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# NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired Conservation Service Employees

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The **ARCSE Newsletter** is published bi-monthly by the  
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Website: [www.arcse.org](http://www.arcse.org)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Julie MacSwain, ARCSE President**

Greetings,

On behalf of the ARCSE Boards, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all of you as Members to vote for our ARCSE Elections. Every two years during an odd year (2025), our elections take place. The ballot includes President Elect, and the Regional VPs for the East, South, Midwest, and the West. Please follow the instructions contained on the ballot for the election. Thank you in advance for your support for this important ARCSE activity.

The concentrated ARSCE membership drive is underway through April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Membership forms have been updated, so that new Members can identify who recruited them. Please visit our website to learn more about the membership drive and obtain the most current membership program. <https://arcse.org/membership-drive/>.

A special thank you to **Chris Tippie** and **Paul Benedict** for their role in developing this first-ever membership drive.

Thank you to all our Members in ARCSE who have stepped up to provide various roles and responsibilities, so that our organization can continue to thrive in the next 50 years and beyond. Members, State Reps., ARCSE Advisors, and Board members all play a significant role. This newsletter is a great way for all of us to stay in touch with one another. If you are a member and you haven't contributed to our Newsletter, please reach out to your State Representative and share an article and a picture. Our Newsletter is also shared every two months with National and State NRCS Leadership. Keeping in touch with the NRCS is vital for not only maintaining our membership, but in continuing to grow as an organization.

My first-ever experience with ARCSE and State Retirees was when I served as the state public affairs specialist in Minnesota. **Bill Hunt**, MN State Conservationist, brought together **Tom Christiansen**, Regional Conservationist, NRCS Leadership, and SCS/NRCS retirees from throughout Minnesota. Hunt felt strongly that NRCS employees needed to get to know the retirees, and by having an event together, he was able to accomplish this. The pictures below are from the spring, 2009 event in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

Thank you for being a member of ARCSE. Together, we can and will make a difference in our organization. If you are aware of someone who has recently retired or is getting close to going out the door, please let them know about ARCSE. For additional information regarding membership, visit our website: <https://arcse.org/join/>.

—All the best, Julie MacSwain, ARCSE President

## ARCSE Mentoring Update

As you know, in 2023, ARCSE and NRCS entered into a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the purpose of increasing interaction, communication, and collaboration between retirees and their former agency, the NRCS. The impetus for this MOU was the news that NRCS would begin hiring over 3,000 new employees to carry out Farm Bill and other related conservation activities. ARCSE leadership has been engaged with NRCS leadership and was excited and hopeful about the prospects of helping new NRCS employees reach their full potential by tapping into the wisdom and experience of ARCSE retirees through a mentoring program.

Keep in mind that mentoring is not a new approach. Mentors have benefited NRCS employees for decades, and many seasoned employees and retirees can attest to the benefits they have accrued from mentors throughout their careers — and well beyond just their first years of employment (probationary periods).

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES



Minnesota ARCSE Members and NRCS Leadership, Spring 2009, St. Cloud, MN



Minnesota ARCSE Members and NRCS Leadership, Spring 2009, St. Cloud, MN

With the news of Trump administration terminations and down-sizing of the federal workforce, it seems impractical to continue promotion of ARCSE mentoring, at least until the situation stabilizes and can be evaluated. However, ARCSE intends to continue to make members available for mentoring, career counseling, or any form of support for NRCS employees need to help them get through this difficult period. ARCSE has therefore developed a fillable form for matching mentors with employees and have started a mentor coordination process in fulfillment of the MOU: <https://arcse.org/resources/arcse-nrcs-mentoring-program/>

The exact number of NRCS employees terminated is not known at this time. That said, the actual number ranges from "several" in one web site to as many as 1,400 from another source. The reason for the lack of actual numbers is related to the chaos that the layoffs are causing throughout USDA.

The impact to individuals, families, and communities is incomprehensible at this time, but there is no avoiding the pain and worries these people are feeling.

With our passion for the work of NRCS and the customers they serve, our focus is to help the agency and the employees prevail through this situation. Our hopes and prayers are with the agency and its leaders as they work to guide and nurture the NRCS workforce to the best outcome possible. We also have sympathy for the ag. producers and rural communities who will be severely impacted by these disruptions in service.

### **NRCS Technical Service Provider Branch (TSP)**

Hello from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Technical Service Provider's (TSP) Branch! The TSP Branch was officially rebooted in 2022, and we are working hard to spread the news about opportunities for landowners and third-party providers, Technical Service Providers (TSPs). Many of you may remember the TSP program from "your days" with NRCS in the past. The idea of utilizing TSPs to deliver conservation assistance is not new, but a number of changes have occurred.

#### **What is the TSP program?**

The TSP Program provides conservation services to farmers, ranchers, producers, forest landowners, and tribes from qualified professionals outside of NRCS. These professionals are known as Technical Service Providers (TSPs).

#### **Some of the Benefits of the TSP Program:**

- *Increased capacity for NRCS:* the program helps NRCS meet the demanding workload associated with delivering Farm Bill Programs.
- *Expanded expertise:* TSPs bring additional subject matter expertise to conservation planning and practice design.
- *Producer choice:* Clients choose a TSP that fits their specific needs.
- *Creating jobs and building private sector and public sector partnerships.*

#### **How does the program work?**

- *Certification:* Individuals, entities, tribes, and public agencies can apply to become Certified TSPs.

- **Services:** Certified TSPs provide technical services related to conservation planning, practice, design, installation, and evaluation.
- **Financial Assistance:** Clients may use NRCS financial assistance programs (Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP, Conservation Stewardship Program- CSP) to pay for services provided by Certified TSPs.

#### How TSPs can provide direct benefits to NRCS Clients:

- *Expert technical assistance:* TSPs are generally specialized and therefore, experts, at what they do.
- *Personalized service:* Certified TSPs can provide personalized advice based on specific farm needs and local conditions.
- *Enhanced knowledge:* TSPs can help clients understand complex conservation practices and regulations.
- *Improved decision-making:* By providing accurate and up-to-date information, TSPs help clients make informed choices.

We need your help to "Get the Word Out" regarding the TSP Program! If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a TSP, we can help. If you have questions regarding the program, we can assist with those as well. Feel free to reach out to [tsp@usda.gov](mailto:tsp@usda.gov) or visit our website at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/technical-assistance/technical-service-providers>.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

—**David Walden**, Natural Resource Specialist  
CPTAD/ TSP Branch

## NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

—**Craig Derickson, retired USDA-NRCS**

### Donald Trump Sworn in as the 47<sup>th</sup> President

**Donald J. Trump** was sworn into office as the 47<sup>th</sup> president of the United States on Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, saying in his second inaugural address: "The golden age of America begins right now." He then immediately began taking control of the executive branch.

Staff writers from National Public Radio (NPR) noted that President Trump promised during his campaign to take action right from the start if elected, and he certainly made good on those promises. NPR reported: "During his first week in office, Trump signed dozens of executive orders affecting everything from immigration, climate change and oil exploration, to health and medical research, as well as eliminating federal diversity programs, directives defining gender, and much, much more." See more information from NPR at:

<https://www.npr.org/2025/01/28/nx-s1-5276293/trump-executive-orders>.

President Trump's actions during his first week include numerous memorandums, proclamations, and executive orders. All of these orders can be consequential, but some are more significant than others. Executive orders are recorded and tracked in the Federal Register and cannot be easily overturned by Congress, though they can be blocked or challenged in the courts. See the Federal Register listing at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/presidential-documents/executive-orders/donald-trump/2025>. The full list of actions, including memos and proclamations, are also listed on the White House website.

Some of Trump's executive actions will have immediate impacts. Others will be slowed down by challenges in the courts. For example, the President's attempt at getting rid of birthright citizenship for people born in the US to parents without permanent legal status has already seen strong opposition and challenges in the court system to block the order. On Thursday Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025, an appeals court declined to reinstate Trump's birthright citizenship order saying that the Justice Department hadn't made a "strong showing that they are likely to succeed on the merits of the appeal." See <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/appeals-court-declines-reinstate-trump-birthright-citizenship-order-rcna192933>.

### Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency – DOGE

As President Trump works to cut back the size, scope, and spending of the federal government, a key executer in those plans is the world's richest man, billion aire **Elon Musk**. Musk has enthusiastically agreed to guide the new Department of Government Efficiency, known as "DOGE." **Stephen Fowler**, NPR news, reported on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, that: "some of the key DOGE actions include: the firing of thousands of federal workers, putting a hold on USAID funds and US foreign aid around the world, and gaining access to agencies' records, including sensitive payment information at the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)." Fowler went on to say: "There is significant push back and concerns about the lack of transparency in Musk's DOGE actions and the ongoing concerns that his own companies will benefit from many of the changes being carried out by DOGE." See more on DOGE at: <https://www.sdpb.org/2025-02-14/rounding-up-what-happened-with-elon-musk-and-doge-this-week>

Last minute news: Reuters news service reported on Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, that more than 6,000 IRS employees were to be terminated as a part of the President's plan to shrink government. "A tearful executive at the IRS told staffers on Thursday that about 6,000 employees would be fired, a person familiar with the matter said, in a move that would eliminate roughly 6% of the agency's workforce in the midst of the busy tax-filing season." See: <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-irs-expected-fire-6700-employees-thursday-trump-downsizing-spree-2025-02-20/>.

### Congressional Work on Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations

The former Congress, the 118<sup>th</sup> United States Congress was convened in Washington, DC, on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, and ended on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025. Regrettably, the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress was one of the least functional sessions. According to ABC news: "If measured by the number of bills signed into law, the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress was by far the most unproductive since at least the 1980s." See: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/118th-congress-track-become-productive-us-history/story?id=106254012>.

One of the most significant tasks the new 119<sup>th</sup> Congress has is to negotiate the passage of an appropriations bill to fund the government for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2025 that ends on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025. According to the US Senate Committee On The Budget: "The last time Congress completed budget bills on time was nearly 20 years ago, in 1996. Instead of maintaining a functioning appropriations process, Congress has resorted to passage of massive omnibus appropriation bills and continuing resolutions that carry over spending from the previous year. See: <https://www.budget.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/>

The current Continuing Resolution (CR) bill was passed on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in the House, and approved by the Senate the following day. House Speaker **Mike Johnson** announced that the House was on track to complete a budget package before the March 14<sup>th</sup> date. However, The Hill news network reported that: "Congress is struggling to strike a deal to keep the government funded, as a looming deadline to prevent a shutdown next month gets closer. Negotiators on both sides have been working to strike a spending deal for weeks, with hopes of crafting the 12 annual funding bills that could make it out of both chambers with bipartisan support." See: <https://thehill.com/business/budget/5149928-congress-struggles-government-funding-shutdown/>.

An article by the American Hospital Association (AHA) on Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, reported: "The House Budget Committee met Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to mark up their budget resolution that calls for increasing the debt ceiling by \$4 trillion and allows for \$4.5 trillion in spending for tax cuts. The House bill would also allocate \$200 billion for border and defense spending. Additionally, it instructs seven committees to come up with no less than \$1.502 trillion in mandatory cuts over 10 years. Notably, for health care, the bill instructs the House Energy and Commerce Committee to cut mandatory spending by a minimum of \$880 billion. The Energy and Commerce Committee has primary jurisdiction over numerous health care programs, including Medicaid, and some proposals suggest significant cuts to Medicaid."

AHA President and CEO **Rick Pollack** said in a Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 statement: "The AHA urges Congress to take seriously the impact of reductions in health care programs, particularly Medicaid." Pollack went on to say: "While some have suggested dramatic reductions in the Medicaid program as part of a reconciliation vehicle, we would urge Congress to reject that approach. Medicaid provides health care to many of our most vulnerable populations, including pregnant women, children, the elderly, disabled and many of our working class." See more from AHA at:

<https://www.aha.org/news/headline/2025-02-13-senate-budget-committee-passes-fy-2025-budget-resolution-house-marking-its-own-resolution>.

### **Understanding the "Budget Reconciliation" Process**

There has been much talk in the news over the past couple of months about Republican Party plans to use the budget reconciliation process to get the budget they want to carry out party priorities and those of the President. The Bipartisan Policy Center reported that: "Republicans hope to leverage the reconciliation process this year to extend and expand on expiring tax cuts. While the reconciliation bill's ultimate deficit impact is yet to be determined, the top-line instructions allow for an up to \$3.3 trillion deficit increase over 10 years." See more at: <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/whats-in-the-fy2025-house-budget-resolution/>.

The Academy 4SC organization tracks activities at the US Legislative Branch and maintains a helpful web page to explain how the budget reconciliation process works. The Academy 4SC site explains: "the budget reconciliation allows a simple majority of 51 votes in the Senate to pass legislation that calls for significant changes in government spending, revenues, or the debt ceiling. It was set up to allow lawmakers to change policy on spending or taxes to keep the nation's budget in line."

The Academy 4SC site further provides: "legislation passed through budget reconciliation is not subject to the infamous filibuster which otherwise derails major legislation unable to obtain 60 votes in the Senate. While the changes can be just as significant, or more, than other non-budget related legislation, ensuring that the country has the money it needs to function allows budget reconciliation to fast-track Congressional action." See more at:

<https://academy4sc.org/video/budget-reconciliation-making-the-money-move/>.

### **Status of Defense Funding for FY 2025**

In addition to passing an appropriations package, Congress will also need to approve the annual Department of Defense (DoD) budget. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) reported: "The proposed budget for DoD in 2025 totals \$850 billion. Adjusted for inflation, that amount is 1.1 percent less than the amount anticipated for 2025 in the previous budget plan, and 1.7 percent less than the amount appropriated by the Congress for 2024 (excluding supplemental funding)." See: <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/60665#>.

### **Brooke Rollins Sworn in as 33<sup>rd</sup> USDA Secretary of Agriculture**

**Brooke Rollins** was sworn in as the 33<sup>rd</sup> US Secretary of Agriculture in a ceremony Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 by Supreme Court Justice **Clarence Thomas** at the Supreme Court building. At her swearing-in ceremony Secretary Rollins said: "It is the honor of a lifetime to serve as the nation's thirty-third Secretary of Agriculture — and a privilege beyond description to have the trust of President Donald J. Trump, and the opportunity to advance his agenda. I am thrilled to lead the United States Department of Agriculture and to serve the people of this country." See: <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/02/13/brooke-l-rollins-sworn-33rd-us-secretary-agriculture>.

The ARCSE organization congratulates Secretary Rollins on her career accomplishments and looks forward to an opportunity for a deeper conversation to highlight and appreciate the positive historical and continuing contributions and impacts made by NRCS and USDA employees.

In a testament to her commitment to the administration priorities, on Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, her first day in office, Secretary Rollins took bold action to advance President Trump's agenda and ensure that USDA serves American farmers, ranchers, loggers and the agriculture community. The USDA website provided a list of the bold actions taken by Secretary Rollins:

- Issued a memorandum to rescind all Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) programs and celebrations. Instead, USDA will reprioritize unity, equality, meritocracy, and color-blind policies.

