Farm Bill legislation in late July before their August recess. Traditionally, legislators introduce “marker bills” to put forward their priorities for a new Farm Bill and solicit feedback for their support from constituents and stakeholders. Other than a few listening sessions and committee hearings, there is not much evidence on real progress being made so far on a new Farm Bill.

Congress will likely put forward a first draft of the 2023 Farm Bill when they are back in September, and possibly agree to extend the current 2018 Farm Bill to avoid a lapse in programs and authorities. However, the reality is that legislators will be dealing with several urgent priorities that compete for floor time in Congress. Pressing and controversial issues like the FY 2024 appropriation bill, that if not passed by October 1st, could mean a lapse in government funding and the potential for a partial government shutdown.

Understanding Farm Bills from a Budget Perspective

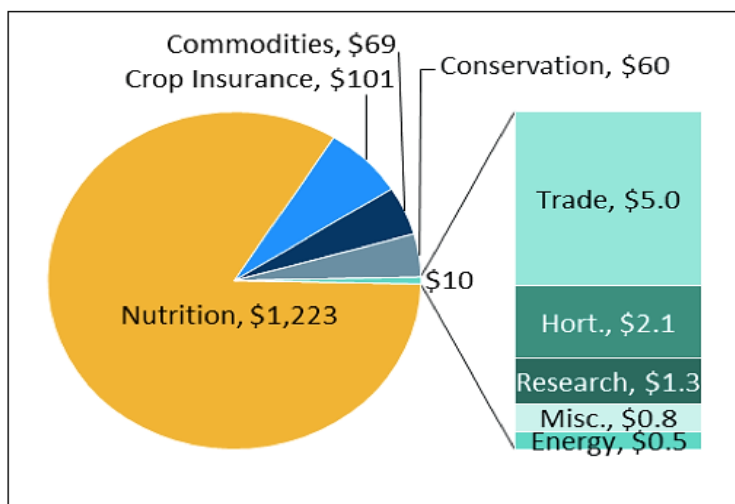
The **Congressional Research Service (CRS)** describes how federal spending for agriculture is divided into two main categories—mandatory and discretionary spending:

- Mandatory spending is authorized primarily for the farm commodity programs, conservation, crop insurance, and the nutrition assistance programs. A farm bill authorizes outlays for mandatory programs when the law is enacted and follows budget enforcement rules.
- Discretionary appropriations are authorized, but not provided, for most other programs, including rural development, research, and credit programs. A farm bill sets program parameters. Funding may be provided in subsequent appropriations acts that follow separate budget enforcement rules.

In May 2023, the **Congressional Budget Office (CBO)** released the budget baseline that will be used to score bills during the 2023 legislative session. The CBO states: “the baseline is a projection at a particular point in time of what future federal mandatory spending would be under the assumption that current law continues. The baseline is the benchmark against which proposed changes in law are measured. Supplemental funding in recent years is not part of the baseline but may influence policy expectations.

When a bill is proposed that would affect mandatory spending, the score (cost impact) is measured in relation to the baseline. Changes that increase spending relative to the baseline have a positive score; those that decrease spending relative to the baseline have a negative score.”

The CBO provides: “farm bills have 5-year and 10-year budget projections according to federal budgeting practices. Converting the May 2023 baseline into farm bill titles and adding funding indicated in law for other farm bill programs, the baseline for all farm bill titles is estimated at \$725 billion over 5 years (FY2024 – FY2028) and \$1,463 billion over 10 years (FY2024 – FY2033, Figure 1).

Figure 1. Farm Bill Titles with Mandatory Baseline

10-year projected outlays, FY2024-FY2033, billions of dollars

Source: Created by CRS using Congressional Budget Office (CBO) May 2023 Baseline and amounts indicated in law for programs in other titles."

For more information see:

[https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12233#:~:text=CBO%27s%20May%202023%20Baseline&text=Converting%20the%20May%202023%20baseline,%2DFY2033%2C%20Figure%201\).](https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12233#:~:text=CBO%27s%20May%202023%20Baseline&text=Converting%20the%20May%202023%20baseline,%2DFY2033%2C%20Figure%201).)

Work on Agriculture Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024

On June 22nd, 2023, the **Senate Committee on Appropriations** approved the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, providing support for critical agriculture, rural development, nutrition, conservation, and food and drug safety programs. The Senate committee approved the agriculture appropriations bill by a bipartisan vote of 28–0, which provides \$25.993 billion in discretionary funding for FY24.

According to the Senate committee's website: "this important legislation will assist America's farmers, invest in critical agricultural and medical research, and support rural communities across the country," said **Senator Collins**. "As the Vice Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I will continue to champion this funding as the appropriations process moves forward.

"Our farmers and ranchers provide the highest quality, lowest cost food supply in the world," said **Senator John Hoeven**, Ranking Member of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. "As the ranking member of Agriculture Appropriations, we worked to ensure that this legislation supports our producers, invests in agriculture research and strengthens rural America."

Senate Committee Bill Highlights (*proposed*):

- Agriculture Research: More than \$3.8 billion for agricultural research programs, including \$1.792 billion for the Agricultural Research Service and \$1.084 billion for National Institute of Food and Agriculture.
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS): \$1.171 billion for APHIS, an increase of more than \$14 million above the FY23 enacted level.
- Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS): \$1.205 billion for the FSIS.
- Farm Service Agency (FSA): \$1.215 billion for FSA and prohibits the closure of FSA county offices. The bill also increases funding for emergency farm loans to meet the expected demands.
- Conservation: \$922 million to the Natural Resources Conservation Service for Conservation Operations and \$70 million for Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations.
- Rural Development: \$3.94 billion to support rural development across the United States, including \$1.6 billion for rental assistance for affordable housing for low-income families and seniors in rural communities.
- Nutrition: \$6.3 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and an increase of \$41 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).
- International Food Assistance: \$1.8 billion for Food for Peace Title II Grants and \$248 million for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education program.
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA): \$3.55 billion for the FDA, a \$20 million net increase to base funding.

For more information on proposed Senate appropriations see:

<https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/minority/senate-committee-approves-fy24-agriculture-appropriations-bill>

On June 14, 2023, the **House Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration** approved the FY24 appropriation bill with a vote of 34 to 27.

According to the House Ag Committee website, “the bill provides a non-defense discretionary total of \$25.313 billion for programs under the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee, \$532 million (2.1%) below the FY23 enacted level and \$3.622 billion (12.5%) below the FY24 President’s Budget Request.

The Subcommittee’s allocation is \$17.838 billion, and the House bill includes another \$7.475 billion that is offset by rescinding some spending approved over the last two years and ending pandemic-era programs. The bill prioritizes agencies and programs that protect our nation’s food and drug supply; support America’s farmers, ranchers, and rural communities; and ensure low-income Americans have access to nutrition programs.”

House Committee Bill Highlights. (*proposed*):

- Supports our rural communities and strengthens our national security and food supply by:
 - Continuing critical investments in agriculture research, rural broadband, and animal and plant health programs;
 - Providing sufficient funds to ensure the safety of food, drugs, and medical devices;
 - Ensuring that low-income Americans have access to nutrition programs;
 - Reining in harmful regulations that dictate how poultry and livestock producers raise and market their animals;
 - Preventing the purchase of agricultural land by foreign adversaries; and
 - Providing a \$39 million increase for the Food Safety and Inspection Service to fully fund frontline meat and poultry inspectors.
- Reins in [other] spending and bureaucracy by:
 - Redirecting billions in the partisan bills that contained [other] priorities (Inflation Reduction Act) to help America’s producers and rural communities;
 - Including a \$32 billion decrease in mandatory SNAP spending from FY23 levels due to the end of increased pandemic-era benefits and a decrease in participation rates;
 - Restricting the USDA Secretary’s discretionary spending authority on unauthorized, non-emergency programs; and
 - Directing USDA to focus hiring efforts in state and county offices to assist producers and rural communities, rather than continuing to bloat the DC bureaucracy.
- Protects the lives of unborn children by:
 - Including a provision that ends mail-order chemical abortion drugs.

For more information on proposed House appropriations see: <https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/committee-approves-fy24-agriculture-rural-development-food-and-drug>.

As a summary on pending annual appropriation bills, the President submits a budget proposal to Congress to fund the federal government every fiscal year (October 1st through September 30th). Congress must then pass appropriations bills to provide funding to carry out government programs for that year.

Therefore, before September 30th, 2023, Congress must reach agreement on an appropriation bill to provide money to carry out government programs for the upcoming year. If the House and Senate do not reach agreement on spending and pass all appropriations measures by the start of the fiscal year (October 1st), they will likely have to enact a continuing resolution to keep the government running.

What to Expect Next

After intense debates to resolve the debt ceiling issue earlier this year, and a highly divided and partisan Congress, it will be a challenge for Congress to come together to successfully pass an FY 2024 appropriation bill and complete work on a new Farm Bill for 2024 and beyond. We look forward to providing much more detail on a new Farm Bill that supports our farmers and ranchers, ensures an adequate food supply, and protects our natural resources.

ARCSE Annual Meeting – August 7, 2023

Des Moines, Iowa

Each year the ARCSE Annual meeting is held at the site of the SWCS International Conference. This year it was in Des Moines, Iowa, on August 7th. The meeting was well attended with over 50 people, representing the ARSCE Board, NRCS leadership, SWCS leadership, and retirees from SCS/NRCS and partner agencies, in attendance. Our ARCSE Governing Board Members who attended included: **Julie MacSwain**, President; **Arnold King**, Past President; **Mary Podoll**, President Elect; **Jack Carlson** and **Cheryl Simmons**, meeting planning committee; and **Donna Beggs**, Treasurer.

After allowing time for folks to visit and re-connect with others from around the country, the meeting was called to order by **Earl Norton**, ARCSE State Representative from Alabama.



Earl Norton, MC for the Meeting

Neil Dominy, Acting State Conservationist from Iowa, welcomed everyone to Iowa. He briefly discussed Iowa's agriculture, conservation activities, programs, and budget effects on workload and staffing.



Neil Dominy, Acting Iowa State Conservationist

Carrie Lindig, NRCS Midwest Regional Conservationist, provided comments for **Chief Terry Cosby** addressing conservation issues and programs from a national perspective. She addressed the significant budget increase that NRCS received as a result of the Inflation Reduction Act. This has resulted in a need for an **additional 7,500 full time equivalent positions**. The plan is to hire around 4,000 new employees and utilize our conservation partners, the ACES program, and contractors for the remaining positions.



Carrie Lindig presented the Chief's remarks.

Clare Lindahl, CEO of the SWCS, welcomed us to the conference. She talked about some of the joint efforts that

have been undertaken between ARCSE and SWCS. She introduced **Sarah Wright**, a Student Leader Project Intern. This intern position is sponsored by ARCSE. One of Sarah's duties is to assist ARCSE with website and communications development.



Clare Lindahl, SWCS, with Intern Sarah Wright

Julie MacSwain and **Craig Derickson** discussed the development of a **Memorandum of Understanding with NRCS**. They have been working with NRCS staff for the past several months to accomplish this effort, as the MOU has now been signed by both parties. The purpose of the MOU is to establish and solidify a working relationship between ARCSE and NRCS. A primary goal of the MOU is to work together to explore ways to increase mentoring opportunities for NRCS employees. ARCSE has agreed to:

1. Identify ARCSE members as well as other retired NRCS and partner retirees to participate as mentors for NRCS employees and participate in ongoing communication about the NRCS mentoring.
2. As requested and available, engage with NRCS to explore ways to enhance professional development of conservation professionals.

NRCS has agreed to:

1. Identify and implement the best ways to use ARCSE members in the NRCS mentoring.
2. As appropriate, include ARCSE in meetings and discussions on employee mentoring and other development.
3. Explore other ways to leverage ARCSE members' experience as conservation professionals.



Photo Op for the MOU Signing: Front Row, L-R: Julie MacSwain, ARCSE President, and Carrie Lindig, Acting Regional Conservationist. Back Row, L-R: Becky Ross, NRCS; Angela Biggs, NRCS; Arnold King, ARCSE; and Craig Derickson, ARCSE.

Craig Derickson will be the ARCSE lead person in implementing this MOU. The signed MOU is posted on the arcse.org website at

https://arcsecommunications.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/nrcs-arcse-mou-full-signed_final.pdf.

Mary Podoll and **Julie MacSwain** briefly discussed a new **Strategic Plan for ARCSE**. The Vision Statement in the Plan states that ARCSE is "An active and engaged group of retirees who endeavor to stay connected with colleagues, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other conservation partnership organizations." The Mission Statement in the Plan states that ARCSE is "To provide effective and timely communications, networking opportunities, and activities to keep retirees connected and informed so they can support efforts to protect and conserve our nation's natural resources." The Strategic Plan includes Objectives, Goals, and a detailed plan to accomplish those goals. The Plan is posted on the arcse.org website.

ARCSE members **Brian Peterson**, **Deanne Lull**, and **Bill Ward** received ARCSE awards this year. Unfortunately, Deanne and Bill were not able to attend the meeting to receive their awards in person. The following briefly describes the three awards. More details are in the Awards section of this newsletter.

1. **Brian Peterson**, retired State Grassland Conservationist from Iowa, received the President's Award for Outstanding Community Service "for his extensive, exceptional, impactful, visible, and long-lasting service to school, community, church, and conservation in Iowa."
2. **Deanne Lull**, ARCSE State Representative for Kansas and retired Public Affairs Specialist in Kansas, received the ARCSE Distinguished Service Award "for her dedicated service to retirees as Kansas State Representative for the past 13 years, consistently contributing to the national newsletter and providing a model for this important ARCSE role."
3. **William (Bill) Ward**, ARCSE West Regional Vice President and retired Design Engineer in California, received the ARCSE Distinguished Service Award "for his dedicated service to retirees as California State Representative during the past 11 years, 100% contribution to the national newsletter, and outstanding work as West Regional Vice President."

The final portion of the meeting was a presentation on Iowa's cropping and conservation history. The presenters were **Lyle Asell**, retired Assistant State Conservationist, and **Kevin Kuhn**, current Resource Conservationist in the Iowa State Office. Some of the key items they discussed included:

- Total acres and acres of cropland in Iowa
- Crop history, past to present
- Iowa's rank in national agricultural production
- Federal laws and programs that impacted cropping history and conservation efforts since the 1930s
- How equipment and technology changes has affected Iowa's agriculture
- Social aspects of Iowa agriculture such as changing land ownership, percentage of persons owning and living on farms, size of farming operations, etc.

Their presentation was an interesting and informative summary of the history of Iowa agriculture.

Earl Norton closed out the meeting by thanking and complimenting all the presenters.

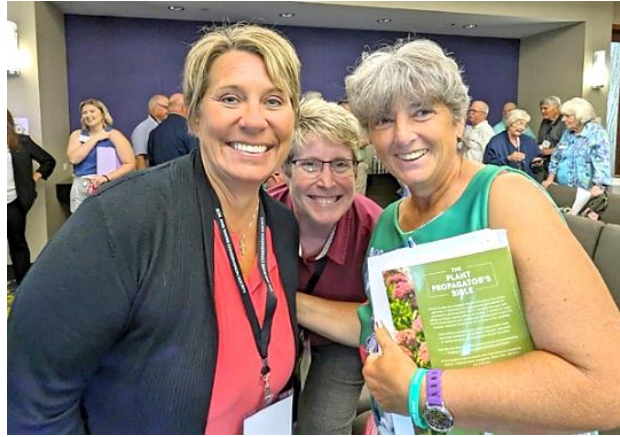
More Pictures from the meeting:



Julie MacSwain, ARCSE President; and Mary Podoll, ARCSE President-Elect.



L-R: Krecia Leddy, District Conservationist, NRCS; and Jody Christiansen, ARCSE.



L-R: Karen Woodrich, NRCS; Becky Ross, NRCS; and Mary Podoll, ARCSE President-Elect

Why does conservation work need skilled people?

A reflection from **Barbara Osgood**, PhD
 Environmental Sociologist
 Retired Federal Executive
 Former Assistant Chief, Northeast
 Former State Conservationist

TUG FORK

My first “hands on” experience with the relationship between people and natural resources came during the year before I joined the Soil Conservation Service. I was finishing up my doctorate in Human Ecology at Cornell in 1979, when I was invited to be part of a team working on a report for the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Tug Fork River between West Virginia and Kentucky had been flooding for years. In 1977 a catastrophic flood motivated government agencies to start looking for solutions. The Institute for Water Resources of the Army Corps of Engineers was tasked to do a report on the human cost of flooding in the Valley. It would be part of a larger effort to produce a cost benefit analysis for Congressional funding.

