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NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired Conservation Service Employees

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Julie MacSwain, ARCSE President

Greetings!

The past few months have flown by since I took over as the ARCSE President. I have enjoyed this opportunity and look forward to serving as President over the next two years. During this past year, our organization has taken on some new activities and projects, such as developing the first-ever **ARCSE Strategic Plan** and an **Annual Plan of Work**. If you haven't already done so, please take some time to review these documents at <https://arcse.org/our-organization/>. This information will provide you with a better understanding of the direction ARCSE will be taking now and in the future. Thank you in advance for your support!

Our **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with NRCS has been in place since our August 7th meeting in Des Moines, Iowa. Through this MOU, both NRCS and ARCSE will explore ways to Mentor NRCS employees. This is a great opportunity for ARCSE members to re-engage with new employees. I hope that you consider mentoring an NRCS employee. What a perfect way to give back in retirement while making a difference in someone's career!

In early October I worked closely with **Tyrone Larson**, Wisconsin State Conservationist, regarding a mentoring program that is being launched in Wisconsin. Tyrone felt this would be a good fit for NRCS retirees in Wisconsin, and he hoped that ARCSE might see value in this program. Unfortunately, he passed away unexpectedly on October 8th. Looking back on the discussions I had with Tyrone regarding mentoring, many things come to mind. ARCSE has retirees with a wealth of knowledge, experience, and a deep understanding of the agency. Mentoring new employees is a perfect way to share our career journey with someone just starting out. I know personally I am looking forward to serving as a mentor.

As you know, ARCSE offers many kinds of fun gatherings throughout the U.S. We enjoyed our agency while working, and we still treasure each other! From individual contacts and visits to events and meals as a group, we have many avenues to stay connected.

This ARCSE bimonthly newsletter (<https://arcse.org/newsletters/>) also serves as a means to keep you up-to-date on what's happening in Washington, DC, and in every state. We also alert you to any legislation and programs that affect Federal retirees. An annual luncheon is held each summer and is a highlight event. It is held in conjunction with the SWCS Annual Conference.

**ARCSE MEMBER DUES FOR 2024 MUST BE
PAID BY JANUARY 1ST. SEE PAGE 8.**

With 2023 drawing to a close, you may know of NRCS employees retiring. Please let them know about ARCSE. Together we will make a difference. More information is at ARCSE.org, including sign-up information.

Thank you! —Julie



*Julie MacSwain
with granddaughters*

NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC, Oct. 25, 2023

—*Craig Derickson, retired USDA-NRCS*

Disarray in the House of Representatives

On September 28th, 2023, former Speaker **Kevin McCarthy** disregarded threats from his far-right party members and negotiated with Democrats on a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government open and avoid a government shutdown. The CR will keep the government open for 45

days and continue funding at current levels, and also included \$16 billion for disaster relief. See information from Duke Government Relations at:

<https://governmentrelations.duke.edu/2023/09/28/government-shutdown-info-october-2023/>.

The collaborative work between Republicans and Democrats to pass the CR came at a heavy cost to Speaker Kevin McCarthy. On October 3rd, 2023 a handful of hard-line Republicans in the House of Representatives voted to remove Speaker McCarthy, presumably for his willingness to negotiate with Democrats on the CR to avoid a government shutdown. This unusual action marked the first time in history that the House removed its leader, according to news reports from Reuters at:

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/mccarthy-says-he-thinks-he-will-survive-leadership-challenge-us-house-2023-10-03>.

On October 11th, 2023 House Majority Leader **Steve Scalise** was selected by the Republican Party as the nominee for Speaker. However, after a failed vote of support within the Republican Conference Committee, Scalise announced the next day that he was withdrawing from the speaker's race. For more information see NBC news at:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/steve-scalise-withdraws-speakers-race-sending-house-turmoil-rcna120230#>.

On October 13th, 2023 Representative **Jim Jordan** from Ohio was selected as the next nominee for the Speaker of the House. After three sessions of failed support and votes on the floor of the House, Jordan was eliminated on October 20th, 2023 as becoming the next Speaker.

On October 25, 2023, Congressman **Mike Johnson** (LA-04) was elected as the Speaker of the House. The House of Representatives website states: "as a Congressman, Speaker Johnson represents the northwest and western regions of Louisiana. Prior to his election to Congress in 2016, Speaker Johnson was an attorney and served in the Louisiana State Legislature from 2015 to 2017." See the House website for more information at: <https://www.house.gov/feature-stories/2023-10-25-new-speaker-of-the-house>.

Continuing Resolution to Expire on November 17

The short term CR passed by Congress was completed at the last minute on September 30th, 2023. The 45-day CR passed in the Senate at 9:03 p.m. ET, less than three hours before the federal government would have shut down. The resolution passed in a 88 to 9 vote, with all Democrats voting in support, according to the CNBC news network at

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/30/government-shutdown-live-updates-congress-faces-funding-deadline>.

The current CR will expire on November 17th, one week before Thanksgiving. Given the current situation of uncertainty in the House, very little progress has been made on the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2024 that began on October 1st. Some members of Congress are already saying they think it is unlikely the 12 separate appropriation bills can be debated and passed before November 17th, and therefore Congress will need to pass another CR to avoid a government shutdown. See NBC news at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/jim-jordan-plan-avert-shutdown-becomes-house-speaker-rcna120623>.

Congress Not Able to Act

Meanwhile, the lack of order in the House leaves Congress unable to deal with critical issues facing the country, including the looming threat of a government shutdown in less than a month and the conflict of war unfolding in the middle East. With no Speaker of the House, Congress is not able to pass legislation to condemn the Hamas invasion into Israel, or provide funding for humanitarian relief. Additionally, aid to Ukraine is temporarily suspended until Congress is able to approve additional funding.

President Biden's Request for \$100 billion Supplemental Package

On October 19th, 2023 **President Biden** made his second oval office address to the nation to respond to Hamas' terrorist attacks against Israel and Russia's ongoing brutal war against Ukraine. President Biden announced he plans to submit a \$100 billion supplemental request to Congress to support both Israel and Ukraine and other critical national security interests. The CBS news network reported "the President is trying to make the case to Congress and the American people that the U.S. needs to support Israel and Ukraine, not just for those countries, but for U.S. national security interests."

According to the CBS news report, here's what's in the President's request to Congress, with minor edits for this column:

\$61 billion for Ukraine and replenishing U.S. stockpile

This figure includes \$30 billion for Pentagon equipment from Ukraine and for replenishing U.S. military stocks. It also includes \$14.4 billion for Pentagon intelligence and other defense support, \$16.3 billion for the State Department and USAID to give economic, operation and security assistance to Ukraine. The Ukrainian portion of the funding also provides \$481 million to support Ukrainians who flee to the U.S.

\$14 billion in Israel-related assistance

Israel had requested \$10 billion. Mr. Biden's request includes \$10 billion for air and missile defense support, as well as the replenishment of Pentagon stocks. Specifically, the Biden administration is requesting support for Israel's procurement of the Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defense systems and components, it says, and the development of Iron Beam.

The request also includes \$3.7 billion for State Department needs related to Israel, including for supporting the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem.

\$9 billion for humanitarian assistance

These funds would be used by the State Department to help with humanitarian needs in Ukraine, Israel, the Gaza Strip and elsewhere. In addition to funding for security assistance for Ukraine and Israel, the request also includes funding to address humanitarian needs of innocent civilians, including those impacted by the war in Israel and in Gaza.

\$3 billion for the submarine industrial base

Most of this funding would be for Pentagon improvements and infrastructure work at the U.S. Navy's four public shipyards, in order to ramp up submarine readiness.

\$2 billion for security assistance to the Indo-Pacific region

The U.S. is trying to bolster security in the region, as a China-North Korea-Russia cooperation appears to be strengthening. The funding would have the aim of deterrence and supporting U.S. allies in close proximity to China.

\$11 billion for border security and migrant matters

This funding includes \$4.4 billion for the Department of Homeland Security for things including holding facilities and reimbursing the Pentagon for its support. It also includes \$1.9 billion for Health and Human Services to support the arrivals of unaccompanied minors. The border funding also includes \$1.4 billion for the Justice Department to add additional judge teams, as immigration court backlogs cripple the system.

\$2 billion to counter China in developing countries

The administration is trying to support the expansion of financing for developing countries to provide an alternative to China's financing for them, which the administration says can be "coercive and unsustainable." The funding is to be used to help unlock more in lending from IMF trust funds and development financing from the World Bank.

\$1 billion for countering fentanyl

Democrats and Republicans alike recognize how detrimental fentanyl is to the nation, taking hundreds of thousands of lives and destroying families. This funding is meant to hire additional Customs and Border Protection officers, among other things.

\$1 billion for migrant support

This request includes \$1.3 billion for State Department and USAID to support host families for migrants.

\$100 million for combatting child labor exploitation

This money would help the Department of Labor with child labor investigations and enforcement. For more information about details in the President's 100 billion supplemental request, see <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/biden-100-billion-request-congress-ukraine-israel/>.

Progress on 2023 Farm Bill

The AgWeb news network reported that although no new Farm Bill legislation has been passed, there is still hope it can be done before the end of the year. However, with the current situation of gridlock in the House of Representatives, those hopes may be dwindling.

Michelle Rook from AgWeb reported in June that delivering a new Farm Bill before the current bill expired on September 30, 2023 would be difficult with the Ag committees still conducting hearings. Her report included National Cattlemen's Beef Association president **Todd Wilkinson's** comments. He said; "you know frankly I would have to tell you I'm not very optimistic that we're going to get the farm bill done [before it expires], but I think it's better to get it done right, rather than to miss out on some things." There is good agreement on many priorities among lawmakers and farm groups on topics such as preserving crop insurance and also enhancing it and the Agriculture Risk (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs in light of inflation and record production costs for the 2023 crop. For more information see <https://www.agweb.com/news/policy/politics/2023-farm-bill-will-come-down-wire>.

Conservation Opportunity and Voluntary Environment Resilience Program (COVER) Act

On May 18th, 2023, **U.S. Representatives Sean Casten, Elissa Slotkin, and Senator Sherrod Brown** introduced the bipartisan, bicameral "Conservation Opportunity and Voluntary Environment Resilience Program (COVER) Act" with original co-sponsor **Representative Mike Bost**. According to Representative Casten's website, "this bill will provide a \$5/acre crop insurance discount to farmers who plant cover crops to incentivize this important soil health practice, building on the federal Pandemic Cover Crop Program."

Representative Casten's website also reported: "climate change has already made the federal crop insurance program more expensive and challenging to manage as drought, rain, and extreme weather further stress our soils. Crop insurance payments have risen more than 400% for drought-related losses, and nearly 300% for rain and flooding-related losses between 1995 and 2020. Unless we act, climate change will continue to exacerbate losses. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has estimated that without mitigating actions, the cost of the Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIP) could increase anywhere from 10 to 37%."

Representative Casten's site also states that "cover crops are a solution to help farmers mitigate risk. A 2023 study found that higher cover-crop adoption led to lower levels of crop insurance losses due to prevented planting. Another study found that just a 1% increase in cover crop adoption led to nearly \$40 million in savings from reduced prevented planting related indemnities. With climate change threatening our food system, practices that build soil resilience are more crucial than ever. No one knows the importance of the soil that sustains us better than our farmers; they will play a vital role in achieving this goal." For more information on the COVER Act see:

<https://casten.house.gov/media/press-releases/casten-introduces-bipartisan-cover-act-to-boost-soil-health-and-align-crop-insurance-with-risk-mitigation-practices>.

According to the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC), "this policy idea has enjoyed bipartisan support at the state and national levels and is endorsed by a wide array of organizations interested in soil health and supporting farmers. Here are the facts:

- 78% of 300 farmers who were polled support this concept.
- USDA enrolled 12 million acres in 48 states in their national Cover Crop Program, which this bill is modeled on.

- Over 120 organizations and businesses, including several regional farm groups, supported the bill.”

For more information on the NRDC report see: <https://www.nrdc.org/bio/lara-bryant/cover-act-modernizes-crop-insurance-and-reduces-risk-farmers>.

ARCSE Mentoring Update

From Bill Ward, ARCSE West Region Vice President, and additions by Craig Derickson.

NRCS and ARCSE working together to identify and recruit NRCS and partner retirees to provide mentoring assistance to NRCS staff.

Recently NRCS and ARCSE signed a MOU with the objective to work together to identify, recruit, and use NRCS and partner retirees to provide mentoring assistance to NRCS employees, especially to new employees.

The fundamental principle and objective of the MOU is very simple. NRCS and partner retirees have experience and skills that can be very valuable in a mentoring capacity to train and guide newer NRCS employees to become proficient more quickly in their jobs.

Under the MOU, ARCSE State representatives are a new resource for NRCS State Conservationists to help identify NRCS and partner retirees interested in working with NRCS staff in a mentoring capacity.

The key individuals for communication and action regarding implementation of the MOU include:

- NRCS - State Conservationist or designee for MOU and mentoring activity.
- ARCSE - ARCSE State representatives.
- NRCS and partner retirees - Self identify if interested in mentoring NRCS employees.

The original intent of the NRCS and ARCSE leaders who drafted the MOU was to identify retirees interested in providing mentoring assistance to NRCS employees on a voluntary basis. NRCS expects to hire as many as 4,400 new employees in the months ahead to meet a growing workload and effective mentoring can help employees reach their full potential.

NRCS retirees providing mentoring assistance will have access to guidance in mentoring guide materials made available to them from NRCS and ARCSE. There is a new folder on the [ARCSE.org](https://arcse.org) website under the Resources tab that contains several useful guides and references on the topic of mentoring. See the mentoring reference material at: <https://arcse.org/resources/arcse-nrcs-mentoring-program/>.

At the discretion of NRCS State Conservationists, and depending on State mentoring needs, ARCSE retirees can be accessed through ACES funding to provide more detailed mentoring or training assistance.

The ARCSE organization has established a Mentoring MOU Work Group that is developing a "framework plan" to assist with successful implementation of the MOU objectives. The framework plan can be used as a model by states and will be made available on the ARCSE website when it is finalized. The ARCSE Mentoring MOU work group members are **Craig Derickson, Julie MacSwain, Bill Ward, and Chris Tippe**.