- USDA will neither commemorate nor celebrate our immutable characteristics, neither among ourselves nor among Americans at large. We will instead celebrate the things that make us American: merit, faith, and liberty first among them. All Americans deserve equal dignity, and at this Department they will receive it.
- Sent a letter to the nation's governors outlining her vision for the Department and inviting them to participate in a new "laboratories for innovation" initiative to create bold solutions to long-ignored challenges.
- Sent a notice to state leaders encouraging them to participate in pilot programs to reform the food stamp program (SNAP). In particular, she outlined principles of reform, such as establishing more robust work requirements.
- Convened a briefing on avian flu and reviewed options for a comprehensive strategy to combat Avian flu and lower the price of eggs.
- Delivered a video message and a letter of gratitude to US Forest Service firefighters for their recent heroic actions to save lives and curb the devastating wildfires in California.
- Reviewed and implemented findings from the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to optimize the USDA workforce and stop wasteful spending. Already, USDA has identified more than \$132 million in excess spending. USDA has terminated 78 contracts, totaling more than \$132 million. Additionally, more than 1,000 contracts are currently under review. USDA has also identified and canceled 948 employee trainings, 758 of which focused on DEI alone. See full details on the USDA website.
- Held a media availability at the White House, where she discussed key priorities for American farmers and ranchers, addressing food prices, food stamp reform, working with DOGE to optimize the Department."

For more see: <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/02/14/secretary-rollins-takes-bold-action-day-one>.

## Progress On A New Farm Bill in 2025

The American Farm Bureau (Farm Bureau) has been tracking progress on a new Farm Bill in 2025 and provided an update on the farm bill status. The current situation of a farm bill and support for agriculture producers is a bit unusual, to say the least. Included in the CR bill that was passed and signed into law on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 — the day a government shutdown would have begun if Congress had not acted — the American Relief Act of 2025 budget bill included \$31 billion in natural and economic disaster aid for farmers and ranchers. That budget bill also included a second extension of the 2018 farm bill and \$2.5 billion in additional aid for producers to be distributed through USDA.

Farm Bureau provided a break-down of the American Relief Act provisions on extension of Farm Bill programs and authorizations. Farm Bureau reported: "The 2018 farm bill expired — for a second time — on Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The report further explained: "While the farm bill extension gives Congress until Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to pass a new farm bill, it did not fund numerous programs without baseline funding — so-called 'orphan programs.' The first extension of the 2018 farm bill included \$177 million for 19 of its 21 orphan programs for the 2024 fiscal year." See: <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/farmers-head-into-2025-with-another-farm-bill-extension-aid>.

In May of 2024, the House Ag Committee passed its version of a new farm bill — the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2024 (H.R. 8467), as introduced by committee Chair **Glen GT Thompson** (R) PA. On November 8<sup>th</sup>, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) published a score of H.R. 8467 based on the June 2024 CBO baseline. CBO reported: "The score indicated the bill would increase mandatory spending that is subject to budget enforcement by \$28.1 billion over 10 years (FY2025–FY2034). It would provide a net increase for farm commodity support programs of about \$37.0 billion over 10 years; a net increase of \$4.5 billion for conservation programs, including incorporating funding from the Inflation Reduction Act; a net decrease of \$27.1 billion to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); and an increase of \$13.6 billion for other titles." See more at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R48167#>.

A December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, report from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) report stated: "The House farm bill would restrict the USDA's discretionary use of the Commodity Credit Corporation over the next decade. Within the conservation title (Title II), nearly all programs would receive increased mandatory funding. The bill would reauthorize the Conservation Reserve Program at its current level of 27 million acres. The bill would also emphasize the use of precision agriculture technology within the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)." See more at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12233#>.

## Ag Producer's Worry About the Impact of Trump Tariffs

President Trump has announced his plans to institute a 25 percent tariff on Canadian and Mexican imports. He also spoke about his plans to impose a 10 percent tariff on Chinese goods. These bold actions prompted a swift retaliation on tariffs from these trade partners, especially Mexico and China. On Feb 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Trump also released news of imposing a 25 percent tariff on all steel and aluminum imports.

A Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Gazette newspaper article by **Monica Cordero** described US farmers' reaction to the Trump tariffs. She reported: "Mexico, Canada, and China account for more than 40 percent of total US trade, valued at more than \$2 trillion. As these trade relations become increasingly strained, economic uncertainty has deepened in rural America, leaving farmers bracing for a financial blow similar to what occurred during Trump's first-term trade war." The report stated: "It certainly does increase the level of uncertainty," said **Ernie Goss**, an economist at Creighton University in Omaha. "This uncertainty manifests itself in areas such as purchasing farmland and agriculture equipment." See: <https://www.thegazette.com/agriculture/trumps-tariffs-return-uncertainty-for-farmers/>.

The NPR news network looked into past farmer experiences with US tariffs and reported that China's tariffs on US agricultural exports hit American farmers hard back in 2019. NPR's **Scott Simon** spoke with farmer **Josh Gackle** about the impacts of another round of such tariffs. Gackle reported: "China placed steep tariffs on US products, and according to the USDA's Economic Research Service, those tariffs caused nearly \$26 billion in agricultural export losses from 2018 through 2019. Gackle said: it seems to be that US agriculture is one of the first targets that gets their attention when they look to do those things. So, yes, generally, a lot of

concern in farm country." For more on the farmer views on tariffs see: <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/08/nx-s1-5288119/a-soybean-farmer-recalls-how-he-was-impacted-by-chinese-tariffs-in-trumps-first-term>.

## Federal Employees Receive Termination Letters

Beginning on Thursday evening of Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, federal employees across the nation began receiving emails telling them that their positions were terminated, effective immediately. Personnel in the Trump administration began sending the termination notices as the administration moved ahead with plans to drastically downsize the government.

NPR reporters **Shannon Bond, Geoff Brumfiel, Andrea Hsu, and Cory Turner** wrote an article on Friday Feb 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 to cover some details of the federal firings. They noted, while the full scale of layoffs wasn't yet clear that, "the first round of cuts appeared to target employees who were recently hired and still on probationary status, according to multiple federal officials and staffers who spoke to NPR on condition of anonymity, because they were not authorized to speak to the press and feared retaliation from the Trump administration." See more at: <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/13/nx-s1-5296928/layoffs-trump-doge-education-energy>.

NPR reported: "Probationary periods vary by federal agency but typically last one or two years. According to government data, around 220,000 federal employees had less than one year of service in March 2024, the most recent time period available. Another 288,000 had between one and two years of service at that time." President Trump signed an executive order on Tuesday directing federal agencies to start preparing to "initiate large-scale reductions in force." **Trump** and his adviser **Elon Musk** have said they want to cut what they say is excessive government spending, although Federal employee salary costs add up to only about 3% of Federal spending — <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/13/nx-s1-5296928/layoffs-trump-doge-education-energy>.

Twenty-one members of the US House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform wrote a letter to President Trump on Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, demanding that he stop his attacks on "non-partisan, civil servants, including career professionals and independent government watchdogs, which will have catastrophic results for the American people who rely on our government for services and benefits." The committee letter goes on to say: "In what appears to be a rapid and sweeping attempt to expand presidential and executive branch power, you are attempting to politicize the federal workforce, weaponize career professionals in the Senior Executive Service (SES), freeze federal hiring, and purge new employees, dismantle civil rights and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs, and attempt to illegally remove independent inspectors general." See the US House letter at: <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-oversight.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-02-03>.

## NARFE Counters Administration Assault on Civil Service

President Donald Trump and his administration have engaged in an all-out assault on the civil service, taking actions to dramatically reduce the size of the federal workforce, undermining democratically directed government operations, and eliminate merit-based competitive service protections, politicizing the nonpartisan, professional civil service. The full scope of the actions is overwhelming. But the National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) is fighting back to counter the actions. See more on the NARFE actions at: <https://www.narfe.org/blog/2025/02/11/narfe-counters-administration-assault-on-civil-service/>.

NARFE leads the fight against these termination notices and illegal assaults on Civil Service protections. One of the most significant faults of the Trump actions to terminate federal employees is the simple fact that there is no plan for continuity of important government operations. Many individuals, groups and communities depend on the service of federal employees for their health, well-being, and stability. This is certainly true of NRCS employees who work hard to meet the needs of farmers, ranchers, forest owners, and communities across the nation.

The work of the NARFE Political Action Committee (NARFE-PAC) is critical in helping to build relationships with members of Congress. The current issues of the NARFE magazine states: "these relationships give us a better opportunity to make our case on the issues that matter to federal employees and retirees, urging them to reconsider their damaging stance on issues like so-called 'government efficiency' and their misguided approaches to budget balancing."

Some lawmakers attempt to justify cuts to benefits by arguing that the government needs to be more "efficient" or that federal employees are overcompensated. However, NARFE argues against that view, and said: "Federal workers are dedicated professionals who provide essential services to the public. They deserve fair compensation, substantial benefits, and the respect they have earned through years of service. NARFE-PAC helps to ensure that those who seek to undermine these values face political consequences for their actions." ARCSE retirees are urged to consider making a contribution to the NARFE-PAC. See the NARFE website for more information at: <https://www.narfe.org/advocacy/narfe-pac/>.

***Editor's note: On Feb. 22, an email from OMB was sent to over two million Federal employees requesting them to identify five things that they have accomplished in the past week. It is not yet clear how this information will be processed. Deadline for submission was midnight Feb. 24. Some departments advised their employees not to respond. Later reports from the Executive Branch indicated that non-responders would have another chance to respond.***

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

**Paul Benedict, Membership Chair**

### New Life Members

Robin Martinek – Prior Lake, Minnesota

Douglas C. Seible – Fort Worth, Texas

Douglas A. Gasseling – Cheyenne, Wyoming

Mark Lindflott – Northwood, Iowa

Wade D. (Dan) Runnels – Kellyville, Oklahoma

### New Members

Mona Peterson, Melbourne, Florida

Stefanie Aschmann – Vancouver, Washington  
Mark McCurdy – Ankeny, Iowa  
Patrick L. Shaver – Monmouth, Oregon  
Steve Chick – Papillion, Nebraska  
Mary Ann Woodruff – Monroeville, Ohio  
Douglas Toews – Santa Barbara, California  
Gwen Gilbert - Santa Barbara, California  
Linda Peterson – Flemington, New Jersey  
Dennis N. Clute – Burleson, Texas  
Doris Scully – Spencer, Indiana  
Daniel Meyer - New Vienna, Iowa  
Karry Tricky - Eaton Rapids, Michigan  
William Keating – Argyle, New York  
Letisha Toomer-Jones – Huntersville, North Carolina

**New Affiliate Members**

Dale Pekar – Little Rock, Arkansas  
Cheryl Delamater – Hurlock, Maryland  
Susan J. Meadows – Lebanon, Indiana

2025 ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES and HARD COPY NEWSLETTER FEES were due Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025

To maintain active membership and be listed in the 2025 ARCSE Directory, dues must be received by April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025. If you have questions on your membership status, please contact me at [soilwarden@verizon.net](mailto:soilwarden@verizon.net) or call me at 202-578-8226.

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 the check payable to **ARCSE** and mail to: **ARCSE, PO Box 8965, Moscow, ID 83843**

<b>ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES</b>	
<b>Due by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025</b>	
Member	\$25 per year
Affiliate	\$25 per year
Life (One-time payment)	
Age 64 or younger	\$325
Age 65 thru 74	\$275
Age 75 or older	\$175
<i>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.</i>	
<i>Please submit Dues to ARCSE at P.O. Box 8965 Moscow, ID 83843</i>	

## Membership Drive — Exciting time to recruit new members.

A concentrated ARSCE membership drive began in November 2024 and extends through April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Membership forms have been updated so that new members can identify who recruited them, available at <https://arcse.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/arcse-2025-membership-form-2.pdf>.

**Tools/Aid:** Watch the ARSCE website for updates including processes that have been used to successfully find and contact retirees with invitation to join ARSCE.

**Incentives:** All members are encouraged to recruit new members. A member from each region who recruits the largest number of new members will receive a complimentary Life Membership, or a \$200 gift card if they are already a life member.

We all know fellow retirees who are not members. Please consider this opportunity to assist in growing our organization. This is a great opportunity to feature the complimentary first year membership and other activities of the organization including:

- Strategic Plan and Annual Plan of Work
- Mentoring MOU – recruit retirees interested in mentoring NRCS employees.
- ACES MOU – promote ACES opportunities for retirees.

Bill Ward sent out the following to promote new membership. There are a number of benefits of ARCSE membership.

One of the major benefits to membership is receiving the ARCSE bimonthly Newsletter. The newsletter typically begins with news from our ARCSE president, Julie MacSwain. She has noted the ARCSE's mentoring and encouraging Retirees to consider mentoring NRCS staff. He noted the content of the newsletters.

The most recent newsletter includes information about this membership drive and ARCSE activity encouraging mentoring.

Folks joining ARCSE for the first time receive their first year complimentary. Annual dues after the first year are \$25. So please consider joining ARCSE. Our website has been updated, and joining online is very easy ([arcse.org](http://arcse.org)).

## ARCSE Webmaster

**Kaitlin Little** started as the webmaster for the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees in January 2025. She also works full-time with the Practical Farmers of Iowa as the senior data and member engagement assistant, and part-time with the Soil and Water Conservation Society helping manage social media.

Kaitlin's love for the outdoors and agriculture began on an acreage in northeast Iowa, where she spent her time exploring the woods behind her house or splashing through the creek down the road. In high school, she worked summers detasseling and rock-picking on her neighbor's farm. She graduated from Iowa State University in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in advertising and has experience in communications and project coordination from her time at a nonprofit and an ag marketing agency.

Her fiancé, **John**, is in the military, so she's no stranger to moving. They recently moved from Virginia Beach, VA to Jacksonville, NC. When she's not working, you can find Kaitlin at a thrift store or local coffee shop. She enjoys reading, gardening, and cooking new dishes. She also loves going hiking and camping with John and their dog, **Fleetwood**.

Kaitlin Little, [little@alumni.iastate.edu](mailto:little@alumni.iastate.edu).



*Kaitlin Little, ARCSE Webmaster*

## Donate to 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 keep the first-year dues free for new members and to partner with the Soil and Water Conservation Society to hire summer interns.

Contribute to ARCSE today! You can donate by MAIL: Write a check to ARCSE with the memo "Donation" and mail to ARCSE, PO Box 8965, Moscow, ID 83843; or ONLINE: <https://arcse.org/give/>.

## Social Security Update

—Courtesy of Tim Murphy, editor of The Bugle.

"Starting the week of February 24, 2025, SSA is beginning to pay retroactive benefits and will increase monthly benefit payments to people whose benefits have been affected by the WEP and GPO

If a beneficiary is due retroactive benefits as a result of the Act, they will receive a one-time retroactive payment, deposited into the bank account SSA has on file, by the end of March. This retroactive payment will cover the increase in their benefit amount back to January 2024, the month when WEP and GPO no longer apply.

Social Security benefits are paid one month behind. Most affected beneficiaries will begin receiving their new monthly benefit amount in April 2025 (for their March 2025 benefit).