The leader of our group was **Lloyd Antle**, a Kentucky native himself, and an economist with the Institute. He was a hands-on kind of guy. He would have no remote analyses. We all must go to the valley, spend time there, and meet with local people and officials. He wanted us to really understand the problem and experience the damages.

When there was another flood nearby in Kentucky, Lloyd said “it’s important for you to see this”. He sent me to spend a few days in the parsonage of the Piney Creek Baptist Church, in order to survey the flood area with a young Divinity student from Yale. We walked the flooded roads and talked to the residents of the damaged houses, many of them occupied by retired coal miners. I still remember them sitting in rocking chairs on their front porches, their faces gray with black lung, unable to do much more than watch.

This was where I saw two elderly sisters with everything they owned spread out on the grass in front of their little house. Everything covered with mud. The two of them trying to clean. And one sister telling me that she had stood on her bed, holding onto the window frame in water up to her neck until the flood water subsided.

The planners at the Army Corps of Engineers were working on a number of different ideas for projects. One of them was to cut off an oxbow in the river, create higher land, and build an apartment complex above the flood line. Part of my job was to do a housing analysis of available housing, willingness to relocate, and housing preferences to see whether that plan was feasible. We also did an analysis of the trauma that people experienced as a result of the flooding as part of the cost-benefit justification.

We hired a professor and two students at Marshall University in Huntington to do a survey of the residents in the valley. We interviewed local government officials. (I particularly remember the mayor of Matewan, because his name was **McCoy**. He cheerfully acknowledged that he was a member of the famous Hatfield and McCoy families!)

When the report was completed, we had determined that residents of the valley were so traumatized by the constant flooding, that they would be willing to relocate. However, they were not interested in relocating to apartments! They were hoping that small, single-family bungalows, like the ones in which they had been living all their lives, would be built on flood-free land.

I know that some work has been done in the Valley to alleviate floods. Some flood walls have been constructed around Williamson. But I don’t believe the Army Corps of Engineers ever cut off the oxbow to build apartments, at least in part because the local people told them not to!

One year later, in 1980, I went to work as the National Sociologist for the Soil Conservation Service. It has been a great ride ever since!

P.S.: The report was called “Human Costs Assessment: The Impacts of Flooding and Nonstructural Solutions”. You can still get it on microfiche!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Paul Benedict, Membership Chair

New Life Members

Claudia C. Hoeft – Manassas, Virginia
Robert Berry – Vinemont, Alabama

New Members

Bob Dayton – Polk City, Iowa
Chris Tippie – Carmel, Indiana
Leonard Jordan – Douglasville, Georgia
Thomas W. Christensen – Milton, Georgia
Rich Stewart – Moline, Illinois
Robert Glennon – Hobbbsville, North Carolina
Jeff Porter – Greensboro, North Carolina
Jim McIntosh – Creston, Iowa
Suzette Betts – North Liberty, Iowa
John Whitney – East Aurora, New York
Beverly Mosely – Fischer, Texas
John Andrews – Foxfield, Colorado
Douglas Morningstar – Lisbon, Iowa
James Gillespie – Earlham, Iowa
Russell Hatz – Hillsboro, Oregon
Mary Monte – Little Falls, Minnesota
Shelly Lassiter – Spokane, Washington
Eileen Campbell – Wilmington, Delaware

New Affiliate Member

Becky Ross – Epping, New Hampshire

ARCSE Membership

Currently, ARCSE has 721 active members, including 423 life and honorary members.

New Honorary ARCSE Members:

The following 14 members of ARCSE have celebrated or will be celebrating their 91st birthdays by the end of 2023. With this milestone, each of these members automatically becomes an Honorary Member. As an Honorary Member, they are no longer required to pay annual dues for calendar year 2024 and thereafter. Honorary members who wish to receive a printed copy of the newsletter still need to pay a \$12 annual fee for that service (increasing to \$15 by Jan. 1st). If you have turned (or will turn) age 91 by the end of 2023 and are not on this list, please let me know as I do not have everyone's birthday information.

First Name	Last Name	State
Phillip D	Coombs	UT
Glenn	Headden	TN
Arthur B	Holland	SC
Jerome C	Hytry	FL
Jack P	Kanalz	OR
Lowell W.	Kenedy	WA
Warren	Lytton	UT
Robert C	Maples	OK
Marlene	Mechelke	MN
Norman	Mull	OH
William U	Reybold	MD
John F	Rice	MO
Ed	Thomas	TX
Mary	Wenberg	TX

ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES

Due by January 1st

Member	\$18 per year (1 st year free)
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**

Note: rates go up after January 1, 2024.

State Representatives Needed!

Several States need State Representatives for ARCSE. There are vacancies in the following areas: **Caribbean Area, Connecticut/Rhode Island, Hawaii/Pacific Islands, Kansas, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.** In addition, several of our current state representatives have been serving in these roles for many years and it may be time to give them a break. If you would be interested in finding out more about serving as a State Representative, please contact your Regional Vice President:

- Melvin Womack (East) - mwpocket2@comcast.net
- Bill Kuentsler (South) - bkuentstler@gmail.com
- Becky Fletcher (Midwest) - becky_fletcher@sbcglobal.net
- Bill Ward (West) - bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

Donate to ARCSE

–Julie A. MacSwain

Your donation to ARCSE provides funding for special projects that help us provide additional services to our members so that we are more visible and relevant.

Your contributions have enabled us to keep the first-year dues *FREE* for new members and to partner with the Soil and Water Conservation Society to hire summer interns.

Interested in making a donation? Check out the follow link:

<https://arcsecommunications.wordpress.com/give/>

WiN Group Award of Excellence

–Julie MacSwain

The Women of NRCS held their Annual meeting at the SWCS International conference in Des Moines, Iowa. During their meeting recognition was given for:

The WiN Group Award of Excellence. The award is designed to recognize a group who, over a period of time, has contributed substantially and creatively to our natural resources conservation profession. The group should exemplify excellence in a particular discipline and, possibly, multidiscipline efforts that promote excellence and creativity.



The WiN Mentoring Committee organized WiN Speed Mentoring Events and WiNning in Conservation. The committee paired mentors and mentees based on input given. This is the first time WiN has developed a mentoring program. The program was developed to meet WiN's mission and to address a top request from WiN members—connecting WiN members to each other and addressing their personal goals. Supporting WinNers in Conservation Mentoring Program was rolled out in January of 2023. A total of 105 individuals signed up for this new program as either a mentor, mentee, or both. All 77 WiN members seeking mentors were paired up with a mentor.

Cheryl Simmons and **Julie MacSwain**, ARCSE members, were part of the 20-member committee that was recognized.

WiN Mentoring Committee Members: **Karma Anderson, Katherine Burse, Madeline Cantu, Katie Cerretani, Kristin Graham Chavez, Roylene Comes at Night, Bethany Munoz Delgado, Bianca Diaz Deliz, Margaret Gannon, Christine Hall, Nicole Kubiczki, Francine Lheritier, Julie MacSwain, Han Nguyen, Heidi Ramsey, Heather Medina Saucedo, Cheryl Simmons, Kara Vigneau, and April Wilson.**

Staying Connected in Retirement – ARCSE Directory

– Julie MacSwain

One of the best decisions I made prior to retiring from the NRCS in Portland, Oregon was to join the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees (ARCSE). I was told that this was a great way to keep in contact with like-minded conservationists and stay connected. And, to this day I would have to agree, this was a good decision.

Paul Benedict serves as the ARCSE Membership Chair. He does a great job of compiling an annual ARCSE membership directory. The Directory contains information regarding our ARCSE Members, Senior Conservationists, NRCS State Conservationists, NRCS Office of the Chief, NRCS Office of the Associate Chief, and the ARCSE Representatives. If you haven't looked at the directory, please check your email for a message that was sent out on April 29th, 2023.

Distribution of the Directory is as follows:

1. A printed hard copy was mailed only to those members who receive the newsletter as a hard copy.
2. A digitally protected computer file (secure PDF) was mailed to members who receive the newsletter as an email attachment.

What's the advantage of having the ARCSE Directory as a PDF file? You can search the file for any person's name or city, using the PDF software. If you know that you are traveling through a certain town, you can search the Directory for any members who live there. You can also have the ARCSE Directory as a PDF file that you can carry with you in your cell phone, Kindle, tablet, or other portable device.

To help us keep the ARCSE Membership Directory current, please report changes in your contact information to:

Paul Benedict, Membership Chair, ARCSSE
 PO Box 1149
 Stephens City, VA 22655 or via email soilwarden@verizon.net

***The Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees (ARCSE) Regions
 Regional Vice-Presidents for ARCSE***

Melvin Womack	Bill Kuenstler	Rebecca Fletcher	Bill Ward
East	South	Midwest	West
Connecticut	Alabama	Illinois	Alaska
Delaware	Arkansas	Indiana	Arizona
District of Columbia	Florida	Iowa	California
Maine	Georgia	Kansas	Colorado
Maryland	Kentucky	Michigan	Hawaii/Pacific Basin
Massachusetts	Louisiana	Minnesota	Idaho
New Hampshire	Mississippi	Missouri	Montana
New Jersey	North Carolina	Nebraska	Nevada
New York	Oklahoma	North Dakota	New Mexico
Pennsylvania	Puerto Rico/Caribbean	Ohio	Oregon
Rhode Island	South Carolina	South Dakota	Utah
Vermont	Tennessee	Wisconsin	Washington
Virginia	Texas		Wyoming
West Virginia			

2023 ARCSE Award Recipients

Brian Peterson—ARCSE member, Iowa: ARCSE Outstanding Community Service Award

This year **Brian Peterson** is recognized by ARCSE for his extensive volunteer contributions to school, church, community, and conservation. He is pictured receiving his award plaque from **Mary Podoll**, ARCSE President-Elect. He and his wife reside in the small town of Corning in southwestern Iowa. After a productive career with SCS and NRCS starting in 1968, district conservationist in three county offices, area grassland conservationist, and retiring in 2009 as state grassland conservationist, Brian has continued to be very active as announcer for local school functions, FFA and Science Fair judge, Sunday School and Bible School teacher, Methodist Church committee worker and officer, usher, choir member, Rotary Club officer, Summer Festival and Christmas Lighted parades announcer, community theatre actor, member of Sheriff's Department coffee group collecting toys and items for families in need, County Fair volunteer/announcer, contributor to local high school Vocational Agriculture class, pasture management trainer, Forage and Grassland Council Board member, water quality project development team member and trainer, and Iowa Master Farmers Association Board of Directors Historian. Brian received the Exceptional Service Award from the Master Farmer's Association, Lifetime Achievement Award from the Adams County Cattleman's Association, Friend of the School Award from the Iowa School Athletic Association, and Volunteer of the Year award from the Adams County Chamber of Commerce. A very impressive community service record ARCSE is proud to acknowledge.



Deanne Lull—ARCSE State Representative, Kansas: ARCSE Distinguished Service Award

This year **Deanne Lull** is recognized by ARCSE for Distinguished Service to the organization, faithfully serving as Kansas State Representative for the past 13 years. Deanne began her career with SCS/NRCS in 1959 on the Watershed Work Plan Party Staff, transitioned to the Public Affairs Staff, retiring in late 2008 with 49½ years of service, much in administrative management. She knew everyone with NRCS in the state, essentially a communication hub for the organization through time, highly capable, and a delight to work with as many co-workers have attested. Her experience and networking carried over to volunteer activity with ARCSE, keeping track of all Kansas retirees, including non-ARCSE members, and new retirees. Her near 100% substantive contributions to the ARCSE Newsletter have provided a model for her peers in other states and regions for many years. Her contributions have greatly helped sustain the vitality of the ARCSE organization.

William Ward—ARCSE West Regional Vice-President: ARCSE Distinguished Service Award

This year **Bill Ward** is recognized by ARCSE for Distinguished Service to the organization, serving as California State Representative for the past 12 years and West Regional Vice-President for the past six years. Bill retired in late 2010 after 36 years of dedicated service to SCS/NRCS, starting as a student trainee before graduating from California State University – Humboldt in Environmental Resources Engineering, then working as a Field and Area Office Engineer before graduate work and duty as a Design Engineer in the state office, including Design Staff Leader for several years. His impact was felt through several completed Watershed projects, including substantial Emergency Watershed Project (EWP) work. Bill has brought a unique

perspective to his ARCSE volunteer work, pioneering, and continuing to use video conferencing for networking with fellow retirees within and beyond California. He has leveraged his skills as a musician, storyteller, and use of media to highlight conservation work in the past and present. Bill continues to be a 100% contributor of substantive articles to the ARCSE newsletter. His sustained contributions have significantly helped anchor the vibrancy of the organization.

Larry Caldwell, NRCS ACES Enrollee

Larry Caldwell has been involved in the NRCS Watershed Program for over 50 years. He is an engineer who has been involved in all phases of the watershed program, including planning, design, and construction since starting with the Soil Conservation Service in 1968 and retiring from the Natural Resources Conservation Service after 41 years of federal service. His work on aging dams for so many years has earned Larry the nickname of “The Old Dam Man.”

Upon retirement, Larry worked part-time for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, assisted with the implementation of DamWatch, and worked on other watershed issues for another ten years. Then he tried to retire a second time. After volunteering for a couple years with the NRCS Earth Team Program, he became an ACES (Agricultural Conservation Experienced Services Program) enrollee to assist with enhancements to the NRCS DamWatch system and other dam safety issues.



DamWatch is a web-based system that collects real-time weather and water-related data and sends alert notifications if thresholds are exceeded for a specific dam. Alert notifications are distributed electronically immediately to people responsible for the dams through email and cell phones. DamWatch provides project sponsors, NRCS staffs, emergency managers, and State dam safety officials with critical information so that they can react immediately when an emergency occurs. DamWatch also provides for storage and retrieval of critical information such as construction drawings, inspection reports, emergency action plans, photos, etc., for future reference.

DamWatch also allows NRCS, our partners, and sponsors to become leaders in monitoring aging dams to address current and future challenges involving climate change. DamWatch helps to keep watershed dams safe during the predicted more frequent and intense storms, as well as providing critical water supplies to municipalities and irrigation during more intense and longer duration droughts.

Why did Larry come back to work as an ACES employee after working more than 50 years? That is a good question. Knowing that almost half of the NRCS agency is in the process of retiring, Larry understood the vital role of preserving institutional knowledge and came out of retirement again. His desire to mentor and train new NRCS employees and sponsors on watershed rehabilitation and provide assistance to the DamWatch program were pivotal to his return.

“After spending over 50 years working with the NRCS Watershed Program, it is difficult to let go from everything you worked so hard to develop and implement. Besides, the younger generation needs help with keeping aging dams safe,” said Larry Caldwell. “The ACES Program provides the opportunity to help mentor new employees while enjoying a very flexible work schedule and the extra money to put towards retirement. Someday I really will retire, but as long as I am still having fun, I will keep working on what I truly enjoy.”

ALABAMA

Earl Norton, ARCSE Representative

Email: earl.norton@charter.net

Local retirees met for breakfast during July and August at Chappy's Restaurant.

There were two local events of special interest to retirees during July. **Ambers Hanson** celebrated his 100th birthday and former Auburn football star **Carnell “Cadillac” Williams** was roasted at Greater Peace Baptist Church pastored by **Rev. Cliff Jones**, retired Alabama SRC.



Ambers Hanson, retired Alabama Agricultural Economist, celebrated his 100th birthday on July 31, 2023. Ambers also served as Ag Economist in New Mexico for 2 1/2 years and had a total of 34 years of Federal service including 4 years with U.S. Air Corp in World War II.

Ambers is shown with family and **Beth Whitten** of City of Auburn and the proclamation declaring July 31st "Ambers E. Hanson Day" in Auburn.

The Greater Peace Community Development Corporation Roast is an annual fundraiser supported by Cliff Jones' Church. The Corporation was founded by Cliff in 2000. The Corporation has provided affordable housing, and outstanding educational opportunities for both young and old in the City of Opelika. Cliff retired as Alabama State Resource Conservationist in 1997. Prior to being the SRC, he served as liaison to Tuskegee Institute and as District Conservationist in two locations in Alabama and soil conservationist in Massachusetts.



Earl Norton attended the SWCS 50th Annual Conference in Des Moines and he and wife Julia attended the ARCSE meeting that was held during the conference. Earl said that he enjoyed making friends at the ARCSE meeting and that he saw a lot of young faces at the SWCS conference, a good sign that young professionals are recognizing SWCS as important to their careers.