ARCSE encourages NRCS and partner retirees to consider this new opportunity to work with NRCS staff and provide valuable mentoring assistance to NRCS staff. This is a new activity for the ARCSE organization, and information and guidance are flowing from the ARCSE leaders to ARCSE members at the state level. Interested individuals should plan to contact their State and Regional representatives for more information as it is made available.

SWCS Liaison

Cheryl Simmons, SWCS Liaison

Email: cheryl.simmons@usda.gov

Back in Person! Back in Action!

The August SWCS meeting in Iowa reminded me of a family reunion. It was exciting to attend the retirees' meeting, with great speakers and informative conference sessions. The long partnership between SWCS and the Retirees is cause for celebration.

As the two organizations move forward, it will be important to communicate for even more coordination and great accomplishments to come. Looking to the future can help both ARCSE and SWCS create new opportunities.



SWCS-ARCSE Intern, 2023

The joint ARCSE-SWCS Intern creates a space for learning and experience. Supporting an Intern position is much more than getting a little assistance for our Retirees' organization. Investing in a young professional offers the opportunity for growth for the individual and both organizations. ARCSE and SWCS make it easy to contribute toward the future.

Consider contributing to ARCSE to support programs for students and new conservationists. ARCSE is a 501.c 4 and donations are not tax deductible.



(L-R): NRCS friends connecting with ARCSE members at the SWCS Conference in Aug, 2023. NRCS employees Tyrone Larson, WI State Conservationist; Krecia Leddy, Management and Strategy, Washington, DC; Jill Reinhart, Management and Strategy, Washington, DC.



Contribute to ARCSE

ARCSE has set up a webpage to enable giving to the ARCSE. 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 partner with the Soil and Water Conservation Society to hire summer interns. If you are interested in making a contribution, please visit the following site on our webpage:

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

ACES-NRCS Spotlight: Adrienne Peterson

Our ACES-NRCS Enrollee **Adrienne Peterson** was the first woman supervisor for the Sublette County Weed and Pest Control District in the State of Wyoming and many surrounding states! Her experience and expertise over the years is a valuable asset to the ACES-NRCS Program in Texas, as explained by her ACES Monitors (Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program, authorized by the Farm Bill).

Her monitor, **Justin Parks**, says, "Adrienne has been an asset to the Nacogdoches Resource Team and to our customers because of her communication skills. The excellent communication she is providing keeps both Team members and customers on schedule. This in turn ensures that we are meeting our goal of putting good conservation on the ground in a timely manner."

Her monitor **Rigo Lopez** says I will also add that in the past when we have deadlines that are fast approaching, she has been willing to work longer and take on more responsibility. I worked with her a little when she was in Pinedale, Wyoming, and I was the Area Conservationist in Riverton Wy.

Adrienne's favorite quote was from her grandfather "Poppy:"

"The harder you work the luckier you get." I think he was exactly right!

Meet Adrienne Peterson

Adrienne started working as a Program Support Specialist under the ACES Program in November 2019. She aids the Texas Field Offices in all phases of the Title XII program. Planning/contracting functions and performing administrative and clerical duties associated with contract processes. Ensuring required documents for applicants/participants in the farm bill programs are filed properly and named consistently is also very important to the program's success and she does a great job.

Before joining the ACES Program, she retired from Sublette County Weed and Pest Control District where she worked up through the ranks to become a supervisor, she was the first woman supervisor in the State of Wyoming and many surrounding states. She also assisted in standardizing the weed-free forage program requirements for many States and government agencies.

Her wonderful background prepared her for becoming an expert on ranching activities. She explains:

I was born and raised in SE Wyoming on a 30,000-acre ranch. We ran around 1,000 pairs and worked with CSU and UW on many experiments with the cattle. In later years Dad and Mom left that ranch for one of our own. When I graduated high school, I got a job but returned every weekend and vacation to help. We had the first embryo transfer herd in the US at that time (frozen and fresh). We also had the first Kobe/wagyu calves. As I moved away, I always seemed to keep a small herd until I moved to Texas in 2013. It was very interesting, and I miss it dearly, too. But it is so nice not to have to work 24/7 in the cold and snow. In 2015 I took a job at Grand Teton National Park at Elk Ranch as an irrigator. My husband volunteered.

She states, as an example of her experience: Each County in the State of Wyoming has a funded Weed and Pest District with a Board of Directors. They work in concert with the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resource Conservation Service, local and State highway departments,

City, State, and Federal governments, gas/oil industry, cattlemen's associations, elected officials, emergency response entities, landowners, ranchers, business owners, etc. In the 1990s a new program needed to be developed because the Forest Service had to implement the "Executive Order" signed by President Clinton on certified weed-free hay. Before hay could be taken onto US Forest land it needed to be certified. Wyoming had the foresight and was in its early stages of inspecting weed-free fields. There were limited standards to distinguish what "weed-free" was, how to inspect, and who should inspect the fields to produce the commodity. I assisted in standardizing the weed-free forage program requirements for many States and government agencies. While with the County, I was challenged with a situation. Weeds were found in a gravel pit. It was the only infestation known to the County at the time.

Sublette County is just over 3 million acres, and 85% is public land. It was very controversial, but we quarantined the gravel pit for a period, and I was tasked to create weed-free standards for gravel comparable to hay/forage. They have been widely accepted throughout the industry, and in many States and agencies. I have been invited to many places from Washington, DC to California and several Canadian Provinces to instruct the "train the trainer" program on weed-free standards. While in Washington, DC I worked with government agencies, legislators, non-government agencies, and private entities to help generate new policies and legislation.

Adrianne also has an interesting life besides her work. She explains:

Along the way, we raised two successful daughters. They helped with the cattle operation and had cows of their own. One is the agriculture administrator at Sheridan College in Wyoming. The other is a world-traveled professional chef. I retired from the Weed and Pest after 30 years, moved to TX, and started a tree farm. In my spare time, I like to hunt and fish, work on our tree farm, walk the dogs, travel back to Wyoming to see my grandson, and cook.

When Adrianne was asked the question what do you enjoy most about the ACES Program? What keeps your interest in the work?

I enjoy working in the ACES Program because there is always something different every day. It keeps my mind alert and engaged. I also love the flexible hours. In addition, not having to work full time, I get my "social work fix" and still have time to do everything else I want."

As you can tell, we are very fortunate to have Adrianne in our ACES-NRCS Program, and she is a valuable asset to the NRCS Team in Texas as well!



Adrianne Peterson, ACES Employee

Why do we need technical specialists?

Submitted by Barbara Osgood, PhD., retired NRCS Sociologist

Julie MacSwain has asked me to write a couple of stories about what it was like to be a sociologist in NRCS. This is a story from 1981. It couldn't happen now, with all of the rules and regulations on privacy, but we got the job done then!

EARLINGTON, KENTUCKY, 1981

The ringing of the phone woke me from a sound sleep. I looked at the clock. It was midnight. The voice at the other end of the line was insistent: "It's raining hard and you need to see this. We'll pick you up outside the hotel in a few minutes."

I threw on some clothes and walked out of the motel to see the fire chief sitting in his big truck with the town's mayor beside him. They edged me into the seat between them, and we took off into the night.

The windshield wipers struggled to keep up with the downpour. Water flowed down the streets and into a channel that ran through town. "Shouldn't we be running the siren?" The mayor wanted to be sure his constituents knew he was on duty.

The deluge stopped as quickly as it began. This time the channel had not overflowed. But I got the message.

The day before my trip to Earlington, the chief had called me into the office. "I need you to use your sociological skills to see if you can justify a flood project for this town. They have been unable to justify a project on economic benefits, but maybe sociological benefits will put it over the top. They have been waiting for help for a long time."

I became a visiting dignitary in that little town. The morning after our nighttime tour of the flood, I was invited to speak about my work at the civic club luncheon. It seemed reasonable to explain to the residents why I was there. But the next day, the town paper had a large headline on the front page: SOCIOLOGIST INVESTIGATES CREEK. As a relatively new federal employee, I wasn't sure whether I would be fired when I got back to DC!

The big challenge for me was to get the data I needed for my sociological analysis. I needed to know the characteristics of the residents—how many elderly, how many children for example. Normally I would have used Census data, but for a small town like Earlington, census data was suppressed. It would be too easy to identify individuals.

The mayor and his staff tried to help me figure out what to do. Then someone had an idea. "The mailman has been delivering mail in this town for years. He knows everybody. He can give you the information you need."

So the next day I jumped into the truck with the mailman, and we started out on his route. He put the mail in the first mailbox. "An elderly woman lives here by herself." I added that statistic to my list. We went to the next mailbox. "This is a family with two little kids." And on we went, through the whole town. I had my data!

Back in Washington, DC, I submitted my report. Much to my relief, the local Congressman had called the Chief to compliment me on my visit, and the newspaper headline was forgotten.

Years later, when I was State Conservationist in New Jersey, a package arrived in my office: a beautiful plaque from the Earlington Civic Club, The City of Earlington, and the Hopkins County Conservation District. Earlington had completed its Stewarts Creek Watershed Project.

I smiled. A sociologist had helped them to get it done.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Paul Benedict, Membership Chair

New Life Member

Sheila Cox – Bronson, Iowa

New Members

Larry McCray – Moundville, Alabama

John R "Dick" – Durant, Oklahoma

Dean Sylla - Green Bay, Wisconsin

2024 ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES and HARD COPY NEWSLETTER FEES are due Jan. 1st, 2024

For your convenience ARCSE annual dues and hard copy fees can be paid by credit card via **PayPal**:

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

Or you can pay by check. Make check payable to **ARCSE** and mail to: **ARCSE, PO Box 8965, Moscow, ID 83843**

For 2024, the **annual membership dues** have been raised to **\$25/year**, and **hard copy fees** have been raised to **\$15/year**. If you are a **Life Member** or are an **Honorary Member** (Member with 5 or more years of paid membership who turned 91, or will turn 91, in 2023 or earlier), you do not owe annual dues. Life and Honorary members receiving the printed newsletter in the mail must still pay \$15 for that service. If you have questions about your membership or newsletter status do not hesitate to contact me at soilwarden@verizon.net.

Contributions to ARCSE are not expected but are always appreciated. Contributions can be mailed to the address above (please mark **contribution** on your check), or they can be made online at

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

Members receiving the newsletter by printed hardcopy: A green insert dues notice is included with the hard copy newsletter. Please follow the instructions on the notice concerning the address label information to determine if your dues are due.

Members receiving the electronic newsletter: Members receiving the electronic newsletter whose dues are due will receive a separate email from ARCSE with dues notice attached (**WATCH FOR IT**). Life Members, honorary members, and members who have already paid their 2024 dues will receive an email assuring you that your membership dues are paid. In 2023 there were some members who paid dues twice, and some who paid dues during the first complimentary year. I have applied those overpayments to 2024.

—NEW RATES—**ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES****Due by January 1st****Member \$25 per year (1st year free)****Affiliate \$25 per year****Life (One-time payment)****Age 64 or younger \$325****Age 65 thru 74 \$275****Age 75 or older \$175**

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 \$15.00 per year.

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

How to grow our ARCSE Flickr Account

Did you know that your organization ARCSE has a Flickr account? We have had this account since June, 2021. To view our Flickr account, check out this webpage link - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/193466003@N08/albums>

Flickr is a platform on which an individual and/or an organization can share photos. For our organization this means sharing some photos from our ARCSE Annual meetings, and certainly our ARCSE newsletters. This is a way for us to share what our organization is all about and look back at our history.

Here's how you can help as an ARCSE member to grow our Flickr Account

- Take pictures at your NRCS retiree event. Shortly after the event email your photos, photo caption and article to your ARCSE state representative. Email the photos as an attachment, preferably a JPEG photo format.
- View the ARCSE Flickr Account and see what type of photos we have on our account. This may give you other ideas as to how you can contribute as a member.

Thank you! —Julie MacSwain, ARCSE President

ALABAMA

Earl Norton, ARCSE Representative

Email: earl.norton@charter.net

The retirees in the Auburn area continue to meet for breakfast once a month and attendance is relatively low. However, as far as we at the breakfast table know, our colleagues are well.

Earl Norton received the **Bill Moody Award** on October 4th, 2023 at the annual Landowner Conference sponsored by the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association, the Alabama Tree Farm Committee and the Alabama Natural Resources Council. Bill Moody was a legendary Alabama Forestry Commission State Forester that envisioned Alabama's Treasure Forest program that was officially adopted in 1976.

The award is given annually by the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association to a TREASURE Forest Landowner who exemplifies Mr. Moody's belief and commitment to the multiple use philosophy imbued in the TREASURE Forest program. The acronym TREASURE stands for Timber, Recreation, Environment, Aesthetics, Sustainable, Usable and Resource. The landowner deserving of this award believes in: Stewardship—Recognizing that God has entrusted them with a TREASURE—to be managed in a way that guarantees Sustainability—Knowing that the land must be taken care of in order to provide for their children and grandchildren the way it provided for them, their parents and grandparents through Education—Passing on the knowledge they been given on how to care for the land to students, landowners and others by working in Partnership—Realizing that by working together with landowners, resource professionals and others who share their passion for forestry, they can make a difference in the future.





Retirees of the Auburn area participated recently in the annual meeting of the Opelika-Auburn Men's Camellia Cub (L-R): Earl Norton, Ken Aycok, Perry Oakes, Mac Nelson, Ken Rogers, Vic Payne, Charles Jessie Bush.



We need to note (1) that **Jerry Johnson**, deceased NRCS State Forester (Alabama), was a key party in developing the TREASURE Forest basic operating procedures (2) the TREASURE Forest program provided the template for the National Stewardship Program established by the U. S. Congress in the 1990 Farm Bill.

ARKANSAS

Ralph Mashburn, ARCSE Representative

Email: ralphmashburn@gmail.com

We had our annual meeting on September 14th led by our president, **Bob Price**, at the Whole Hog Restaurant on Cantrell Road in Little Rock of Blue Cross Blue Shield gave us interesting and valuable information and great handouts.