Anyone whose monthly benefit is adjusted, or who will get a retroactive payment, will receive a mailed notice from Social Security explaining the benefit change or retroactive payment.

NOTE: A beneficiary may receive two mailed notices, the first when WEP or GPO is removed from their record, and a second when their monthly benefit amount is adjusted for their new monthly payment amount. They may receive the retroactive payment before receiving the mailed notice.

We have been able to expedite payments due to the use of automation. For the many complex cases that cannot be processed automatically, additional time is required to manually update the records and pay both retroactive benefits and the new benefits amount.

We urge beneficiaries to wait until April to inquire about the status of their retroactive payment, since these payments will process incrementally throughout March.

Beneficiaries should also wait until after receiving their April payment before contacting SSA to ask about their monthly benefit amount because the new amount will not be reflected until April for their March payment." On that same web page (<https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html?tl=2%2C5%2C11>) they advise that you should be sure that SSA has your address and/or direct deposit information so they can deliver your retroactive benefits.

They also advise that if you never applied or are unsure if you applied for your own or spousal benefits, you can do so at [ssa.gov](http://ssa.gov).

—Tim Murphy

## ALABAMA

**Earl Norton, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [earl\\_norton@yahoo.com](mailto:earl_norton@yahoo.com)

Local retirees continue breakfast at Chappy's restaurant in Auburn.



*Attending breakfast on January 7<sup>th</sup>: L-R (seated) Vic Payne, Joe Spooner, Earl Norton, Mac Nelson; (standing) Steve Musser and Charles "Jessie" Bush.*



*Attending breakfast on February 3<sup>rd</sup>: (L-R) Ken Rogers, Vic Payne, Charles Jessie" Bush, Earl Norton, Ernest Todd, and George Martin.*

SCS\NRCS retirees were saddened to learn of the passing of **Dr. Joe Touchton** on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Joe came to Auburn University Agronomy and Soils Department in the early 1980s from the University of Georgia Ag Experiment Station in Griffin, Ga. While at Auburn University, Dr. Touchton became nationally renowned for his cutting-edge research in sustainable agriculture. Later, he served as Department Head of the Agronomy and Soils Department until retirement in 2013. Joe was a native of Georgia and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Georgia and a PhD from the University of Illinois. He mentored hundreds of students into successful careers in agriculture. Of significant importance to NRCS and producers was his research and educational work related to conservation tillage. Many farmers developed their highly erodible land (HEL) conservation programs based on the influence of Dr. Touchton. To a number of NRCS staff involved in the early years of adoption of the 1985 Farm Bill HEL provisions, Joe Touchton was a great partner and recognized as "One of us."

## ARIZONA

**Wade Biddix, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [rwbiddix@aol.com](mailto:rwbiddix@aol.com)

**Wade Biddix** is happy to report that his 2<sup>nd</sup> granddaughter, **Olivia Blaine Biddix**, was born on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025. After a rough start of spending 11 days in the NICU, she is home and healthy in Richmond, Virginia.



*Olivia Blaine Biddix*



*Wade Biddix and granddaughter*

## ARKANSAS

**Ralph Mashburn, ARCSE Representative**

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

The holidays were full of fun activities for Ralph and Nancy Mashburn. They enjoyed visits from grandson Austin Burroughs from New Zealand and grandson Jeremy Mashburn and family from the Seattle area.

Christmas Eve: Our local family members joined us in a worship service at our Lonoke Baptist Church.



**Front – Joanie Mashburn, Nancy, Ralph, Mary Lillian and Danny Joe Burroughs. Back – grandsons Miles Mashburn, Nathan Burroughs, Andrew Mashburn, Austin Burroughs.**



**Super Bowl party at our cottage. Joanie, Miles and Drew Mashburn, Nancy and Ralph, and best friends and SCS retirees, Dick and Lori Babeu**



**New Year's Eve party at our cottage. Seated – Ralph, grandson Jeremy Mashburn, (from Seattle area), Nancy. Back row – grandson Andrew Mashburn, Sara (Jeremy's wife) and sons Jonas and Lucas, grandson Nathan Burroughs**



**Surprise Visit: Ralph, Nancy's grandson – Austin Burroughs from New Zealand.**

He surprised them by showing up one day at their cottage. They were overjoyed. **Austin** is an Activities Director at a Christian Camp. His wife, **Ana**, insisted that he come for Christmas since he has missed being with family for a number of years.



**Longtime best buddies and SCS/NRCS retirees, Ralph and Dick Babeu.**

They and their wives, **Nancy** and **Lori**, are best friends, live not too far apart and spend a lot of fun time together. **Dick** and **Ralph** have enjoyed working (and fishing) together since 1967 in Syracuse New York. They began with Ralph as an engineer and Dick as an economist on the New York Water Resources Staff. Each transferred many times as managers and Water Resource specialist with some time working in the WDC SCS Headquarters. Many retirees may remember them as a teaching and consulting team all over the USA, even after retirement. They helped organizations (and even some churches) with efforts they needed that included team building, strategic planning, Total Quality Management, and conflict resolution.

Since finally fully retiring, they have enjoyed volunteering in various works in their church and community. Ralph will be 91 next month and has recently had cochlear implant surgery to hopefully improve his hearing.

**Dick Babeu** reports that he and **Lori** enjoyed a three-week trip to Kona, Hawai'i, in celebration of his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday. Unlike his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, they decided not to skydive. They felt there was no need to jump out of a perfectly good airplane – again. Instead, they spent a considerable amount of time relaxing on the beach, revisiting favorite locations, and hiking a 100,000-year-old cinder cone volcano.



**Dick and Lori Babeu in Hawai'i**

**Ralph** had a Cochlear Implant activated on February 25<sup>th</sup>. He and **Nancy** celebrated with **Missy**, the audiologist, who got it adjusted for him. He is hearing much better now but was told that it will be up to a year before it is at the best for him. He is still recovering from over two hours of surgery, but feels pretty good for a 91-year-old guy.



Shortly after returning from their vacation, his daughter **Michelle** arrived for a two-week visit. Dick had a wonderful time showing Michelle the Maumelle Senior Center and introducing her to bean bag baseball. Despite not being a member, Michelle was allowed to participate in the games, and together, father and daughter contributed to the team's victories.

After Michelle's visit, they traveled to Virginia to spend Christmas with Lori's stepfather, then New Year's with Michelle, their son-in-law **Derek**, and granddogs. Dick thought it was great to leave Virginia a day before a snowstorm, unfortunately, a few days later Arkansas was in the middle of a storm and Maumelle received approximately 10" of snow. Dick is hoping warmer weather is around the corner so he and **Ralph** can get back on the lake.



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## CALIFORNIA

**Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative**

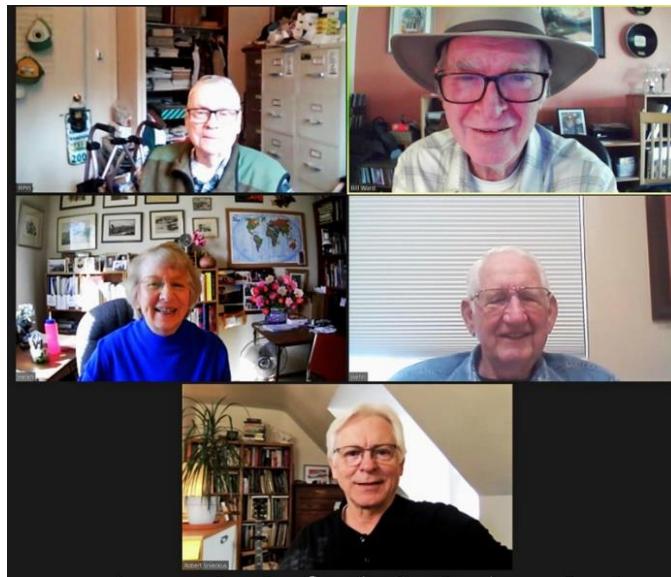
**Email:** [bluegrassbillward@gmail.com](mailto:bluegrassbillward@gmail.com)

California retirees continue to enjoy a monthly Zoom meeting the first Wednesday of every month for all who wish to participate. On February 5<sup>th</sup> we had a special guest, **John Peterson** join us. John Peterson, NRCS Engineer with over 40 years of service is considered one of our agency's watershed legends. John held many different Engineering positions at HQ including Director of the Watersheds Division.

John's topic to share with us was the story of how our agency went through the challenging task of getting our PL 106-472, the Watershed Rehabilitation Bill of 2000, passed. This was a major victory for our agency and our watershed project sponsors who at this time in our history had many small watershed project dams in need of significant repair and rehabilitation to meet important safety standards.

As John had promised to me prior to sharing his story this was an excellent case study in how laws are passed, complete with humor and intrigue. The process of approval of this authority took about four years. John played a major role in getting this legislation passed.

Following is a group of "early arrivals" to our Zoom meeting who had a special connection working with John Peterson over their careers.



**John Peterson, Bill Ward, Helen Flach, Tom Wehri, and Bob Snieckus. Before starting the official program, the following additional people joined us: Harbens Lai, Walt Sykes, Pam Hertzler, Doug Toews, Ed Schmit, and Dave Sanden.**

Many thanks John, we all enjoyed your presentation!

California does have a small group of retirees that meets for Breakfast on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at the Black Bear Diner in Davis. **Walt Sykes** is the coordinator for this monthly gathering. Other California retirees who have typically or occasionally joined this group include: **Ed Schmit, Arturo Carvajal, Jim Chapman, and Mark Cocke**.

All California NRCS employees have returned to work in their official office duty stations. A number of newer California probationary employees have lost their jobs. This is a difficult time for CA NRCS federal employees, just like it is for all Federal Employees.

—Best Wishes, Bill Ward

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## COLORADO

**Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative**

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

The Fort Collins retirees breakfast club met in January and February. Attendees included **Ken Rojas, Frank Geter, Stu Keil, Phil Smith, Chuck Hart, Owen Unangst, Ken Harward, and Wendall Oaks**.

**Steve Park** announced his 8<sup>th</sup> annual charity golf tournament to be held July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at the Raccoon Creek Golf Course in Littleton, Colorado. Those interested can find out more here: <https://www.eventstlc.com/papfoundationgolf.html#>.

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## CONNECTICUT, RHODE ISLAND, NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Carl Du Poldt, ARCSE Representative**

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

CT—Climate Smart Land Stewardship Grants—

<https://ctconservation.org/programs/climate-smart/2025-climate-smart-land-stewardship-grants/>

In Connecticut, there are several conservation events in March and April, including the Connecticut Land Conservation Conference, the Beardsley Zoo's Party for the Planet, and the North Central Plant and Seedling Sale. - <https://ctrcl.org/>

[https://www.cga.ct.gov/pd/fts/20050207\\_Continuing%20Legislative%20Committee%20on%20State%20Planning%20and%20Development/20250110/FINAL\\_DRAFT\\_CD\\_Plan\\_w\\_Appendices\\_11-26-24.pdf](https://www.cga.ct.gov/pd/fts/20050207_Continuing%20Legislative%20Committee%20on%20State%20Planning%20and%20Development/20250110/FINAL_DRAFT_CD_Plan_w_Appendices_11-26-24.pdf)

NH—Conservation events in New Hampshire in March and April 2025 include the Barrington Trails Committee Meeting, the Conservation Quest Camp, and Discover WILD New Hampshire Day. - <https://www.wildlife.nh.gov/dwnh>

<https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/conservation-mitigation-and-restoration/water-conservation>

RI—Rhode Island has many conservation efforts, including land conservation, forest conservation, and wildlife conservation. These efforts are intended to protect the state's natural resources, habitats, and farmland.

<https://www.nrcc.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-environmental-quality-incentives/rhode-island/environmental-quality>

VT—Vermont's conservation efforts include protecting and restoring natural resources, conserving wildlife, and improving water quality. These efforts are carried out by several agencies and organizations, including:

<https://www.nrcc.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-environmental-quality-incentives/rhode-island/environmental-quality>

<https://www.maltvt.org/events>

Vermont's biodiversity is rich and includes many different plants, animals, and natural communities. However, biodiversity is declining worldwide, and Vermont's biodiversity is also threatened by climate change, invasive species, and habitat loss. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/vermont/stories-in-vermont/biodiversity-vt/>

CT—Living shorelines connect the land and water to stabilize shorelines, reduce erosion, and provide valuable habitat that enhances coastal resilience. - <https://portal.ct.gov/dep/coastal-resources/coastal-management/living-shorelines>

Rhode Island's oyster fishery restoration efforts include creating oyster reefs, monitoring their health, and supporting oyster growers. The EQIP Oyster Restoration Initiative in Rhode Island has several phases, including setting oyster larvae at the hatchery, spat-on-shell grow-out on a

participants' lease, oyster deployment at the restoration site, and several years of monitoring the constructed oyster reefs.-  
<https://dem.ri.gov/programs/marine-fisheries/surveys-pubs/habitat.php>

New Hampshire's Great Bay restoration efforts include oyster reef restoration, eelgrass restoration, and wildlife habitat protection. In recent years the team has scaled-up efforts, with as much as five acres and 1 million oysters restored annually. Our approach is rooted in science: our restoration strategy includes a review of past restoration efforts in the estuary and the identification of new sites. -<https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/new-hampshire/oyster-restoration-in-the-great-bay-estuary/#:~:text=In%20recent%20years%20the%20team,1%20million%20oysters%20restored%20annually.&text=Our%20approach%20is%20rooted%20in,the%20identification%20of%20new%20sites>

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## IDAHO

**Jim Cornwell, ARCSE Representative**

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

Not much news from Idaho. Information about the Memorandum of Understanding between NRCS and ARCSE for Mentoring was discussed at our January meeting and was provided to all of those on my email list. I have had no response back so far.

As for myself, we are downsizing, getting ready to sell our house. Amazing how much you can accumulate in 50 years. Just to complicate matters we are hosting an Army reunion in April and going to Portugal in May to walk the Camino de Portuguese. This may be our last through hike.

The following pictures are from our January meeting.



*From left: John Kendrick, Dan Ogle and Frank Fink*



*From the left: Gene Crisman, Dennis Feichtinger, Rob Fredericksen, Gale Roberts*



*From the left: Keri Gibbs, Joe Icenhower, Laurie Icenhower, Frank Fink*

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## IOWA

**Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [amjens1@gmail.com](mailto:amjens1@gmail.com)**

In 2023 **Marty Adkins** was invited to attend a meeting with some representatives from the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN). EEN "...inspires, equips, educates, and mobilizes evangelical Christians to love God and others by rediscovering and reclaiming the Biblical mandate to care for creation and working toward a stable climate and a healthy, pollution-free world." In the upper Midwest EEN is focusing on soil health, with an eye toward its many benefits. They are seeking to work with rural

congregations to reach farmers and non-farming landowners with a faith-based approach to encourage sustainable soil management. Locally, Marty is exploring multi-congregation partnerships to reach farmers and landowners with EEN produced educational materials. He is also preparing a webinar for EEN about how conservation can be a part of people living out their faith. Marty has a knack for getting involved in worthwhile projects.