On a sad note, **Samuel "Sammy" Harris** passed away on July 18th. He was a highly dedicated District Conservationist with many years of outstanding service in the Tennessee Valley, retiring at the Huntsville Field Office and serving earlier at the Tuscumbia Field Office. During his tenure, significant gains were made in conservation tillage with corn, soybean and cotton farmers. Following retirement from NRCS, Sammy worked 10 years for the Cullman SWCD.

ARIZONA

Ken Cookson, ARCSE Representative

Email: ckcookson@aol.com

Ken Cookson Report: My wife and I recently went on the 15-day Viking River Cruise, France's Finest. There were two parts to the cruise. The first half was on the Seine River from Paris to Normandy and Omaha Beach and back to Paris.

We did a Panoramic Tour of Paris, part walking and part by bus. We also did a Paris by Night Cruise. The Eiffel Tower was well-lit and at 11:30pm, 20,000 lights were blinking for an awesome display.

Stops along the way included a tour of the Vincent Monet Gardens with many beautiful flowers. Monet painted the famous pond in his garden over 300 times.

Normandy was a major stop. The cemetery was immaculate, and the rows of crosses impressive. Being there was very moving. We also saw Omaha Beach at low tide. The tour guide did a really good job explaining some of the what and why's about D-Day to help us understand what we were seeing.

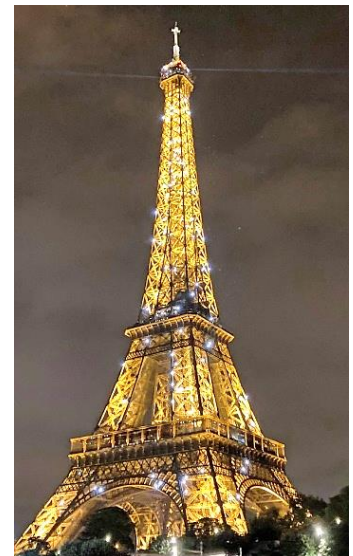
Another highlight of this cruise was to learn more about **Joan of Arc**. I knew she was burned at the stake and learned it was in Rouen. I didn't know she was only in her late teens and had become very influential over a two-year period and had become a threat to the powers that be.



Normandy Cemetery



Ken and Connie Cookson on tour



Eiffel Tower at Night

We left **Paris** by high-speed rail to Lyon for the second part of the cruise on the Rhone River. The speeding train was traveling at speeds up to 200 mph. Smooth ride!

The tour went from Lyon, the third largest city, to Avignon with several stops along the way. Lyon, next to Paris, is considered the country's most significant cultural center. We did several walking tours and visited cathedrals and an amphitheater that seated 20,000 people. Some of the walking tours were not easy because streets were made of cobblestones and other materials not real flat. Some of these towns date back to 1100–1500 AD. Streets were narrow, but some of the original building materials are still there. This is Beaujolais wine country, so we visited a couple of wineries.

The highlight of this part of the tour for me was the Pont du Gard Aqueduct. This is an ancient Roman aqueduct bridge built in the 1st century AD. The aqueduct carried water over 160 miles. The gradient was very flat. It is a masterpiece of Roman architectural ability. It is about 165 feet high. There was no mortar or concrete, no hydraulic lifts or other tools we use today. All stones, some weighing several hundred pounds, were cut to fit in a certain place to assure stability. This part of the tour saw everyday with sunshine and temperatures in the 80s and reaching into the 90s on the last days.



Ken Cookson and friend Bob Swithers at the Pont du Gard Aqueduct

Rod Alt Report: On June 12th **Sally Alt** flew to Detroit to connect with her daughter **Christine Altizer** so they could fly to Malaga, Spain on June 14th where they would stay in her daughter's flat in Fuengirola, Spain for the next five weeks.

I flew to Amarillo, Texas on June 13th to play in the Whing Ding golf tournament with my son **Rod**. I stayed with him and his wife **Mary** until June 18th.

On June 22nd I flew to Malaga, Spain to join Sally and Christine. On July 1st, **Lance Altizer** joined us in Fuengirola.

On July 2nd, we all went to the LVI golf tournament at the Red Club in Valderrama, Spain. The format of the tournament was different. They had a shotgun start and if you stayed on a hole, you could get to see all the players.

I played golf with my son-in-law Lance and grandson **Lance Jr.** at the LaCala Campo Europa golf resort in Mijas, Spain. I did ok with rental clubs and not knowing the course and only lost one ball. My son-in-law and grandson did not do as well as me.

On July 12th, Sally and I flew to Lisbon, Portugal for three days. We rode the hop-on-hop-off bus around the city to see different sites that we would get off to see. On July 13th, we were on a small tour bus (van) with five other people and went to the city of Sintra where we toured the Pena Palace which is the highest point in Portugal. The palace was very interesting and enjoyable. We also stopped in Sao Martinho for lunch which is the furthest west in Portugal.

After several weeks in Spain we returned to the USA in late July. We had a really enjoyable trip and we hope we can do it again next year and see some other sights.

On August 8th, Sally flew to Maryland to visit her daughter **Alisa Gibson**, granddaughter **Lauren Schmitz**, and great grandson **Cayson Schmitz**. While there, she and the family spent some time at the Outer Banks, NC. Sally returned home on August 16th.

Ron Moreland Report: **Ron and Barb Moreland** took a fun three-week trip this July. Our first stop was for a family gathering at a condo in Park City where, among other adventures, we watched Park City's substitute for fireworks – an amazing drone show with hundreds of pre-computerized drones. On to Many Glacier, our favorite area of Glacier National Park. On our hikes we held our bear spray at the ready. Many grizzlies in the area! Then on to more bear spray walks and golf in the Big Fork, Montana area. Then time at a ranch in the Idaho backcountry where we fly-fished and explored the amazing wilderness of the Sawtooth Mountains. We finished our trip with a few days in Sun Valley, Idaho.

CALIFORNIA

Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative

Email: bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

California retirees continue to enjoy our monthly Zoom meetings. Our most recent retiree Zoom meeting included the group shown below.

This was the first time **Ron Schultz** had been able to join us on Zoom in some time. Ron shared with us that at this time he is doing well in his recovery from hip replacement surgery, which he had done back in late December of last year. There were certainly some significant challenges along the way, but at this time Ron has even been able to get out on the golf course some.

August 2nd California NRCS retiree Zoom Participants



Top: Marl Cocke, Bill Ward, Chester Bush. Middle: Paul Benedict, Harold Honeyfield, Ron Schultz. Bottom: Ed Schmidt, Walt Sykes, Pat Grover

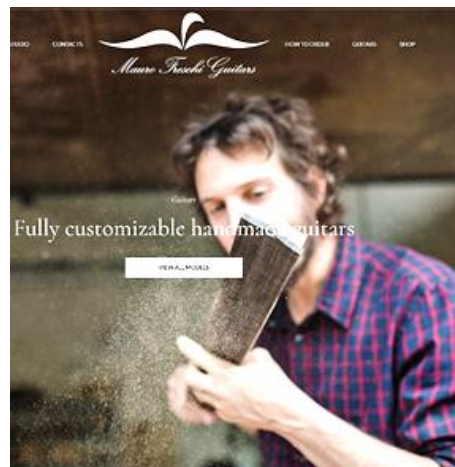
In closing out the sharing, I had some pretty exciting news to share which I began by screen sharing the following photos and captions

Bill and Dana's Trip to Italy!

Yes, in a very brief period of time going back only a few weeks ago, **Dana** and I set in motion plans for us to make a trip to Italy! After initially being in a state of shock that I would actually propose something like this and then realizing we were really going to do this, Dana looked at me incredulously and said "All right, who are you and what have you done with my husband!"

I then put up the following screen share photo and shared the origins of how this upcoming adventure got started. The origins began with a guitar friend of mine living in Scotland, **Crawford Milne**, sharing his experience having a custom gypsy Jazz guitar built for him by an Italian Guitar Builder in Italy, **Mauro Freschi Crawford**, and who I initially met as a result of us both taking some live online. "Gypsy Jazz Instructional Courses." The screen share photo is from the builder's website and here is a link to his actual website:

www.maurofreschiguitars.com



Mauro Freschi, Hand Crafted Custom Guitars, Venice Italy

Crawford's experience with this builder sounded excellent, and he loves the guitar he had recently built for him by this builder. I began to communicate with the builder myself and am now in the process of finalizing my order for him to build the following model guitar for me: Model 1910, Mauro Freschi Guitars

(<https://www.maurofreschiguitars.com/portfolio-item/model-1910/>)

Dana loves to travel and has been overseas to London and Scotland with her Mom. She has always wanted to make a similar trip to a country like Italy. As I thought more and more about buying this guitar made in Italy, I decided a trip to Italy would be a great experience for both of us. We have both had some health challenges this last year, and a trip to Italy like we are planning now to celebrate overcoming those health challenges is just what we both need at this time in our lives.

Western Lights July 7th Live Performance

Our Western Lights Band had one recent live show in which my daughter joined us. It is always extra special for us to have my daughter join us. Here is a video recording of our closing two songs.

<https://youtu.be/4EVZFEhG2Y8>

My Daughter **Jennifer Reeves** with Western Lights Closing Songs, Proud Mary and Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Well, that is about all from California this time folks. Until next time, best Wishes to all!

Colorado

Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative

Email: pspicata@gmail.com

Jack and Vicki Carlson, before returning to Colorado from the SWCS meeting in Des Moines, trekked east to Clayton County, Iowa and the town of Elkader, where Jack's 2nd great grandparents settled in 1851 and farmed north of town. Through the county genealogical society office, Jack was able to locate and visit the property as well as other points of interest, filling in gaps in the family history. While in town he and Vicki stayed at the county jail (converted to a bnb).



Settling in for the night

GEORGIA

Edward Ealy, ARCSE Representative

Email: epdro22@gmail.com

Georgia and the Southeast Region lost a significant contributor to the nation's soil and water conservation efforts. **Edna Firor** came to be a great talent and supporter for soil and water conservation. She married the late **Charles Bartlett** (Bart) after WW II ended. They were married for 25 years. Bart served as a Soil Conservation Service (SCS) State Conservationist in North Carolina and Georgia. Edna supported Bart in his career and was an inspiration as he advanced in SCS. During Bart's tenure, Edna would attend State Conservationist meetings with him and earned lasting friendship with spouses and others from across the country. After Bart passed in 1975, Edna married **Dave Firor**. Dave was a leader in the Georgia Conservation Districts. He later served as the representative for southeast region of the National Association Conservation Districts (NACD) and served on the NACD Research Committee. Edna was always present with Dave at NACD regional and national meetings and assisted with the administrative details of those meetings. Edna became nationally known as a role player in the NACD conservation agenda and she possessed a great personality, never met a stranger and with Edna friendships lasted forever.

In retirement Edna was active in the Southern Retired State Conservationist Organization. On two occasions she hosted the annual meeting of the organization in Georgia and managed and maintained a large collection of the photo files.

Read more about Edna Firor in the "IN MEMORIAM" section of this newsletter.

IOWA

Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative

Email: amjens1@gmail.com

On August 5th, **Kevin Kuhn** and **Jim Gillespie** hosted a get together for current and future retirees at Kevin's farm in Guthrie County. Nestled in among the trees, his house could, and probably does, also serve as a very nice private hunting lodge. The deck on the east side of the house overlooks a good-sized wetland. Corn and soybean fields surround the farm. Overall, it is a beautiful rural Iowa setting. Jim and Kevin served up fresh roasting ears and grilled hamburgers with all the fixings and more. Around 40 people attended the event. It was a fun afternoon visiting with old friends and catching up on the news. Thanks to Kevin and Jim for hosting!



Jim Gillespie and Kevin Kuhn



Part of the Group Enjoying Lunch



Tom Burkheiser, Kevin McCall, Jim Gillespie, Margaret Henderson and Greg Mathis



Lee and Alice White, Duane Miller, and Alan Lauver

The ARCSE Annual Meeting was held in Des Moines on August 7th. See the report elsewhere in this newsletter. Iowa retirees who attended the meeting included: **Marty Adkins,**

Bob Dayton, Tom O'Connor, Bruce Wight, Dave Beck, Lee White, Lyle and Charlotte Asell, Don and Kay Peterson, Brian and Kathy Peterson, Scott Osborn, Jody Christiansen, Dale Bruce, Jim Gillespie, Larry Beeler, Ernie Aust, Bruce Trautman, Marvin Brown, and Mark Jensen. Congratulations to **Brian Peterson** for receiving the ARCSE President's Award for Outstanding Community Service. It was certainly well deserved. **Lyle Asell** and Kevin Kuhn made a presentation about the history of Iowa agriculture. It was very interesting. Thanks Lyle and Kevin!

On June 30th, **Doug Morningstar**, Area Engineer in Williamsburg, joined our retiree family. On July 6th, an open house/retirement party was held for Doug at the Lake Iowa Nature Center near Ladora. Doug's career extended over 40 years, nearly all of it in southeast Iowa. He was very well liked and well respected as shown by the large number of retirees and current employees who attended the party. Congratulations Doug!



Doug Receiving Plaque from Acting STC Neil Dominy



Doug and Mary Morningstar



Doug Receiving Clock from Acting ASTC(FO) Aaron Musselman

Thanks to **Suzette Betts** for the following about **Les** and their son **Chris**: “Les Betts, former District Conservationist in Keosauqua, who served in various positions from 1976–2006, is giving us a little insight into how he spends some of his ‘free’ time. He and his son, **Chris Betts** are both avid hunters. In 2010 they began a new business making unique patented duck calls and had some well-known customers, like those guys from the reality show *Duck Dynasty*. In 2018, Chris sold the patent and ventured into another hunting product. Chris created a company called “Rutted-Up Blinds” which manufactures custom-made high-end deer blinds. Chris designed the product and now has dealers in several states and has a growing market share. He has three ‘employees,’ one of which is his Dad, Les. Les is the errand boy, sounding board, and cheap labor! He spends about one third of his time at their cabin property assisting Chris in his manufacturing shop. He and his wife Suzette have a home in North Liberty as well. Les and Chris have several blinds as demos on their whitetail deer property in Van Buren County. Check out the website: Rutted-Up.com.” Deer hunters, you’ve gotta take a look at this!



Rutted-Up Gladiator Deer Blind



Load of Rutted-Up High Single Deer Blinds Being Shipped Out

Here’s another feel-good story about one of our retiree’s kids. The Iowa State Fair is, perhaps not even arguably, the biggest and best state fair in the country. Okay, I may be just slightly biased! Last March, **Jeremy Parsons**, son of **Jerry Parsons**, retired Soil Conservation Technician in Decatur County, took over as the manager and CEO of the Iowa State Fair. Jeremy grew up around fairs as Jerry was active on the Decatur County Fair Board and served as its president. Jeremy worked for several years as the CEO of the Missouri State Fair Foundation and then for many more years as the manager and CEO of the large Clay County Fair in northwest Iowa. In 2022, he was honored as Fairman of the Year by the Association of Iowa Fairs. **Ann** and I took our grandsons to the fair one day, then we spent another day there without the boys. As always it was a lot of fun and way too much food! If you would like to read more about Jeremy, he is featured in a [Country Characters](#) article in the August/September issue of the “Our Iowa” magazine. The Iowa State Fair tradition continues on and will for many years to come with Jeremy providing the direction and leadership.

Todd Duncan sent an update on what has been keeping him busy since retiring. “I am farming in northeast Iowa in Winneshiek County and with my Dad in Illinois – so just enjoying retirement. The logistics of farming both places makes it interesting. I have the time and freedom to go back and forth as needed. One of the farms is my Grandma’s farm. She turns 102 this month, so it makes it rewarding for family to be able to farm the land.”

Lynn and Candy Betts celebrated their 50th anniversary on July 21st. They appreciated the many anniversary wishes they received that helped them celebrate, including those from retired SCS/NRCSers. Congratulations! What-a milestone!

Eldon Weber reports that he is looking for ideas he can use to try to keep squirrels out of his bird feeders. He says that baffles and other deterrents haven’t been effective. One of his relatives provided him with a good slow cooker squirrel stew recipe, but he’s a little hesitant to use that idea. If you have a proven method that works, Eldon would like to hear it! (*Editor’s note: try a length of metal drier vent pipe near the bottom of the pole*)

Kay Steffes, Civil Engineering Technician in southwest Iowa, joined our retiree family on June 30th.