(L-R): Linda and Larry Ward, Dick Babeu, David Heffington, Bob Young, Speaker-Amy Blenden, David Teneleve, Sid Lowrance, Bill Garner, Charles Fultz, and Bob Price. (Ralph Mashburn took the picture)

CALIFORNIA

Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative

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Our October 4th Retiree Zoom meeting

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



Bob Slayback, Bill Ward, Paul Benedict, Harold Honeyfield, Jon Hayward, Carlos Velasquez, Walt Sykes.

A major focus of our Zoom meetings is to go “around the screen” and give everybody the opportunity to share what is new with them and their families. Sometimes there are health challenges folks share about. When that kind of news is shared it is nice for the rest of us to be able to provide some encouraging words and best wishes to those individuals.

Bill and Dana's Trip to Italy. By the time folks receive this newsletter, my wife **Dana** and I will be in Italy in the mid stages of our 14-day trip through Italy. We set up a tour with time to see and explore Rome, Naples, Sorrento, Florence, Venice and Milan. Be ready for some pictures in our next Newsletter after this one.

The Ward family had a wonderful time this last Saturday providing music for the 14th Annual Rosemont Community Associations Celebration Event. Western Lights with my son Jimmy joining us opened up our first of three sets of music. My daughter Jennifer was in that mix for some songs as well. Our 2nd set featured my son **Jimmy** and his wife **Becca** performing as a duo. Their music was a big hit for folks in attendance. Our 3rd set of music had **Jennifer** joining **Melvin** and me.

Here are a couple photos and recordings from a very fun day for all of us



<https://youtu.be/GtwAqh0Y700>



“You Don't Have to Move that Mountain”
Western Lights Bill Ward, Jen Reeves, Melvin Font

<https://youtu.be/tGqqXlbiYVA>



“Live Cover, Dream a Little Dream of Me”
Jim and Becca Ward, “The Distant shores”

On a day like this I sometimes feel a need to “pinch myself” to make sure it is really happening. I am a firm believer that music, especially family music, does indeed make the world go around!

Best Wishes to all!

COLORADO

Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative

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The Fort Collins retirees breakfast club gathered in both September and October. Attending: **Bernie Shafer, Dennis Lytle, Ken Rojas, Phil Smith, Chuck Hart, Terry Buettgenbach, Frank Geter, and Jack Carlson**. Among topics covered, the history of mink farming and how to navigate Wheatland Reservoir 3 during a sudden high wind event.

CONNECTICUT, RHODE ISLAND, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Carl DuPolt, ARCSE Representative

Email: cdupoldt@gmail.com

Welcome Carl DuPolt as the new ARCSE Representative for this three-state region!

Fall Foliage Reports:

Connecticut, <https://www.ctvisit.com/articles/connecticut-fall-foliage-report>. Connecticut's fall foliage season is always stunning! The State of Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) interactive fall foliage report map is now available. It forecasts the progression of color across our corner of New England. According to current estimates, peak foliage arrives in the northeast and northwest corners of the state around Columbus Day and extends to the lower Connecticut River Valley and shoreline through early November.

New Hampshire, <https://www.visitnh.gov/seasonal-trips/fall/foliage-reports>

New Hampshire Region	Peak Foliage	Color Change
Great North Woods	100%	
White Mountains Region	100%	
Lakes Region		65% - 80%
Dartmouth/Lake Sunapee Region		80% - 85%
Monadnock Region	100%	
Merrimack Valley		50% - 70%
Seacoast		40%

Claremont, NH excitedly announced an environmentally friendly and creative solution to tackle invasive plant species encroaching on lands and parks: Goats.

Invasive species, such as sumac, Japanese knotweed and multiflora rose, have challenged the city's efforts to maintain the natural beauty of its green spaces. Rather than resorting to chemical treatments or heavy machinery, Claremont chose goats as a more sustainable, eco-friendly and non-intrusive alternative.

Goats' well-documented history of grazing on various vegetation types make them a perfect choice for targeted land management. https://www.eagletimes.com/news/city-uses-goats-to-naturally-manage-invasive-plants/article_392161f3-83b3-5a27-a6ec-e7e552c25111.html.

Rhode Island: <https://www.visitri.com/state/foliage/>

The Old Farmer's Almanac, which has been predicting long-range weather outlooks annually since 1792, has made its 2023 predictions for when peak fall foliage will hit in every state. In Rhode Island, they're predicting peak season will be Oct. 12 through 28. Some points of interest include Cliff Walk, Fort Adams State Park, Newport Exploration Center, Newport Mansions, Ocean Drive, and Bannister's Wharf.

EPA awards \$4.6 million for coastal communities in Rhode Island

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-awards-46-million-coastal-communities-rhode-island>

Rhode Island communities will get \$4.6 million in new funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency to help protect the area's coastal waters and watersheds. Communities throughout the state will also get added technical assistance and partnerships with local organizations working for clean water and healthy coastal ecosystems in Southeast New England.

Carl also forwarded the following link to an interesting video on historic water mills: Shrewsbury Historical Society Presents: "Old Mills and Water Power" - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EI1SHRAoO_E.

IOWA

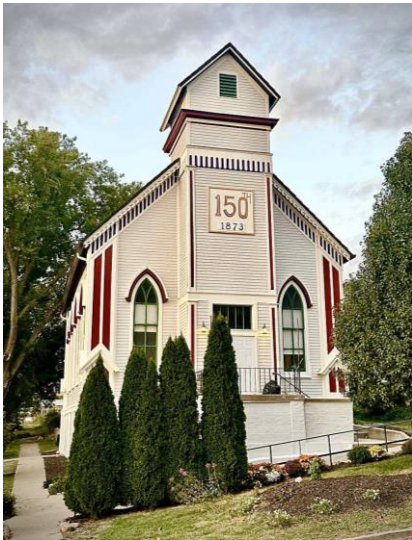
Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative

Email: amjens1@gmail.com

During the last weekend in September, **Jerry and Marion Stevens** attended their class reunions in Malvern. This was Jerry's 63rd year reunion and Marion's 60th year class reunion.

While we're talking about Malvern, here's a story from **Bonnie Pierce** telling about her and her husband's work with a local organization to promote their small southwest Iowa town. "Hello from beautiful southwest Iowa and the town of Malvern,

population 1,150. My husband and I have been proud members of the Malvern Area Betterment Association (MABA) since 1985! MABA has set their sights on branding our community as a biking and art destination. We have participated in Main Street Iowa, Trees Forever, Main Street façade renovation, and an Art Council grant to improve walkability and add art to our village. The heart of the art consists of six metal trees crafted by our local artist welder **Woody Jones**. Other projects include enhancing the bike corridor that runs through town. The Wabash Trace is a 65-mile bike trail that runs from Council Bluffs to the Missouri border.



Art Church in Malvern



Bicycle Art in Malvern

We are proud to house Fine Art on Fifth which is an artist consortium and the amazing Art Church, a repurposed church event center. Malvern houses four unique Bed and Breakfast facilities, so plan to stay over and enjoy our excellent eateries. I am including a sample of our gorgeous art. You will have to visit to enjoy them all."

Thank you to **Ernie Aust** for the following: "The Ernie Aust family celebrated Pat and Ernie's 60th wedding anniversary during the weekend of June 24 at Kings Point Resort in Storm Lake, Iowa. We were married the 22nd of June, 1963, at St. Mary's Church and received a blessing there again with our family in attendance. Family that attended included 24 of our 26 grandchildren, my sister, and Pat's 5 brothers. In addition to the rooms where we stayed, we rented a big house as well as all 4 cabins available at the resort. It was a great weekend.



Ernie and Pat Aust with their family at their 60th Anniversary Celebration

Jerry and Kathy Sindt are the fourth generation of the Sindt family living on their Century Farm northwest of Ida Grove near Holstein. Jerry is still doing part of the farming. He said that he's the soybean guy, and his son who lives in Chicago helps a lot with the corn.

Storm Lake was our home area growing up, but we didn't meet until we were attending Iowa State College. Storm Lake was also my student trainee location starting in 1955. Just a reflection on the first 4 offices I was assigned to, and before we were married, spent time in the Army, etc. Three were on the second floor of downtown office spaces and one was in the basement of a post

office. None of these offices had air conditioning, but we did have fans. There was no handicapped access. Our vehicles had no AC, no radios, no automatic transmissions, etc. We got the work done and serviced our customers well. They appreciated the service we gave getting conservation on the ground. We enjoyed the hot summer!"

Thank you to **Marty Adkins** for the following. "We're (**Marty and Carol Adkins**) good here in Knoxville and enjoying the cooler weather. Even when the days were hotter, we enjoyed early morning bike outings, usually on the Volksweg Trail at Lake Red Rock. With the change in seasons maybe we can make those rides a little longer.

We're in the last month of rehearsal for *Godspell*, which I am directing. Carol is in the cast and handling costumes, so it's another family project. It's going well so far, even though the cast has had a ton of music and dance to learn. It's a great show. Eugene Levy, Martin Short, Gilda Radner and several others got their show business starts in early *Godspell* productions in the early 1970s.



Carol, Drew, and Marty Adkins on a Bike Ride

Our oldest son **Nathaniel** was ordained as a pastor in August and is now serving a congregation in Fairfield. His family is settling in nicely and off to a good start in this new chapter in their lives. His ordination was held in Knoxville; it was a wonderful event with lots of smiles and a few happy tears too.

The rest of our family is fine. Our oldest granddaughter started college last month. The other grandkids are playing instruments, smacking softballs, and navigating the complexities of third grade. **Drew** and I continue Earth Teaming and baking. There's a lot to be thankful for right now."

Many retirees are going through tough health issues. One of the more "high profile" cases in Iowa involves Iowa's **Governor Kim Reynolds**. About a month ago, she announced that her husband, First Gentleman **Kevin Reynolds**, has been diagnosed with lung cancer. We know Kevin better as a retired District Conservationist from Leon. Governor Reynolds said in a statement, "Our doctor has assured us that significant advancements in lung cancer treatment have been very effective, and we have every reason to be optimistic. We are confident in our team as we begin treatment, and we will beat this." The Governor thanked the public for their prayers and asked for continued prayer support for Kevin.

During the past few months, the following people joined our retirement family: **John Davison**, Soil Conservation Technician in Tipton, retired on July 29th; and **Yolanda Butler**, Soil Conservation Technician in Waterloo, retired on September 11th.

In August we were saddened by the passing of **Bennie Floyd**. Bennie spent his entire career as a Civil Engineering Technician in the Council Bluffs Engineering Office.

KANSAS

Deanne Lull, ARCSE Representative

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Editor's Note: Deanne Lull has passed away. See details in the In Memoriam section.

MICHIGAN

William J. Fude, ARCSE Representative

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On September 11th six retirees and one spouse cleaned up trash on a two-mile stretch of US-127 north of Lake Lansing Road to the I-69 intersection. This has been an annual event sponsored by SWCS, beginning in 1993. The clean-up crew was organized by **Gay Lynn Kinter** and included **Will and Deborah Bowman, Joe Calus, Jon Quisler, Greg Thoen, and Carol Wade**. We thank them for their efforts!

MIDATLANTIC STATES

Ken Carter, ARCSE Representative

Email: duckheadone@gmail.com

Warren Lee and his wife have sold their residence in Virginia and are relocating to a senior living facility in PA near their children.



MidAtlantic breakfast retiree group meets monthly in Woodbridge, VA. (L-R) Ron Marlow, Jerry Bernard, Bill Irwin, Dave Thackeray.

*Ken Carter is retiring as ARCSE Representative. His replacement will be **Terry D'Addio**, tmdaddio@aol.com.*

MISSOURI

Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative

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Jim Rickman: We just got back October 19th from a long trip to Turkey, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. In the Baltic states the war in Ukraine has them concerned that Russia will come after them next if Ukraine falls.

Our son **James** completed hiking the Appalachia Trail (2,200 miles) July 30th. If you are interested in the hike, he did a Facebook journey, day by day. The link is

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Appalachian-Trail-Journey/100090068975070/>.

Seems like only yesterday, but we left Missouri 35 years ago. I have very fond memories (when I have any memory at all) of all the great people I got to work with while living in the Ozarks. I feel so fortunate to have spent my youth learning so much from everyone in SCS (before it was NRCS). Those were the best of times.

Dennis Shirk: "Lois and I are well. Enjoying life as best as possible."

From **Ray Hudak's wife, Jackie Moore:** "Regret to inform you that Ray passed away Oct. 1st from heart failure. Here is the link to our obituary page:"

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/funeral-homes/missouri/columbia/memorial-funeral-homecolumbia/9874>

Nancy Ayers: "Van and I have been so busy this growing season that we didn't even go on a trip. We increased our pumpkin acres from 5 to 8. The business has grown these last 5 years. We sold out again this year! One of our organizations we work with is a local church ministry called; Gateway Outdoors. They work with handicapped children and take them fishing and hunting. We even have a few handicapped blinds set up on our farm for them to hunt in. They have been selling our pumpkins for a fundraiser the last 4 years. We made enough money to purchase one of those track wheel-chairs and a few blinds!

Our sweet corn acres have increased also! We only grow two varieties now, Serendipity and Silver Queen. We decided these are the best varieties in this climate. Serendipity has a longer life in the field and after picking has a longer shelf life than other varieties grown in this region. When we first moved back to Van's family farm (Est 1807) it seems most folks only wanted "peaches and cream." We finally convinced them that Serendipity was much better than Peaches and Cream. To the nay sayers, we gave them 3 to 6 ears to take home and try. Soon they returned to buy several dozen! In the last 3 years we have donated 500–700 ears of corn to the local Catholic Church Fall Festival. Bedford County has a large Hispanic Population. They use our sweet corn for Mexican Street Corn (mayo, chili powder, and Mexican white cheese) and a soup made with cut corn and herbs and spices.



From right, Nancy Ayres, Sara Nussbaum, Mark Nussbaum, Van Ayres

In addition, we grow about 10 acres of sunflowers. The last 5 years we have charged folks to take photos and pick sunflowers, and have had professional photographers come out and charged them by the hour. We set up our antique tractors, children

peddle tractors, old milk jugs, my chickens, etc. for photo props. This year we decided to do a sunflower maze and was very successful!