In 2020, **Bonnie Wichman** retired as the Area Management Assistant in the Sioux City Area Office. Shortly after that, Bonnie and her husband, **Rich**, decided to move to Norwalk where they would be closer to their grandkids. The move also made it possible for Bonnie's Mom to move in with them. It didn't take long for them to decide that they needed another activity in their life, so they both found jobs at Blank Park Zoo. Bonnie works in the gift shop. Rich does whatever needs to be done. He has worked in the admissions booth, feeds the giraffes at the public feeding times, helps with Kids Kingdom, works with the birds, and does many other miscellaneous things; and my favorite – drives the train that makes a loop through the zoo. I've always thought that looked like the perfect retirement job!

**Mark McCurdy** has a passion for writing. Over the years, he has written short stories, poems, songs, and an occasional piece of fiction (sometimes referred to as environmental impact statements). Due to some health issues, combined with work requirements, he hasn't been able to do much writing the last few years. However, after retiring at the first of the year, he has been able to jumpstart his writing passion again. I'm hoping to have a sample of his writing in a future newsletter.

**Norman Friedrich**, a retired engineer, traveled with his wife **Susan**, a Lutheran minister, on a Lutheran study trip to Greece and Turkey in January with Wartburg Theological Seminary. The trip focus was "In the Footsteps of Paul." They stopped at sites of Christian, ancient Greek, and Muslim interest. They traveled to Thessaloniki, Athens, and the archeological sites of Phillipi and Corinth in Greece. In Turkey they visited the archaeological site of Ephesus as well as Istanbul. The bus ride through Greece came through some agricultural areas with cotton and rice and a John Deere implement dealer. The main agriculture seen in both countries was olive trees. Norman's engineering interests were piqued by ancient aqueducts, 100,000 tons of marble in the Parthenon, clay conduit at Ephesus, the Corinth canal, and the monasteries built on the vertical rock formations of Meteora.



*Water delivery pipe in the Ephesus archeological site (Turkey)*

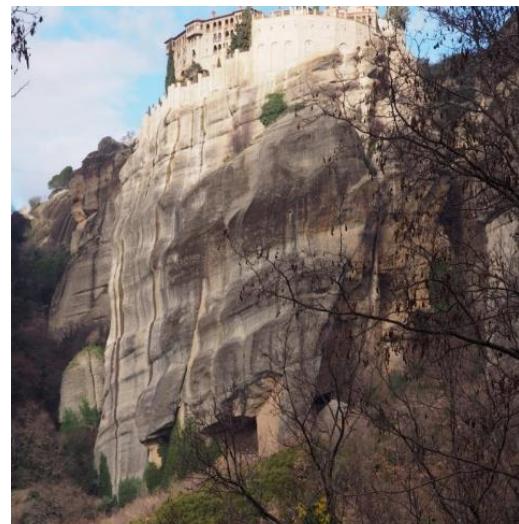


*Norman and Susan at the Parthenon, Athens, Greece*

Norman and Susan moved their daughter **Ellen** to Minneapolis from Vermont, where she worked for the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. After moving, Ellen got a position with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture where she will be working on environmental efforts.



*The Corinth Canal cuts through one of six active monasteries on the Meteora Bluffs in Isthmus of Corinth, Greece.*



*One early monastery was accessible only by ladder*

Thank you to **Sheila Cox** for the following: "In February this year, my husband **John** and I boarded a Norwegian cruise from Buenos Aires to Antarctica. This was something that was always on his bucket list. What really made this trip great was the fact that there was a geologist on board who gave presentations about the formation and development of Antarctica. A historian talked about **Ernest Shackleton's** expedition on the Endeavor to Antarctica, and pointed out when we passed Point Wild on Elephant Island where Shackleton's crew were stranded for four months, prior to their rescue. A wildlife biologist and photographer pointed out and talked about all the different wildlife found in Antarctica. At one point we passed a tabular iceberg that was nine miles long and at least 100 feet above water. We were told this iceberg alone could provide fresh water to New York City for 50 years!"



*Sheila Cox in Paradise Bay, Antarctica*



*Nine Mile Long Iceberg off the Coast of Antarctica*

Over the years **Lyle Asell** and I have enjoyed talking about the bird activity in our yards and bird feeders. Here is Lyle's most recent "southern Iowa birding report. There have been lots of birds at our feeder this winter but only two occasional cardinals. Then nine inches of snow, along with plunging temperatures, resulted in a cardinal explosion. The record day was 21 at our feeder at one time. We also see bald eagles quite often and an occasionally pileated woodpecker. They are fun to watch and forces one to get outside and enjoy life while feeding the birds."

In early January, **Mark McCurdy** joined our retirement community. He was the Assistant State Conservation Engineer in Des Moines. Mark took a day or two off to enjoy his retirement before starting work as an ACES employee.

A few weeks ago, we found out that **Margaret Walker** passed away on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Margaret was a long time Area Administrative Assistant in the Sioux City Area Office. She was living in California at the time of her passing.

## MAINE

**John Simon, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [jjhorseshoe39@icloud.com](mailto:jjhorseshoe39@icloud.com)**

*Editor's Note: John said that he was stepping down as the Maine ARCSE Representative and would like to hand over the job to someone else.*

## MIDATLANTIC STATES

**Terry D'Addio, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [tmddaddio@aol.com](mailto:tmddaddio@aol.com)**

The following members met for breakfast on Tuesday, Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Ron Marlow, Bill Irwin, John Peterson, Dave, Thackeray, Paul Benedict, John Moore, and Jerry Bernard.**

The group (minus Paul Benedict) met again on Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> and had lively discussions about current events affecting Federal employees and retirees. Join us if you can for 7:30am breakfast at the Woodbridge, VA, Bob Evans the first Tuesday of each month.

**Melvin Womack** announced through email that we are planning our Spring Luncheon on April 4<sup>th</sup> at Madigan's Waterfront Restaurant in Occoquan, VA. We plan to start at noon, and there will be door prizes and a Special Guest.

**DEADLINE FOR THE MAY/JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS IS APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2025.**



**Virginia ARCSE Breakfast Group, Woodbridge, VA; Feb. 4, 2025. L-R: Jerry Bernard, John Peterson, John Moore, Bill Irwin, Dave Thackeray, and Ron Marlow.**

**Barbara Osgood** wrote: I just adopted my 25<sup>th</sup> old rescue Labrador retriever. Rosie is 9 years old and was taken to a shelter in rural West Virginia when her owner died. She joins 13-year-old "big boy" Remi, whose owners took him to the shelter in Richmond, Virginia last year because he was "too old."



**Rosie, Barbara Osgood, and Remi.**

If you want to adopt a dog, consider a senior. They make wonderful companions, and they come already trained!

As you know, I've written a book about my senior dogs: 84 Paws: A Life with Old Labs.

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## MISSOURI

**Dave Rastorfer, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [daverastorfer@aol.com](mailto:daverastorfer@aol.com), [moarscse@aol.com](mailto:moarscse@aol.com)

**Jim Rickman: Jere** and I are in good health, and I have started exercising. I've already gone to the Y twice this year. Awesome to go once a month?

I spend a lot of time trying to fix water leaks on our farm in Quanah. Leaving after church tomorrow to try to find another leak. The water line is over 40 years old, and prone to issues. Keeps me busy and away from the Y.

Went hunting along the border in January. First time ever while we were hunting quail, the border patrol arrested a couple of illegals in the same field we were in. Helicopters flew over and four wheelers came from all over.

Jere turns 80 this year, and she wanted a trip to Tahiti, with both our kids and their spouses, so that's where we plan to be in April. We are still traveling a lot, and enjoying the trip, once we get there. I hope everyone is also enjoying good health and retirement. My son retired last year, and he thinks retirement is the best deal ever.

**Jack Schneider:** Due to my Parkinson's, we sold the farm and moved to town. We recently had a mini family reunion at sister-in-law, **Joan's** place in Boonville with niece **Sara**, husband, and two kids who live and teach English in Korea; and niece **Erin** and husband who live in Ireland. A rare time for us all to get together.

**Bill Pauls:** We're in AZ and headed to CA running 1/2 marathons and visiting friends. Sad to hear about several fellow SCS/NRCS colleagues and family members passing. Kris and I were able to attend **Doris Harryman's** funeral. Grandkids winter sports are busy and looking forward to softball/baseball right around the spring corner. One senior will be going to Purdue in the fall and

another possibly to either Benedictine or KU. Two more are sophomores. You have had some nasty weather, and I guess more now that we are missing (while traveling in the SW). Looking forward to spring water season at the lake. Anyone is welcome to visit the lake anytime, we have a fun little cabin, a dock and boats; just down the road right on the lake (ok, ok, not right on the lake, on the shore next to the lake). Everybody stay warm for now and stay healthy.

**Mike Blaine:** Yes! It is very cold on Blaine Hill as I write this note. We have had more cold this year than we have for several. My wood pile is going down slowly, but I think I have enough to last the winter. Can't get outside and do much so I enjoy doing jigsaw puzzles in the winter. The one I'm working on now is a 1,000-piece Sherlock Holmes mystery puzzle. That means you don't know what it looks like until it's done. They don't give you a picture to help sort pieces! Here's a picture of my progress. I think I'd use it for fuel in the wood stove.

Hope everyone is staying healthy and missing that flu that is going around. It seems to be nasty and drags on a couple weeks. Take heart! Spring is only a few weeks away!



*Mike's puzzle.*

**Craig King:** Craig had a heart transplant in early February. I made it home on Tuesday 2/18/25. Home sure does feel good since being gone from Dec 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 when we left for Weston's Bowl game in Texas. I definitely got the goody out of the old heart.

**Andrea** (Craig's wife and Area Conservationist at the Palmyra Area Office) is still doing maintenance chemo which she does every two weeks on Mondays. It's a lot better with this round, but she gets tired for two to three days after.

**Weston** had his meniscus surgery that went well and is now recovering from labrum surgery. It seems to be going well. He thought he was going to be working in the Warrensburg office after two summers of Pathway, but as we know that all changed. He's got an interview with a District now. He will graduate in May. Eight hours of online is all he has. ***Editor's note: we have been told that all Pathway employees have been released.***

**Candra** is in her second semester at Iowa State. She threw (shot put) the first indoor meet and did well. Then on the following Monday, she heard a pop in her turning foot. Nothing broke, just a strained metacarpal. She's back to practicing now for the outdoor season. School seems to be going well this semester. Definitely likes her biology classes. Hope all is well for everyone.

It is with great sadness we have learned of the passing of retired Area Resource Conservationist, **Steve McMillin**. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

<https://www.ridgewayfuneralhome.com/obituaries/steven-mcmillin>

Bob Wolf, long time DC at the Palmyra field office, passed away on September 19, 2024 in Arizona. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

<https://obituaries.nationalcremation.com/obituaries/phoenix-az/robert-wolf-11999058>

## NEBRASKA

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

**Emails:** [nkempf@neb.rr.com](mailto:nkempf@neb.rr.com), [j4culver@aol.com](mailto:j4culver@aol.com)

The Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> meeting was opened by last year's Chairperson, **Craig Derickson** who then handed the gavel to our new Chairperson, **Doug Christensen**. Attending were **JoAnne Thiele, Donna Dornbusch, Dave Camper, Norm Helzer, Gary Muckel, Doug Christensen, Mike Kucera, Craig Derickson, Gerald Montgomery, Harold Klaege, Steve Stover, Steve Scheinost, Gus Dornbusch, Dana Snyder, and Jim Culver**.

The February meeting was canceled due to cold weather.

**Jim Culver** has worked with the Nebraska Historical Society to accept the Nebraska NRCS Retirees Club records for permanent storage. He had to sign a release to the Society, because it is their responsibility to decide what to do with the records. Jim received a letter from the Society, outlining that someday people will be able to go online to access those records. **Harold Klaege** moved that Jim Culver be our representative with the Society to decide how those files will be accessed and to answer other pertinent questions. It was seconded and approved by the group.

**Steve Scheinost** had perfect attendance at our meetings in 2024 and therefore received a free breakfast today.

**Harold Klaege** handed out the new 2024 Nebraska Individual Income Tax Return form (Form 1040N, 2024) and Nebraska Schedule 1 – Nebraska Adjustments to Income to those filing their 2024 state taxes (Form 1040N, Schedule 1, 2024). Harold addressed the importance of number 13 on Form 1040N and numbers 28 and 36 on Form 1040, Nebraska Schedule 1. If you use a CPA for your tax preparation, tell them you receive a Federal annuity from being a Federal employee, in order to receive state

tax benefits and Social Security benefits (if you are eligible for Social Security but were previously unable to claim them because of your Federal annuity). Harold has also been in discussion with the State on how to navigate the new tax law. Retired employees under FERS are not eligible for this benefit. Harold said he would keep us updated on this new state benefit. He also discussed the Social Security benefit that can be received from spouses receiving Social Security.



*Retirees breakfast Jan 2025. Left to right – Craig Derickson, Gerald Montgomery, Harold Klaege- standing, Steve Scheinost, Gus Dornbusch, and Dana Snyder.*

**Steve Scheinost** celebrated his birthday. **Dana Snyder** said his wife is taking him to Arizona so he can play golf. **Doug Christensen** and his wife will be going through the Panama Canal. **Jim Culver** handed out the 2025 calendar from the NSSC, titled *Mysteries in the Soil*.

**Craig Derickson** will fill in for him in February. Minutes recorded by **Donna Dornbusch**, Secretary. Submitted by Jim Culver and Norman Kempf.



*Retirees breakfast Jan 2025. Right to left -- Mike Kucera, Doug Christensen, Gary Muckel, Norm Helzer, Dave Camper and Jo Anne Thiele.*

**Doug**, our new chairman, discussing some of the open house ceremonies at the new Federal Building in Lincoln where the Nebraska NRCS State Office, National Soil Survey and National Soil Mechanics are now located.

#### **First Friday of the Month NRCS/SCS Retirees Breakfast Club**

Attending the January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025 8am breakfast at Stacey Hy-Vee were **Steve Schenost, Bill Best, Mike Kucera, Ken Noonan, Dave Griffith, Jim Culver, Harold Klaege, Gus Dornbusch, Jerry Bucy, Ed Chmelka and Jim Welch**. We were pleased to have Gus Dornbusch join our group. Gus was a former State Conservationist in North Dakota and Director of the Midwest Regional Technical Center.



*First Friday Retirees Jan 2025. Left to right – Gus Dornbusch, Harold Klaege, Dave Griffith, Ken Noonan and at table to right Jim Welch and his wife.*

There was great attendance at our February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025 breakfast. Those present were **Ken Noonan, Harold Klaege, Steve Scheinost, Dennis Schroeder, Ed Chmelka, Scott Willet, Jan Joseph, Norm Koster, Crain Derickson, Jerry Bucy, Jim Harder, Brad Somksen, Steve Chick and Jim Culver**.

Harold Klaege led an excellent discussion on recent changes in social security benefits and suggestions on filing Nebraska state Income taxes as retired Federal CSR employees are exempt in paying taxes on their annuities for 2024 tax year.