During the past couple of months, we have been saddened by the passing of four of our retiree family. **Hal Cosby**, retired Area Conservationist in Fort Dodge and Liaison in the Soil Tilth Laboratory at Iowa State University passed away on July 25th. **Wayne Raasch**, retired long time Civil Engineering Technician in the Audubon Engineering Office, passed away on July 12th. **Jane Schnoor**, wife of **Roger Schnoor**, retired Civil Engineer on the Watershed Planning Staff in Des Moines, passed away on August 1st. **Charles (Chuck) Fisher**, a soil scientist in South Dakota and Iowa before becoming the State Soil Scientist in Michigan, retired in 1985 and passed away on August 17th.

KANSAS

Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative

Email: rlull2@cox.net

Editor's Note: Deanne Lull has taken ill and will no longer be able to be the Kansas ARCSE Representative. Thank you, Deanne, for your years of keeping us up-to-date on Kansas retiree activities!

MAINE

John Simon, ARCSE Representative

Email: jjhorseshoe39@icloud.com

Last Tuesday (July 11th) our breakfast was attended by: **Art Taylor, Bob Lagassey, Chris Jones, Dan Baumert, and John Simon**. See the attached photo.

Chris Jones and the rest of us recalled all the places we have worked for SCS/NRCS and all the people we worked with: **Ralph Walker, Bryce MacCuen, S. Von Day, John Malley, Dave Garcelon, Dan Schmidt** and many others. Great stories about great people!

Dan Baumert says his large garden is going crazy! He will bring veggies for us next month! So if you show up you can enjoy Dan's garden. The price is good also (0.0 \$/lb). Dan said that in spite of the erratic weather, he is having a great year with his garden (he harvests between rain events!).

Bob Lagassey did me a favor by translating a 1959 letter from my Mom's sister in California. that **Noreen** and I found that was written in French. Thanks Bob! Bob commented that he was going back to read letters from his Mom when he was away at school. Unfortunately, I kept none of the letters sent to me by my Dad after I left home! Big mistake by me.

Art Taylor enjoyed his show-and-tell open house in June. Somehow someone should help Art get his write-up in a magazine. **Norm Kalloch** is a respected writer who really knows how to tell a story, maybe he could spice up Art's write-up? Art always said that he thought that many of us had a subconscious spiritual component to working with the land and farmers. I Think Art is right.

Speaking of the spiritual thing reminds me that I recently traded in my 20-year-old Taurus and miss it a lot. The rust that was eating out the body and reminded me of how my own bodily rust is also eating at my body! I hope when I trade-in my body that I get a souped-up version! Like my new fancy-smanchly Rogue Sport. At 84 I can see the body trade-in coming on too fast!

I can't possibly include all the funny stories we passed along about the folks we all worked with, but some of them were funny, others sad, others really interesting. See what you all are missing. You all know what a blabber mouth I am, but **Chris** is pretty good also. He is a lot of fun! Dan is a close third.

Tuesday (August 8th) our breakfast was attended by a small group: Attending were **Art Taylor, Karen and Bruce Champeon, and John Simon**. According to Karen, Bruce had four trips to the emergency room in August (ugh). He is awful tired but is recovering well. John spent the month with sciatic pain! For info on John's web searches on sciatic pain contact him or do your own web search. It seems that us 70 and 80 year old retirees support the medical establishment big-time.



Art, Bob, Chris, Dan, and John - a good crew!



Art Taylor, Bruce Champeon, John Simon



Karen Champeon and Art Taylor

'Till next month take care and God bless.

MIDATLANTIC STATES

Ken Carter, ARCSE Representative

Email: duckheadone@gmail.com

Ken Carter and wife just returned from a British Isle cruise with stops in England, Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Norway. Great trip but driving on the other side of the road is scary, especially at roundabouts.



White Cliffs of Dover



Norwegian bait and tackle shop.

John Peterson reported: Saturday we left Massanutten at 6am and got to Hilton Head Island at 6:30pm. Blanche helped drive as it is 633 miles from Massanutten (580 from home). In one day we went from mountains, many pine and hardwood tree species, deer, black bears, groundhogs, skunks, foxes, eagles, vultures, cardinals, and many other birds, to palm trees, magnolia and palmetto trees, deer, alligators, eagles, cormorants, great blue herons, snowy egret's, pelican's, sea gulls, and bats. We both realize how fortunate we are to be able to still do this.

In August **John and Blanche Peterson** spent two weeks at the Massanutten Resort in the Blue Ridge Mountains of VA on an annual trip with those grandchildren who can still make it. As happens in life, many of them have their own schedules

as they get older. Two of their granddaughters are off to college this year. **Lilly Dube** is at UMaine and **Emily Baily** is at The U of Mary Washington. After a fun time at Massanutten visiting many of the area's fine vineyards, the Peterson's spent another week at Hilton Head Island, SC which they fell in love with many years ago. The Atlantic Ocean beaches and great seafood are attractions.

We move slowly now but manage. And later this year we will travel to Telemark Resort near Cable, WI (the big woods near Lake Superior), and the Samoset Resort near Rockland, ME (the lobster capital of the world and the Atlantic Ocean), visiting family in both places. This week we will enjoy HHI, the Atlantic Ocean, and great seafood. Pictures are of the vegetation near our condo's at Massanutten Mountain and the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Hilton Head Island.



John Peterson, Paul Steyn, and Blanch Peterson

Blanche's brother **Jerry** and his wife **Kathy** have spent a couple months each year on Maui in Hawaii not far from the

tragic fire in Lahaina. It may be some time before they can return. Blanche and I visited Lahaina in 2019. As we look at all our pictures and see what is there now, it is hard to describe. And many people are still unaccounted for. Some may never be found and identified.

John Peterson also reported: We attended the Memorial Service for **Joan Steyn**. Joan was **Paul Newcombe's** fiancée. Joan was 95 and had a very productive life of service. She and Paul had 18 years together. Ron and Ann Marlow were also there. If there were other SCS/NECS retirees, I didn't recognize them, which seems to happen to me more often nowadays. We also saw Paul's son **Keith** for the first time in 20–30 years. Keith coached our son **Pat** when Pat played baseball at St. Paul VI (PVI) HS school about 1985.

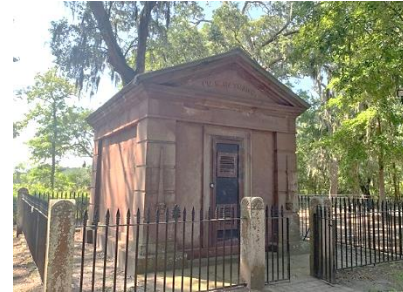
Zion Cemetery. Situated on just under three acres and nestled beneath a cluster of live oak trees at the edge of a marsh, you might just miss it if you're traveling along the north end of William Hilton Parkway. Home to the oldest standing structure on the island, Zion Cemetery is a true historical gem right here on Hilton Head Island. Walking around the small plot of hallowed land, you'll start to notice how very weathered the various gravestones and markers are.

Many of the graves date back to the Revolutionary War era, causing some to be nearly illegible due to centuries of exposure. The focal point of the cemetery is Baynard Mausoleum, a single giant stone tomb constructed in 1846 by **William E. Baynard**, a local plantation owner. The mausoleum resides at the far edge of the cemetery. A plaque at the entrance to the cemetery reads, "Zion Chapel of Ease Cemetery: A Chapel of St. Luke's Parish, established May 23, 1767, built of wood shortly after 1786 under the direction of **Captain John Stoney** and Isaac Fripp, was consecrated in 1833. Members of the Barksdale, Baynard, Chaplin, Davant, Fripp, Kirk, Mathews, Pope, Stoney, and Webb families worshipped here.

By 1868 the chapel was destroyed." While the chapel is long gone, the mausoleum and cemetery remain a historic landmark and serve as an important reminder of a time that came before. Chiseled into headstone after headstone are the names of people who left their marks on Hilton Head, and in a sense the Baynard Mausoleum and Zion Cemetery have served to preserve and protect the many stories that lie buried there. Built around 1845 by William E. Baynard, one of the island's wealthy cotton plantation owners, the mausoleum served the needs of the dead, but the inscription on its wall urged the survivors to live with "Integrity and Uprightness."

Some of the torches on the walls were installed upside down to symbolize a life cut short. Baynard himself died in 1849 at the age of 49. This was just four years after the mausoleum was completed. Both Baynard and his wife were buried in the mausoleum. The cemetery is also the final resting place of several Revolutionary War patriots: **Lt. Isaac Baldwin** and his wife, **Martha Baldwin**; **James and Lydia Davant**; and **Charles Davant**, who was ambushed while out on patrol; his was the only known patriot death on the island. Built beside the first church on the island, Zion Chapel of Ease, the mausoleum was part of the South Carolina Diocese Episcopal Church of St. Luke's Parish. Founded by **Capt. Jack "Saucy" Stoney** and **Isaac Fripp**, the chapel was built as a convenience for parishioners who didn't want to journey to Bluffton for services. The congregation grew under its first

pastor, **Phillip Mathews**, for whom the street beside the cemetery is named. Eventually, the church building was among the many casualties of the Civil War, but the cemetery still remains today.



Baynard Mausoleum



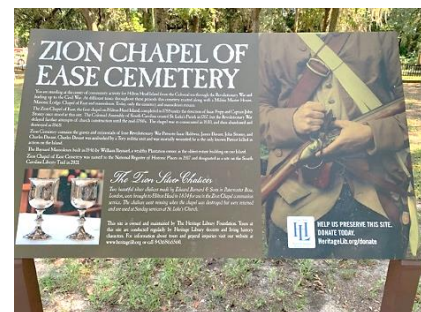
James Davant & wife



Charles Davant grave



CPT Stoney grave



Entrance sign.

MISSOURI

Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative

Email: daverastorfer@aol.com, moarscse@aol.com

The Columbia area retirees met for their quarterly breakfast on August 9th at JJ's Restaurant in Columbia. In attendance were the following: **Gail Sallee, Odie and Deb Swanegan and grandson Gabriel Swanegan, Jean Herman, Rita Thomas Mueller Williams, Kevin Williams, Gena Michalson, Robert Herschbach, Robert Hummel, John Turner, Ed and Judy Smith, Frank Miller, Troy Chockley, Jack and Carol Cronhardt, Larry and Bonnie Pollard, Jerry Edwards and Dave Rastorfer.** The next quarterly breakfast will be held at JJ's on November 8th. All retirees are welcome.

Roger Hansen: (July update on his hip replacement): Just to let you know I am doing good. Pain is minimal and I am starting to walk around the house without using a walker. Getting a new hip is much easier than getting a new knee! I use the walker to walk along the street in front of our house. So far, everything is good.

Mike Blane: Things were not good on August 4th and 5th in Baring. That night a tornado almost destroyed the whole town. The senior housing apartments were totally destroyed. It happened at 11 at night. All residents were in bed, but miraculously no one was killed or even seriously hurt. The post office, a brick one story building, was totally destroyed. The only café in town was destroyed. Many houses just disappeared. We were on vacation and got home Sunday to many of our trees broken and laying in the yard. Our house was not hurt. A crew from our church came Monday with tools and equipment and cleaned up the trees. A neighbor and I have spent many hours picking up debris from our hay field around the house. I am so sorry for all the people in Baring that have lost everything. The large Mennonite population in this area have worked nonstop since Saturday cleaning up the town. What a blessing they are. Praise God no one was killed. Pray for the residents, many of which are older, retired, and have little income.

Joyce Walker: Sorry to give you this news but **Jack Walker** passed away on July 28th. Funeral is scheduled for August 3 visitation at 9am, funeral service mass at 10AM. Christ the King Catholic Church 85th St. and Wornal Road, Kansas City, MO.
<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/kansas-city-mo/john-j-walker-11388242>

Alton Taylor: Our trip to Alaska was all and more than expected. Since it takes a week to get there and same to get home, that leaves only a week but that is enough to see the real Alaska one mile at a time. We saw so much country that tour buses never get to. It gets a lot of rain and snow, and the result was everything was green. A good amount of this is runoff, so you have water in even small creeks, mountains are steep so water falls are everywhere. This then has all of the natural lakes full all the time and it seem to me that each creek or river had one natural lake after another. Just ask our geologist to clear that up. I am sure that that is a story in itself. Hope the weatherman checks the calendar and realizes it is almost September and give us some cool weather.

Dennis Shirk: Howdy folks, **Lois** and I just returned from a trip to Ecuador. It was a trip of a life time for us. We went to visit our daughter and her family. She is a family nurse-practitioner, and her husband is a preacher. It is amazing how God is using them. Keep them in your prayers.

Rita Thomas Mueller Williams: We sure enjoyed visiting with folks at NRCS/SCS retiree breakfast in Columbia in August. We were all reminiscing and trying to remember some coworkers' names from forty years ago (when I started working while in college in 1983), and **Jean Herman** still remembers everyone! Thanks to all of you for being so nice and welcoming.

Husband **Kevin** and I vacationed in beautiful Sedona, Arizona, in June. We golfed at Seven Canyons Golf Club, Sedona Golf Resort, and Oakcreek Country Club. We hiked several days and even visited the Boynton Canyon Vortex, and yes, we felt the terrific whirlwind when we leaned against Kachina Woman Rock Formation (hippy dippy, I know).

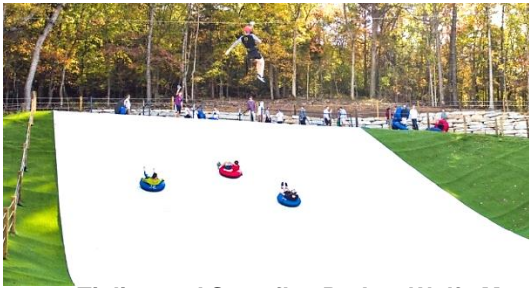
We are enjoying six-month old granddaughter **Gemma (Nicholas' daughter)**. We had a fun-filled week with 13-year-old granddaughter **Bella (Kevin's son Christopher's daughter)** – ziplined and snowflexed (I had not "sledded" in years), golfed, went swimming, visited Crystal Cave, and played bocce ball, volleyball, and board games.



Kevin and Rita Williams at Enchantment Resort in Sedona, Arizona



Kevin and Rita Williams at Sedona Golf Resort (most photographed Par 3 in Southwestern United States)



Branson Zipline and Snowflex Park at Wolfe Mountain

Troy Chockley: Brief summary of my motorcycle trip and a couple of pictures: Alaska Highway and Tour of Alaska, my brother, **Scott**, and I did. We rode to Alaska and then took a ferry from Haines Alaska to Bellingham Washington. Returned home following Route 2 just south of Canadian border. We were on the road for 51 days and travelled 8,525 miles on motorcycle.

The Alaska Highway starts in Dawson Creek, British Columbia, (the picture with motorcycles by the sign). It is 2,000 miles from Jefferson City to Dawson creek. The end of the Alaska Highway is Delta Junction Alaska, (picture of the sign). The Alaska Highway length is 1,422 miles.

We visited Fairbanks, Denali, Anchorage, Kenai, Homer, Valdez, and Haines while in Alaska. I had no trouble, the old Kawasaki Concours 1000 made the trip. My brother's motorcycle had mechanical issues, and they couldn't get parts. He ended up shipping the motorcycle home and bought another motorcycle to complete the trip. Overall, it was a good adventure. (**Troy Chockley**, retired 2023.)



The Alaska Highway starts in Dawson Creek, British Columbia



The end of the Alaska Highway is Delta Junction Alaska

MONTANA

Lori Valadez, ARCSE Representative

Email: valadez226@gmail.com

Gooby Ranch Report: Mary Ann bought me a battery-powered chainsaw for Father's Day. That was really nice of her. She charged the battery and took the saw out to the pile of logs to see how it worked. I was going to go out with her, but it was my nap time. When I woke up, I went out to see what was going on, and Mary Ann had sawed wood 'till the battery was out of power, and she was hooking it up to the charger. She said she really liked the chainsaw.

Every day for a couple of weeks Mary Ann spent over an hour sawing wood. After a few days I sharpened the chainsaw chain, and Mary Ann was really proud of me for doing that. I offered to saw some logs, but Mary Ann said "No, I might get hurt." She didn't want me out by the logs since one would probably roll on me. Thanks to Mary Ann I got to watch another movie.

A couple of days later Mary Ann went out to saw wood. I looked over the available movies, and none of them turned me on, so I decided to go out and do a work improvement study of Mary Ann's wood sawing. I did a bunch of time-in-motion studies while Mary Ann was sawing wood. After watching her for over an hour, the only suggestion I came up with was for her to do more lifting with her legs while she is sawing, and it would take less time to cut a piece of wood. Mary Ann incorporated my suggestion and was really proud of me for helping save her time.

For Mother's Day I got Mary Ann a maul and wedge to split the wood. I was going to go out and use it to split wood. When Mary Ann seen what I was going to do, she told me that it was her present, so she was the wood splitter – not me.