We are the only farm in middle southern Tennessee that grows warm season grasses. Our hay sales have grown, so we had to build another hay barn. Even the Tennessee Walking Horse folks have realized that Eastern Gama Grass is just as high in protein as alfalfa. But we had to warn them to stay away from Switchgrass. I was surprised how many horse folks didn't know this.

Van and I are on the Shelbyville FFA advisory board. Which is kind of ironic, because when I was in High School at South Shelby, Shelbyville, MO, they would not let girls in FFA. Van wrote a \$15,000 check and got funded. The funds are earmarked to plant pollinators around the high school and technology school. They asked me to plan the landscaping and varieties to plant.

We also attended the Mizzou vs Vanderbilt game in Nashville with recently retired co-worker of mine; **Mark Nussbaum** and his wife **Sara**. See photo. We have tickets for the Mizzou vs Tennessee game in Columbia on November 11th. We will be staying with my nephew's family who played Mizzou Football under Larry Smith.

Our son, **Harrison**, after he completed his basic training in the army (he was in ROTC in the Air Force at SEMO), and OCS training at Fort Benning; he accepted a training CED position with USDA/FSA. He has trained in Mississippi, Montgomery, and St. Francis Counties. He is now in St. Charles and St. Louis Counties. And he is in the Army Reserves.

Vanessa, our daughter, is still in Charleston, MO with our two grand-daughters; **Caroline** and **Lily Faye**. She and her husband farm over 7,000 acres in Mississippi County. She obtained her Agriculture Technology Degree from Murray State University."

From **Joyce Walker**: "Thanks for keeping in touch. As you know, **Jack** passed away on July 28th, and I really miss him! He was 96 years old and lived a long, productive life; and we were married for 40 happy years.

I have moved from our villa at Kingswood Senior Living to one of their apartments, so have a new address: Joyce Walker #3117, 10000 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, MO 64114. Still in the process of getting settled! I have macular degeneration in my eyes, so am coping with diminished eyesight. Prayers are certainly appreciated!

Greetings and best wishes to all, Joyce Walker."

Bill Pauls: "74th birthday was last Saturday. Ran 1/2 marathon that day in Mankato, MN. Fun trip up through my hometown of Newton, IA. The corn harvest was in full swing all over the states of IA and MN. **Kris** went to a grand-daughter's state finals tennis Championship in Springfield. They finished 3rd. Went water skiing for the 54th year in a row this past week. Yeah, a bit cool, but very crisp and refreshing. Will start thinking about winterizing things pretty soon. It is beautiful here at the Lake of the Ozarks now. I drove a John Deere Tram Tractor at the MO State Fair this year—a whole lot of fun for 10 days and some pocket change to boot. Busy time of the year for my Knights of Columbus guys and volunteering at church. Have been to several retreats that were quite inspiring. Headed for a run in Chickamauga, GA next month. I hope everyone is doing well, staying healthy and living their dream. If times are a bit tough, hang in there, and keep your faith strong, God will provide. His plan not ours."

MONTANA

Lori Valadez, ARCSE Representative

Email: valadez226@gmail.com

Gooby Ranch Report: "This summer we had more rain than we have ever had. The grass and weeds grew better than ever. **Mary Ann** waited to cut the hay until the weatherman said it wasn't going to rain for at least a week. As soon as the hay field dried, she mowed the hay, and the next day it got rained on. In a few days it dried enough so Mary Ann was finally able to rake the hay. About a half hour later the wind started blowing like crazy and all the hay blew up against the fence. There was no way Mary Ann would be able to bale the hay up against the fence. She said she would take the pitch fork out and fork the hay into the baler so she could get it baled.

I went out and looked and thought the best way would be for Mary Ann to take the trailer out and fork the hay on the trailer. Then she could haul the hay to the barn and stack it inside. That would save us baling twine and use less gas. Mary Ann said it would take more work to do it the way I suggested. Then I told her the next time we go to Bozeman I would take her to Costco's and split a foot long hot dog for lunch for her good work and the money we saved on gas. Mary Ann did two hand springs and said yes! yes! That will be great! We get to eat out."

From **Lori Valadez**, retired December 2021

"My husband and I just returned from a ten-day river cruise that began in Amsterdam in the Netherlands and ended in Munich, Germany, for Oktoberfest. We took in sites along the way stopping in Dusseldorf, Heidelberg, the Alsace part of France, Mt. Pilatus, Lucerne, and Lake Konstanz. It was my first trip to Europe, and it was spectacular. In a nutshell – incredible food, scenery."



Jose and Lori Valadez in Heidelberg, Germany.



Lori and Jose Valadez dressed in traditional German clothing (dirndl and lederhosen) for Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany.

NEBRASKA

Norm Kempf, Jim Culver, ARCSE Representatives

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LINCOLN SCS/NRCS RETIREES CLUB

The September meeting was called to order by President **Craig Derickson**. Attending were **Norm Helzer, Craig Derickson, Bob Engel, Doug Christensen, Norman Kempf, Jim Culver, Dana Snyder, Dave Camper, Gus Dornbusch, Angie Thompson, Harold Klaege, and Donna Dornbusch**.

The October meeting was opened by Chairperson **Craig Derickson**. Attending were **Doug Christensen, Paul Bartlett, Norm Helzer, Robert Engel, Gus Dornbusch, Dana Snyder, Harold Klaege, Craig Derickson, Steve Stover, Richard Bolli, Gary Muckel, Thomas Reinsch, Steve Scheinost, Jim Culver, JoAnne Thiele, and Donna Dornbusch**.

Craig announced that the National Office gave the go ahead to the ARCSE to reach out to NRCS state conservationists to discuss the potential for ARCSE retirees to mentor new NRCS employees. **Norm Kempf** and **Craig** will contact the Nebraska State Conservationist **Rob Lawson** for his input. Another issue on this subject is whether to pay compensation or have it be a volunteer service or both.

The new Nebraska Soil Health Coalition has been officially designated as a nonprofit in Nebraska. Articles were published in the Lincoln newspaper (under Public Notices) in September. The next step is to get 501c3 status, hopefully by the end of the year.

Craig announced that the Memorandum of Understanding with NRCS and the Association of Retired Civil Service Employees (ARCSE) to allow retirees to mentor new employees has been approved. The NRCS anticipates hiring 4,400 new employees in the coming year. The Nebraska State Conservationist Rob Lawson will speak on this at our December meeting. Announcements for the new jobs are currently going out.

Craig announced that **Ray Ward's wife Jolene** passed away in September. Ray runs a soil analysis lab in Nebraska and is a soil health expert.

Thomas H. Hammer passed away on August 15th, 2023. Some of our retirees attended the funeral services for Tom who retired from the NRCS in 1997. Tom retired as the State Conservation Engineer in Nebraska. **Scott Davidson** of Stanton also passed away this week. He was an NRCS technician. **Deanne Lull** who worked 49 years for the agency in Kansas also passed away.

Bob MacLauchlan passed away on September 30, 2023. JoAnne Thiele and Gus and Donna Dornbusch attended the funeral for Bob MacLauchlan on October 7. Gus shared with Bob's family some of the work that he had done for SCS/NRCS.

Norm Kempf said that his wife's sisters and brother visited them in September. **Dana Snyder** traveled to Springfield, Oregon, Bremerton, Washington, then to Hot Springs, South Dakota (over 3,800 miles round trip) to see his son and daughter and sister and their families.

Gus Dornbusch said he and **Donna** had to cancel their Portugal trip in September because he became ill.

Steve Stover said that he had recently attended the 105th anniversary of his high school in Beverly, Kansas. He has been president of the reunion association several times.

Tom Reinsch and his wife, along with his father who is 90, took a cruise around England.

The Dave Langemeier Memorial Golf Tournament sponsored by SWCS was held September 8th at the Highland Golf Course. There were 64 participants at the tournament, and \$3,300 was raised, mainly for scholarships. **Jim Culver** provided a table display for the tournament.

Harold Klaege reminded everyone that the COLA for CSRS retirees will be a 3.2 percent raise in their annuity in 2024, and FERS retirees will receive a 2.2 percent raise. A representative from BXBS will speak at the next NARFE meeting concerning changes in the revised plan for retirees, especially on drug benefits. Harold is also contacting the state of Nebraska to make sure survivors receive the same benefits.

Craig saw on the news the effects of storms and drought are having on some states. Homeowners may lose their home insurance or rates will go up dramatically because of the effects of natural disasters.

Craig Derickson was elected to the Nebraska SWCS board "at large." Craig Derickson also announced that the Nebraska Soil Health Coalition has submitted a 501c3 tax exempt paperwork to IRS.

Brad Soncksen's retirement party is October 20 in the Federal Building.

Recorded by **Donna Dornbusch**, Secretary

Submitted by **Jim Culver** and **Norman Kempf**



Some of our Lincoln SCS/NRCS Retirees club getting ready to order breakfast during our September meeting. (L-R) Donna Dornbusch, Norman Helzer, Harold Klaege, and Craig Derickson.



Our Host, Andrea in background getting ready to serve breakfast at our September breakfast. Sitting, (L-R) Dana Snyder, Dave Camper, Gus Dornbusch and Angie Thompson.



Good turnout for our October Meeting. (L-R) Jim Culver, Steve Scheinost, Thomas Reinsch, Gary Muckel, Richard Bolli, Steve Stover, Harold Klaege, Dana Snyder, Gus Dornbusch, Bob Engel, Norm Helzer, Paul Bartlett, and Doug Christensen. Donna Dornbusch and JoAnne Thiele upper right of photo.



Craig Derickson, our Chairperson (standing) discussing current club activities. (L-R) Steve Scheinost, Thomas Reinsch, Gary Muckel, Richard Bolli, and Steve Stover.

NEW JERSEY

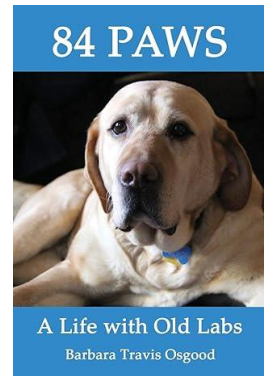
Nancy Paolini, ARCSE Representative

Email: npaolini@comcast.net

Life is not over after retirement. **Barbara Osgood** was the first female State Conservationist in NRCS when she came to NJ to lead us. After retirement she is still active and wrote a wonderful book in 2019. Consider supporting Barbara and Lab Rescue LRCP by purchasing the book. It is available from Amazon and other book sellers, and it will touch your heart.

84 Paws: A Life with Old Labs. At 84 years of age, **Barbara Travis Osgood** decided to publish a book. Through this autobiographical collection of short stories, she shares funny, sad, and always intimate moments from a life with senior Labrador Retrievers. **84 Paws** (<https://www.84paws.com/>) is more than a story about rescuing twenty-one elderly labs. It is the story about a woman with bipolar disorder, who, against all odds, saved herself. As it chronicles her enormous successes and her heart-wrenching plunges into darkness, it introduces readers to a cast of funny, furry, feisty senior labs who have occupied Barbara's home and heart, showing how she turned her love of labs into the best of all possible therapies. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book will go to Lab Rescue LRCP, for the rescue and care of senior labs.

Barbara and **84 Paws** were recently featured in **A View from Fair Lakes** magazine, a quarterly publication created by the Fair Lakes League.



NORTH CAROLINA

James Canterbury, ARCSE Representative

Email: jhcanter@bellsouth.net

Eight retirees from the Raleigh area met at the Farmers Market Restaurant for breakfast on September 26. Attending the breakfast were **Jim Canterbury, Frank Evans, Dick Fowler, Dick Gallo, John Kelly, Cecil Settle, Horace Smith, and Phil Tant.**



NORTH DAKOTA

Bob Bird, ARCSE Representative

Email: rajmbird@aol.com

It's starting to feel like fall and winter are descending on us. North Dakota did get back to having an annual reunion on Thursday, September 21st, 2023 at the Pizza Ranch in Bismarck with 15 retirees, 3 spouses, and a representative from the State NRCS office. The oldest retiree, **Chris Hansen**, retired in 1994, but then worked for the State Land office for 25 years. The most recent retiree was **Juan Ramirez**, who had retired only 3 weeks prior to our reunion. The most prominent retiree was **Mary Podoll**, past State Conservationist in North Dakota and was recently elected as President-Elect of ARCSE. **Brian Mager**, State Civil Engineer, representing current State Conservationist **Dan Hovland**, gave a short update on NRCS activities.

Retirees that were present and their former disciplines represented were: engineering, soil conservationists, soil scientists, agronomist, administration, economist, NRI Specialist, and plant materials specialist. This was a very interdisciplinary retiree group. Since we are coming up on a holiday season, I hope everyone travels safely to visit family and friends for Thanksgiving and Christmas or heading south for the winter. Hope your holidays are Happy and Best Wishes for the New Year.



Standing: Dave Dewald, Bob Bird, Chris Hansen, Scott Hochhalter, Juan Ramirez, JoDean Nichols, Clarence Clayton, Mary Podoll.
Seated: Rod O'Clair, Tom Coleman, Tom Kleingartner, Alan Ness, Jim and Lucy Johnson, Karen and Ron Sando. Not pictured, Jackie and Ken Miller. OREGON

Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative

Email: don.stettler@comcast.net

The Oregon fall quarter retiree lunch was held on October 25th at the Stir Crazy Chinese restaurant in Aloha. Several sent their regrets. **Russ Hatz** said he would be in Paris on the day of the lunch. Can't imagine 5,000 miles keeping him away. **Jon Lea** blamed it on Murphy's Law, because once again he had a conflict. This time the conflict was a meeting for an upcoming dog show. In a similar vein, **Leland Saele** has a conflict with an important meeting with the Sons of Norway. Hopefully, no conflicts for the winter quarter lunch in January.

