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NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter for Retired Conservation Service Employees

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Becky Fletcher, ARCSE President

A term that keeps popping up in retirement conversations these days is “*solo aging*.” Research shows that more people are living alone well into their eighties, nineties, and beyond. Some choose this path for the autonomy, freedom, and independence it offers. Others arrive here unexpectedly—after the loss of a spouse or partner, or following a divorce.

Regardless of how someone becomes a solo ager, the journey comes with real challenges. Physical limitations, declining mobility, depression, and accidents can all become more common with age. But the issue that rises to the top in every study is loneliness. And loneliness isn't just an emotional burden—it's linked to higher risks of heart disease, cognitive decline, and chronic inflammation.

Yet across every article, interview, and expert recommendation, one message is consistent: **stay connected**. Build your own “village of support” through organizations like ARCSE, your church, your post-retirement job, your neighbors, and your broader community.

Make new friends. ARCSE has given me the chance to connect with people across the country and, even better, to deepen relationships with colleagues I've admired and trusted throughout my NRCS career.

“Solo aging” may be a new phrase, but the importance of staying connected—of nurturing relationships with family, friends, and community as we age—is anything but new. It's essential to staying healthy, happy, safe, and secure.

So the real question becomes: **How can we strengthen our connection with you?** We would love to hear from you. Contact your state representative, regional vice president or board member.

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES

ANNUAL ARCSE MEETING

Join us for the Annual ARCSE Business Meeting on Wednesday, July 29th, in St. Louis, Missouri at 11 am central.

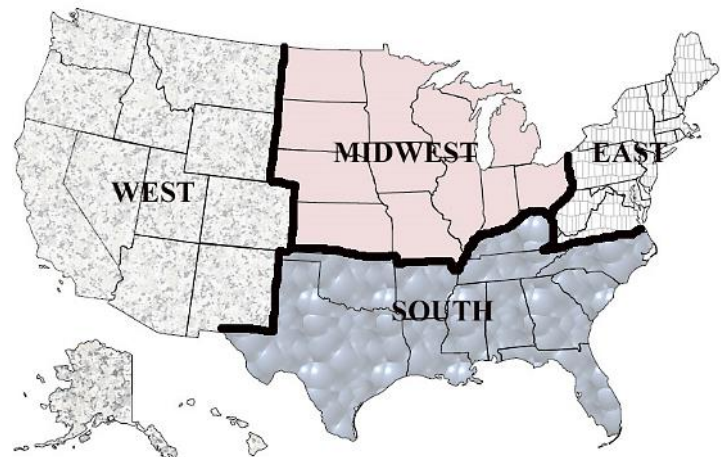
The meeting will be held in conjunction with the 81st SWCS International Annual Meeting, and that day ARCSE will help host a session to celebrate our Nation's 250th Birthday by bringing together past NRCS Chiefs and other leaders to talk about conservation through the decades. Following that, ARCSE will host a symposium titled “Mentoring and More: Leadership, Followership, and the Future of Conservation.”

Chief Aubrey Bettencourt and other leaders will join us at our business meeting to give NRCS and partnership updates, and we will also hold our annual ARCSE awards ceremony.

Registration for the SWCS conference is not required, if you are only attending the ARCSE business meeting. If you plan to attend the whole morning, a one-day conference registration will be required.

We encourage members to attend the entire SWCS conference where they bring together our conservation community of researchers, practitioners, industry leaders, farmers, and students from around the world to share

inspiration, connections, and wisdom for success. Early bird registration is June 16th. Registration Link: <https://www.swcs.org/events/conferences/26ac>.



ARCSE Regional Map

NOTES FROM THE POTOMAC

April 26, 2026

Ongoing Appropriations Debate for Fiscal Year 2026

Even though more than half the fiscal year (FY) has already passed by, Congress is still working to complete appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). A report from the Public Broadcast Service (PBS) states: “The Department is still in a partial shutdown and funding lapse due to a partisan stalemate over ICE and Border Patrol enforcement activities. In early 2026, federal agents shot and killed two U.S. citizens, Renee Good and Alex Pretti, during a major ICE and CBP enforcement surge (Operation Metro Surge) in Minneapolis, igniting widespread protests. While other federal agencies were eventually funded in the previous two government shutdowns this year, the House has rejected a Senate-passed funding bill, seeking separate, long-term funding legislation for DHS.” See more at: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/minnesota-sues-to-obtain-evidence-in-shootings-by-federal-officers-during-ice-surge>.