From now on if we need a tool that requires a lot of work, I'm getting it for Mary Ann's birthday or Mother's Day.

Report from **Mark Johnson**, Area Programs Manager in Bozeman who retired in 2016. Retirement has been great so far. My wife, **Kelly**, and I moved from Bozeman, Montana, back to Cut Bank, Montana, in 2021 to be near all our grandkids. Three boys (5, 3 and 3 1/2) and an 8-month-old girl. They are keeping us busy. I have been helping with small grain harvest with my son-in-law and renewing old friendships.

NEBRASKA

Norm Kempf, Jim Culver, ARCSE Representatives

Emails: nkempf@neb.rr.com, j4culver@aol.com

The June 21st meeting was called to order by President **Craig Derickson**. Attending were **Doug Christensen, Bob Engel, Harold Klaege, Dave Camper, Richard Bolli, Gus Dornbusch, Jim Culver, Craig Derickson, Steve Scheinost, Gerald Montgomery, JoAnne Thiele, Steve Grube, Donna Dornbusch, Norman Kempf, and Sylvia Kempf**. Guests attending were **Rob Lawson, Nebraska State Conservationist, and Brad Soncksen, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs**.

The July 19th meeting was called to order by President **Craig Derickson**. Attending were: **Sylvia Kempf, JoAnne Thiele, Doug Christensen, Harold Klaege, Norman Kempf, Jim Culver, Norm Helzer, Richard Bolli, Gus Dornbusch, Steve Stover, Donna Dornbusch, Steve Scheinost, Craig Derickson, Dana Snyder, Gerald Montgomery, Thomas Reinsch, and Dave Camper**.

The August 16th meeting was called to order by President **Craig Derickson**. Attending were **JoAnne Thiele, Gus Dornbusch, Paul Bartlett, Richard Bolli, Jim Culver, Gary Muckel, Craig Derickson, Bob Engel, Louie Buller, Harold Klaege, Donna Dornbusch, and Norm Helzer**.

Rob Lawson and Brad Soncksen joined us to talk about the NRCS Conservation Programs and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA); a handout on the IRA was given to each attendee. A copy of the handout can be obtained at NRCS Conservation Programs and the Inflation Reduction ACT (IRA) on your computer. The IRA provides USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with \$19.5 billion in additional funds over five years for its existing conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQI), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). The IRA directs NRCS to use these additional funds specifically for climate change mitigation activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon storage. New staff is being brought in and trained to help implement this new program. These funds must be used by September 2031. Both Rob and Brad then took questions about the new IRA.

Harold Klaege stated that LB754 was approved to begin January 1st, 2024, to exempt Federal annuities from Nebraska state taxes. He, along with others from NARFE, will meet with Congressmen Don Bacon and Mike Flood about pay raises for FERS employees.

A group of individuals in Lincoln are working to establish a Nebraska soil health coalition to implement the activities described in the Soil Health Task Force Report and LB925. **Craig Derickson** is involved with this group.

Craig also announced that some are considering the idea of expanding the Lincoln retirees group to a statewide group. **Norm Kempf** said there had been talks through the years about holding other types of get-togethers to keep all retirees involved. **JoAnne Thiele** said that there used to be retirees' meetings in Grand Island but doesn't know what the current status is on this. Craig thought maybe a summer get-together might work to keep retirees up to date on current activities. A starting point might be the ARCSE directory where members could start and expand their contacts. This will be discussed at our next meeting.

Harold Klaege was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) for outstanding leadership in working with Nebraska state senators, NARFE members and others during the 108th Nebraska legislature session, resulting in passage of LB754, a bill reducing Nebraska state income taxes for Federal annuities.

Last month, **Harold Klaege** and others spoke to a legislative assistant to congressional members **Deb Fischer, Mike Flood, and Don Bacon**, seeking to equate FERS pay raises to those under CSRS. Harold also suggested that our retirees might want to consider donating to NARFE Alzheimer's fund with savings from the reduction of Nebraska income taxes from Federal annuities. The NARFE Alzheimer's fund decides which organizations/agencies to send those donations.

Jim Culver, Craig Derickson, and Robin Faulk are working to increase contributions to the SWCS Foundation for scholarships. **Paul Smith** and others started this effort.

Craig passed around a list of retirees who are currently members of ARCSE. Of the 19 members listed, all but three are residents of Lincoln.

Soil health field days held by UNL Sol Health team was held on August 1–3 (co-sponsored by NRCS) and soil health and cover crops on August 22nd. More information can be found at UNL Soil Health Program/Crop Watch.

Craig announced that **Rex Tracy** had passed away; Jim Culver said he had been an Assistant STC in Nebraska. **Donna Lamb** passed away on August 10, 2023. She was the wife of **Bob Lamb**. They worked at several locations and ultimately retired in Red Cloud, NE. **Loyal Arthur Quandt**, 91, of Lincoln passed away August 13th, 2023

Norm Kempf, his son, and others went to Canada to fish. Norm then traveled to Bozeman, Montana, to attend his grandson's graduation.

Norm Kempf said that he had attended his 65th high school graduation reunion in Timberlake, South Dakota, on June 29th. **Craig Derickson** said he had gone to his 50th high school reunion.

Norm Helzer and wife and daughter went to Niagara Falls for a week. **Dana Snyder and wife** traveled to Oregon and Washington in their camper and were stranded on I-90 for three hours because of a lost wheel on their camper

Norm and his wife Sylvia celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 30. Sylvia stated that **Dottie Svendsen and her husband Ed** celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on the same day. **Steve Stover and wife** celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. **Jim Culver and Gus Dornbusch** have birthdays in August.

SWCS National Awards: **Jim Culver**, Society Service Award; **Claudia Steveson**, Society Service Award; and Jim Gilley, ARS, Fellow Award.

Gus Dornbusch recently saw **Sandy Langemeier (Dave's wife)**. She asked him to say hi to everyone.

Craig announced that the soil health group in Nebraska is working to establish an LLC and 501c3 as Nebraska Soil Health Coalition. Craig is part of this group.

Donna Dornbusch said she had listened to public radio coming to the breakfast today, and the community college in Hastings announced the declining enrollment in agricultural related courses. They were encouraging urban youth to consider ag related course work because there were good paying jobs in the agricultural field in rural areas. This led to discussions about the declining population in rural areas, especially among the young people.

There were 40-50 retirees attending the ARCSE meeting in Des Moines, IA, on August 7. **NRCS Chief Terry Cosby** was unable to attend as scheduled because of the death of his brother. **Carrie Lindig, Acting Central Regional Conservationist**, spoke to the group instead. Approximately 700 attended the SWCS conference. NRCS plans to hire about 4,400 new employees and about 3,000 contract employees in the months ahead. Under the MOU, retired employees will be able to mentor those new employees.

Harold Klaege announced that the NARFE chapter meeting will be held August 19th at the First Lutheran Church at 1551 S. 70th Street. One of the topics to be discussed is HR-82, a bill that repeals provisions that reduce social security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits such as pensions from state or local governments (but not Federal employees). The bill is still short of the votes needed to pass.

Gus Dornbusch saw retiree **Jim Harder** last Sunday.

The **Dave Langemeier** Memorial Golf Tournament is September 8th at the Highland Golf Course. Proceeds go to scholarships sponsored by the SWCS Foundation.

Donna Dornbusch was the recording secretary. Submitted by Norman Kempf and Jim Culver.



Craig Erickson, Chairman discussing some of the new NRCS programs during our August meeting. Left To right – Lou Buller, Bob Engel, standing Craig, Gary Muckel, and Richard Bolli.



Quality discussion on the upcoming Nebraska football team. Left to right Craig Derickson, Doug Christensen, standing Dave Camper, Harold Klaege and Norman Kempf. Harold, the showman, was proud of his shirt showing the Nebraska Cornhusker on top and the Ohio State Buckeyes on the bottom.



Craig Derickson, Chairman presenting Harold Klaege, President of the Nebraska Chapter of NARFE a Certificate of Appreciation signed by William Shackelford, National President of NARFE to Harold for his outstanding leadership contributing to Nebraska reducing state income tax on Federal Annuities.



There were excellent Symposium presentations and good participation at the International Soil and Water Conservation Society Conference during the August, 2023 meeting in Des Moines, Iowa.



The 2023 annual meeting of the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees (ARCSE) meeting during the International SWCS Conference in Des Moines was well attended. An excellent agenda and quality presentations contributed to a successful meeting.

NEW JERSEY

Nancy Paolini, ARCSE Representative

Email: npaolini@comcast.net

The NJ Retiree Virtual Meeting was held Sunday, July 23rd, 2023 from 8pm to 9pm using Google Workspace. Eight retirees joined the call as shown in the screen shot below. These included **Thornton Hole**, Soil Scientist, **Carl DuPoldt**, Engineer, **Barbara Phillips**, Public Affairs Specialist, **Ronnie Lee Taylor**, Soil Scientist, **Barbara Osgood**, State Conservationist, **Greg Westfall**, Water Resources Specialist, **Ken Taaffe**, Forester/RC&D Coordinator, **Nancy Paolini**, Resource Conservationist. Three people contacted me the next day and apologized for missing the meeting. (Note to self: retirees need earlier meetings.)



It was a great meeting with everyone taking a few minutes to update us on their activities. Several of us are still working at other jobs, volunteering with the Earth Team and other groups, working as Technical Service Providers, caring for rescue animals, dabbling in local politics as a Mayor, teaching at a local College, writing a book and of course enjoying travel, grandchildren and other family activities.

We are hoping to have our next meeting in person at the new NJ State Office Location in Hamilton, NJ., followed by an informal lunch. Look for more details soon. The plan is to have some meetings in person and some virtual so that people who live far or cannot travel can participate virtually as much as possible.

NORTH DAKOTA

Bob Bird, ARCSE Representative

Email: rajmbird@aol.com

It has been an unusual summer with streaks of really hot weather and then really cool weather, and then times of smoky weather from forest fires in Canada. Not to mention my air conditioner going out during one of the hot streaks with temperatures hitting 101 one of those days. As you will see in the "In Memoriam" column we lost retiree **Mary Baumann**, who was the first woman District Conservationist in North Dakota. In talking with some co-workers in that area this was not without challenges. They said that farmers would come into the office, and she was the only one there, they would say they would come back when one of the men were there. Evidently Mary and the local farmers found ways to cope with this, since she stayed there until she retired with a 30+ year career.

Summer is waning, schools are opening, and footballs are flying, so here's hoping that we have a great colorful fall with leaves turning and weather moderating.

Mary Baumann, 69, Ashley, ND died Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at Ashley Medical Center. Mary was the first woman in North Dakota to hold the title of District Soil Conservationist. Mary is survived by two sons: David Baumann and Jeffery Baumann of Ashley; two daughters: Arika (Jim) Elliott of Fargo, ND and Amy Miller of Ashley; three sisters; and three grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her father, Wesley, and her mother, Annie. Memorials are preferred to the North Dakota Veterans Home, PO Box 673, Lisbon, ND 58054.

OHIO

Mike Monin, ARCSE Representative

Email: mjm427@insight.rr.com

Ohio held its annual NRCS retiree luncheon at a restaurant in the Columbus area. Attached is a photo with attendee list. Last year a bunch of folks had to leave before we could snap a picture (perhaps witness protection program participants), so we punted to 2023.



Front Row – Dot Harris, John Armentano, Nancy Jervis, Lenny Losh. Middle Row – Jim Forshey, Andy Bayham, Bruce Atherton, Jim Stafford, John Crumrine. Back Row – Scott Jerrome, Jon Gerken, Steve Boeder, Art Brate, Mike Monnin.

OREGON

Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative

Email: don.stettler@comcast.net

The summer quarter Oregon retiree lunch was held on July 26th at the Elmer's Restaurant on NE 181st Avenue in northeast Portland. Nineteen attended, which made for a nice turnout. Attending were **Ralph Wadleigh, Stefanie Aschmann, Gale Voge, Bobbie Hart, Patricia Straka, Rick and Randy VanKlavern, Joe Sahlfeld, Kay Denfeld, Lowell Kenedy, Dick and Kathy Sylvester, Beth Zetter and Butch, Don Wallin, Louise Davis, Marcine Richmond, Terry Mitchell**, and myself.

Everyone seemed pleased with Elmer's food and service so most likely we will meet there again next January. We welcomed **Rick and Randy VanKlaveren** who now live in the vicinity of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Currently they are traveling about, visiting friends and family.

A common thread in the group discussion was that their tomatoes were doing well. We can thank the above average temperatures we have had for that. Of course, along with that came four consecutive days in mid-August with high temperatures of over 100 that most of us could have done without.

Joe Sahlfeld told us he had been fishing in Diamond Lake with some success. **Louise Davis** had a nice time at the Salt and Pepper Club convention in Springfield, IL. **Kay Denfeld** has an invasive plant in her yard and doesn't know what it is. It was suggested she take a picture of it with her smart phone and see if the app would identify it. We congratulated **Marcine Richmond** with early happy birthday wishes as she is nearing her 99th birthday. **Stefanie Aschmann** is enjoying helping some immigrants with learning English on Zoom. **Terry Mitchell** recently took a trip to Georgia to visit her brother.

The fall quarter lunch is planned for the third Wednesday in October at a westside location. Watch your email inbox for details.



TEXAS NORTH

Mike Bogard, ARCSE Representative

Email: mbogard41@gmail.com

Ed Schwill wrote: "A big Hello to you my friend. Just how are you doing now that the temp has topped out at about 109/111 here? Me? you ask, right now just sitting in the computer room attempting to respond to all the emails. Well, let's see, Lake Limestone is down a little over two feet, so the lake has more water than 2011. Fish not biting so I pulled my jugs (floating green laundry soap) –none were females.

Ruth and I are doing very well; that is, if I do all the things I'm directed to do by her and any of the docs. Next PET scan is in Nov and we will go from there. I feel good doing what I want – well mainly what I want.

I received a letter thanking us for the Deceased Personnel List. I have received many names to add that you hear about or run down. I told **Willeene** I would continue doing the job taking some of the work back off her. If you have any names that can be added to the Deceased List, I will be more than happy to update.

Guess I got caught up being windy. Wind is surely blowing outside 10-15mph. Take good care of yourself, and I will do the same."

Arnold and Willeene King attended the ARCSE annual meeting at Des Moines, Iowa, held concurrently with the Soil and Water Conservation Society's (SWCS) annual convention. The SWCS annual meeting is a great technical meeting, and it is too bad NRCS employees are not encouraged to join that organization and take advantage of the technology transfer that takes place during that week. As new employees, we were told getting involved with SWCS was a requirement for success in the Soil Conservation Service.

Anyway, we had a great meeting and launched our MOU with NRCS and the new Strategic Plan. At the very least, our organization will have much better exposure to NRCS retirees, and the result should be more memberships. Our members will soon be provided detailed information about plans to forge relationships at the local level through mentoring some of the new employees expected to be hired with new program money. Following the meeting at Des Moines, we headed to Pagosa Springs Colorado to join our daughter and granddaughter at Bruce Spruce Ranch at the base of Wolf Creek Pass. What a great time we had, along with some good trout meals. Leaving Pagosa, we stopped by Dalhart, Texas, and spent the night with friends who bought our house when we left my DC job at Dalhart.

WEST VIRGINIA

Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative

Email: pegreesevw@gmail.com

WVU Soil Judging Coach **Jim Thompson** announced that “the 2023 Southeast Regional Collegiate Soils Contest will be held in Morgantown, WV, during the first week of October. Practice will begin on Monday, October 2, with 12 practice pits scheduled over the three days of preparation prior to the contest on Thursday, October 5. While I have not begun to organize my thoughts on volunteer opportunities, there will definitely be a need for pit monitors and other supporting roles (grading scorecards, shepherding students between pits, etc.) on the contest day (Thursday, October 5). If anybody wants to volunteer more time, there will also be other tasks prior to and during the practice dates (pumping water from wet pits, refreshing the pit faces, checking slope stakes, etc.).

Feel free to suggest other ways in which interested individuals or groups can provide assistance.” As this is an exceptionally busy time for Jim, I am asking that anyone wishing to help with the event e-mail me by Wednesday, September 6th. The e-mail should include the tasks you are willing to do, when you are available to help, and your telephone number. I will consolidate all the information and e-mail it to Jim with a cc to all who are want to help with the event. If you do are not willing to have your e-mail included in a group mailing, please let me know and I will send it to Jim separately. As Jim encouraged, please feel free to include tasks not mentioned by Jim. For example, I plan to get menu guides and tourism information to include in the welcome packets.