Attending the lunch were **Gail Voge, Jim Marron, Thor Thorson, Beth Zetter and Butch, Lowell Kenedy, Kay Denfeld, Ron Avarado, Susan Scott, Bobbie Hart, Joe Sahlfeld, Ralph Wadleigh, Don Huffman, Stefanie Aschmann, Dick and Kathy Sylvester, Tom Fujii, Jay Gibbs, Eldena VanderZanden, Louise Davis, Eldena VanderZanden and yours truly, Don Stettler.**

The group greeted recently retired **Ron Avarado** and current acting State Conservationist **Jay Gibbs**. Ron retired after 31½ years. He frequently sees **Bob Graham**. **Jay Gibbs** announced his plans to retire this coming December. In preparation for that, his wife bought a huge horse trailer. **Kathy Sylvester** is focused on physical therapy for a rotator cup injury. **Dick** said he was helping her with that, plus dealing with some plumbing problems. **Stefanie Aschmann** had a good time in the Azores. She also continues to be involved in dragon boat racing. **Don Huffman** recently helped **Bill Daley** building his house in Alaska for three weeks. He is also enjoying participating in a cribbage tournament. **Jim Marron** is no longer coaching softball but serves as a commissioner. He is doing some home remodeling and enjoying taking care of his granddaughters.

Eldena VanderZanden has been actively involved in the Relay for Life fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. **Louise Davis** enjoyed witnessing a niece's wedding and recently welcomed a grandnephew into the family. **Kay Denfeld** is still playing with an ukulele group that entertains in Scappoose and St. Helens. She recently went to Hawaii for a niece's wedding. **Susan Scott** recently had an adventure going to Shanghai for a nephew's wedding. She also tried playing pickleball, but it didn't go well. **Ralph Wadleigh** is enjoying swimming again and working in the yard. Two of his grandchildren were married but then moved to New York and Maine. **Joe Sahlfeld** keeps busy managing the family farm. **Beth Zetter** told us she and **Butch** are enjoying their cat and dog and staying busy with their farm. **Tom Fujii** is looking forward to celebrating his 95th birthday in Arizona this coming February. **Gail Voge** volunteers for Meals on Wheels. She is often entertained by those on her route. **Bobbie Hart** just got back from spending some time on the coast and taking in some casinos.

Lowell Kenedy recently went to a plowing bee featuring old tractors in Eastern Washington. He had a hearing aid crisis which was resolved, allowing him to enjoy the event. **Thor Thorson** is golfing once a week and is doing NRCS volunteer work. **Don Stettler** participated in a small way in the 2023 Great Shake Out Earthquake Drill by sending a test digital report via ham radio to USGS that he had felt the earthquake. He also is focused on getting his English Springer Spaniel through puppyhood.

The plan is to have the winter quarter retiree lunch at an eastside restaurant in January.

PENNSYLVANIA

Excerpt from The PA Bugle, from Tim Murphy.

Our gathering in Bloomsburg/Berwick on September 10th and 11th was a great success, with attendees from across the state and beyond. Twenty-six retirees and spouses enjoyed a delicious meal at RoseMarie's Restaurant in Bloomsburg on Sunday night. On Monday, 29 people attended our meeting at the Berwick Golf Club. Our guest speaker was **David Kovach**, who provided an entertaining history of the Stuart M3 Light Tank, built in Berwick during WWII, and more recent efforts to acquire a tank and establish a museum in Berwick.

Amanda Coleman, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in Bloomsburg, presented the NRCS report, focusing on the May 2023 PA-NRCS Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2027, and emphasizing NRCS's involvement in mitigating climate change, an expanded role in urban agriculture, massive funding increases under the Inflation Reduction Act, and increasing NRCS staffing and partnerships in PA. **Hosea Latshaw** has volunteered to organize the Sept. 15th-16th 2024 Retiree's reunion. We will meet in the Lebanon area. Mark your calendar now.



(L-R) Ken Harvey, Kevin Roe, Don Murray, Ed and Rita Brzostek, Hosea and Glenna Latshaw, Mark Groshek, Alan Bennett, Phil Sheets, Tim Murphy, Alice Sheets, Wayne and Jackie Bogovich, Joel Myers, Norm Wolfrom, Debbie Watson, Rose Wolfrom, Tom Sierzega, Anne and Gary Smith, Gina Murphy, Jane and Fred Schuetz, Mary Smith, Judy Ulery, Martin Smith, and Nevin Ulery. Not pictured: Deb Bennett and Cindy Groshek.

Submitted by Frank Resides

Some of our more senior members may have known and remember **Richard Arnold Pennay**. Richard was a farmer and was with the ASCS in Harrisburg. I met him at a SWCS, Keystone Chapter Meeting at Slippery Rock College many years ago. **Lloyd Thomas** (now deceased) and **Bob Heidecker** also knew Richard. We became friends, and after we retired I stopped occasionally at his place along US Rt. 15 just south of Liverpool in Perry County. Richard enjoyed giving people tours of his 200+ acre farm in his pickup.

After his death in June of 2012, **Jane** and I stayed in touch with his wife, **Louise**, a wonderful person. We stopped in a couple of times every summer, and she always had homemade chocolate chip cookies or cinnamon bread for us in return for a small jar of honey from Matthew's and Frank's apiary.

Louise died on September 12th of this year, at age 95, in a Medical Facility at Camp Hill. What a wonderful Blessing it was, that she could stay in her home until the last 5 days!

God Bless, Frank Resides

TENNESSEE

ARCSE Representative: Dana D. Ensor, DBA

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Fall Retiree's Meeting 9/21/2023



We met at The Golden Corral in Cookeville, TN on Thursday September 21, 2023. There were 21 total in attendance, including spouses and a grandchild.

In attendance were: **Allen and Freda Crowe with their granddaughter Elizabeth Ring, James Creasy, Donald Dotson, James Sims, Bobby Moore, Anna and Jack Chidester, Dewitt Simerly, Debbie Brasfield, Terry Gupton, Kathy Daughtery, Dwight Dickson, Bill Dailey, Jim Lansford, Mike Hart, Kevin Brown, Larry and Connie Hasty, and Traci Horne.**

News of those not in attendance that were reported on:

Patty Lane has been in AFIB and has had a hole repaired in her retina. She had an appointment today and could not attend. Says to tell everyone "hello."

AnnSue Wattenbarger had an appointment today and could not attend. Says "hello" to everyone. **Ron Graner** will be 89 on 9/28/23. His wife had a dr. appointment today and he could not attend.

Dana (York) and Bob Ensor are taking care of their grandson while his parents recover from COVID. They travel between their two farms in MD and TN and have been enjoying the rain we received this year.

Shirley Childs has been in the hospital and has driving restrictions right now, so she could not attend. Her daughter is retiring from the Air Force in Japan, which Shirley will be travelling to for the retirement ceremony.

Darwin Newton is in Cleveland, OH on vacation and can't attend. Says "hello" to all.

News from those in attendance:

Kathy Daughtery is celebrating her birthday and doing well after her mini-stroke, with minimal complications. Her husband **Tracy** had been in AFIB since August, but he is now back in rhythm after treatment. She is also the caregiver for her aunt.

Dewitt Simerly is still living in Pall Mall and has a 10-month-old granddaughter. One of his daughters has recently moved to Minnesota. He also brought all of us some jars of his homemade apple butter, an old family recipe and tradition.

Debbie Brasfield is still working the ACES program and doing some soil judging. She keeps busy with her grandchildren, and she is blessed with good health.

Bill Dailey said that he had heard from **Randy Parnell** who had planned to come but wasn't feeling well, so didn't get to come. He also had heard from **Bob Peters** who could not attend either. He also shared that **Howard Whitaker** had just turned 90 yesterday. Bill had been fighting stage 4 metastatic prostate cancer. He has a 9-year-old grandson and a 4½-year-old granddaughter who he claims is his mother reincarnated.

Dwight Dickson has 7 grandchildren. His daughter and son-in-law who have 2 sets of twins, are all moving in with him temporarily while their home is being built. He also shared that **Dimple Geesling** recently fell and broke two ribs.

Mike Hart has had some health issues and has recently had shoulder surgery. He is still living in Gladeville near one son. His other son is living and working in Australia! Visits are being planned each way.

Traci Horne enjoyed a trip with her 2 nieces to King's Island to ride roller coasters in July. She and Terry took a trip to the Northeast for nearly 2 weeks earlier this summer. She also has a trip planned to Florence, AL with **Patty Lane, Faye Floyd and Nancy Harris**. She is also working with the ACES program on the Administrative staff under **Grace Lutz**.

Larry Hasty has not been able to attend recent meetings due to dr. appointments and conflicts with his high school class meetings. He tries to rotate between the meetings. His granddaughter is the state FFA President, and she travels state-wide for meetings while also enrolled in college. He still has a few cattle and takes care of 2 places about 20 miles apart.

Allen Crowe brought this granddaughter **Elizabeth** who is in her third year of nursing school at TTU. Her twin sister is in school at UT Knoxville, and his grandson is now a Civil Engineer in the Knoxville area. He mentioned that when Freda retired from teaching 20 years ago, the twin granddaughters were born 17 days later!

Terry Gupton is glad to see everyone. He still enjoys farming and raising cattle. He is going to a field day tomorrow in Alabama. He is no longer on the Board in Roane County since he moved outside the county. He still practices soil health.

Jim Lansford has been in Cookeville since 1978 and still lives at home. He loves seeing old friends and enjoys church on Sundays. He says that the rest of the days are for doctor visits! He said that he had heard from **Ray Holyfield** who is doing well and has relocated to northern Alabama near his daughter. He also shared that **Eldon Witcher** had passed away about 3 weeks ago.

(Jim was also mentioned by many in attendance in their shares. He was and continues to be a mentor to them. They all shared some fond (and often funny) memories of their times working with him.)

Kevin Brown just got back from Clover, SC after a 10-day babysitting job for his grandson, while his daughter and her husband took a vacation. He recently attended a Titans game and also a trout fishing trip. He also enjoys gardening.

James Creasy enjoys a little fishing, kayaking, and hiking and spending time with his 4 grandchildren. His daughter **Sarah** and her husband and child are now living with him and **Kim** while their dream home is being built. He also drove a horse trailer out to the set of Yellowstone and was actually cast as an extra as a cowboy! However, his dream of fame was dashed when the scene was cut from the script.

Bobby Moore is now 84 and has just gotten his first great grandson who comes to visit every Friday. He cares for his wife **Brenda** who has health problems. He is also still working part time and has retained his engineering and surveying licenses.

Donald Dotson will be 80 on January 5th. He just had his 57th wedding anniversary to **Donna**. He told of how he had to take LWOP when they got married as he had not been with SCS long enough to earn leave yet. His two daughters live in Franklin, and he finally got a great grandson.

Anna Chidester reflected on how many thought we would be spending so much time in the doctor's offices? She advised developing a "waiting-room hobby" to help pass the time while we wait. She and **Jack** have been doing well, and travelling a little to places like Pigeon Forge.

James Sims turned 83 yesterday. He is still working ACES and feels good. His daughter was recently promoted to a GS-14 with the IRS and works on the Chief's staff in Smyrna.

THANK YOU to **Dewitt Simerly** for his generosity in sharing jars of his apple butter with us all! If you have had it before, you know what a treat it is!

We all enjoyed mingling before the meal and catching up on all the news. The food was outstanding as well as the company. Our next meeting will be **Thursday December 14, 2023**. Please put this on your calendar and plan to attend. See you then!

–Traci

Missing in the attached picture is **Jim Lansford**.

TEXAS NORTH

Mike Bogard, ARCSE Representative

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Mike writes "I retired from the NRCS in September 2003 as DC at the Groesbeck, Texas field office from a job I had been in for almost 30 years. The job had changed since I started out in charge of one county and was in charge of three counties when I retired.

My wife, **Amelia**, and I moved to Gatesville, Texas January 2004. We decided to move to Gatesville, Amelia's hometown because her mother was having dementia issues, and Amelia had inherited some land that needed attention.

The last few months have been a big adjustment for me. I lost my wife, Amelia, December 18th, 2022 and for the first time I am living by myself.

I still live in Gatesville and have spent a lot of time on the local golf course this year, but things started to change for me in February of this year when I started getting acquainted with a lady that attends the same church as I attend.

Mary Beth Rivers lost her husband about one year before I lost Amelia. Her late husband retired from the US Forest Service. He had worked for the Forest Service in Virginia, North Carolina, and the last 42 years in Florida.

Mary Beth and her husband grew up in West Virginia and moved to Gatesville, Texas in 2020 to be nearer to their son. Mary Beth and I are becoming better acquainted every day. We are not sure exactly where our relationship is headed and are trusting the Lord will lead us in our decisions."

DEADLINE FOR THE JAN/FEB 2024 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS DEC. 25TH, 2023.



Quenna Terry is retiring after 32 years of service.

Ed Schulle wrote: "Just thought I would give a quick update on me. I'm still doing very well. Just had an "SCS" procedure performed. Oh yes, the SCS does not stand for Soil Conservation Service. Just "Spinal Column Stimulator." When I need it, I get a buzz."

WEST VIRGINIA

Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative

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Ron Estepp passed away on October 1ST, 2023. Ron was A Soil Scientist who worked all over West Virginia. He retired as a Soil Survey Project Leader, Resource Soil Scientist in Romney. One of his achievements was being a WV Association of Professional Soil Scientists Golden Auger award winner. You can read more about his life in the "In Memoriam" section of this newsletter.

Ten teams participated in the 2023 Southeast Regional Collegiate Soils Contest, which was hosted by WVU in Morgantown, WV: Auburn University, Clemson University, North Carolina State University, Tuskegee University, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, University of Tennessee-Martin, Virginia Tech, and Western Kentucky University. Practice sessions began on Monday, October 2nd, with 12 practice pits scheduled over the three days to prepare the contestants for the contest on Thursday, October 5th.



Ten teams participated in the 2023 Southeast Regional Collegiate Soils Contest

Prior to handing out the awards to the winning teams, WVU Soil Judging Coach **Jim Thompson** commented that each of the participants were better soil scientists than when they arrived in Morgantown, due to the three days of intensive training they received during the practice days at the Animal Science and Organic Farms. The top five teams were Virginia Tech, North Carolina State University, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Auburn University, and Clemson University. These teams will represent the Southeast Region at the National Collegiate Soils Contest in Iowa next April.