According to a notice on the Homeland Security website, “The DHS shutdown primarily forces over 90% of its 260,000+ employees to work without pay, causing significant staffing shortages, long airport security lines (TSA), and reduced cybersecurity operations. While border patrol and law enforcement activities continue, key programs like E-Verify may pause, and the US economy faces billions in losses.” See more at: <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2026/03/17/spring-break-under-siege-democrats-reckless-dhs-shutdown-forcing-tsa-officers-work>.

A report from Politico News provides these key DHS status updates as of mid-April 2026:

- **Partial Shutdown:** The shutdown, which began in February 2026, has left several DHS operations unfunded while most of the federal government remains operational.
- **Legislative Deadlock:** House leadership has delayed voting on a Senate-passed funding bill, leading to a 60-day-and-counting shutdown.
- **Reconciliation Strategy:** GOP leaders are pursuing a multi-step budget reconciliation process to pass funding for ICE and Border Patrol without needing Democratic votes, aiming for a resolution by June 1.
- **Existing Funds:** Despite the lack of new appropriations, DHS has had access to funds from previous reconciliation packages, with reports suggesting some funds were available to manage operations for a limited time.
- **Operational Impact:** The lack of a budget has hindered regular pay and operations for some DHS employees, though critical services have continued operating with reduced funding levels from, or during, the shutdown, often under Continuing Resolutions (CRs).

The situation remains fluid with negotiations ongoing between the House and Senate to secure long-term funding.” See more at: <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/04/13/senate-reconciliation-dhs-funding-00870581>.

President’s 2027 Budget Request

President Trump’s FY 2027 budget request was released on April 3, 2026. A report from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget described the budget proposal as: “focuses on a massive military buildup and domestic spending cuts. It proposes boosting total defense funding to \$1.5 trillion (a 42% increase), while simultaneously reducing non-defense discretionary spending by 10% (\$73 billion) to address the deficit.” See more at: <https://www.crfb.org/press-releases/crfb-statement-presidents-fy-2027-budget>

The CFRB report provides an analysis of the economic impact of the President’s proposed budget. Their assessment suggests: “while the President’s budget typically presents a comprehensive plan for addressing discretionary spending, mandatory spending, and revenue for the next decade, this year’s budget includes mainly a discretionary spending request and assumptions about how the economy will grow over that period.”

In summary, “under the President’s ‘proposed’ budget:

We estimate that debt held by the public would rise from 100% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in FY 2025 to a peak of 103% by 2029 before falling to 94% by 2036 – largely driven by the budget’s economic assumptions.

Deficits would be \$6.7 trillion lower than projected under the Congressional Budget Office’s (CBO) February 2026 baseline from FY 2026 through 2036, largely due to \$6.3 trillion of baseline and economic differences, as well as about \$435 billion of net policy savings.

Total defense funding would rise to \$1.5 trillion in FY 2027, including \$350 billion of new reconciliation funding and \$251 billion of increases in base defense discretionary funding. This would be somewhat offset by a purported \$73 billion reduction in base non-defense discretionary funding.

It is assumed that real GDP would grow at 3% annually on average over the next decade – far above the 1.8% projected by CBO or the 2.0% in the Federal Reserve’s long-run estimates.

Compared against a baseline assuming CBO’s growth projections, the removal of tariff revenue ruled illegal by the Supreme Court, and the Administration’s recent tariff policies, we estimate debt held by the public would rise to 124% of GDP by FY 2036 under the President’s budget versus 125% under our baseline.” See more from the CRFB analysis at: <https://www.crfb.org/press-releases/crfb-statement-presidents-fy-2027-budget>.

Debt and Deficits Under the President’s Budget

The CRFB report stated: “It is important to note the President’s budget presents no summary figures for debt or deficits; instead, it provides a summary of its discretionary spending request alongside a reconciliation request for further defense funding. However, the various tables in the Analytical Perspectives section allow us to impute debt, deficits, spending, and revenue in both the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) baseline and the President’s budget. We find that the budget assumes debt held by the public would grow from 100% of GDP in FY 2025 to a peak of 103% of GDP by 2029 before falling to 94% by 2036.”

“Many of the fiscal improvements in the budget arise from the generous assumption of 3% average annual real GDP growth over the next decade. As a result of that growth, the budget’s own baseline shows debt peaking at 102% of GDP by FY 2029 and then falling to 95% by 2036.” See more at: <https://www.crfb.org/blogs/overview-presidents-fy-2027-budget>.