Many of our discussions during our breakfast are about our experiences of working in different parts of the Nebraska landscape. So it seems a quick review of some Nebraska agriculture highlights are appropriate.

Nebraska agriculture is a national leader in irrigation of crops and livestock productions. The Cornhusker State is No. 1 in total acres of cropland and pastureland irrigated. About 9.1 million acres, 32 percent of the state is irrigated. The annual average additional crop value due to irrigation is 1.5 billion dollars statewide and added property valuation of 13 – 24 billion dollars. Nebraska is nationally number 1 in the acreages of center pivot irrigation. Corn and soybeans are the major irrigated crops. Nationally the state is 3<sup>rd</sup> in corn production, 4<sup>th</sup> in the production of soybeans, and 1<sup>st</sup> in the production of Great Northern beans. Nebraska is also a national leader in beef production with about 7.2 billion dollars in annual cash.



*First Friday Retirees – Jan 2025. Right to left – Mike Kucera, Bill Best, Steve Schienost, Ed Chmelka, and Jerry Bucy visiting about some of their past NRCS and SCS field watershed experiences.*



*First Friday Retirees – Feb 2025. Jim Culver – standing at end having a conservation about the opportunity to become a member of Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees – ARCSE*

## **NEW JERSEY**

**Nancy Paolini, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [npaolini@comcast.net](mailto:npaolini@comcast.net)**

News from the NJ NRCS State Office. Two of our employees on probation were dismissed last month. Two employees accepted the buyout.

Please join us on March 25<sup>th</sup> at 7pm for a one-hour virtual meeting. We will catch up on each other and welcome new retirees. Contact **Nancy Paolini** if you don't get an invitation via email. [Npaolini@comcast.net](mailto:npaolini@comcast.net).

## **OKLAHOMA**

**Randy Freeland, ARCSE Representative**

**Email: [freelandrandy50@gmail.com](mailto:freelandrandy50@gmail.com)**

Larry Caldwell wrote: Hi Julie.

It has been a while since we last talked. I hope you and your family are doing well through this crazy weather and crazier

The Oklahoma Conservation Historical Society (OCHS) is planning to hold three commemorative events in April. Two events will commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Black Sunday—one in Oklahoma City on April 14<sup>th</sup>; and the other will be in Guymon, Oklahoma later in the month. The Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts will be co-hosts for these events. The third event will be to commemorate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Soil Conservation Service. It is planned for April 28<sup>th</sup>. The location is still to be determined. OCHS has received a grant from the Oklahoma Historical Society to help with the expenses of these events. Please check out our new OCHS website to see the many projects that have been completed and underway: <https://www.oklahomaconservationhistory.org>.

Thank you for your work to make the news happen. I always enjoy reading to see what many of my former co-workers and friends are up to.

–Larry Caldwell, 405-742-7810

## OREGON

**Don Stettler, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [don.stettler@comcast.net](mailto:don.stettler@comcast.net)

The Oregon retirees met at Elmer's Restaurant on NE 181<sup>st</sup> Avenue on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was a beautiful day to be out and about. Attending were: **Denise Troxell, Gale Voge, Bobbie Hart, Joe Sahlfeld, Louise Davis, Jolyne and Jon Lea, Ralph Wadleigh, Lowell Kenedy, Anne Derting, Ben and Janice Doerge, Dick Sylvester, Kathy Sylvester, Leland Saele, Lamont Robbins, Karen Robbins, Kay Denfeld, Terry Mitchell, Jim Marron**, and yours truly, **Don Stettler**.

A special welcome was given to **Ben and Janice Doerge**. They had made a trip from their home in Texas to visit Ben's children and arranged to be in the vicinity the day of the lunch. A special welcome was also given to **Jolyne Lea** and **Anne Derting** who were first time attenders.

**Jim Marron** is still involved to some extent in women's softball. **Denise Troxel** is doing some painting. **Jon Lea** is being his usual busy self while **Jolyne** is taking in some Irish music concerts and tending to dog show responsibilities. **Louise Davis** enjoys walking her Chihuahua. She also took some trips. **Lowell Kenedy** is looking forward to taking a transcontinental railroad trip. He was surprised that he needed to take his passport. After spending two years in North Carolina, **Lamont and Karen Robbins** are happy to be back to their home in Vancouver. **Karen** will be making a trip to Cuba to give presentations on helping special needs children, in particularly those with autism.

**Laurel Grimsted** could not come to the lunch because she had to work. She asked that her best wishes be conveyed. Sadly, **Thor Thorson** would be making the move to California the very day of the lunch. He sent his goodbyes.

The spring quarter lunch is planned for April 23<sup>rd</sup> at the usual westside restaurant.



*Oregon Retirees*

## PENNSYLVANIA

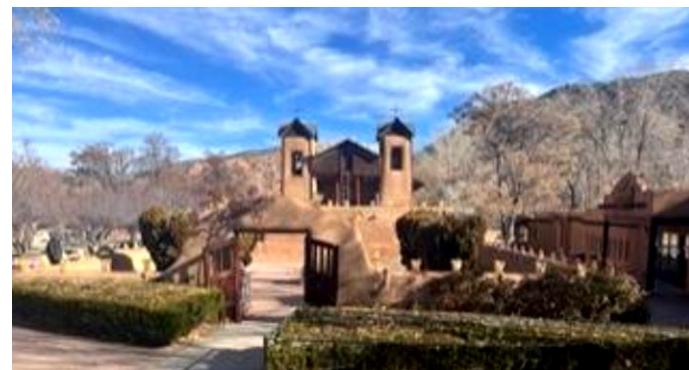
### Excerpts from the PA Bugle.

Retiree Happenings

**Alan and Judy Wood** spent Thanksgiving in New Mexico, where Alan was an SCS design engineer from 1979 to 1985 before coming the Harrisburg. While visiting with friends in Chimayo, they ate at a restaurant in an old hacienda that was an RC&D project and saw one of Alan's dam projects which is still functioning! They had time in Santa Fe with their son and his family (there for the Plaza lighting), and ran into none other than **Rosie Updegraff** and her family!



*Santa Fe Plaza*



*Sanctuario de Chimayo*

**Tim Murphy** is on the board of directors of the fledgling Friends of Detweiler Park, adjacent to the Dauphin County Conservation District and NRCS Field Office. Our first project to enhance the park will be a conservation plan and EQIP contract for forest stand improvement to control invasive vegetation.



*Rose Marie and Family in Santa Fe*

**Rose Marie Updegraff** writes that her family took a three generation trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico at Thanksgiving. It included her daughter, son-in-law, and grandkids. They stayed in a 100-year-old adobe. They drove to Taos and stopped in Chimayo to visit the Sanctuary de Chimayo where at Easter 50,000 pilgrims arrive on foot bearing crosses hoping to cure ailments. Abandoned crutches are evidence of their cures. "We stopped at the Rio Grande Gorge and walked across the bridge. It's 600 feet down and is quite a sight. We also walked the trails at the Pecos Historical Monument. We enjoyed wonderful food, incredible art, and beautiful scenery. Everyone loved the trip. We combined sightseeing with Christmas shopping. The Christmas decorations were fantastic. New Mexico truly is the Land of Enchantment!"



*Bridge over the Rio Grande gorge*

Blast from the Past



*Ed Steckler, Gary Swope and Alan Wood at the groundbreaking ceremony for PA-671 Pitchpine Run channel and conduit in Reynoldsville, Jefferson County in 1997. What features catch your attention in this photo?*

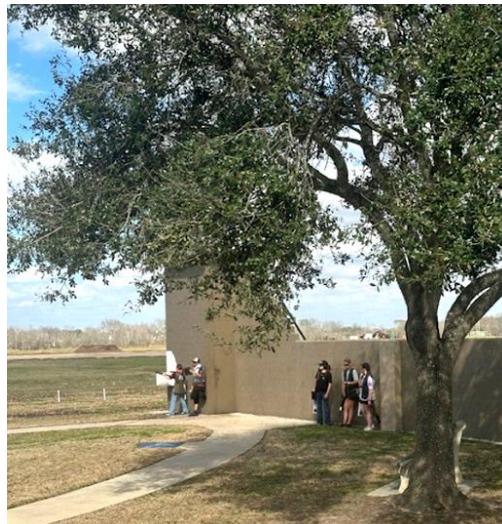
## TEXAS NORTH

**Mike Bogard, ARCSE Representative**

Email: [mbogard41@gmail.com](mailto:mbogard41@gmail.com)

Ronald Hillard wrote: Edith and I have just completed working the Ranching and Wildlife Committee, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Young Guns Competition. There were 531 youth representing 141 Texas Chapters of 4-H and FFA at the three-day event February 7–9, hosted at the Greater Houston Sport Club. Youth competed in 5 Stand, Trap and Skeet events, and shot 101,500 rounds of shotguns shells. We as volunteers contributed roughly 2,400 hours and prepared approximately 5,000 meals for the youth, coaches and families in attendance.

Our next event will be the World Championship BBQ COOKOFF February 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, and March 1<sup>st</sup>, prior to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo which opens March 4<sup>th</sup> and runs through March 23<sup>rd</sup>.



The planning committee for the annual Texas SCS/NRCS Retirees Reunion met in Temple, Texas, January 23, 2025. The 2025 reunion will be held April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 in Belton, Texas. The meeting will be held in the LaQuinta Inn, and a block of rooms has been reserved for SCS/NRCS retirees.



*Texas retirees annual reunion planning committee*

Ag Workers Auto Insurance will pay for the noon meal on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Registration will be \$15.00 but is free for first time attendees. John Mueller will do roll call of deceased retirees/spouses since 2024 reunion. A golf tournament will be held on Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and the cost is \$50.00. **Mike Black** oversees golf tournament. **Rhett Johnson** will be charge of raffle to raise money for Wildlife Brigade. Retirees are asked to contact Rhett if they have items to donate for the raffle. **Van Johnson**, Rhett's brother, will sing for the reunion if his health allows.

State Conservationist **Kristy Oates** will be asked to update retirees on what is going on with the NRCS. Ms. Oates asked retirees to design a packet the state office could provide new retirees describing what retirees' reunion did. **Arnold King** will work on a packet.

A Wildlife Brigade spokesman will be asked to update retirees on activities of the organization.

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## WEST VIRGINIA

**Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative**

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

**Jim Piper**, Retired Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, died on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Jim retired in 2004 after working for SCS/NRCS for 33 years. More information about his life can be read in the "in Memoriam" section of this newsletter. Our condolences to his wife **Gail** and their three children.

West Virginia lost another well-known figure, **Dr. Mannon Gallegly** at age 101. Although not a member of the NRCS family, most of us knew Mannon as the former Dean of the WVU Davis College, or from planting one of his four blight resistant tomato varieties. His career spanned 82 years as an expert in plant and soil sciences. Mannon continued his research for more than 30 years after he retired from the university.



*Dr. Mannon Gallegly at age 101*

Blackwater Canyon is now fully protected as a publicly owned natural and recreational treasure. Over 2,700 acres of privately owned forest land and river corridor have been transferred to the Monongahela National Forest, making the entire 10,000-acre canyon, including Blackwater Falls State Park, under public ownership.



**Blackwater Canyon**

WVDA won a courtroom victory that upholds the rights of West Virginian's to engage in agricultural practices, including bee keeping, on their property.

The eighth annual Mountain State Maple Day will be held March 15<sup>th</sup>. Go to <https://wvmspa.org/mountain-state-maple-days/> for more information. The deadline for 2025 Women in Agriculture nominations is May 1<sup>st</sup>. The application is at: <https://agriculture.wv.gov/divisions/executive/women-in-agriculture/>.

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## **WISCONSIN**

**Deb Legear, ARCSE Representative**

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

Submitted by Julie MacSwain:

Retirement has provided me with a great way of getting back to my love for music. For me this has meant spending more time on my piano, guitar, and trumpet. Hopefully this will lead to me performing again in the near future!



Submitted by Tim Meyer:

**Tim Meyer** and his wife **Carol** took a camping trip to Alaska.





**Hanging glacier along Resurrection Bay, Seward, AK**



**Spire Cove, Resurrection Bay**



**Exit (or Resurrection) Glacier, Seward, AK**

The weather turned to more typical Seward days of rainy, windy, and cool with the clouds sunk down around the city. We're glad we saw both. Leaving tomorrow morning, hooking up in the rain and driving up and over to Soldotna.

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**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.

**Are You a Senior Conservationist?**

If you have ever skimmed through the ARCSE Newsletter or browsed the ARCSE website, you have probably seen some people referred to as a "Senior Conservationist." Have you ever wondered what that means? Maybe you have wondered if you could be recognized as a senior conservationist, or how you go about being recognized as a senior conservationist.

The recognition of senior conservationists began many years ago to salute retirees of the Soil Conservation Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service for their efforts in building and maintaining a very strong agency. For most SCS/NRCS retirees, their work with the agency was much more than just a job. Their work centered around an ethic of desiring to protect our soil, water, and other natural resources for future generations by serving the public through promotion of wise voluntary stewardship of the land. Many retirees have continued those efforts into retirement through volunteering, consulting, or just providing perspective and advice to younger generations on how conservation has changed over the years. The Senior Conservationist recognition honors these individuals.

As of December 2023, over 820 retirees have been recognized as senior conservationists. Here are the requirements to be recognized:

- You must be a retiree who worked for the SCS or NRCS
- You must be 83 years of age or older
- You must complete and submit the Senior Conservationist Questionnaire

Please note that you are not required to be an ARCSE member to be recognized as a senior conservationist. So, if you know of a deserving retiree who is not a member, please let them know about this recognition so they can apply. And you are certainly welcome to encourage them to join ARCSE too. You also don't need to have worked as a soil conservationist. Any retiree of SCS/NRCS of any discipline is eligible. We have senior conservationists that were engineers, soil scientists, biologists, technicians, area clerks, computer specialists, etc. It doesn't matter – your work helped put conservation on the ground.

After you meet the requirements and are named a senior conservationist, there will be a writeup in the ARCSE newsletter about your career and what you have been up to in retirement, and it will be posted on the ARCSE webpage as well.

Our ARCSE webpage dedicated to senior conservationists is here: <https://arcse.org/senior-conservationists/>. On this site you will find a link to the Senior Conservationist application. If you do not have access to a computer, I would be happy to send an application to you. Just call me, Paul Benedict, at 202-578-8226, and I will get one in the mail to you right away.

## SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

### Senior Conservationist

#### Kenneth W. Overhults

**Kenneth W. Overhults** was born 03/17/41 in Equality, Kentucky. He earned his BS degree in May 1964 at the University of Kentucky. He married **Faye Carolyn** on February 16, 2013, and they had one son and one daughter. He retired as a Resource Conservationist at the Burlington, KY Field Office in 1994. He received a certificate of merit in 1992. He was deemed a Master Builder of Men by the FarmHouse International Fraternity in 2004. And he was named to the Hall of Fame of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association in 2010.