Peg Reese was the only retiree who helped with the contest, but several current NRCS employees had major roles in making the contest a success, including **Aron Sattler, Jared Beard, Wendy Noll and Jason Teets**. As soil scientists never miss an opportunity to see soil pits, the West Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists held their annual meeting at the farms the day after the contest.

Alan Stadden shared the following: "**Gretchen** and I, along with our son **Eric** and his wife **Cathy**, met our daughter, **Heather**, her husband **Craig**, and children **Jed**, age 14 and **Mackenzie**, age 9 in Honolulu, Hawaii for our annual family vacation. We all stayed together the first week in a 3-bedroom Villa at Ko Olina. We spent our sun-drenched days on the beach at the private lagoons swimming and snorkeling and enjoying being with each other. The second week, we were aboard the Norwegian cruise ship "Pride of America," stopping at four different ports of call, which included the Island of Maui for a turtle and snorkel at Molokini Crater on Sunday, a Zip Line and Rainforest adventure on Hilo, a journey to Waimea Canyon, and visit to a Blowhole on the coast near

Nawiliwili on the island of Kauai before returning to Honolulu for our trip home. We enjoyed being together as a family and had another wonderful vacation to add to our memories.”

WISCONSIN

Deb Legear, ARCSE Representative

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Wisconsin retirees are active around the state. We have several luncheon “meetings” between March and October in various locations, so everyone has a chance to get out to visit with past co-workers.

On September 7th, 24 retirees and partners met in the southwest part of the state at the Spring Garden Family Restaurant in Mt. Horeb. The NRCS State Conservationist, **Tyrone (Ty) Larson**, came to the meeting to update the retirees on current conservation activities in the state and expressed his hope to unite some of the retirees as mentors with new NRCS employees. Sadly, Ty passed away suddenly on October 8th, 2023.



Tyrone Larson, State Conservationist; and Patricia Leavenworth, Former State Conservationist



(L-R) Greg Igl, Roger Allan, Tyrone Larson



(L-R) Sheryl Paczwa, Renae Anderson, Scott Mueller, and Kirsten Mueller



(L-R) Jim Enlow, Lynette Enlow, Lori Van Hulle, and Shawn Nameth



(L-R) Mary King and Ted Manning



(L-R) Michelle Wilkinson, and Jim Kaap



(L-R) Mike Sundquist, Sue Skebal, Susan Gundlach, and Howard Gundlach



(L-R) Roman Statz, Red Larson, and Tom Thrall



(L-R) Phil Leavenworth, Deb LeGear, and Michelle Wilkinson

Submitted by: Tim Meyer

Breakfast and coffee with a small group of Natural Resources professionals met at Pammy K's in Eleva.



(L-R) Phil Leavenworth, and Patricia Leavenworth



(L-R) Tim Meyer, Vice Price, Ron Kugel, Larry Natzke from NRCS, and Jon Olson-USFWS

Submitted by Deb LeGear

Retirees met at the Launching Pad in Shawano on October, 12th for the last luncheon meeting for 2023. We had 17 in attendance. New acquaintances were made as well as old friends happy to see each other again.



(L-R) Marlys Tauchen, Herb Tauchen, and Julie MacSwain, ARCSE President



(L-R) Gary Stanke, Steve Kellermann, and Joe Wauchon



(L-R) John Campbell, Susan Gundlach, and Howard Gundlach



(L-R) Leon Janowski, John Hoepfer, and Gary Stanke



(L-R) Deb LeGear, Judy Derricks, and Greg Rebman



(L-R) Pete Lindgren and Billm Kowalski



(L-R) Steve Kellermann, Joe Waukechon, and Dean Sylla

From **Michael Hook** (michael@wisconsinlandwater.org), WI Statewide Training Coordinator: The Wisconsin Conservation Mentor Program is officially launched. It's with great pleasure and excitement that I announce that the pilot program is officially OPEN, and we are now accepting applications to be part of our interagency conservation mentorship program!

This program has been designed, developed, and approved through a collaborative effort amongst staff and agency leaders from each of our major conservation partners by way of the State Interagency Training Committee (SITCOM). We feel that it will act as an important resource for staff across the state of all ages, experience levels, backgrounds, and affiliations.

Please visit our program's website, <https://wisconsinlandwater.org/our-work/conservation-training/sitcom/interagency-mentor-program> to learn more about the program and to apply!

We are seeking 30–50 staff to participate in our pilot process, where we will begin the matching and mentorship experience and figure out what works and what doesn't. Our intention is to use the pilot process to ensure a successful rollout of the full program at our March 2024 Wisconsin Land and Water Annual Conference.

Do you know a conservation professional who might benefit from having a mentor? Do you know someone who could make a great mentor themselves? Are you or is someone you know looking to grow their network of peers? Forward them this email, and we hope to hear from them soon!

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

Robert T. Heidecker

Robert Heidecker was born on October 25, 1939 at Bethlehem, PA. He earned his BS degree at Penn State in June, 1961. His wife, Carole J., passed away 9/22. He has one son, one daughter, and two grandchildren and grew up on a farm near Quakertown, PA.

He started with SCS as a student trainee soil scientist in 1959 and was assigned to a field location as a soil conservationist in 1961. He served in the US Army beginning in 1962, six months active duty and 5½ years reserved duty, with honorable discharge in 1968. He served as a soil conservationist in 1962 and served as a work unit conservationist from 1962 through 1974, then as Area Conservationist beginning in 1974, and State Resource Conservationist in 1978. He retired in January, 1997, in Harrisburg, PA.

Bob did assessments of large National Pork Producers Association operations for three years. His hobbies include gardening and being an avid Penn State football fan. He is an active member of the Carlisle Reformed Presbyterian Church. He became a Master Gardener through the Extension Service in 1998, receiving his Master Gardener Emeritus status in 2008. In cooperation with the Cumberland County Nursing Home, he developed Extension Service trial and demonstration gardens and received an award as Garden of the Month featured on the front page of the Carlisle newspaper. The gardens were used to educate the public on gardening.

He is a past President of the Keystone Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and also past President of the Pennsylvania Chapter of ARCSE for five years. He has presented numerous technical papers at SWCS national meetings. Bob has had some serious health problems including advanced prostate cancer, for which he received a life-time dose of radiation treatments in 2003.

Bob can be reached at 6 Enck Drive, Boiling Springs, PA 17007' 717-258-3328; carbobs39@comcast.net.

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)
Abernathy	2023	Edward J. Abernathy (92) of Poteau, Oklahoma passed away peacefully on September 19, 2023, surrounded by family. He was born in Milton, Oklahoma to Dolar Edward and Mary Elizabeth (Tolbert) Abernathy. He attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, Oklahoma, and graduated from Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State University) in Stillwater, Oklahoma, in 1953. Ed married Joanne (Williams) Abernathy, on September 4, 1954, as he began his soil scientist career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, assisting the LeFlore County District Soil and Water Conservation. Ed was relocated to Beaver, Oklahoma, Duncan, Oklahoma, Sallisaw, Oklahoma, and in 1964, he was transferred to Poteau, Oklahoma where he continued his work with the USDA until his retirement in 1985. He then was a director of the LeFlore County Conservation District. He retired the district in 2022 after honorably serving as Chairman of the Steering Committee for the Wister Lake 319 Water Quality Program in LeFlore and Latimer Counties, Chair of the Watershed Advisor Group for the Wister Lake Program, and finally the District Director of the LeFlore County Conservation District. In 2022, Edward received a Congressional Citation for his service. Ed served the First Baptist Church in Poteau for over 40 years as a Deacon, Chairman of the Deacons, and numerous committees, prayer groups, and community outreach. Ed was preceded in death by his loving wife of 50 years, Joanne Abernathy in 2005. He is survived by a son, Dr. Bryan Abernathy, and a daughter, Shauna Sterling (Brent) of Fayetteville, Arkansas; five grandchildren, Brett Sterling (Jenny) of Fayetteville, Jordan Hoff (Chris) of Seminole, Florida; Lauren Sterling of Fayetteville, Sydnee DeAngelis (Matt) of Boston, Massachusetts, and Reid Abernathy of Fayetteville; and five great-grandchildren.
Anderson	2023	Dellas Neal Anderson (91) of Chickasha, Oklahoma, passed away on September 15, 2023, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Dellas was born on February 2, 1932, in Tulsa, Oklahoma to Dupree Coffman Anderson and Bessie Mae (Watson) Anderson. After high school, he joined the United States Army and served his country for two years at Fort Chaffee Army Base. After being honorably discharged from the Army he attended Oklahoma State University for his undergraduate degree, then went on to get his master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Oklahoma. He worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service for 38 years, where he retired in 1994 after working on the Chickasha watershed planning staff. He married the love of his life Pat Blackerby in Martha, Oklahoma on August 18, 1957. Dellas was very devoted to his faith, which he did as a Sunday school teacher and an active Gideon. Dellas is survived by his wife, Pat Anderson of Chickasha, son, Greg Anderson of Frisco, Texas; daughter, Cindy Avers of Frisco Texas; and grandsons, Parker and Ethan Avers.

Birdwell	2023	Bobby Thomas Birdwell (90) of Stillwater, Oklahoma, passed away October 19, 2023, at his home. He was surrounded by his wife, Billie and their children. Bobby was born on June 11, 1933, on Flynn's Creek in Gainsboro, Tennessee to Doxie and Lillie Birdwell. Bobby met his wife and lifelong partner, Billie, at Oddie's Drive Inn in Cookeville, Tennessee in 1951 and they married on November 5, 1952. Bobby voluntarily enlisted in the United States Army in 1952 and served his country as a Master Drill Sergeant at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He was honorably discharged in 1954. Bobby graduated from Tennessee Tech University with a degree in Agriculture. He would continue his education throughout his career and earned his PhD from Oklahoma State University in 1982. After leaving military duty, Bobby began work with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. His career would take him to live and work in Tennessee, North Carolina, Texas, Oklahoma, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. He began as an Assistant Soil Surveyor and rose to be the National Leader and Director of the USDA Soil Survey Division. Bobby served as the State Soil Scientist in Oklahoma from 1976 to 1982. He then moved back to Tennessee and then to Washington DC. where he stayed until his retirement in 1988. He traveled to several countries as a representative for the USDA and was in Tehran, Iran just days before the US Embassy was taken and held hostage by the Iranian government. Bobby retired in 1988 after a long and successful career. Bobby and Billie returned to Stillwater that same year to live closer to their children. Bobby is survived by his wife, Billie, of 71 years, his daughter, Susie McCord (Larry) of Plano, Texas. His son, Richard (Suzanne) of Stillwater and his youngest daughter, Beth Borland (Jeff) of Plano, Texas; 5 granddaughters, Tracy, Cassie, Sara, Rebecca and Macey and one grandson, Garrett; and 6 great grandchildren, Colby, Ryder, Owen, Nevaeh, Caden and River. Funeral services were held October 23, 2023 at the Stillwater Church of Christ, with burial following at Sunset Memorial Gardens.
Blohm	2023	Catherine Diane Abbott Blohm (75) of West Sacramento, California, passed away on August 25, 2023. An obituary was not available. Diane, as she was known by coworkers, was born April 28, 1948. She worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in the California State Office as an Administrative Assistant for the State Resource Conservationist and the Resource Technology staff for many years. Survivors include her son Walter "Josh" Blohm of West Sacramento.
Burton	2023	Loretta Mae Burton (86) of Alex, Oklahoma, passed away September 14, 2023, at her home in Alex surrounded by her loving family. She was the wife of retired USDA-Soil Conservation Service Soil Conservation Technician Durl Ray Burton. Loretta was born November 17, 1936, in Chickasha, Oklahoma, to Everett and Xelpho Cox. Loretta was raised on a farm Northeast of Alex. She attended Alex Public Schools until she married Durl Ray Burton at age 16. They were married on July 18, 1953, and were married for 70 wonderful years. She worked at Grady Memorial Hospital for many years. She then worked for the highway department where she retired.
Chaney	2023	J. Cecil Chaney (98) of Kaufman, Texas, passed away April 8, 2023, surrounded by family. Cecil was born March 17, 1925, to Thomas Monroe and Dovie Bailey Chaney five miles northeast of Canton, Texas. After graduating high school in 1943, he volunteered for the United States Navy. He spent his time at the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station where he worked on planes until his discharge in 1946. With the help of the GI Bill, Cecil entered Texas A&M University in 1946 and received a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education in 1950. Cecil's first job teaching was Veteran's Ag for one semester in Wills Point, Texas. He married Onetta Gilmer in Canton on December 23, 1950. They moved to Winters in West Texas where he taught vocational ag that spring semester. Cecil then accepted employment with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service and served as a District Conservation in Mabank, Texas. From Mabank, the job took them to Hubbard, Saint Jo, Muenster and finally in 1969 to Kaufman, Texas. Cecil retired after 30 years of service for the Soil Conservation Service in 1981. At that time, he received his real estate license. He also serviced cars at Eagle Lube two or three days a week. Also, during this time, he served as a part-time secretary/bookkeeper and did lake dam maintenance for the Soil Conservation District. Cecil was a member of the First Baptist Church in Kaufman. He is survived by his wife of 72 years, Onetta; two children, Judy Reznicek (Randy) and Steve (Charlotte); 5 grandchildren Brian Reznicek (Krystal), Brad Reznicek, Jennifer Perry (Dallas), Michael Chaney (Candy), Allison Cocchi (Michael); 8 great-grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.
Davidson	2023	James Scott Davidson (64) of Stanton, Nebraska, passed away September 14, 2023 at his home. James Scott was born March 11, 1959 in Norfolk, Nebraska to John Vernon "Jim" and Georgia June (Petersen) Davidson. He graduated from Stanton High School in 1977. Following graduation, he attended Northeast Community College and the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. He returned to the family farm. Also, Scott worked as a technician for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for 34 years. On August 20, 1999, Scott married Jeanette Houdek in Lake Tahoe, California. Over the years, Scott served on the Stanton County Fair Board and the Pheasants Forever Chapter. Additionally, he held a variety of positions as a member of the New England United Church of Christ in Stanton. In 1984, Scott received awards for his heroism from the Nebraska Funeral Directors Association and VFW Auxiliary 3602 for saving his father from a grain bin accident. Survivors include his wife Jeanette, sons Gunnar and Gatlin; father Jim of Stanton.
Davis	2023	Mark Rowland Davis (76) of Appomattox, Virginia, passed away on September 12, 2023. Mark was born on September 7, 1947, in Front Royal, Virginia, the son of the late William and Cora Jane Reid Davis. Mark was a veteran of the United States Air Force. He graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University with degrees in Forestry and Wildlife Management. Mark worked for the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He was a District Conservationist for the Rustburg Service Area and took great pride in helping local farmers install conservation practices on their land. Landowners spoke highly of Mark well after his retirement. Mark was a kind man who was devoted to his family. He had a sharp intellect and many interests including reading, hunting, and fishing (especially with his brother and nephew), walking the woods, checking timber sites, and tending to his many collections. He cherished his many pet dogs through the years. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Yun Hui; his daughters, Gina Kelley (Tim) of Charlottesville, Virginia, and Elizabeth Amacher (Mike) of Colorado Springs, Colorado; and his grandson, Dylan Kelley. A memorial mass and celebration of life service was held at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Appomattox on September 16, 2023.
Estep	2023	Ronald Estep (79) of Old Fields, West Virginia, passed away October 1, 2023, at his home. Ron was born on December 27, 1943, in North Matewan, West Virginia, the son of the late Alfred Herman Estep and Zola Cook Estep. Ron was a 1967 graduate of Berea College before earning a master's degree in Agronomy from West Virginia University in 1969. Ron worked as a soil scientist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service from 1969 until he retired in 2000. During his service as a soil scientist Ron oversaw the mapping and investigation of soils throughout the eight counties in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. Ron loved living in Hardy County so much that he turned down opportunities for