President’s Budget Proposal Impact on Agriculture

According to the Center For Budget and Policy Priorities: “President Trump’s proposed FY2027 budget slashes USDA discretionary spending by 19% (\$4.9B–\$5.1B), focusing on cutting research, rural development, and conservation programs to prioritize reducing non-defense spending. The proposal eliminates Food for Peace and slashes Women Infant and Children (WIC) benefits, aiming to reduce “bloated” bureaucracy.” See more at: <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/for-second-year-in-a-row-trump-budget-seeks-to-slash-wic-fruit-and-vegetable-benefits-for>.

The Association of Public and Land Grant Universities released a statement on the President’s budget proposal with the following identified key impacts:

“Key Impacts on Agriculture & Rural Programs:

- Significant Budget Cuts: USDA discretionary funding falls to \$20.8B (down from 2026).
- Research & Extension Cuts: Roughly \$510 million–\$655 million in cuts to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), including eliminating the Hatch Act and cutting Smith-Lever extension funds by 46%.
- Rural Development Reduction: \$659 million reduction in community facilities grants and \$82 million cut from the Rural Business Service.
- Conservation Funding: Eliminates \$979 million in discretionary Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA).
- Staffing & Marketing: Over 25% workforce reduction in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and \$61M cut to the Agricultural Marketing Service.
- International Food Aid: Defunds the \$1.2B Food for Peace program and reduces the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program.” See more at: <https://www.aplu.org/wp-content/uploads/FY27-PBR-Analysis.pdf>.

Readers should keep in mind that these are “proposed” budget projections and are not final until Congress approves an appropriation bill. By tradition, Congress is expected to approve the Fiscal Year 2027 budget by the start of the new fiscal year, which begins on October 1, 2026. Following the April 3, 2026 release of the President’s request, Congress would normally begin drafting the 12 required appropriations bills, with committee markups in mid-April 2026. However, given the significant political divide currently among the parties in Washington DC, many skeptics doubt the appropriation process will remain on track with the traditional timeline. Some would suggest that it is more likely we will begin FY 2027 on a Continuing Resolution to go through the 2026 mid-term elections in November 2026.

White House Release of President’s Budget Proposal

The White House release of the President’s 2027 budget proposal includes a cover letter to Congress from **Russell T Vought**, Director, Office of Management and Budget. The letter states:

“The 2027 Budget builds on the President’s vision by continuing to constrain non-defense spending and reform the Federal Government. The Budget proposes a 10-percent cut compared to 2026 non-defense levels. Within this total, the Budget maintains investments in border security and immigration enforcement while protecting the Nation from threats of terrorism; delivers on the President’s commitment to support law enforcement and ensure they have the tools, technology, and resources necessary to keep themselves and Americans safe; and honors the Nation’s sacred obligation to military veterans.”

“At the same time, the Budget builds upon the historic \$1 trillion top line provided for the national defense by requesting \$1.5 trillion for 2027, a 44-percent increase. President Trump promised to reinvest in America’s national security infrastructure, to make sure our Nation is safe in a dangerous world. The 2027 Budget upholds this promise and would ensure that the United States continues to maintain the world’s most powerful and capable military.”

Under President Trump’s bold leadership, every tool in the executive fiscal toolbox has been utilized to achieve real savings.” See more of full budget proposal document at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/budget_fy2027.pdf.

USDA Reorganization Plan Update – April 2026

Lydia Johnson from Agri-Pulse news reported: “the Agriculture Department will complete a reorganization of more than half the current D.C.-based staff to five regional hubs across the US by the end of 2026, according to Deputy Agriculture Secretary **Stephen Vaden**.” The reorganization plan calls for shifting 2,600 D.C.-based employees to five regional hubs—Raleigh, NC; Kansas City, MO; Indianapolis, IN; Fort Collins, CO; and Salt Lake City, UT.

The reorganization plan also proposes closing the USDA South Building, reducing regional offices, and downsizing the overall workforce. See more at: <https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/23870-vaden-usda-reorganization-to-be-complete-in-2026>.

Rachel Shin from Politico news reported: “employees should expect to receive more detail about USDA’s reorganization ‘by the beginning of this summer, ’ **Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins** said during a brief interview outside the department recently.