His career positions with SCS/NRCS were many:

Jun-Sep 1960, Student Trainee (Agr Engr), Owensboro Area Office, Owensboro, KY  
Jun-Sep 1961, Student Trainee (Agr Engr), Mayfield Area Office, Mayfield, KY  
Jun-Aug 1962, Student Trainee (Soil Science), Owensboro Area Office, Owensboro, KY  
Jun-Aug 1963, Student Trainee (Soil Conservation), Stanton Field Office, Stanton, KY  
Jun 64-Sep 1966, Soil Conservationist, Campton Sub-Field Office, Campton, KY  
Sep 66-Feb 1967, Soil Conservationist, Dixon Field Office, Dixon, KY  
Feb 67-Nov 1975, SC (District Conservationist), Manchester Field Office, Manchester, KY  
Nov 75-Mar 1985, SC (District Conservationist), Leitchfield Field Office, Leitchfield, KY  
Mar 85-Jun 1986, Resource Conservationist, Owensboro Area Office, Owensboro, KY  
Jun 86-Jan 1987, Resource Conservationist, Hartford Field Office, Hartford, KY  
Jan 87-May 1987, Resource Conservationist, Leitchfield Field Office, Leitchfield, KY  
May 87-May 1988, Resource Conservationist, Hodgenville Field Office, Hodgenville, KY  
May 88-May 1991, Resource Conservationist, KY State Office, Lexington, KY  
May 91-Apr 1994, Resource Conservationist, Burlington Field Office, Burlington, KY

Kenneth's contact information is 460 Spencer Park, Lexington, KY 40515; tel. 859-272-6413; email koverhults@juno.com.

## SENIOR CONSERVATIONIST CHRONICLE

### Senior Conservationist

#### James E. McQuilkin

**James E. McQuilkin** was born 12/25/40 in Henry, Illinois. He earned his BS in Agriculture in June 1964 at the Western Illinois University. He married **Bonita Proctor** on June 9, 1973, and they had one son, three daughters, and two grandchildren. He retired from the Henry, IL Field Office 12/2005, where he was a soil conservation technician. He did EWP work in the state of Oregon, overseeing streambank restoration projects.

After retiring, he worked for the Maurer Stutz Engineering company in Henry, IL. His hobbies include woodworking and operating a sawmill.

James' contact information is 1093 Illinois Rte. 89, Mongolia, IL 61336; tel. (815) 869 3100; email soiltech1@yahoo.com.



# 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](mailto:soilwarden@verizon.net). Always include the position or the spouse's position with SCS/NRCS.

Surname	Year	<i>In-Memoriam</i> (Note: These are recent notices. For a complete list, please see <a href="http://www.arcse.org">www.arcse.org</a> )
Hoepfner	2025	<b>John Peter Hoepfner</b> (83) of Appleton, Wisconsin, passed away on January 1st, 2025, just making it into the new year. In his final moments, he had the chance to be near what he loved, including family and his beloved backyard through the window. John was born on July 12th, 1941, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, to the late Julius and Philomine Hoepfner. He served in the United States Navy from 1961 to 1966. During his service he had many opportunities to broaden his schema in several European countries, since the naval ship he was stationed on was situated in the Mediterranean Sea. After his discharge from the navy, he returned to Wisconsin. He married Laura Litturro on June 8, 1974. He graduated from the Fox Valley Technical College on June 9, 1974. He got his first job working for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Lumpkin, Georgia. He returned to Wisconsin, and worked in the in the Waukesha, Wisconsin NRCS office. In 1983, John moved with his wife Laura to Appleton Wisconsin where he helped raise their daughters. He put down roots in Appleton through his conservation work, and through his various hobbies (photography, singing, nature walks, and whittling). His most proud moment was finishing his agriculture degree much later in life. It was a goal that he pursued over his life. He was a member of St. Bernadette Parish, Appleton, WI. John is survived by his wife, Laura, and his two daughters, Stacey Hoepfner(Marco), and Shelley Hoepfner-Weier (Brad).
Bacon	2025	<b>Don Edward Bacon Jr.</b> , (74) of Temple, Texas, passed away on February 6, 2025, at his home. Don was born on December 9, 1950, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the son of Don Edward Bacon, Sr. and Hazel (Raines) Bacon. On February 4, 1972, Don married Margie Ivey and recently celebrated 53 years of marriage. He graduated Tarleton College in 1989 with a bachelor's degree in construction. Don proudly served his country in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. He served the United States Army for a total of 6 years. He worked at the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRSC) for a total of 27 years before retiring on December 31, 2011. Don's happy place has always been fishing. He loved spending time on his boat fishing with Brian, Riley, and Cliff. He is survived by his wife Margie Bacon of Temple, son Brian Bacon (girlfriend Shay Veal) of Little River-Academy, daughter Brittny (AJ) Fuentes of Temple, grandchildren, Cylar Fuentes, Berkley Fuentes, and Kaitlin Veal, and a great grandchild Zhiyari Veal. A funeral service was held February 19, 2025, followed by burial with military honors at Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen, Texas.
Swan	2025	<b>Bertha Anne (Vallem) Swan</b> (93) of Spooner, Wisconsin, passed away on February 12, 2025. She was born March 10, 1931, in Hayward, Wisconsin to Arthur and Ruth (Koloen) Vallem. After high school she worked at the Hayward Dairy Company before she met the love of her life Melvin W. Swan. They married March 28th, 1950. In 1957 they bought the farmstead in Spooner from Uncle Edwin and Aunt Sophie Hanson where she and Melvin lived and raised their two sons Dale and DuWayne. She also worked at the USDA-Soil Conservation Service office in Spooner for 28 years, receiving several awards during her employment before she retired. She helped raise chickens, sell eggs, raise beef cattle, and helping with farm work where and whenever needed. She enjoyed the outdoors, gardening and canning what they grew. On the evening of June 18th, 2001, an F3 tornado ripped through their farm destroying most of the buildings. By the grace of God they were saved in their house by three large trees that came down on the house. They worked tirelessly to restore their farm. Grateful for all the family, friends and community that helped with that life changing event. Bertha and Melvin celebrated 65 years of marriage before his passing in April 2015. Bertha stayed living on the family farm until 2021 due to failing health, then residing at Shell Lake health care until her passing. Preceding her in death were her parents, her husband Melvin. Bertha's surviving family includes sons Dale (Carol) Swan of Spooner, DuWayne Swan (Jeana Jarvis) of Stratford, Wisconsin; grandchildren Danielle (Eric)Larson, Darian Swan; and great grandchildren Nolen, Dominik, MacGregor, and Brielle Larson.
Lansford	2025	Life Member <b>Jimmie William Lansford</b> (81) of Cookeville, Tennessee, passed away on February 9, 2025, at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. Jim was born September 22, 1943, in his aunt Ada's homestead house in Cumberland County, Tennessee. He was the son of the late Robert and Edna (Smith) Lansford. After graduating from Cumberland County High School, he enlisted in the United States Air Force where he proudly served for 4 years during the Vietnam Conflict. Upon leaving the military, he attended Tennessee Tech and received a bachelor's degree in agriculture. Jim worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for over 34 years as a soil conservationist, District Conservationist and Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator. His life's work was not just a job but a true calling. His career was dedicated to helping farmers protect the soil, water, plant, and animal resources on their land. He also helped schools with conservation education and local government with environmental concerns. Jim was a role model, mentor, and friend to countless NRCS employees. After retirement, he helped train new employees nationwide about the importance of protecting our nation's natural resources. He loved spending time at his family's farm in Crossville, fishing at Kentucky Lake, spending Monday night at Outback, tailgating at Tennessee Tech football games, and fishing at the river with his grandsons. He attended Cookeville First Cumberland Presbyterian Church for over 45 years where he served as an elder. Jim's survivors include his daughter, Stacey Byers (Bill); and 2 grandsons, Nate and Brody.
McMillin	2025	<b>Steven Allen "Steve" McMillin</b> (70) of Paris, Missouri, passed away January 27, 2025, at his residence. Steve was born in Pensacola, Florida, on June 10, 1954 to Nancy Stapp McMillin and the late Harold Dean McMillin. Steve worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and was the Area Resource Conservationist in Missouri's Area 3 when he retired. Steve, influenced many young careers ensuring all employees had grazing training, knew technical policy, and followed program policies. He was a trainer and a coach for many employees. Steve loved spending time with his boys hunting. He was an avid pickleball player and loved sports. Along with his mother, Nancy McMillin who survives of Bolivar, Missouri, Steve is survived by his two sons, Brian (Shelby) McMillin of Paris, Tennessee, and Jarrod (Deidra) McMillin of Mayfield, Kentucky; one sister, Cheryl (Tony) Bowers of Bolivar, Missouri; and five grandchildren, Steven McMillin, Ivy McMillin, Oliver McMillin, Dean McMillin, and Ellie McMillin.

Stanek	2025	<b>Michael R. "Mike" Stanek</b> , Wisconsin State Agronomist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), (51) of Caledonia Township, Wisconsin, passed away unexpectedly on February 5, 2025. Mike obtained a master's degree from Washington State University in Science and Agriculture. In addition to working for NRCS, he was a Farm Manager for the Dairy Forage Research Center and worked for the Sauk County Land Conservation Department. His many farming talents included raising chickens, beef and pigs, beekeeping, gardening, and taxidermy. It came in handy on their land in the Baraboo Hills that he could fix anything and was a master tinkerer. Others enjoyed that he was an excellent grill master, and his daughter even dressed up as him for "BBQ dad" day during Spirit Week last year. He loved being out-of-doors whether he was camping in his RV, fishing or hunting. His daughter, Emmy, was his pride and joy. He loved spending time taking her for motorcycle rides, riding the 4-wheeler in the woods and going turkey and deer hunting. He was also really good at telling bad dad jokes. Mike is survived by his wife of 27 years, Jenny, his daughter, Emmy, parents, Darrell and Judy Stanek of Hillsboro, Wisconsin, brothers, Aaron (Wanda) Stanek of Necedah, Bryan (Jamie) Stanek of Baraboo, Wisconsin in-laws, Gary and Pat Hudson of Madison, brother-in-law, Kevin (Tara) Hudson of Oregon and many loved nieces, nephews and extended family. A Celebration of Life was held at the Baraboo Arts Banquet Center, 323 Water St., Baraboo, on February 13, 2025.
Basinger	2025	<b>Donald Lee Basinger</b> (90) of Greensboro, North Carolina passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on February 7, 2025. Donald was born June 5, 1934. He was born with an innate curiosity and passion for engineering, and pursued a career that spanned several decades working with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS). As an SCS engineer, his expertise and commitment to excellence influenced many projects and colleagues throughout his profession. His work was marked by a meticulous attention to detail and a deep respect for the craft, inspiring those who had the privilege of working alongside him. He retired as the Director of Engineering in 1989. Above all, Donald was a devoted husband to Mary Freda Basinger, his partner and confidante. Together, they built a life rich with love and mutual respect, exemplifying the true meaning of partnership. Their bond was a cornerstone for their family and a beacon of love for all who knew them. Donald was also a cherished father to his children, Don Jr., David, and Kevin, and a proud grandfather to 7 grandchildren. He delighted in sharing his knowledge, imparting wisdom, and offering unwavering support to his family. His gentle spirit and kind heart were felt in every interaction, and his legacy will live on in the countless lives he touched. A private family service will be held to honor his memory.
Trissell	2025	<b>William Alvin Trissell</b> (90) of Vinita, Oklahoma, passed away on January 21, 2025, after a lengthy illness. Alvin was born in Cordell, Oklahoma on September 28, 1934, the son of Jessie Earl and Ruby Jewell (Short) Trissell. He began his 46-year career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as a student trainee in Pawhuska, Oklahoma in 1956. Alvin became a Range Conservationist in the Okmulgee, Oklahoma office after graduating from Oklahoma State University in 1958. He married Evelyn D. (Schmitt) Trissell in Stillwater, Oklahoma that same year. He subsequently was assigned to Soil Conservation offices in Okemah, Pryor and Guymon, Oklahoma before moving with his family to Vinita in August 1968. He ended his lengthy career as a District Conservationist with the Vinita Field Service Center in March 2002. Alvin also was active in church and community affairs. The family joined Vinita's First United Methodist Church after moving from Guymon in 1968. Alvin enjoyed making custom furniture and wooden toys. In 2023, the Vinita Lions Club awarded Trissell the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award, recognizing his 57 years of service to the local club's civic programs. Alvin was preceded in death by his wife, Evelyn D. Trissell, in 2023. He also was preceded by his twin brother, Charles Alvie Trissell in 2022, who also worked for SCS. Survivors include his children, Darrell Trissell, Charlotte (Mike) Flock, Nina (Tony) Miller, Kevin (Teresa) Trissell; grandchildren, Cliff (Chrissy) Flock, Tonya (Taylor) Massey, Maggie (Thomas) Schneiter, Neal Miller (fiancée Micaylah Rose), Kevin Trissell, Jeffery (Madeleine) Trissell, Dr. Brian (Dr. Loren) Trissell, and Ashley Trissell. Other survivors include great-grandchildren Normandie Flock, Britain Flock, Nova Massey, Arya Schneiter, Emma Claire Trissell, Aubaine Trissell and Rosamund Trissell.
Marcum	2025	<b>Thomas Charles Marcum</b> (74) of Georgetown, Kentucky, passed away January 30, 2025, at Baptist Health Lexington. He was born May 8, 1950, in Clay County, Kentucky the son of Robert H. Marcum and Elva Gabbard Marcum. Tom was a graduate of the University of Kentucky earning a bachelor's degree of Science in Forestry. He had a successful career across the decades with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service retiring after 31 years in 2005 as State Resource Conservationist of Kentucky. He was a member of Southland Christian Church and the University of Kentucky Alumni Club. His most important accomplishment in life was as a devoted husband of 51 years to the love of his life, Judith (Judy) Warren Marcum. In addition to Judy, survivors include his sons, Bryan Thomas Marcum of Georgetown, and Wesley "Wes" Warren Marcum (Kimberly) of Spring Hill, Tennessee; and grandson, Ethan Wesley Marcum.
Fronk	2025	<b>Robert Allen "Bob" Fronk, Jr.</b> (88) of Weatherford, Texas, passed away peacefully on January 13, 2025, in Weatherford. Bob was born on February 11, 1936, to Robert Fronk, Sr. and Matilda Fronk in Mt. Angel, Oregon. He lived in various places across the United States before settling in Weatherford, Texas. Marlene Fronk, whom he married in 1958, were married for 52 years before her passing on December 16, 2010. Bob dedicated his career to the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, where he used his bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering and two master's degrees, one in civil engineering and one in Resource Administration, to make a lasting impact. He retired as the Head Engineer at the National Technology Center in Fort Worth, Texas. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus organization. He was known for his kind and generous spirit, always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need. In addition, Bob loved his Catholic Faith. He loved attending daily Mass, and he had a very strong devotion to the most holy rosary. Outside of his work, Bob enjoyed spending time in nature, indulging in hobbies such as fishing, hiking, camping, gardening and woodworking in his workshop. Bob is survived by five children: James Fronk, Michael Fronk, Paula (Andy) Allen, Kathy (Steve) Ross, and David Fronk (Janet) Fronk; 14 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. Mass of Christian Burial was held at St. Stephen Catholic Church, in Weatherford, Texas, on January 23, 2025.
Ricks	2025	<b>Sylvester Eugene "Sid" Ricks</b> (77) of Canyon, Texas, passed away peacefully at his home on January 1, 2025. Sid was born October 12, 1947, in Childress, Texas, the only child of James Edward and Velma Lee (Goodson) Ricks. Sid was a decorated war veteran, enlisting in the U.S. Air Force in 1968, where he served his country as a Sergeant during the Vietnam War until 1972. He then attended West Texas State University and graduated in 1976 with a Bachelor of Science in Agronomy. For 34 years he was a soil conservationist around the state of Texas for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service until his retirement. Sid was very active in his community. He was a lifetime member of Girlstown USA, became a Mason with Patrick Lodge No. 359 in Franklin, Texas, and Commanded the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5681, as well as a Lion's Club member, in Canyon, Texas. Survivors include his loving wife, Cheryl Hunter Ricks; a son, Jason James Ricks (Nicole), and their children Kaitlynn, Kelton, and Kiegan of Oklahoma City,