		advancement several times because that would have required him to move away from the beauty of the South Branch Valley. As a man of many interests and talents, Ron made several muzzle loaders, fly fishing rods, bookcases, cabinets, desks, sewing desk and cutting table, a pool table, a chest of drawers, and a dining table. He was a member of the Moorefield Church of Christ for almost 53 years where he performed any task needed done from cleaning the baptistery to leading singing. Surviving is his loving wife of 56 years, Majorie "Vivian" Russell Estepp ; a son, Jody Bret Estepp of Melrose, Florida; and daughter, Amanda Estepp of Little River, South Carolina.
Floyd	2023	Bennie Lee Floyd (82) of Omaha, Nebraska, passed away on August 15, 2023. Bennie was born on July 30, 1941, in Sunflower County, Mississippi, in what's referred to as the "Delta". His parents were Purvie and Mary (White) Floyd. His father worked for the Illinois Central Railroad and wanting to leave the south's "Jim Crow" environment, readily volunteered for railroad work in the north laying track. In the summer of 1945 he, along with other workers, were loaded into crude company box cars making stops in various cities like Memphis, Tennessee; Springfield and Chicago, Illinois; Fulton and St. Louis, Missouri; and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The last city stopped at was Council Bluffs, Iowa, so Purvie decided to make this the place to work and make a home for his growing family. Bennie graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in Council Bluffs, Iowa, in 1959. He worked as a Civil Engineering Technician for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in Council Bluffs beginning in 1971 and retiring in 2004. Bennie dedicated his life to Jehovah God on Nov 25th, 1967, and faithfully served his Heavenly Father until his death. He is survived by: Daughter Zillah (Jim) Ingles; grandsons Beau and Benjamin Ingles; stepdaughter Joyce Dillahunt (Tim); and stepson Richard Giandomenico (Cara).
Hale	2023	Dwight Dean Hale (83) of Huron, South Dakota, passed away September 2, 2023, in an auto accident near Madison, South Dakota. Dwight was born January 19, 1940, to Clarence Willard and Roberta (McCoy) Hale in Bethany, Missouri. He received a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Missouri-Columbia. This led him to a 42-year career with the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service and included several years as the State Conservation Engineer in the South Dakota state office in Huron. After retiring, he did some consulting work. His favorite hobby was gardening. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Sherri Timperley; and his wife, Elaine Hale. Survivors include his daughter, Cindi (Terry) Ivestal of Custer, South Dakota; and four grandchildren, Uriah Herding, Tyler Herding, April (Jim) Wingle and Amber (Zach) Gronewold.
Hamer	2023	Thomas "Tom" H. Hamer (84) of Tecumseh, Nebraska, passed away August 15, 2023. He was born August 11, 1939, to Lewis K. and Josephine K. (Shackleton) Hamer in Pawnee City, Nebraska. He received his degree in Agricultural Engineering, with a focus on Civil Engineering from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. On September 9, 1962, Tom and Karen Glenn were married in Pawnee City. Tom served as a project engineer with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in Hebron and Tecumseh, Nebraska. He advanced to Assistant State Conservation Engineer and then State Conservation Engineer for Nebraska. After retiring, Tom continued to serve the state for many years, volunteering with the Five Rivers Resource Conservation and Development office and the Nebraska Environmental Trust Advisory Committee. Survivors include his wife, Karen, of Tecumseh, sons, Matt (Adrienne) Hamer of Miami Beach, Florida and Jake Hamer (Jenny Wallner) and children Louisa and Nicholas, Dallas, Texas.
Hobson	2023	Howard L. Hobson (83) of Clinton, North Carolina, passed away peacefully on September 17, 2023. Howard was born on April 30, 1940, in Raeford, North Carolina. He was the first member of his family to attend college, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in soil science from North Carolina State University. Howard proudly served in the United States Army from 1958 to 1962. Howard was employed as a District Conservationist with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) serving the farming community for thirty years. After retiring from the SCS, he was employed for ten years as Senior Technical Specialist with Carroll's Foods. Howard served as president of the Clinton Rotary Club and was an active member of First Methodist Church in Clinton. An avid nature lover, Howard enjoyed boating and fishing, especially along the Pungo River. He also loved attending North Carolina State football and basketball games with family and friends. Howard was predeceased by an infant daughter, Kathryn. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Helen Langdon Hobson, his son, David Howard Hobson (Jana) of Clinton; and by his beloved granddaughters, Emma Langdon Hobson, and Kate Norris Hobson.
Larson	2023	Wisconsin State Conservationist Tyrone "Ty" Larson (50) of Madison, Wisconsin, passed away on October 8, 2023. Ty was born and raised on Lake Waubesa in Madison, Wisconsin. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in 1995 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Reclamation. After graduation, he started as a temporary employee with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and then climbed the ladder, becoming a Soil Conservationist, a District Conservationist, Area Conservationist, and then Assistant State Conservationist, working across Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Ty became the State Conservationist of Wisconsin in the summer of 2023. He had a career of service to conservation and rural America. Ty's hobbies included fishing, hunting, following many sports, traveling with family, and indulging in his favorite music. He often did these with family and friends, and loved introducing people to his favorite activities. Ty also loved bringing these experiences to those who had never done them, as well as the youth. He was involved with many different conservation and wildlife organizations. Ty earned his two-gallon pin from the Red Cross for blood donation. He was involved in so many organizations, too many to list, but gave his all to each and every one. Ty is survived by his wife, Laura; son, Alex; mother, Kathy Larson; father, Richard Larson; sister, Amanda Larson; and aunts, uncles, cousins, and nieces and nephews. A celebration of life was held at Gunderson Oregon Funeral and Cremation Care, 1150 Park St., Oregon, Wisconsin on October 17, 2023. The family requests donations be made to Groundswell Conservancy.
Logan	2023	Glen Harold Logan (91) of Boise, Idaho, passed away September 22, 2023. Glen was born May 17, 1932, in Smith Center, Kansas to Sam and Barbara Logan. Arriving 2 years into the Great Depression, followed by 7 years of the Dust Bowl, created an upbringing of determination and hard work. Glen spent 1 year at Estherville Jr. College, and 4 years at Iowa State University, graduating in 1953 at the age of 21 with a degree in soil science. While in College, he completed the requirements for ROTC and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. He was proud of the fact that he worked his way through all 5 years of college. In April of 1954, he began his active service, 1st year in Denver in photo radar intelligence at Lowry Air Force Base, and his 2nd year as a targets officer in Osani South Korea. After his honorable discharge, Glen worked 9 months at Albert Dickenson Seed Company as a seed analyst, and in 1957 took a position as a soil scientist with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. That same year he met and eventually married Florence Holmes Howard, a widow with a young son, John Edmund (Pete) Howard. Glen became an immediate father. The family grew to 3 with the birth of Nancy and Linda. Glen's career took him to Emmett, Idaho, then Nampa, Burley and

		finally Boise, Idaho. In 1991, they lost son Pete to a heart attack. During his tenure as a soil scientist, Glen taught at Boise State University. Upon retirement, he became an appraiser and an independent soils analyst for property development. Florence passed away in October of 2015, having battled dementia for some time. Glen had an unwavering dedication to caring for her at the entire time. He is survived by his daughters, Nancy (Steve) Osborne and Linda Borup (Burke), grandchildren, Audrey (Rutger) Vanderlaan, Alex Borup, Laurel Osborne (fiancé, Henry), Olivia Osborne and Carly Osborne; and great grandson Thorne.
Long	2023	Former USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service employee John Earl Long (52) of Horseheads, New York passed away on October 17, 2023. John was born on November 12, 1970, in Altoona, Pennsylvania, son of the late Earl and Rosemary Rohaley Long. He grew up on a family farm in Patton, Pennsylvania and used that experience to shape a 30-year career as an agricultural economist where he worked for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington DC, Maryland, and Maine. For the past 10 years he ran his own consulting business Long Watershed Planning and Economics, where he supported conservation projects across numerous states. He was a graduate of Pennsylvania State University, where he met the love of his life and future wife, Stacey. He also completed masters-level coursework at both the University of Maryland and University of Maine. He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Stacey Carman Long; children, Sydney, Benjamin and Kathryn Long and other relatives.
Lull	2023	ARCSE Life Member Deanne K. (Nagel) Lull (83) of Salina, Kansas, passed away September 9, 2023. Deanne was born on July 4, 1940, in Orchard, Nebraska to Dr. Henry A. and Blanche F. (Schultze) Nagel. She grew up in Washington, Kansas, and graduated from Washington High School. Deanne received an associate's degree from Brown Mackie College in 1959. While there, she met her husband, Ronald Lull. They were married for 63 years. Deanne spent 49 years with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service working in clerical roles. She continued to serve through the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association and the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees (ARCSE). Deanne had served as the ARCSE Kansas State Representative for the past 13 years and had recently received a Distinguished Service Award for her volunteer work for ARCSE. Deanne was a longtime member of First United Methodist Church. Her faith was very important to her. Within the church, she was active in the Crusaders Sunday School Class, and the First United Methodist Women of Faith, Ruth Circle. She volunteered for many years in the church office and prepared meals for shut ins. In later years, she enjoyed doing Christ Centered Yoga. Deanne loved watching sports, especially football and the Kansas City Chiefs. She enjoyed playing bingo and going to plays at the community theatre. She collected nativity scenes and horse themed memorabilia. She is survived by her husband, Ronald Lull; son, Steven Lull (Janelle); daughter, Judi Waliczek (John); brother, Randy Nagel (Mary Hillman); two grandchildren, Samantha Metcalfe (Tyler) and Bryan Lull. A Celebration of Life was held September 18 at the First United Methodist Church in Salina.
MacLauchlan	2023	Senior Conservationist and Honorary ARCSE Member Robert "Bob" Scott MacLauchlan (96) of Lincoln, Nebraska, passed away September 30, 2023. Bob was born in Edmunds, Maine June 19, 1927, to Neil S. and Eleanor 'Nellie' Walker MacLauchlan. He served in the United States Coast Guard during World War II, Asiatic Theater. Bob graduated from the University of Maine and had additional graduate studies at Oregon State University, University of Nebraska, and Oklahoma State Universities. Bob married Doris Ruth Henderson in Pleasanton, California, on September 25, 1950. Bob was briefly employed by Agricultural Extension Service in Maine and then worked 37 years with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (S.C.S.) with positions in Pleasanton, California; Bellingham, Washington; Harrisburg, Hillsboro and Corvallis, Oregon. In Corvallis he was headquartered on the Oregon State University campus with a cooperator appointment to the faculty and served SCS field offices in Oregon and Washington in plant materials. He transferred back to California serving the state and western Nevada field offices in plant materials. He was promoted to the regional office in Lincoln, Nebraska serving the 12 mid-western states in plant materials for three years. Then he was promoted and served twelve years as Chief Plant Materials Specialist in the SCS National office, Washington, D.C. providing technical guidance and coordination to the SCS's 26 multi-state cooperative Plant Materials Centers, while living in Annandale, Virginia. He traveled repeatedly to all fifty states, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands providing national leadership and coordination to the SCS cooperative plant materials research. He participated in technical exchange assignments to Algeria, Mexico, Peoples Republic of China, and the former Soviet Union. He and Ruth moved back to Lincoln, Nebraska following retirement in 1985. He was a member of First Plymouth Congregational Church; member and past president Cornhusker Kiwanis Club; member and past president Chapter 199 National Association of retired Federal Employees; member American Legion, Post No. 3; member and past president of the SCS retirees Club; member Izack Walton League; early member Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; volunteer Tabitha Meals on Wheels for 18 years; an Admiral, and active in several other organizations. Survivors include daughters Debra (John) Horner, Omaha, Nebraska; Nancy (George) Bess, Crete, Nebraska; Pam Henning, Beatrice, Nebraska; son Neil (Robin) MacLauchlan, Seneca, South Carolina; grandchildren: Jonnie Ruth Horner Robinson (Zac); Jordan Horner Sochor (Joal); David Henning (Rosanna); Steven Henning; Mac Henning (Shaina); Andrea Bess Bridgmon (Nick); Spencer Bess; Garrett and Katie MacLauchlan; great-grandchildren: Zane, Leo and Ruthie Robinson; Uriah and Amaurice Henning; Josiah, Joah, Jagur and Joalie Sochor; Nettle Henning; Georgia and Ryker Bridgmon. He was preceded in death by beloved wife of 51 years, Ruth and grandson Zachary MacLauchlan.
Nechero	2023	James Steven "Steve" Nechero (62) of Benbrook, Texas passed away September 24, 2023, with family and close friends by his side. Steve was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer that he fought for over 10 years, well beyond the expectations of his medical team. Steve was born September 19, 1961. He attended the University of New Mexico where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Geography in 1986 and a Master of Arts in Geography/Geospatial Science in 1988. He started work with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 1989 as a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist in the Salina, Kansas State office. In 1993 he went to the NRCS National Cartography Center in Fort Worth, Texas as a Supervisory Cartographer. He served as the Technology Applications Team Leader from 2005 to 2010, and in 2010 became the Geospatial Data Management Branch Chief. In 2020 his position was transitioned to the USDA-Farm Production and Conservation agency where he served as Geospatial Science Map & Data Leader. Steve was a pioneer in elevation data, passionate about GIS, a mentor to so many, but perhaps more importantly a friend to anyone who let him. Survivors include his wife Shelly and children Rhiannon and Drake.
Ralston	2023	Margaret Speer Ralston (93) of Fairfax, Virginia, passed away peacefully on September 2, 2023. She was the widow of Senior Conservationist David C. Ralston, who served as the National Design Engineer for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. David retired in 1990 and passed away in 2020. Margie, as she was referred to, was born in Kingman, Kansas