Jim is dealing with a lot right now. “With the start of the fall semester, the ongoing WVU Academic Transformation, preparations for the soil judging contest, etc., I am struggling to keep up. As for the Academic Transformation, they announced the next round of recommendations for the ongoing Academic Transformation a little over a week ago. According to the Provost's Office, the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences has a ‘low ratio of majors to faculty, increased expenses, and expenses exceeding revenue annually for the years of analysis.’ While not as drastic as the cuts to the Department of World Languages, we have been told that we need to reduce the number of faculty positions in the department from 21 to 10. (Across campus, there are 169 faculty positions recommended to be cut.) There is an appeals process, but even with three planned retirements in the next few months, there will still be six to eight faculty in my department that will be losing their jobs. Individual faculty will be notified in October if they are included in the Reduction in Force. Not unexpectedly, it is quite grim on campus.” Anyone wishing to make a public comment may do so by September 8th to the Office of the Provost at provost@mail.wvu.edu and the Board of Governors at Valerie.lopez@mail.wvu.edu (Special Assistant.) You can also sign a petition at change.org

WISCONSIN

Deb Legear, ARCSE Representative

Email: deb.legear@gmail.com

Submitted by: **Tim Meyer**

Growing up in Milwaukee, I always told people I was German when asked, although I also knew that my great, great grandfather had married an Irish girl with the maiden name of **Riordan**. I was actually at least 1/8 Irish.

My wife and I recently had the opportunity to visit Ireland. Our trip was through Inishfree Irish Music Tours. “Our tours are for people who don't like tours but who love music and travel.” Our tour guide was the owner of the company, **Paddy Downes**, and we had two musicians, Moors & McCumber from the United States – as tour leaders who traveled with us and performed a few concerts for our group and played in a number of pubs with local Irish musicians. We traveled with a group of 22 people, plus the two musicians, the tour guide, the bus driver, and the manager for the musicians. I highly recommend this type of tour for those who “don't like tours.” After the 10-day tour, we rented a car and traveled for another eight days.

The trip was so enlightening for us, we learned so much about the struggles of the majority of the Irish people over the centuries, the role of Vikings in Ireland, the deep-rooted role that religion played in the country and still affects daily life there. The Irish landscapes and historical remnants left by people long ago are magical. Painted sheep and ancient rock walls are in almost every scene in the vibrantly green countryside.

The tour guide, when learning of our post-tour travel and my 1/8 Irish heritage, was kind enough to make an appointment for me at the Skibbereen Heritage Center to try and find out something about my “Irish side.” The explosion of ancestry searches led to astounding surprises in some people's family trees so maybe I had an Irish King in my background and a castle waiting to be claimed!



I found no Irish King but did find out that my relatives are all originally from the beautiful County Kerry near Killarney National Park. I found where they were baptized and married. I know that they were likely poor farmers that didn't own any land (or castles), and they probably left Ireland during the years when western Ireland was stricken with the potato blight and people were starving. My guess is that the government in England, ruling over Ireland at the time, may have paid the fares of my relatives to send them to the US so they didn't rise up and revolt. The UK may have avoided a large-scale revolt back in the mid-1800s by sending starving possible dissidents overseas, but that would come later with the IRA, and discontent with British rule remains strong today with many in Northern Ireland. Strong feelings also exist even in those only 1/8 Irish.

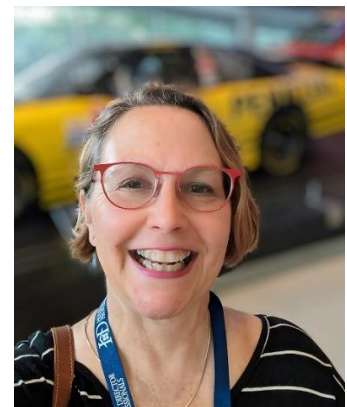


Submitted by **Julie MacSwain**

In June I traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina for a National House Director Conference. I was one of three House Mothers from Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity who attended the training. From start to finish, the content, speakers, and networking was top notch.



Photo of Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity Chapter House in River Falls, Wisconsin.



Julie MacSwain visiting the NASCAR National Hall of Fame in Charlotte, North Carolina

Now the fun begins. A training session will be scheduled to gather all House Directors from Alpha Gamma Rho nation-wide. Serving as a House Mother in River Falls, Wisconsin has been a good fit for me in retirement.

Submitted by: **Deb LeGear**

The retirees met in northeastern Wisconsin on August 4th for a tour of a potato farm and museum prior to attending a luncheon at Swartzendruber supper club. There were 18 of us in attendance for the luncheon.

The potato farm tour was interesting to a former IT person like me. I had my granddaughters, **Norah** and **Gracelynn**, along as we were heading south to begin a vacation immediately after the luncheon. The soil scientists always have a lot of interesting questions for the tour guide about the distance between plant, type of equipment used, soil type, type of potato plant, other locations where the potatoes are grown and harvested, etc. And it is always nice to learn new things too.



Back Row (L-R) Kim Goerg, Dave Omernick, Bill Kowalski, Linda Kowalski, Deb LeGear. Front Row (L-R) John Campbell, Kate Kelly, Norah Burmeister, Gracelynn Eslinger.



Standing in back: Vic Price. Sitting (L-R) Jean Omernick, Dave Omernick, Jan Mitchell



Sitting (L-R), John Campbell, Bill Kowalski, Linda Kowalski, Kate Kelly



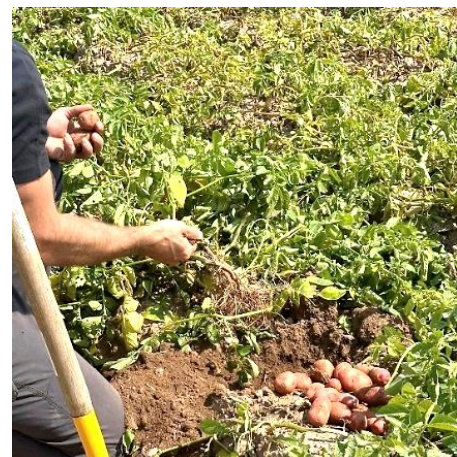
Sitting (L-R) Howard Gundlach, Susan Gundlach, Dan Lynch



Standing in back: Deb LeGear. Sitting (L-R) Norah Burmeister, Gracelynn Eslinger.



(L-R) Lori Van Hulle, Darryl Ellis, Kim Georg, Susan Georg



Tour guide dug up some seed potatoes



Tour guide showing us some of the old equipment in the Potato Museum

SENIOR CONSERVATIONISTS: Senior Conservationists have reached the minimum age of 83 years and have completed the Senior Conservationist Questionnaire (download at <https://arcsecommunications.wordpress.com/senior-conservationists/>). 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.

SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

Senior Conservationist

Ross L. Ulmer

Ross Ulmer was born 02/24/1939 in Angola, Indiana. He earned his BS degree in agricultural engineering in 1961, at Purdue University. He grew up on a dairy farm in northern Indiana. He began his career on the SCS Engineering Staff in West Lafayette, Indiana, in 1961. He served in the US Army in Germany from 1962 to 1964, then returned to the SCS as Project/Area Engineering from 1965 to 1970 in Sullivan, Indiana. He was a Planning Engineer from 1970 to 1974 in Paoli, Indiana. He served as Assistant State Engineer in Jackson, Mississippi, from 1974 through 1994, when he retired from the NRCS.

He worked part time for an engineering firm in Jackson, Mississippi from 1994 through 2002. He was also an engineering consultant on small dams in Jackson, Mississippi, from 1994 through 2002, and an engineering consultant on small dams in McDonough, Georgia from 2002 through 2020.

He currently serves as Deacon in his Church and also teaches Sunday School. He enjoys traveling, gardening, and fishing and says that he is blessed with good health. He cruised the Panama Canal in April of 2023.

You can reach Ross at 325 The Gables Dr., McDonough, Georgia 30253; 770-833-4955; ruengrg@att.net. He married **Patricia** in 1960. She died in 2014. He is married to **Marilyn** and has one son, one daughter, and two grandchildren.

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 internet, Paul Benedict will be glad to do the search. PLEASE SEND DEATH NOTICES AND OBITUARY INFORMATION DIRECTLY TO PAUL BENEDICT AT 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 www.arcse.org)
Baumann	2023	Mary K. Baumann (69) of Ashley, North Dakota, passed away August 9, 2023, at the Ashley Medical Center. Mary Kathryn Eisenbeis , daughter of Annie (Becker) and Wesley Eisenbeis , was born at Jamestown, North Dakota on February 5, 1954. She grew up on a farm 5 miles west of Streeter, North Dakota. She attended North Dakota State University, graduating with a degree in agriculture and a minor in animal science. Beginning in Killdeer, ND she started her 30+ year career with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and becoming the first woman in the state of North Dakota to hold the title of District Conservationist. She finished her career in Ashley in 2009. She went on to work for the Ashley Tribune for several years part time, but the rest of her time would be filled with things that were important to her; photography, traveling, reading, gardening, and jigsaw puzzles. Nothing compares though to the time she got to spend with her grandkids. Mary is survived by two sons, David Baumann and Jeffery Baumann of Ashley; two daughters, Arika (Jim) Elliott of Fargo, North Dakota, and Amy Miller of Ashley; and three grandchildren, Emerson , Wyatt and Mason . Mary's family prefers memorials to the North Dakota Veterans Home, PO Box 673, Lisbon, ND 58054.
Blakley	2023	ARCSE Life Member Earl Ray Blakley (88) of Fort Worth, Texas, passed away July 31, 2023, doing what he liked to do - working outside in his yard. Earl spent his career working as a soil scientist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, retiring in 1995. He is preceded in death by his wife Delores , and survived by his daughter, Lori Blakley . He was a loving

		person, with a servant's heart. All who knew him were impacted in a positive way. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Habitat for Humanity or Live Thankfully.
Brown	2023	John Robert Brown (93) of Hawesville, Kentucky, passed away peacefully on February 9, 2023, with his family at his side at the Heartford House residential facility of Hospice of Western Kentucky in Owensboro, Kentucky. He was born on April 27, 1929, to John Robert and Georgia Jane Jump Brown in Hardin County, Kentucky. At age 18, he moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky to attend Western Kentucky University where he studied agriculture. After finishing college John was drafted into the United States Army. He was stationed in Germany from 1951-1953 as an Army Medic with the 43rd division. At the end of his first enlistment, he was given the option to re-enlist and was commissioned an officer in the Army Reserves from 1953 until 1981. He retired in 1981 as a Lieutenant Colonel having served proudly for 30 years. In 1961, he met and fell in love with his future wife Betty Leasor in Henderson, Kentucky. John and Betty married on January 6, 1962. They went immediately to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas where John had been called up to active duty because of the Cuban missile crisis. During their assignment to Arkansas, John and Betty made life-long friends and traveled the country in their VW "bug". In 1965, John was assigned to Hancock County as a Soil Conservationist with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Over the next 30 years, John assisted local farmers with all farming issues and designed and sited many of the lakes and ponds in Hancock County. He was a member of and actively involved at Immaculate Conception Church. He served on the Hawesville Water Board for many years. If you have bought a famous Lion's Club corn dog at the Hancock County Fair, it is likely that John made it. John retired from the Soil Conservation Service in 1988. He went on to work for the Hancock County Chamber of Commerce as the Executive Director for ten years. He was responsible for beginning the Annual Farm City Dinner that many people still enjoy today. When retirement came, John and Betty started spending their winters in Florida and began traveling extensively. John treasured his time in Florida and made wonderful friends. He detested cold weather and loved to call home telling how warm it was in Florida. He never forgot that he was a Kentuckian through and through and loved following the University of Kentucky Wildcats basketball. John was preceded in death by his wife Betty in 2020 and infant daughter Beverly . Survivors include his daughter, Brenda Brown ; his son, Bradley Brown and his daughter, Beth Harshman (Scott) ; and his grandchildren, Emma Harshman , David Harshman , Kaliff Brown , and Mariah Brown . A Mass of Christian burial was held February 13, 2023 at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Hawesville, followed by burial with full military honors in Mt. Calvary Cemetery.
Cosby	2023	Hal Cosby (74) of Cypress, Texas, passed away July 25, 2023. Hal was born on July 19, 1949, in Enid, Mississippi to the late George Willie and Gertrude Cosby . Hal graduated from Alcorn State University in May 1971 with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education. Hal married his childhood sweetheart Pearlene Johnson on May 3, 1975. Hal had a long career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (Natural Resources Conservation Service). He started as an intern in 1968 in Montana and then as an employee after college in 1971. He was a Soil Conservationist in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and later held the District Conservationist role in Clear Lake, South Dakota and Boone, Iowa. He was promoted to Area Conservationist in Fort Dodge, Iowa and served as a Liaison in the Soil Tilt Laboratory at Iowa State University. He retired after 36 years from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2007. In the same year, he and his wife relocated to Cypress, Texas. Hal dedicated 19 years to being an amazing caregiver to his wife, Pearlene, after her massive stroke in 2004. He loved playing golf, playing the piano, watching westerns, and learning about the stock market. He was a devoted 16-year member of The Church Without Walls in Houston, Texas, where he served as an usher, a member of the Momentum Men's Ministry and the SALT Ministry. Survivors include his wife of 48 years, Pearlene Cosby ; his daughter Tanisha Harrell and son in love Jamon Harrell , his daughter Taneeka Cosby ; and his four grandchildren Elijah Cosby , Lincoln Harrell , Kendall Harrell and Amya Cofield . He is also survived by his brother Terry Cosby , Chief of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.
Evans	2023	Senior Conservationist and ARCSE Life Member William R. "Bill" Evans (88) of Lewiston, Idaho, passed away peacefully at home on July 7, 2023, with his wife and family by his side. Bill was born on August 18, 1934, in Wichita Falls, Texas, to parents Robert James Evans and Ruth Etta Martin Evans . Bill married the love of his life, Jeanne Dickerson , on June 5, 1954. The two of them had just celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary the month prior to his passing. Bill graduated from Texas Agriculture and Mechanical College, now known as Texas A&M University, in 1956, with a degree in Agricultural Engineering. Bill was very proud of his time at A&M where he learned to greet everyone he met with a resounding "Howdy," and played tuba in the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band for the four years he attended A&M. After graduation Bill went to work for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) with time out to satisfy his military obligation at Fort Eustis, Virginia., for six months, then returned to the SCS at Spearman, Texas, with stints in San Angelo, Texas; Boise, Davis, California.; Portland, Oregon.; Denver, Colorado., and returned to finish out his career with the SCS in Portland and retired in 1990, as the Head of the Engineering Staff at West National Technical Staff serving 13 western states. In 1993, Bill and Jeanne moved to the country outside of Kooskia, Idaho, to a small acreage where they raised miniature horses and enjoyed the serenity of living on Clear Creek. Also, during this time Bill worked as an Enumerator for the USDA-Statistical Service collecting agricultural data for Northern Idaho. He was a long-time member of the Lions Club and served as District Governor from 1997-1998 and received the Lions Club's Melvin Jones Award. He also was a member of the Masonic Lodge. Bill's survivors include his wife, Jeanne, at their home in Lewiston; three children: Kyra Baerlocher (Bruce) , Moses Lake, Washington; Kyle Evans (Gayle) , Brush Prairie, Washington; and Keith Evans (Kristi) , Lewiston; Grandchildren: Alan Baerlocher , Natalie Baerlocher , Marsha Baerlocher , Kendra Evans , Kayla Lantgios , Kelsie Kriebel , Connor Evans , and Amelia Evans ; and six great-grandchildren.
Firor	2023	Edna B. Firor (92) of Athens, Georgia passed away on August 1, 2023. Edna's first husband was Charles Waymon Bartlett , former State Conservationist of North Carolina, and later Georgia for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Charles, a United States Army Veteran of World War II, passed away at age 49 in 1975 after an illness while serving as State Conservationist in Georgia. Edna was born on September 12, 1930, she was the daughter of the late Luther C. Bridges and Lucile Hall Bridges of Vienna, Georgia. Edna loved cooking and gardening but most of all loved her family. She was a homemaker and always made sure everyone was cared for. She was very active in the community and enjoyed volunteering. In addition to her first husband, Charles, Edna was preceded in death by her second husband, David Firor ; daughter, Linda Claire Bartlett Cohen and son-in-law, Stephen McKim . Survivors include, her children, Charles Walton Bartlett (Paula) , Susan Marie Bartlett McKim ; grandchildren Aram Cohen (Dyana) , Jennifer Barros (Jeff) , Jonathan Bartlett (Miriam) , Rachel Cruz (Andrew) , Julia Collins (Bill) , Alyssa McKim ; ten great grandchildren; one great-great grandchild.