		Oklahoma; a daughter, Kristin Kamille Ross (Dan), and their children Margot and Charlize of New Braunfels, Texas; a stepson, Eric Hunter Forsyth (Maegan), and their children Reilly and Sean of Houston, Texas; and a stepdaughter, Desi Forsyth Hutcherson (Joshua), and their children Daniel and Nicholas, of Canyon, Texas.
Clifton	2025	<b>George Michael (Mike) Clifton</b> (72) of Rotan, Texas passed away January 8, 2025. Mike was born on February 22, 1952, in Crowell, Texas to the late George and Velmeta Meharg Clifton. He was a graduate from West Texas State University. He served in the United States Air Force from 1972 to 1976 as a surgical nurse. After returning from his service, he started working for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in 1983. He retired in 2011 as District Conservationist. He married Judy Rushing in Knox City on November 21, 1992. They moved to Rotan after marrying. They loved to travel to the mountains and to see the fall foliage. He was preceded in death by his wife, Judy, in 2010. He is survived by one son-in-law Dennis Carver; three Grandchildren Jordan (Tyler), Cyla, and Ryan; two great granddaughters Gracie and Maycie, of Graford, Texas.
Lawrence	2025	<b>Anthony Ray Lawrence</b> (64) of Checotah, Oklahoma, passed away January 19, 2025, at his home surrounded by family. Anthony was born on July 28, 1960, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the son of Everett Ray and Kathleen (Logan) Lawrence. He received his associate degree from Connors State College. Anthony married Verlinda (Carol) Martin at the Vivian Baptist Church in Eufaula. He worked as a soil conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for twenty-three years, retiring in 2011. After retirement, Anthony worked as a ranch foreman for C-Gawf until 2016. He then worked for the United States Postal Service as an HCR mail carrier from 2016 to 2023. He was the owner/operator of CAL Cattle from 1985 until his death. Survivors include his wife of 44 years, Carol, of the home; daughter Felicia DeAnn Pearce (Barry); son, Martin Callahan Lawrence (Stormy); mother Kathleen Lawrence; nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren. A funeral service was held January 25, 2025, at the Calvary Baptist Church in Eufaula, Oklahoma.
Vrem	2024	<b>Marcoe Durand Vrem</b> (89) of Belle Fouche, South Dakota (formerly of Dickinson North Dakota) passed away on November 20, 2024, at the Spearfish Hospital in Spearfish, South Dakota. He was born January 11, 1935. Marc's career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service took the family to Bottineau, Westhope, Hettinger, Williston, and finally to Dickinson, North Dakota where he retired in 1990 as Area Conservationist. He is survived by his son, Loren and wife Laurie, a grandson Caleb, granddaughters Caitlin, Amanda, Amber (Tim) Parsons and a brother. He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Ann, his son Jerry and his parents and a brother.
Wolf	2024	<b>Robert Orland Wolf</b> (88) of Mesa, Arizona passed away on September 19, 2024. He was born on May 22, 1936, in Chicago, Illinois to Irvin and Ruth Wolf at Presbyterian Hospital, and grew up on a farm in Missouri. He graduated from the University of Missouri in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. While attending college he served in the United States Army Reserves for 8 years. He worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service for 25 Years and was a longtime District Conservationist at the Palmyra, Missouri field office. He loved working outdoors and traveling in his RV. He was a member of the Kiwanis Club which participated in service projects along with the Jaycees where he helped plan Flower City Park in Palmyra, Missouri. After retiring in 1987, he went back to farming with his parents for 15 years, and then moved to Mesa, Arizona. He was actively involved in church volunteering as a greeter and other duties. He loved playing softball and tennis. He volunteered in sports activities including developing a softball complex, which he was most proud of. He is survived by his wife Betty and children Steve, Carl, Janet, and Sharon; 10 grandchildren and 25 great grandchildren whom he loved dearly.
Haakenstad	2024	<b>Timothy George Haakenstad</b> (64) of Lincoln, Nebraska, passed on October 29, 2024, at his home in Lincoln. Tim was born on June 8, 1960, in Albion, Nebraska, to Sydney H. Haakenstad and Bonnie M. (Schroeder) Haakenstad. He attended the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the College of Engineering and Technology. Tim married Kiki Nick on January 12, 1990, in Omaha, Nebraska. Tim had a lengthy career that began as a Civil Engineer in 1980 with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. He worked in several offices in Nebraska. He later became the Assistant State Conservation Engineer in Lincoln from 1998 to 2007 and was the State Conservation Engineer in Lincoln from 2007 to 2015, when he. After his retirement, he worked part time in the private sector as a civil engineer. Timothy had a passion for classic cars; his first vehicle was a restored 1956 Chevy. He loved attending classic car shows and frequently visited swap meets. He loved to listen to blues music. Additionally, he enjoyed drawing and spending time with his family and friends. Tim is survived by his wife Kiki, daughters Ellana, Alexandra, Victoria and son Samson
Mister	2024	Senior Conservationist and ARCSE member <b>Hagner R. Mister</b> (90) of Prince Frederick, Maryland, passed away at home on December 26, 2024, surrounded by his loving family. Hagner was born on December 20, 1934, the oldest of eight children born to Norman and Margaret Horsmon Mister. After high school graduation, Hagner began work with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. He assisted farmers with erosion control and particularly enjoyed designing farm ponds. After retirement from the federal government in 1986, Hagner was elected to the Board of County Commissioners for two terms. He was then appointed Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture in 1998, and he served as Secretary of the Maryland Department of Agriculture from 2001 to 2003. He joined the Maryland National Guard in 1952 and later served in the Army Reserves. He served on the Calvert County Board of Education from 1973 to 1982, the Calvert County Democratic Central Committee from 2006 to 2022, the Prince Frederick Methodist Cemetery Corporation for 52 years, the Calvert County Historical Society, the Calvert County Land Preservation Board, Calvert County Farmland Trust, the Board of Directors of Asbury Solomons retirement community, and the Board of Directors of the Calvert Nursing Center. He was an active, lifelong member of the United Methodist Church, first joining Asbury Methodist Church as a boy and transferring to Trinity United Methodist Church when it opened in 1955. Hagner is survived by his high school sweetheart and loving wife of 69 years, Helen Ann; his children, Carolyn Hobbs (William), Sherri Kennedy (James, deceased), Mark Mister (Dawn); six grandchildren, Matthew Hobbs (Susan), Katie Wingate (Jeremy), Jason DeLizio, Julie Kennedy, Jordan Mister and Cody Mister; and nine great-grandchildren.
Wallace	2024	<b>Bobbie Jean Wallace</b> (89) of Salina, Kansas, passed away on December 23, 2024. Bobbie was the wife of ARCSE Life Member Jimmy R. Wallace, retired State Engineer for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. She was born on November 21, 1935, in Sand Springs, Oklahoma, the daughter of P.D. and Dora (Coker) Tarr. On October 18, 1958, Bobbie married the love of her life, Jimmy. Education played an important role in Bobbie's early life, as she was actively involved in the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls, a group that promoted leadership and community service among young women. She later pursued a fulfilling career as a secretary and administrative assistant, working for various organizations, including the Gulf Oil Company, Soil Conservation Service, and Saline County Expo Center. Her dedication to her work and attention to detail made her a valued member of every team she was part of. She served as a Cub Scout Den Mother,

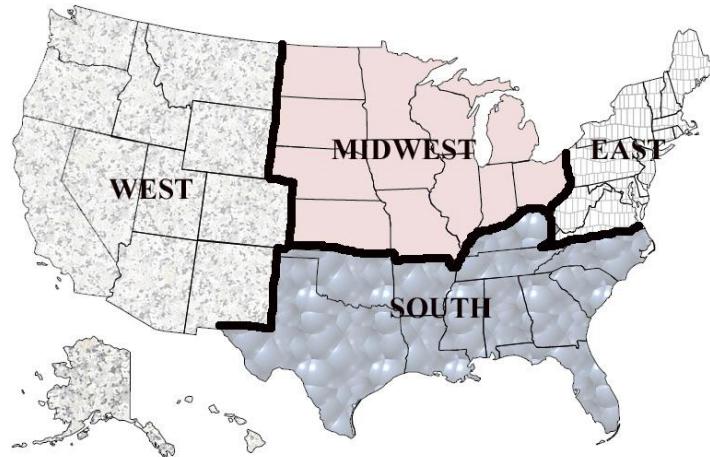
		sharing her love for the outdoors and guiding young boys through their formative years. An artist at heart, Bobbie found joy in painting with oils and watercolors, expressing her creativity and vision through her artwork. Her contributions to the community were further exemplified by her leadership as the past president of St. John's Hospital Auxiliary. Bobbie was a member of Salina's First United Methodist Church. She is survived by her husband, Jimmy; and her sons, Michael and Kevin.
<b>Roberts</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Alfred "Al" Roberts</b> (76) of Haymarket, Virginia, passed away July 8, 2024, at the Inova Fairfax Hospital, Fairfax, VA. Al was born in Brookerville, Florida on January 5, 1948, to the late Albert and Ardella Roberts. He attended Florida A&M University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science, Soil Science and Agronomy degree. He also completed the Graduate Studies Program in Soil Science at Texas A&M University. He was also very proud to be a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. He was a veteran of the United States Army, serving in the Army Security Agency in support of the Vietnam and Korean Wars. He received the National Defense Service Medal and Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. After his military service he went on to have a distinguished career with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. He began his career as a Soil Scientist and later in his career transitioned to the civil rights field serving as a Civil Rights Manager and Branch Chief. He retired after 39 years of federal employment. In his retirement, he loved spending time with his family, gaming, and spoiling the grandchildren. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, Haymarket; two sons Stephen (Katie) Roberts, of Putnam, Connecticut and Derek (Jennifer) Roberts, of Colchester, Connecticut; one daughter, Tonya Hart; 4 grandchildren; Jordan Labossiere, Wethersfield, Connecticut; Kaylee and Brayden Roberts, Putnam, Connecticut; and Amanda Stephens, Miami, Oklahoma.
<b>Krauss</b>	<b>2024</b>	Senior Conservationist and ARCSE Member <b>Hans Krauss</b> (94) of Spokane Valley, Washington, passed away on November 23, 2024, in Spokane Valley. He was born in Staten Island, New York in 1930. Hans managed the family dairy farm in upstate New York and received a degree from The State University of New York Delhi in 1950. He volunteered for the draft in 1954 and served as a Staff Sergeant and Jungle Expert in the United States Army 33rd Infantry regiment stationed in Panama. After receiving an honorable discharge, he attended Cornell University, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy in 1959. He married Kathryn Howard in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1960. During his college career Hans had been a student trainee with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in Northampton, Massachusetts, but when he graduated there were no SCS jobs available. At that point he found employment with Heath Survey Consultants mapping vegetation for gas leakage control at various locations across the country. This job took him to Michigan, then to Denver, and at last to Portland, Oregon. He visited SCS's regional office there looking for the possibility of getting back into a conservation profession. While there he learned of a soil conservationist vacancy in Ritzville, Washington that he accepted. He was there for two years then was promoted to District Conservationist at Odessa, Washington. He later served as District Conservationist in Odessa and then Warden, Washington. From 1970 until 1974 Hans was RC&D Project Coordinator at Raymond, Washington, for the coastal area of the state. In 1974 he was promoted to State Agronomist at Spokane, Washington, where he served until 1990 when he retired. He is survived by his wife, Kathryn; sons, John and Erik; and grandson, Spencer.
<b>Martin</b>	<b>2024</b>	Honorary ARCSE Member <b>Robert C. Martin</b> (96) of Wabash, Indiana, passed away November 21, 2024, at Wellbrooke of Wabash. Bob was born on November 4, 1928, in Wabash, to George L. and Rosa (Brosnan) Martin. Bob received his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from Purdue University in 1951, where he was a founding member of the Purdue Chapter of FarmHouse fraternity. He was a United States Army veteran serving during the Korean Conflict. Bob married his beloved Mary Ella "Ellie" Teusch at the St. Bernard Catholic Church on March 26, 1951. He worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service for over 30 years. He was the District Conservationist for Kosciusko, St. Joseph and then Jennings Counties and later became the coordinator for the Historic Hoosier Hills Resource Conservation and Development office, where he worked until he retired in 1985. In retirement, he worked at the Southeast Purdue Agricultural Center. Bob was a member of the St. Bernard Catholic Church, the Knights of Columbus, and the Wabash American Legion. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, cattle shows, horse sales, and just generally being outdoors. He is survived by his wife of 73 years, Ellie Martin of Wabash; four sons, Robert Andrew "Andy" (DeAnn) Martin of Georgetown, Indiana, Mike (Karen) Martin of Saint Charles, Missouri, Matt (Jena) Martin of Minnetonka, Minnesota, and Tim (Mari) Martin of Fort Wayne, Indiana; six grandchildren, Kathryn (Tony Patullo) Martin of St. Peters, Missouri, Zoe (Chris Morris) Martin of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Dori (Markelle) Moore of St. Peters, Missouri, Amelia (Zach Venturella) Martin of Weldon Spring, Missouri, Ruby Martin and Lia Martin, both of Minnetonka, Minnesota; and eight great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by granddaughter, Kelsey Lynn Martin.
<b>Rogers</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>John H. Rogers</b> (94) of Davis, California, passed away peacefully on December 31, 2024. John was born on September 22, 1930, in Ventura, California to Josephine and Burton Rogers. He attended the University of California-Davis for a year before transferring to Oregon State University where he met his future wife, Phyllis, and obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. After graduating, John served in the United States Army's 2nd Infantry Division, 38th Infantry Regiment, for two years during the Korean War as a Staff Sergeant. After being discharged in September of 1954, John went on to marry Phyllis Goossen of Auburn on February 5, 1955, in Colfax, California. John worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) conducting and leading soil surveys for Placer, El Dorado and Amador Counties in California. In 1976 where John took on the assignment of State interpreter of Soils at the SCS State Office in Davis. After retirement John worked as a consultant, assisting landowners as a soil interpretation expert witness at hearings with Tahoe's Regional Planning Board. John was active in the Placerville Elks Lodge, Placerville Little League President, and volunteer assisting with the construction of the UC Davis baseball field. John is survived by his wife of almost 70 years, Phyllis, two children, Steven and Lisa; daughter-in-law, Kristina; and grandchildren, Derek and Sean. A memorial will be held at 11:30 a.m. on March 7th at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon, California. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Meals on Wheels Yolo County.
<b>Brown</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Lynn Albert Brown</b> (84) of Ellensburg, Washington, passed away on December 2nd, 2024. Lynn was born on April 14, 1940, in Buffalo, Wyoming, the son of Albert 'Buster' and Margaret 'Dorothy' (Waegle) Brown. In 1960, Lynn married his first wife, Phyllis, and together they welcomed four children into the world, Randy, Julie, Kevin and Shane. He earned both his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of Wyoming in Laramie. Lynn's professional career began as a Forest Ranger with USDA-Forest Service in Wyoming, where he nurtured his love for the environment and conservation. In 1967, he transitioned to the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Lynn was selected to pursue a Master's degree in Public Administration at Harvard University, fully funded by a government scholarship. Upon completing his studies at Harvard, Lynn's career was characterized by a series of relocations, each move marking a step up in his professional journey. Lynn lived in various parts of the country, including Needham,