		on January 22, 1930. She was the daughter of William Scott and Genevieve Martin Speer. After graduating from Kansas State University, Margie worked in the Chicago test kitchens of Swift and Co. Over the years she involved herself as a homemaker followed by working in the kitchen of the Fairfax County school system for about 10 years. In her spare time, she enjoyed gardening, was skilled at textiles and fiber work including weaving, knitting, basketry, and many other crafts. She was an active member of the Fairfax Presbyterian Church for more than 45 years, including serving in leadership positions. She enjoyed staying on top of the news of day, reading, and learning something new every day. She was a positive force in her community, much loved and touching many lives. She married David C. Ralston in 1956 and has four surviving children, Roger (Elisa Nappa), Peter, Barbara, and Andrew (Shannon Walton), and one grandchild, Grace Nappa-Ralston.
Stover	2023	James "Jim" Stover (75) of Kingfisher, Oklahoma, passed away on September 4, 2023, in Kingfisher. He was born on December 4, 1947, to parents Otto and Jean (Little) Stover in El Reno, Oklahoma. He married his high school sweetheart, Janet Murray, after dating for 4 years on June 23, 1967. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with their family in Mexico 6 years ago. He grew up on a dairy farm, milking Holsteins, and farming wheat, and took over the farm from his dad to run Stover Dairy with his brother Mike. He worked for both Kingfisher County Conservation District and Logan County Conservation District as well as the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Jim was the Soil Conservation Technician in Guthrie, Oklahoma in the early to mid-1990s. He worked in Information Technology before it moved to its own agency, and he also worked under Jim Henley as a GIS Specialist before he retired. Jim was active in many areas. He served for years as a little league coach for his children while they were growing up and was a big supporter of Cashion, Oklahoma sports. He was also President of Cashion AllSports. Along with the many things Jim was active in, he also taught GPS Mapping at Langston. Faith was important to Jim. He served as the church administrator at First Baptist Church in Cashion and was ordained as a Deacon of the First Baptist Church of Kingfisher. Jim is survived by his wife Janet of the home, his three children; Jaime Stover (Tara) of Crescent, Oklahoma, Jana Stover-Trello of Cashion, and Jeremy Stover (Sarah) of Edmond, Oklahoma, seven grandchildren; Jaici and Tucker Stover, Otto and Levi Trello, Karsyn, Kadence, and Kyzer Stover, and bonus grandson Braylin Babb.
Todd	2023	ARCSE Member Hewlett Freeman Todd (90) of Chico, California, passed away September 1, 2023. Hewlett was born in Peking, China on March 19, 1933, the youngest of four children born to Dr. Lois Pendleton Todd (medical missionary) and Oliver Julian Todd (civil engineer tasked with harnessing the Yellow River, "China's Sorrow"). In 1938, the family moved back to the United States due to WWII, settling in Palo Alto, California where he spent the remainder of his childhood. At age 12, he learned to play the accordion and acquired his first vehicle. As a Boy Scout, he learned and taught sailing. He graduated with a degree in Agricultural Engineering from California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) and worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in Corning and Redding, California for 35 years as an engineer. In 1954, he fell in love and married Susan Lynell Swig; they had three children. Sadly, the marriage did not last and in 1979, he married widowed Mary Bidwell Elledge and became a devoted father to her three sons. To him, his most important role in life was being a father. In his retirement, he joined the YMCA and enjoyed Zumba, water aerobics and the many friendships made there. He also made daily visits to Morgan Stanley where he enjoyed studying, engaging in the stock market, and making friendships. After the death of his second wife, he moved to Chico to be closer to his daughter. He enjoyed life at the Terraces where he actively participated in fitness classes, swimming, music, dancing, and making many new friends. He could often be heard playing the accordion or engaging in conversations. He was known for his kindness, optimism and great love for family and friends. He was predeceased by his wife, Mary, and stepson Bruce Elledge. Survivors include daughters Ginny Todd, Joyce Todd, son Hewlett Todd and stepsons Dan (Sara) Elledge and Rod (Stacey) Elledge, four grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.
Tupas	2023	Deputy Chief Luis Madamba "Louie" Tupas (61) of Vienna, Virginia, passed away August 29, 2023. Louie was born March 1, 1962, in the Philippines where he grew up until his college years. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Marine Sciences from the University of the Philippines (Dilman) in 1982. He received his Master of Science degree in Marine Science from the University of Tokyo Ocean Research Institute in 1988, and then his Doctor of Philosophy in 1991. Louie served as a faculty member at the University of Hawaii at Manoa from 1991-2002. His research and teaching careers were in the fields of biogeochemistry, microbial ecology, aquaculture, and biological oceanography. He began his federal government career in 2002 as a program director at the U.S. National Science Foundation. In 2004, he joined USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, now the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). He served at NIFA as a national program leader, division director, and deputy director for Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment. He joined the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in 2020 as Deputy Chief for Soil Science and Resource Assessment at national headquarters. Dr. Tupas provided leadership for addressing the scientific basis for conservation and sustainable agriculture through research, national surveys of soil, snow, water, and other natural resources, inventories of U.S. natural resources and their ecological transitions, and analyzing the impact of conservation practices, including soil, water, and climate studies. He provided national leadership to address global change and climate impacts on agriculture, forestry, and other landscapes, develop and expand climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, and enhance the sustainable utilization of agricultural working lands and waters. He also worked to implement strategies for sustainable natural resources utilization and environmental systems management and promotes domestic and international partnerships and engagement through collaborative research, education, and outreach programs. Louie is survived by his wife Jermelina, his son Mishail (Miko) and his sister Maria Isabel (Marisa) Tupas-Morgan.
Vavra	2023	Senior Conservationist and Honorary ARCSE Member Martin E. Vavra (98) of Boerne, Texas (formerly of Bryan, Texas), passed away October 13, 2023. Martin was born in College Station, Texas. Upon graduating from A&M Consolidated High School in 1943, he joined the United States Navy and served as a gunner in the Merchant Marines and a fire fighter at the Los Angeles Naval Air Station before being discharged in 1946. Martin attended Texas A&M University and received his Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering in 1949. Martin met his wife Geraldine (Deany) at a country dance in Kurten, Texas and they were married in 1951. He was employed by the USDA-Soil Conservation Service throughout Texas for 34 years. He obtained his Professional Engineer License and was a member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. Martin was a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church where he served as an usher and served on the Mount Calvary Catholic Cemetery board of directors. He was a life member of the Knights of Columbus Council 1834, the American Legion Post 159 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4692. Upon retirement in 1983, Martin and Deany returned to Bryan and built their retirement home in the Kurten area. Together they enjoyed country living until 2013, when they moved to Arbor Oaks in Bryan, and later to Morningside Ministries at Menger Springs in Boerne. He is survived by

		his wife of 72 years, Deany; daughter, Karen (Bob) Freeman; son, Dennis (Alicia) Vavra; grandchildren, Bill (Melissa) Freeman, Bobby (Rachel) Freeman, Adrienne Vavra, and Alexis (Jason) Thurston; great grandchildren, Clara Nell, Finley, and Dean Freeman; Tyler, McKayla, and Gabriel Thurston. Funeral services were held October 21, 2023, at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Bryan, Texas with Reverend Monsignor John McCaffrey officiating. Burial with military honors was at the Mount Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Bryan.
Warren	2023	Ronnie Joe Warren (69) of Altus, Oklahoma, passed away at his home on September 25, 2023. Ronnie was born on November 16, 1953, to Leota (Roberts) and Jeff Clay "J.C." Warren, Jr. He attended Altus High School and graduated with the Class of 1971, later attending Altus Junior College. He worked as a Technician for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service until his retirement. Ronnie was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed fishing and especially quail hunting. Among those left to honor Ronnie's memory are his son, Jeff Warren (Dee); grandchildren, Ansley Warren, Addison Warren, and Aspen Stephens (Trenton); and great grandson, Truitt Stephens.
Whittington	2023	Senior Conservationist Rosalie J. Whittington (96) of Raleigh, North Carolina, passed away October 14, 2023. Rosalie was born in Coats, North Carolina on October 27, 1926. She was the daughter of the late Millard Smith Whittington and Vada Turlington Whittington. Upon graduating from Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina, she moved to Raleigh and worked her entire career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, serving as Personnel Officer. Her interests included many years of ballroom dancing, trips to North Carolina beaches in Emerald Isle, Ocracoke and Outer Banks with family and friends, and travel abroad. While she had no children, she made many trips with her nieces and nephews, including fun days at the pool and parks. She shared her love of history with them, especially pertaining to North Carolina, its capital, and the Outer Banks. The family is so appreciative of her dedicated group of caretakers, who have become family to her and her niece Lynne. They loved her and were wonderful companions as she shared with them many stories of where she grew up, her interests, family, and career. She is survived by her sister-in-law Cheryl Whittington (brother Hartwell deceased) and 10 nieces and nephews and many grand nieces and nephews.
Woodrich	2023	Chi Robert Woodrich (50) of Salina, Kansas, peacefully passed away at Salina Regional Hospital on October 6, 2023, with his wife Karen at his side. His wife Karen Woodrich is currently the Deputy Chief for Programs for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and served as the State Conservationist of Kansas from 2018 until January 2023. Chi was born on March 16, 1973, in Lacrosse, Wisconsin, to Joanne and the late George Woodrich. Chi lived a life guided by humility, gratitude, and commitment to service. Chi's faith in God was the foundation of his life, and he found solace and strength in his active membership in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod since his baptism. He was also a proud member of the Ho-Chunk Nation. At the young age of 13, he met the love of his life, Karen, while playing broom ball at Pastor Erdman's cottage. Their bond deepened over the years, and they exchanged vows on October 21, 1995, at St. John Lutheran Church in the Town of Easton, Wausau, Wisconsin. Chi had a diverse career that showcased his talents and passions. He began his professional journey as an auctioneer, working alongside his mother and father in the family business, Woodrich Real Estate & Auctions. Later, he owned his own car hauling business, Chief Auto Transport, after spending many years at the Central Wisconsin Auto Auction. Chi also served as a volunteer firefighter with the Town of Texas in Wausau, Wisconsin. Most recently, he worked as an animal educator at the Rolling Hills Zoo in Salina. However, his ultimate passion was raising cattle and caring for the land. Chi's educational journey was marked by a thirst for knowledge. He graduated from Wausau East High School in 1991 and went on to obtain a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Anthropology from the University of Kentucky. Driven by his passion for learning, Chi also completed his coursework for a master's degree in Archaeology. The family would like to thank the medical professionals at Salina Regional Health Center for the care and compassion they provided during his brief stay. A funeral service for Chi Woodrich was held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Salina on October 16, 2023, with burial following at Crown Point in Culver, Kansas. Contributions in his name can be made to the Wausau East (Wisconsin) FFA or your local 4H/FFA chapter. Additionally, donations to volunteer fire departments would be greatly appreciated. Chi leaves behind his loving wife of 28 years, Karen (Valent) Woodrich, his mother, Joanne Woodrich of Sun City, Arizona, his sister, Noya Woodrich of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, and his nephew, Tuari Woodrich Landa, also of Brooklyn Park along with many other relatives.
Wyckoff	2022	Nancy Sue Wyckoff , previously known as Nancy Ellis, (83) of Nowata, Oklahoma, passed away July 13, 2022. She was born in Nowata, on December 3, 1939, to James Harold Bodle and Lois K (Ward) Bodle. Nancy graduated from Nowata High School in 1958. Nancy lived in Nowata her whole life and loved to reminisce about growing up in the 50's. On July 21, 1959, she married her high school sweetheart, Jack R. Ellis. On July 21, 1994, they celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary and on August 3, 1994, he passed away. Nancy married Michael Wyckoff in 1997 and had 25 and a half years together. Nancy worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for 20 years, first as a District Clerk in Nowata and then the Area Clerk at the Claremore, Oklahoma Area Office. She retired in 2000. Nancy was a charter member of the Hillside Christian Church in Nowata. She was a dedicated mother and grandmother. She loved music, traveling, and was an avid reader. She is survived by her husband, Michael, of the home; a daughter Regina Swan (Kevin) of Barsndall, Oklahoma; a son Brett "Dink" Ellis (Khristina) of Hugo, Oklahoma; one step-son, Derik Wyckoff of California, one-step daughter, Dawn Wyckoff of Michigan, and multiple grandchildren and great-grandchildren; Ashley K. Newton of Edmond, Oklahoma, Matthew B. Miller of Dewey, Oklahoma, Dally Jack Ellis and Amelia Vaughn of Nowata, Dillon Jacob Ellis of South Coffeyville, Oklahoma, Nathan Gage Miller, Nickolos Blake Miller, Colton James Miller, Macy K. Miller, Draven Shane Lowe, Hendrix Lee Steele, Marley Monroe Dunlap, Lexi Thomas, Axton Thomas, Alijah Thomas, Will Swan, Drew Swan, Hannah Crawford, and Greyson T. Wyckoff.