Fisher	2023	Senior Conservationist and Honorary ARCSE Member Charles S. Fisher Jr. (95) of Decatur, Michigan, passed away peacefully on August 17, 2023, in Decatur, Illinois. Charles (Chuck), the oldest child of Charles S. Fisher and Mildred R. (Speck) Fisher , was born in Vinton, Iowa. After high school, Chuck attended South Dakota State College in a one-year Army Reserve Specialized Training program. Called to active duty in 1946 as part of a military government company and he served in Korea. Chuck was discharged from the Army in June 1947, before hostilities broke out on the Korean peninsula. Thanks to the benefits of the GI Bill, he attended Iowa State College (now University) through the spring of 1950, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. Chuck put his education to good use as a soil classifier for the Bureau of Reclamation, and later the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS), in South Dakota. Near tragedy altered the direction of Chuck's life in 1954. His father suffered a heart attack and Chuck returned to Garrison, Iowa to tend farm while his father recuperated. While home, Chuck's sister, Mardene , set him up on a date with her friend Phyllis . In the spring of 1955, with his father sufficiently recovered, Chuck returned to a job with the SCS in Storm Lake, Iowa, a bit closer to his parents and Phyllis, who "coincidentally" found a teaching job in nearby Fonda. Chuck and Phyllis were married in Storm Lake on December 3, 1955. They remained married, and very much in love, for over 60 years. Advancement brought Chuck and family to Ames, Iowa in November of 1962. The family enjoyed Ames High football games on crisp fall evenings, Iowa State basketball and wrestling in the old Armory, and of course the annual Veishea parades. They frequented the abundant Ames parks and explored nearby Ledges State Park. Promotions took Chuck and his family to Ankeny, Iowa in 1971 and then Okemos, Michigan in 1977. Chuck retired as the SCS State Soil Scientist for Michigan in April 1985. He was a member of the Professional Soil Classifiers of Iowa. In retirement, Chuck maintained the house, gardened, fished, and most of all golfed. He also served on the board of the Ames First United Methodist Church. In later years, Chuck and Phyllis became founding members of the Windsor Oaks Senior Living Community in Ames. Living in Windsor Oaks made it easier for them to be "snowbirds", spending parts of several winters in Texas, Southern California, Florida, and Arizona. Chuck served on the Windsor Oaks board for many years, his presence prized for his calm, reasonable attitude. A few years after Phyllis's passing, a final move took Chuck to Decatur, Illinois, where son Dennis could watch over him. Chuck is survived by his sons David (Kristine) and Dennis (Peggy) , beloved granddaughters Erin and Lauren , and many cherished nieces, nephews, and extended family.
Garrett	2023	Barbara Ann Stegall Garrett (86) of Raleigh, North Carolina passed away on August 16, 2023, just 15 days after her husband Coy Arthur Garrett , had passed away (Coy was a Senior Conservationist and ARCSE Member). Barbara was born on December 3, 1936, in Shallowater, Texas. She graduated from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas with a Degree in Home Economics. She worked as a School Teacher in Northern Virginia, while Coy served in the United States Army. After the birth of her children, she stayed at home as a mother and Home Maker. She enjoyed cooking, gardening, painting, and restoring furniture. She also enjoyed spending time in Nags Head, North Carolina, beside the ocean. After her illustrious time as a High School Basketball Player, she carried her passion for the sport to become an avid ACC College Basketball Fan. She is preceded in death by her husband, Coy Arthur Garrett; her son, Jim Sealy Garrett . She is survived by her son, Jay Garrett (Julie) .
Garrett	2023	Senior Conservationist and ARCSE Member Coy Arthur Garrett (87) of Raleigh, North Carolina, passed away August 1, 2023. He was born on January 13, 1936, in San Angelo, Texas where he grew up. He graduated from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. At Texas Tech he met Barbara Stegall who was from Lubbock, Texas, and they were married on August 16, 1957. He worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. He started as a Student Trainee in Plainview, Texas. After graduating from Texas Tech in 1958 with a degree in Agricultural Education, Coy served as Soil Conservationist in Lubbock, Texas, until he entered the US Army in February 1959. Upon completion of his training, Coy was transferred to Fort Lee, Virginia, where he worked for the Commanding General, Alfred Denniston. Prior to his discharge, he received a direct commission as Second Lieutenant and served in the Texas National Guard for several years. After his discharge from the Army in February 1961, Coy went to Muleshoe, Texas, as a Soil Conservationist. In 1962 he was transferred to Cuba, New Mexico, as GS-9 District Conservationist. Coy was transferred to Santa Fe, New Mexico, as GS-11 District Conservationist in 1964. From 1967-1970 Coy was assigned to the Office Inspector General in the Kansas City Midwest Region. In 1970 Coy became the Assistant Area Conservationist in Manhattan, Kansas. From there he went to Dodge City, Kansas, in 1972 as Area Conservationist. Then in 1975 he accepted a job in the national headquarters (NHQ) as Management Analyst in the Management Division. In 1979 Coy was selected as the State Conservationist for Vermont and worked there for two years. From 1981-1985 Coy served as State Conservationist for North Carolina. This was the first of two stops in North Carolina as State Conservationist. In 1985 Coy was selected as the State conservationist for Texas. His sons liked North Carolina so well that they did not move to Texas. Two years later he moved to National Headquarters as the Assistant Chief for South. In 1992 he returned to North Carolina as State Conservationist until his retirement April 1, 1994. He enjoyed spending time at their beach cottage in Nags Head with Barbara, hunting (squirrels), fishing, boating, gardening, spending time with friends, family, and his dog. Coy was preceded in death by his son Jim Garrett , who was killed in an automobile accident in Raleigh in 1991. At the time of his death, Coy was survived by his wife Barbara Ann Garrett . She passed away 15 days later, on their 66 th wedding anniversary. Coy is survived by son Jay (Julie) Garrett . Funeral services were held August 7, 2023, at Mitchell Funeral Home in Raleigh.
Harris	2023	Samuel (Sammy) Kowyan Harris (81) of Guntersville, Alabama, passed away on July 18, 2023. He was born in Crossville, Alabama, on April 11, 1942. After graduating from high school in 1960 he honorably served in the United States Army as an aircraft engine mechanic until 1963. He married Pam L. Guest of Geraldine, Alabama in 1962, and following his military service, they moved to Auburn, Alabama. Sammy received his Bachelor of Science degree in agricultural education from Auburn University in 1967, and received his Masters degree in education in 1971. Sammy taught vocational agriculture at Dadeville High School from 1967 until 1970, and was then employed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, retiring in 1995 as the District Conservationist for Madison County. Following his retirement, he worked for the Cullman County Soil and Water Conservation District until 2006. Sammy and Pam recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in December of 2022. He was a resident of Guntersville, Alabama, for 44 years and enjoyed lake living, bird watching, gardening, and deer hunting. His love and devotion to the Lord and to his family were the driving forces in his life. He is known for his big smile, hearty laugh, and ability to make all who knew him feel special and loved. Sammy is survived by his loving wife Pam and their two daughters Amy Sauls (Josh) and Jessica Mitchell (Tim) , as well as their four grandchildren Lydia Brewster (Grady) , Jacob Sauls , Jenna Mitchell , and Harris Mitchell .
House	2023	Kelly Dezane House (63) of Tulia, Texas passed away August 24, 2023. He fought the good fight and finished the race at his home on the family farm. Kelly House was born in Marshall, Texas on February 25, 1960, to A.G. and Ellouise

		House. After high school he moved to Abilene, Texas to attend McMurry University where he graduated with a major in Psychology and a minor in Religion. Kelly made and sold unique and creative pottery to pay for the majority of his college. Kelly married the love of his life, Nancy deLorraine House , on November 13, 1982. They moved to Tulia and Kelly pursued his dream of farming with his dad. He began working for the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service in 1985 as a civil engineer and worked diligently for 35 years before retiring in 2020. Kelly served the community for many years through the hospital board, Chamber of Commerce, and Rotary, organizing the annual town parades, developing Market Square for vendors, and putting flags out for national holidays, among other things. Kelly attended the Methodist church most of his life. He was baptized in Peralta, New Mexico when he was eleven years old. Kelly was preceded in death by his mother, Ellouise House. Kelly is survived by his wife of 40 years, Nancy; his father, A.G. House ; children Kylee Smith (Cheyenne) of Roscoe, Texas, Britney McCullough (Morgan) of Bennett, Colorado, son, Brett House of Tulia; and grandchildren Ferron, Finley, Forrest, Zora and Brigan .
Howard	2023	Senior Conservationist and Honorary ARCSE member Paul M. Howard (97) of Sarasota, Florida, passed away on May 20, 2023. Paul grew up on a family dairy farm in Sale Creek, Tennessee, before joining the United States Army. Upon his honorable discharge, Paul attended and graduated from the University of Tennessee. Paul started his career as a high school teacher in French Lick, Indiana. There he met and married Betty Clark . This past December they celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. After teaching for five years, Paul went to work for the USDA- Soil Conservation Service, from which he retired in 1986 as Deputy Chief for Technology Development and Application. He was instrumental in development of the original 1985 Farm Bill. Before working at National Headquarters Paul was the State Conservationist in Tennessee. Upon retirement, Paul and Betty moved to Sarasota, Florida, where they lived for thirty years. At the time of his death, Paul was survived by his wife, Betty, his two sons, Jeff (Susan Albert) and Don (Jean) Howard , four grandsons, Jacob (Rachel Howard) , Zack (Emily Schnur) , Ryan Howard , and Jeff Howard , and four great grandchildren, Mia, Marlow, Samuel , and Ivy . His wife Betty passed away a month after Paul's death.
Howard	2023	Betty Irene Clark Howard (89) passed away on June 22, 2023, and is now with her soulmate, Senior Conservationist and Honorary ARCSE Member Paul M. Howard . Her husband Paul had served as Deputy Chief for Technology Development and Application for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, retiring in 1986. Betty grew up in French Lick, Indiana, where she met and married Paul. They were together for over 70 years. Besides living in French Lick, Muncie, and Vincennes, Indiana, they lived in Iowa, Maine, Tennessee, and Washington D.C. After Paul retired, they moved to Sarasota, Florida and lived there for 30 years. Betty is survived by her two sons, Jeff (Susan Albert) and Don (Jean) Howard , four grandsons, Jacob (Rachel Howard) , Zack (Emily Schnur) , Ryan Howard , and Jeff Howard , and four great grandchildren, Mia, Marlow, Samuel , and Ivy . She lived for her family. She and Paul were "one in life" and now they are "one in death." There will be a private service with the family for both at the National Cemetery in Canton, Georgia.
Kapalka	2023	Donald Edward Kapalka, II (77) of Arlington, Texas, passed away on July 2, 2023, at Vitas Hospice in Carrollton, Texas. Don was born in Fort Worth, Texas on July 14, 1945, to parents, Donald Edward and Virginia Wynn Kapalka . After high school, Don chose to follow his dream and joined the United States Navy in 1963. He served his country for the next 12 Years. He retired from the Navy as a Petty Officer First Class. He met his wife Marsha Blackwell (Bobbie) during his Naval service, and they were married in 1967 in California. He spent several years at Navy Schools learning to be a Nuclear Mechanic and served on several nuclear-powered ships. In 1988, Don and Marsha were blessed with a long hoped-for child, son Zachary , born in Dallas Texas. After his Naval Service, Don graduated from the University of Texas, Arlington with a degree in Computer Programing. He worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, retiring in 2007, as a Computer Mapping Supervisor. In 2009, Don was diagnosed with lung disease, traced back to his Naval Service. He underwent a successful double lung transplant in 2013. It gave him 10 more years of life and allowed him to see his son graduate from college and marry Anna Latsha in 2014 and welcome 4 wonderful grandchildren into his life. Don is survived by his wife, of 57 years, Marsha Kapalka , his son Zachary W Kapalka (Anna Latsha Kapalka); (four grandchildren, Maxim, Wynn, Gideon and Jove).
Lamb	2023	Donna Lamb (99) of Lincoln, Nebraska, passed away August 10, 2023, surrounded by the love and support of her family. Donna was the widow of Robert "Bob" N Lamb who worked as a Soil Conservationist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service and passed away in 2004. Donna was born June 21, 1924, at home on the family farm near Rosalie, Nebraska. After high school she moved to Lincoln to attend Lincoln School of Commerce. It was while she was in school in Lincoln that she met a University ROTC student named Bob Lamb . While Bob fought in World War II in Europe, Donna went to work in New York City and then Atlanta working on pay for officers. Following the German surrender, Bob returned home for leave before being redeployed to the Pacific. A wedding was put together in a few days and she and Bob were married August 9, 1945. Japan surrendered while they were on their honeymoon and Bob was discharged from the Army thereafter. They returned to Nebraska and lived in several cities for Bob's career with the Soil Conservation Service. Donna worked in various positions ultimately retiring as an Assistant School Secretary in Red Cloud, Nebraska. In addition to her husband Bob, she was preceded in death by her daughter Sherry Lamb Schirmer . She is survived by her son Tom (Diane) Lamb ; grandsons Cortney (Kelly) Lamb , Kyle Lamb and Jeffrey Lamb , great-grandsons Tyler Lamb and Magnus Lamb , and son-in-law Steve Schirmer .
Lammert	2023	Raymond "Ray" H. Lammert, Jr. (88) of San Antonio, Texas, passed away on February 26, 2023, in San Antonio. Ray was born on July 29, 1934, to Raymond and Nelda Mueller Lammert near Clifton, Texas. Ray was very active in the FFA at Clifton High School showing hogs in livestock shows across Texas and received the FFA Lone Star Farmer Award. He received a degree in Range and Forestry from Texas A&M University. After graduation, he attended Naval Officer Training School in Newport, Rhode Island, and became an officer in the United States Navy serving as a navigator on planes including four years in Guam. He continued in the Navy Reserves for twenty years, receiving the rank of Captain. He worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a Range Conservationist. While working in Eden, Texas, he met a ranch owner's daughter, Lucille Royal in Menard, Texas. They were married on February 21, 1960, in Menard. As opportunities arose, Ray began working with the Equitable Life Insurance Company and then in banking and real estate. While living in Boerne, Ray served on the School Board and other volunteer activities in the community. He presently was a member of First Presbyterian Church in San Antonio and of the Aggie Club. Ray enjoyed working with the Soil Conservation Service to practice the correct way to manage a ranch. They had a ranch near Menard where he spent many hours in maintenance of the pastures and providing a deer lease to many. Ray is survived by his wife of sixty-three years, Lucille Lammert , and his three sons: Dean Lammert (Christi) of Horseshoe Bay, Texas, John Lammert (Susan) of San