		<p>Massachusetts; Vienna, Virginia; Lexington, Kentucky; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Spokane, Washington. In 1979, Lynn achieved a significant milestone in his career when he was appointed as the State Conservationist in Washington. He retired in 1998. The Washington Conservation District (WACD) named the Lynn Brown Plant Materials Center in Bow, Washington, in his honor. In 1984, he married the love of his life, Linda Arentzen, from Sedro-Woolley, Washington. Lynn and Linda spent many, many days at the family cabin in Wyoming, camping, riding horses and other adventures. They lived in Spokane until Lynn retired in 1998 when they moved to Ellensburg, Washington. There he built a 7500 square foot barn with an apartment and shop, followed by their current home. He also spent countless hours hunting and fishing, working on projects, rebuilding antique clocks, working on guns, farming, cowboying in Wyoming rounding up cattle. He was a pilot and took many trips in his Cessna 182. Lynn is survived by his wife, Linda; daughters Julie Brown, Janet Arentzen and Shelly Pailles; son, Shane Brown; grandchildren, Samantha, Tory, Josh, Ana and Jeremy; great grandchildren, Odin and Iris. He was preceded in death by sons, Randall Lynn Brown and Kevin Taylor Brown; and granddaughter, Elizabeth Ann Hein.</p>
<b>Highfill</b>	<b>2024</b>	<p>Senior Conservationist and Honorary ARCSE Member <b>Richard Eugene "Gene" Highfill</b> (96) of Fort Myers, Florida, passed away peacefully at his residence on October 20, 2024. Gene was born in Cherokee, Oklahoma on July 26, 1928, to Mattie Goldie (Mitchell) and John Wesley Highfill. After high school Gene served in the Air Force as a radio operator. He was based in Japan and had duties throughout the western Pacific region. He started college in 1949 under the GI Bill. He met Ann Mason during his freshman year. They were married June 1, 1950. Gene graduated in 1953 from the University of Arkansas with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering. He began working for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as an Area Engineer in Erie and Iola, Kansas, in 1953. In 1960 he became watershed planning engineer at Salina, Kansas, and in 1961 he accepted the job of Project Engineer for Watersheds in Atchison and Sedan, Kansas. In 1966 he went to Washington, DC, as a recreation specialist for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. From that job he accepted the position of Assistant State Engineer with SCS at Champaign, Illinois; from 1970 through 1972 he was Assistant State Conservationist for Watersheds at Champaign. In 1972 he took the job of Watershed Planning Engineer at SCS Headquarters. From 1974 until he retired in 1983, Gene served as National Agricultural Engineer. After retirement, he worked on conservation projects and plans for Lesotho and Zambia in Africa and Saint Kitts in the Leeward Islands. He worked as Business Manager/Treasurer for Baptist Missions in Macau. And, for 26 years, he prepared income tax returns — first for H and R Block and then for AARP as a volunteer. Gene also served in the US Air Force Reserve as a civil engineer; he retired July 31, 1977, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Gene is survived by his wife Ann of the home; children Sharon (John) Farrar, Karen Baker and John (Linda) Highfill. He also leaves behind 12 Grandchildren, 22 Great Grandchildren, and 2 Great-Great Grandchildren. Sadly, he was preceded in passing by his daughter Terry Highfill.</p>
<b>Lyton</b>	<b>2024</b>	<p>Life Member <b>Warren Allen "Jim" Lyton Sr.</b>, (92) of Herriman, Utah, passed away peacefully on December 23, 2024. Jim was born on November 13, 1932, in Coaldale, West Virginia, to Otie Alan and Ruby Parker Lyton and was raised on a dairy farm. At the age of 17, he met Christine Widener, the love of his life. Together, they were happily married for 54 years. At the age of 32 he earned a degree in agriculture from West Virginia University. He then went to work for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as an economist. His work took him across the country, including Madison, Wisconsin; Salt Lake City, Utah; and ultimately Washington, D.C., where he transitioned into human resources. In 1988, after 31 years of dedicated service to the federal government, Jim retired. Jim loved the outdoors and spent most of his time outside, stating that "being in nature was his place of worship." Once he retired, he and Christine split their time between Yuma, Arizona and South Jordan, Utah for almost 30 years. In Yuma, not only was he an avid cyclist, he enjoyed horseshoes, water volleyball and being a cherished member of their community. In South Jordan, he enjoyed gardening and woodworking, both he excelled at. Jim is preceded in death by his wife, Christine Adair Widener Lyton; and son, Warren. He is survived by his daughters Pam (Charles) Laishley, Susan (Shane) Rushton; sister Joyce (Frank) Mash; 8 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.</p>
<b>Cook</b>	<b>2024</b>	<p>Life Affiliate Member <b>Maurice Gayle Cook</b>, Ph.D., (92) of Raleigh, North Carolina, passed away June 16, 2024. Maurice was born in Franklin County, Kentucky on December 26, 1931, the youngest of eleven children born to Price and Evelyn Moore Cook. Maurice loved his country. He joined the United States Army in 1957. He retired with the rank of Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve after 29 years of service to the United States. He was accepted to Harvard University but chose to stay close to his roots and attend the University of Kentucky. Realizing the family farm was in financial difficulty, he paused his college career in his sophomore year to return home and manage the farm. Five years later he continued his education at the University of Kentucky and earned Bachelor of Science degree and master's degree in agronomy. He completed his higher education in 1962 by earning a Ph.D. in agronomy from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Virginia. Shortly thereafter, he accepted a faculty position at North Carolina State University (NC State). When he retired from N.C. State in 1992 as a full professor, Maurice had taught over 8,000 students, including many who went on to work for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. He advised and mentored hundreds of students majoring in agronomy, soil science, and conservation. His teaching excellence resulted in numerous teaching awards, including the Alumni Distinguished Professor from NC State, and the Ensminger-Interstate Distinguished Teacher Award from the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture. He served as the High Chancellor of the Alpha Zeta honorary professional fraternity and in multiple soil conservation societies. He also conducted extension and research activities. He was a staunch advocate for soil and water conservation, both domestically and internationally. He served as President of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and received the Society's highest recognition—the Hugh Hammond Bennett Award. In North Carolina state government, he served as the Director of the North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation. He worked closely with the Association of North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts and was inducted into the Association's Hall of Fame. He was also elected to the Southeast Region Hall of Fame by the National Association of Conservation Districts. After retiring from NC State, he served on the staff of Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. as his state agricultural advisor. He later coordinated the agricultural program of the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center. Maurice was a devoted Christian and very active member a member of Hayes Barton Baptist Church in Raleigh. In later years, Maurice and Nancy were involved in multiple short-term mission projects in Poland, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Uruguay, and several other countries. Maurice is survived by his wife Nancy, his son Stephen (Tannen), his granddaughters Ava, Mable, Evelyn, and Rosemary, and beloved nieces and nephews. Maurice was buried in his beloved home soil of Kentucky.</p>
<b>Gossett</b>	<b>2024</b>	<p>Life Member <b>Charles Joseph "Skip" Gossett</b> (91) of Speedway, Indiana, passed away July 26, 2024, in Indianapolis, surrounded by family. Charles was born June 30, 1933, in Chicago, Illinois, the son of Joseph and Sally (Moeller) Gossett.</p>

		<p>Charles began dating his future wife, Patricia Joan Spence, after she started working at the Green Mill restaurant owned by his father. The two went to a movie on their first date Christmas night 1953 in a yellow Buick convertible loaned to Charles by his cousin Art. Charles earned a Bachelor's Degree in Geology in 1955 at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. The next year, on Feb. 19, 1956, Charles and Patricia were united in marriage at Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Norris City, Illinois, marking the beginning of a 68-year loving partnership. The couple first moved to Champaign, Illinois, where Charles earned a Master's Degree in Geology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Less than four months after his August 1957 graduation, he began his service in the United States Army. The couple eventually relocated to Washington, D.C., where he worked for the Army Map Service. After he served two years in the Army, Charles and Joan moved to Tallahassee, Florida, and later Lexington, Kentucky. In 1965, the family moved to the Speedway neighborhood near Indianapolis where they would spend the next 59 years. Charles spent 34 years working with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, working in every county in Indiana and rising to the role of Assistant State Conservationist. After retirement in 1995, they traveled extensively with friends. Charles was a member of Speedway Christian Church, Masons Lodge #0718 in Norris City, the Geological Society of America, and the Association of Retired Conservation Service Employees. Charles is survived by Patricia, daughters Tricia (Tim) Brown and Caroline (Steve) Cork, and grandchildren Chris Brown, Danny Cork, Ben Brown and Abby Cork.</p>
Piper	2024	<p><b>James Lee Piper</b> (74) of Warsaw, Ohio, passed away August 1, 2024, at Genesis Hospital in Zanesville, Ohio. Jim was born September 9, 1949, to the late Lloyd and Mary (Davis) Piper in Conneaut, Ohio. On July 30, 1983, he married Gail Littler Piper, his wife of 41 years. He started college at Kent State University, transferred to The Ohio State University, and graduated as a proud Buckeye in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in agronomy. After college, Jim was hired by the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (which later became Natural Resources Conservation Service) and worked as a Soil Conservationist in Ironton, Ohio and then Van Wert, Ohio, where he became a District Conservationist. In 1978, Jim moved to Coshocton, Ohio to become the Area Conservationist for Area 3. He later was chosen as an Assistant State Conservationist in Florida, covering the lower half of the state, and retired in 2004 as the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations in West Virginia, completing a career that spanned over 33 years. Jim was a very giving and patient man with a great sense of humor and a curious nature. He was involved in several churches, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, 4-H, Jaycees. A member of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, he received a SWCS Commendation Award in 1997 at the international conference in Toronto Canada. Jim is survived by his wife, Gail, and three children, Tammi (Bounthavy Soungradith) Rogers of Coshocton, Pete (Kellie) Rogers of Lexington, Ohio, and Carmen (Hector Munoz) Rogers of Queens, New York; grandchildren Jett Soungradith of Ft. Hood, Texas, and Simon and Phoebe Munoz of Queens, New York.</p>
Walker	2023	<p><b>Margaret Louise Walker</b> (83) Sioux City, Iowa, passed away December 6, 2023, at Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley, California. Margaret was born April 28, 1940, in Little Rock, Arkansas, to Willa Mae Jackson and John Jackson. She married Robert Curtis Walker on June 6, 1965, in Sioux City. Margaret was a long time Area Clerk for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in the Sioux City Area Office. Margaret enjoyed spending time with her granddaughters Bella and Nala Walker. She enjoyed exercising daily when she was in good health. She loved watching cowboy television shows. Margaret was preceded in death by her husband Robert on December 29, 2021. She is survived by her son Darrell (Bianca) Walker of Oakland, California; her daughter-in- and grandchildren Bella and Nala Walker.</p>
Edwards	2023	<p>Life Member <b>Darlene Esther Edwards</b> (85) of Columbia, Missouri, passed away on August 25, 2023, in Columbia. Darlene was born in Hermann, Missouri, on October 24, 1937, to Richard and Lorene (Biermann) Grannemann. She went to Ledo's School of Hairstyling to become a licensed cosmetologist. She began her 27-year career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service in 1974. She retired as a personnel management specialist, a job she enjoyed, in July of 2000. She maintained close ties with her USDA co-workers and formed a breakfast group called "The Old Farts Club" for retirees to socialize. She was united in marriage to Moss Edwards on June 7, 1975. They had many happy years together until he preceded her in death on March 7, 2009. Darlene is survived by her three children: Charles "Chuck" Brown of Columbia, Missouri; Eric Brown of Blue Springs, Missouri; Sheila (Alan) Owens of Columbia, Missouri; and as well as a brother: Calvin Grannemann of Herman, Missouri; and one sister: Katherine Felger of Omaha, Nebraska. She was preceded in death by her parents and one sister: Eylane Thompson. A funeral service was held at Memorial Funeral Home on August 31, 2023. Interment was at Memorial Park Cemetery in Columbia.</p>
Palalay	2020	<p><b>Maria Gloria Palalay</b> (82) of Newark, Delaware, passed away peacefully in her home on May 13, 2020. Maria was the wife of Salvador "Sal" Palalay, retired Planning/Hydraulic Engineer at the Northeast National Technical Center for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Maria was born in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, Philippines. She became a United States Citizen on January 26, 1972 in Honolulu, Hawaii, and had a phenomenal and illustrious career raising her three children: Dennis, Heidi, and Noel (Died December 1994). She is the daughter of the Honorable Agripino Santos (Mayor of Laoag 1933-1942) and Pantaleona Lagpacan Santos. Maria was a member of the Filipino Cultural Dance Troupe, "Saniata Ti Amianan" or Jewel of the North which toured the United States from 1964 to 1965, which is when Maria and Salvador met for the first time after months of letter writing. She was a woman of great faith and a Franciscan. Maria is survived by her loving husband, Salvador, and her son, Dennis (Casey), and their six children: Mellissa, Kyle, David (Rachel), Luke, Kamaha'o, and Kawai. Maria is also survived by her beautiful daughter, Heidi and her wife Christina, and the twins, Kona and Bowie.</p>



*Yosemite*



**ARCSE Regions**

<b>EAST</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>	<b>MIDWEST</b>	<b>WEST</b>
CT	AL	IL	Ak
DE	AR	IN	AZ
DC	FL	IA	CA
ME	GA	KS	CO
MD	KY	MI	HI/Pac.
MA	LA	MN	IF
NH	MI	MO	MT
NJ	NC	ND	NV
NY	OK	NE	NM
PA	PR/Car.	OH	OR
RI	SC	SD	UT
VT	TN	WI	WA
VA	TX		WY
WV			