		Antonio, and Scott Lammert (Christine) of Dallas, Texas; and grandchildren Chris, Connor, Clark, Lauren, Maddie, Megan, and Travis.
Mornhinweg	2023	Steven Pierson Mornhinweg (73) of Stillwater, Oklahoma, passed away on July 14, 2023, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, after a short illness. Steve was born at home in Red Rock, Oklahoma on November 22, 1949, to O.V. and Willene Mornhinweg . He attended Northern Oklahoma College and Oklahoma State University, graduating with a Wildlife Management degree in 1972. He began his career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a Soil Conservationist in 1973. His career spanned over 30 years, serving in Kingfisher, Antlers, Talihina and finally Ada, Oklahoma, where he was the District Conservationist. In 1975 he married the love of his life, Claudia Beth Jones from Jones, Oklahoma. He was a lifelong member of Ceres Christian Church, Ceres, Oklahoma, and an honorary member of the First United Methodist Church, Ada, Oklahoma, and Highland Park United Methodist Church, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Survivors include his wife, Claudia of the home; sons Jeff (Rebecca) of Stillwater, Paul (Kendall) of Edmond, Oklahoma, and Gary (Jennifer) of Ada, Oklahoma; and nine grandchildren, Cora, Sylvie, Cecily and Margo Mornhinweg, Hailey Cantrell and Maddie May, Brayden, Bailey, and Brooklyn Mornhinweg,
Otter	2023	Augustine "Auggie" J. Otter (86) of Waupaca, Wisconsin, passed away on July 8, 2023, at Cherry Meadows Hospice Center in Appleton, Wisconsin. Auggie was born in Dodgeville, Wisconsin on April 3, 1937, to the late Louis and Loretta (Wiedenfelar) Otter . He was a veteran of the United States Army, serving for 26 years. He was also a retired soil scientist with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. He worked on several Wisconsin soil surveys during his career and later was Area Resource Soil Scientist in the Appleton Area Office. He will be sadly missed by his wife: Donna ; children: Marcella (Heidi) Otter, Melissa (Scott) Henderson, Melinda Otter Giese ; step children: Jackie (Jim Kasper) Kuse, Mike (Kim) Witthuhn, Scott (Patti) Witthuhn, Brad (Culleen) Witthuhn , grandchildren: Alex, Max, Katarina, Karianna, Kiegan, Kadan, Jana (Ryan), Shaun, Tyler (Niki), Megan, Paul, Taylor, Colby ; great grandchildren, Sophie, Carter, Lillian, Aubrey, Hailey, Tia, Jake, Charlie, Emmeline; Sophia; Kaitlyn, Cayne, Lauren (TJ), Camille and Brynley ; and great-great grandson, Ricky . He was preceded in death by his son, Peter . A Memorial Mass was held July 14, 2023, at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church. The burial was at the Central Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery.
Quandt	2023	Loyal Arthur Quandt (91) of Lincoln, Nebraska, passed away August 13, 2023. Born on October 6, 1931, in Grand Island, Nebraska to Walter and Laura (Scherzberg) Quandt . Loyal joined the United States Army in 1952 and served overseas in the Korean War until November 1954. Afterwards, he attended the University of Nebraska where he graduated with both a bachelor's and a master's degree from the Department of Agronomy. Loyal devoted his professional career to agronomy and was employed for forty years as a Soil Scientist by the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Loyal also owned and ran a farm north of Grand Island for fifty years. Loyal married Lorene Mader on January 25, 1958. During their married life, they lived in Lincoln and Seward, Nebraska; Little Rock, Arkansas; West Chester, Pennsylvania; and then returned to Lincoln, Nebraska, in their later years. During all that time, Loyal and Lorene were active in Lutheran congregations, and Loyal served as Vice President, Chairman of the Board of Elders and Personnel Committee, and taught bible classes. Loyal's family was very important to him. He is survived by his wife Lorene and two daughters Sonya (Jerry) Honea, and Kim (Peter) Tummino ; grandchildren Lauren Howe (Beau), Lindsay Cole (Elliott), Rachel Tummino, and Matthew Tummino , and great-grandchildren Hannah and John Howe, and Adam, James and Audrey Cole . Loyal and Lorene's son Marty Quandt passed away in 2008.
Raasch	2023	Wayne Leo Raasch (94) of Harlan, Iowa, passed away July 12, 2023, at Myrtue Medical Center in Harlan. Wayne was the son of Arthur George and Gladys Margaret (Ryan) Raasch , and was born on April 15, 1929, in Massena Township, Cass County, Iowa. After graduating from high school in 1946, Wayne enlisted in the United States Marine Corps where he served his country for three years, being stationed on Guam from August of 1947 until May of 1949. After his Honorable Discharge, he worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service for 30 years, retiring in 1984. Following his retirement, Wayne became a valued member of the Burmeister-Johannsen Funeral Home staff, where he worked as a part-time funeral assistant for many years. On June 5, 1967, he was united in marriage to Vera Ruth (Buck) Heilig in Nashua, Iowa, and the couple made their home in Harlan. Wayne was an active member of the First United Methodist Church in Harlan where he served on the church board for many years. He also served on the Harlan Community Library Board and was a member of Harlan Odd Fellows Lodge from 1963 until it closed. Wayne had a special interest in traveling and visiting historical sites and museums. An avid reader, he also enjoyed golf and fishing, as well as watching old movies. Wayne was preceded in death by stepson, Terry Heilig . He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Vera Raasch of Harlan, Iowa; one stepson, Dan (Ruth) Heilig of Elk Horn, Iowa; four grandchildren, Amy (Jim) Adamson of Adel, Iowa, Chris (Jessica) Heilig of Flower Mound, Texas, Carrie Heilig of Fremont, Nebraska, and Brian (Nicole) Heilig of Buffalo Grove, Illinois; four great-grandchildren, Molly (Nick) Howell, Michael Adamson, Cole Heilig, and Reed Heilig.
Schafer	2023	Former ARCSE member Richard L. Schafer (78) of Plainfield, Indiana, passed away peacefully surrounded by loving family members on May 24, 2023, after living with Myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) for six years. He was born in Clay County, Indiana on October 21, 1944, to the late Carl and Mary Louise Schafer . Richard was a Purdue University graduate where he was a member of the Purdue All American Marching Band. He was also an Indiana Army National Guard veteran. Richard worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, retiring in 1997 as a Resource Conservationist after 30 years of service. He then worked for Co-Alliance after retirement for 10 years. Richard was a member of the First Baptist Church in Plainfield for 48 years, where he served in various roles. He enjoyed woodworking, boating, bicycling, playing card games, and traveling in his free time. Richard and his wife Margaret camped throughout the United States and Canada. They enjoyed many great adventures traveling the world together during their retirement. Richard loved spending time with family and friends. Funeral services were held May 31, 2023, at First Baptist Church in Plainfield followed by burial with military honors at Maple Hill Cemetery. Survivors include his loving wife, Margaret Schafer ; daughter, Beth (Jim) Malone ; son, Brian (Sonna) Schafer ; sister, Judy German ; grandchildren, Brian (Annie), Austin (Kasey), Ashlyn, Tyler and Carter ; and great grandchild, Kora Louise.
Schnoor	2023	Jane Schnoor (88) of Mount Ayr, Iowa, passed away peacefully on August 1, 2023, in her home, surrounded by her family. She was the wife of Roger Schnoor , retired Civil Engineer on the Watershed Planning Staff in Des Moines, for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Jane was born in Dwight, Illinois on June 28, 1935, to Clifford Clement Steichen and Margaret Irene (Bannon) Steichen . Her She attended St. Mary School of Nursing and she and her sister Gretchen graduated together as registered nurses and started the practice of nursing serving veterans at the Veterans Administration hospital in Dwight. Jane married Roger on October 6, 1961, in Dwight. While Roger worked for SCS, Jane

		served the sick and supported her colleagues as a registered nurse at Ringgold County Hospital and Ringgold County Public Health. Supporting young families and bringing new babies into the Mount Ayr community was one of the highlights of her career. Jane was a longstanding parishioner of the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Mount Ayr.
Siler	2023	Donald Lee Siler (82) of Baldwin, Wisconsin passed away peacefully on July 15, 2023, surrounded by his family at Hammond Health Services in Hammond, Wisconsin. Don was born on April 9, 1941, in Menomonie, Wisconsin, the son of Lavern and Myrtle Siler . Don joined the United States Army in 1964, served in the Vietnam War and was honorably discharged in 1966. On January 30, 1965 he was united in marriage to Karen Gifford at the First Evangelical Church in Manhattan, Kansas. Don worked for the USDA Soil Conservation Service for over 30 years. While working full-time, Don attended school at UW-River Falls part-time and earned his bachelor's degree in 1981. During his career worked in several locations throughout Wisconsin. He retired as a District Conservationist in 2001. Upon retirement, Don and Karen spent their winters in Sarasota, Florida. Don was fortunate to find love again after Karen's passing in 2010. Don and Sandy Ferg were married on March 14, 2014. During their time together they enjoyed vacationing in Florida, looking after their grandchildren, going for long drives, dining out at Culver's and Texas Roadhouse, and cheering on the Green Bay Packers. Don is survived by his wife Sandy Siler of Baldwin; daughter Mindy (Brian) Jacobson of San Antonio, Texas, and son Ron (Angela) Siler of Roberts, Wisconsin, grandchildren Noel Gawrysiak , Taylor (Lily) Jacobson , Dalton (Samantha) Jacobson , Dallas (Brianna) Jacobson , Morgan (Sam) Brock , Gabe Siler and Aaron Siler , great grandchildren Harper Gawrysiak and Elliot Jacobson , stepchildren Brian (Jessica) Ferg , Brad (Beth) Ferg and Brenda (German) Luna , step-grandchildren Lauren Ferg , Avery Ferg , Camryn Ferg , Marley Luna , Jacob Luna and Grace Luna .
Smola	2023	Norman Edward Smola (85) of Stillwater, Oklahoma, passed away August 11, 2023, while working on the farm he loved. Norman was born to Eddie and Leona Smola (Nee Hill) and raised in rural Kingfisher County, Oklahoma. Norman married Jane Mueggenborg of Kingfisher, Oklahoma on April 30, 1960 and the couple enjoyed 63 years of marriage before his passing. He went to Central State College (Now the University of Central Oklahoma) at Edmond, Oklahoma then on to Oklahoma A&M (Now Oklahoma State University). Norman graduated with a degree in forestry in 1961 and worked as a State Staff Forester from 1961 until his retirement in 1994. His first position was in the Poteau field office. He was promoted and transferred to Hugo, Oklahoma, in 1965 and later promoted again and moved to Stillwater in 1973. In 1983 Norman and Jane purchased a 60-acre farm northeast of Stillwater, where they enjoyed an enormous garden, working the land, grafting pecan trees, gathering pecans and walnuts in the fall and watching the abundant wildlife. Norman stocked one the ponds with catfish which became a great source of good times and fond memories for his children and grandchildren. Following his passion for forestry Norman established a 'cut your own' Christmas tree farm on a portion of the property and ran that successfully for several years. Norman and Jane moved from their home in town to the farm in 2001, where they enjoyed 20+ years of gardening, farming, entertaining their children and grandchildren at this special place of peace and tranquility. Norman was passionate about Oklahoma State Athletics and was a season ticket holder for football, basketball, and wrestling for decades. He and Jane were long time members and very active in the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church. Norman was predeceased by two sons, Paul and Vince . He is survived by his wife, Jane; three sons, Doug , Don and Ed Smola ; eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren.
Steyn	2023	Joan Katherine Steyn (95) of Springfield, Virginia, passed away peacefully on July 15, 2023, due to complications from Alzheimer's disease. Joan was the fiancé of Senior Conservationist and ARCSE Life Member Paul R. Newcomb . Paul retired in 1989 as Director of the Financial Management Division in Washington, DC, for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Joan and Paul had been together for 18 years. Joan graduated from Christian Buhl Hospital in Sharon, Pennsylvania, as a cadet nurse, and became a Navy nurse in August 1950. During the Korean War, she worked at Yokosuka Naval Hospital in Japan, tending to young soldiers who had serious and sometimes fatal wounds. During her 10 years in the Navy, she rose to the rank of Lt. Commander, also serving in Guam, Pensacola, Florida; and Bethesda, Maryland. After her first husband died in 1993, she became active in the American Legion, the Military Women's Memorial and Widowed Persons Service of Northern Virginia, where she met Paul.
Townsend	2023	William Randolph "Bill" Townsend (79) of Greenbrier, Arkansas, passed away on August 15, 2023. Bill was born September 3, 1943, in Clovis, New Mexico to Dud and Lucy Townsend . He attended Arkansas Tech University for two years before transferring to the University of Arkansas, where in 1965 he graduated with an Agricultural Science Degree. After graduation, he moved to Conway where he went to work for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service), until his retirement 33 years later. He was the District Conservationist in Conway for many years. While in Conway he met the love of his life JoAnn , to whom he was married for 51 years. Community was important to Bill. For 56 years, he was a member of the Conway Optimist Club. He was a boy scout troop leader for almost 10 years. Other areas of community service included serving as a Faulkner County Museum Board member, poll sheriff for numerous elections and he donated countless hours to the Bethlehem food pantry since its inception. For 48 years, he was a faithful member of Bethlehem Baptist Church where he served as deacon. He is survived by his wife JoAnn; daughters, Kristy (George) Roberts , Karon (Mike) Reynolds ; grandchildren, Chase (Becky) Roberts , Gavin (Haley) Roberts , Morgan (Jesse) Mohon ; and seven great-grandchildren with one more on the way. Memorials may be made to the Bethlehem Food Pantry.
Walker	2023	Senior Conservationist and Life ARCSE Member John Joseph (Jack) Walker (96) of Kansas City, Missouri, passed away while in hospice care at the Kingswood Retirement Health Care Center on July 28, 2023. Jack was born in Moline, Kansas. After graduating with a degree in Agricultural Engineering from Oklahoma State University, he spent his career working for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. He started in Idaho and then was transferred to Columbia, Missouri where he was the Assistant State Conservationist in the State Office of Missouri. He retired in 1986. Jack met his backyard neighbor, Joyce , in the late 1970's and after seven years of courtship, Jack and Joyce were married on February 19, 1983. Jack and Joyce made one final move to the Kansas City area, where Jack grew and harvested a variety of berries and vegetables on what was affectionately referred to as the "Walker Berry Farm" in Raymore, Missouri. In 2004, Jack and Joyce made the decision to join the Kingwood Senior Living Community where they have resided independently for the last nearly 20 years until Jack's medical issues required him to be hospitalized over the course of the last couple of months. Jack was a devoted Catholic and with a strong faith that was reflected in his daily life. He was a very active volunteer in many organizations outside of his community including, Lake Winnebago Lions Club, Missouri Watershed Association, Soil and Water Conservation Society, National Genealogical Society, Missouri State Genealogical Society and the Conservation Federation of Missouri. He is survived by his wife, Joyce, a son, Michael (Joan) , two grandsons,

		Christopher and Stephen ; and seven great-grandchildren. He was stepfather to Kerry (d. 1991), Denise Norman (Paul) , Terry (d. 2001) and Stephen (Kelly) Johnson (Joyce's children) and step-grandfather to nine additional grandchildren.
Wallace	2023	Lifetime ARCSE Member Marie Wallace (101) of Belton, Texas, passed away in her home on July 5, 2023. She was born Marie Sheffield on November 19, 1921, in Honey Grove, Texas, to William and Ressie Owens Sheffield . She married William C. Wallace in Greenville, Texas on October 18, 1947. They were together until his death in February of 2000. Marie graduated from Honey Grove High School, and Paris Junior College. She went to work for the Federal government and retired as a Secretary for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in 1990. Marie loved knitting and gardening. She was a member of First Baptist Church of Belton. She is survived by her son, Louis Wallace of Belton, Texas, and her brother, Frank Sheffield of Abilene, Texas, along with 2 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. Services were held at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton Texas, followed by burial at North Belton Cemetery.
Williams	2023	Glen Edwin Williams (92) of Stillwater, Oklahoma, passed away August 9, 2023. Glen was born to Bert Allen and Minerva Belle (Leonard) Williams on March 3, 1931. He married Geraldine Faye Rodgers on August 30, 1952. He earned his master's degree from Oklahoma State University and worked as a Soil Scientist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Glen was a member of Highland Park United Methodist Church. He enjoyed golf and was proud of his hole in one on July 3, 1999, at the Amana (Iowa) Colonies Golf Course, Hole 18, 145 yards using a 3 Wood club. Glen was a gifted woodworker and enjoyed creating beautiful furniture with his skills. Glen enjoyed flying and piloting a private plane as well as exercising. Glen is preceded in death by his wife Geraldine in 2020, his daughter, Judy Vomacka and a grandson, Jeremy Williams . Glen is survived by his daughter, Cary Lacefield (Doug Quinn) , his son, Scott Williams (Allison) ; grandchildren, Ryan and Jessica Williams and Beau and Gavin Lacefield ; great grandchildren Owen , Lilly and Sam Lacefield and Jacob Williams .
Wimberley	2023	John L. Wimberley (68) of Amarillo, Texas, passed away on August 14, 2023. John was born in Littlefield, Texas on January 16, 1955, to Earlyne and John Overton Wimberley . He attended Texas Tech University where he received his bachelor's degree in Range and Wildlife Conservation. He worked as District Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for 33 years until he retired. Retirement wasn't for John though, so in 2013, he went to work for The Texas Department of Transportation as an environmental coordinator. John married Kayla Newberg on August 27, 1983, in Farmington, New Mexico. After Farmington, they lived in Stinnett and Claude, TX, before settling in Amarillo. John was happiest outdoors, especially hiking mountains, jogging, biking, hunting, and fishing. An avid sports fan, John loved the Dallas Cowboys and the Texas Tech Red Raiders. He was a member of Southwest Church of Christ where he sang on the praise team and volunteered in various ministries. One of his favorites was his Wednesday night work with the Hali Project and the friends he made there. John also served on the board for High Plains Children's Home where he was currently the president. He is survived by his wife, Kayla Wimberley ; children, Isaac Wimberley (Kayla) , Meredith Tanner (Blake) , and Lauren Strickland (Dave) ; grandchildren, Sawyer Wimberley , Asher Wimberley , and Oliver Strickland . The family suggests memorials be made to High Plains Children's Home, PO Box 7448, Amarillo, Texas 79114.