‘We’re going to be flexible if they can’t move right away or they’ve got other issues,’ she added. ‘We’re working really hard to support these career employees and make sure that they have what they need, that this hopefully is a positive experience for all, understanding that anytime a job relocates, probably not the easiest thing.’”

“More than 20,000 USDA employees have already departed the department through various Trump administration policies, including last year’s deferred resignation initiative,” Shin reported. See more from the Rachel Shin report at: <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-agriculture/2026/01/26/usda-targets-summer-staff-relocations-00745776>.

The full USDA Reorganization Plan is available at the Congressional Research Service website at: <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R48905.html>.

Conservation Staff Have Been Reduced to Record Lows

On September 25, 2025, the National Sustainable Ag Coalition (NSAC) reported: “The NRCS has lost nearly 1 in 4 of their staff since January 2025. The Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) offered buyouts and incentives to encourage federal employees to resign. At NRCS, 2,409 employees, 21% of the workforce, accepted the DRP. 560 NRCS employees accepted the first DRP in February 2025 and another 1,849 accepted the second round of DRP in April.”

The NSAC article reports that NRCS staffing numbers have declined over the past two decades. Records show in 2005, the agency employed nearly 13,000 staff. However, since January 2025 the number of NRCS staff have been reduced to approximately 9,000 employees, which is very similar to record lows of 2019 in the previous Trump Administration. In 2024 before the new administration took over, NRCS had ramped up hiring to a level of 11,623 employees. Several conservation and agriculture groups have expressed a concern that these staff reductions will leave NRCS considerably under-equipped to provide technical assistance services to America’s farmers, ranchers, and private forest owners. A related concern is the lack of adequate NRCS field personnel to disperse the historic increase in conservation program dollars provided by the 2025 reconciliation package. Previous experiences with this situation would suggest that a lack of adequate staff to service customer requests is a critical risk, likely resulting in high turnover, burnout, and reduced productivity.

“In addition to the NRCS employees who left the agency via the DRP, an additional 182 employees (2 percent) separated from the agency in just the first three months of 2025, according to data from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Separations include retirements (early, voluntary, or for disability), firing, failure to renew contracts, quitting, transferring to another federal agency, or other separation.” See more at: <https://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/usda-staffing-crisis-conservation-staff-losses-will-further-undermine-services-to-farmers-and-ranchers>.

Fertilizer Fight Heats Up as Prices Soar

A fight over fertilizer costs is heating up, and a new survey forecasts bigger price risks in 2027.

As the Iran war drives fertilizer prices up 40%, the Trump administration is warning against price gouging. A new survey from the Ag Web News shows only 60% of corn farmers have secured their nitrogen needs for 2026. The report states: “Fertilizer market volatility is once again taking center stage as geopolitical tensions disrupt global supply lines and push input costs sharply higher. New analysis shows the increase in fertilizer prices may not be over, even if the Strait of Hormuz reopens soon.” See more at: <https://www.agweb.com/news/crops/corn/fertilizer-fight-heats-prices-soar-and-survey-points-bigger-price-risks-2027>.

The Ag Web article reports: “Fertilizer market volatility is once again taking center stage as geopolitical tensions disrupt global supply lines and push input costs sharply higher. New analysis shows the increase in fertilizer prices may not be over, even if the Strait of Hormuz reopens soon. Another compounding factor in the cost of fertilizer is a recent decision by the Mosaic company to scale back mineral mining in Brazil. Mosaic has defended high fertilizer prices by “citing global market factors—supply, demand, energy costs, and geopolitics—rather than individual producer actions. While farmers face high input costs and potential shortages, Mosaic maintains that its pricing is competitive and that U.S. prices remain lower than other regions, resisting pressure to drop trade duties.” See more from Farm Progress at: <https://www.farmprogress.com/farm-policy/trump-administration-poised-to-take-on-fertilizer-giant>.

“Even with the situation in Iran pushing prices even higher, the sharp increase in fertilizer prices from 2020 to now is catching attention in Washington. Not only did **President Donald Trump** take to social media to warn of ‘price gouging,’ but **Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins** also posted on X in mid-April, specifically expressing frustration over Mosaic’s response to farmers.”

“While Rollins and USDA Under Secretary **Stephen Vaden** have raised concerns over fertilizer prices this year, the President posted on Truth Social that he is closely monitoring fertilizer prices and pledged support for American farmers. Trump posted on his Truth Social platform he is ‘watching fertilizer prices CLOSELY’ during what he described as the US ‘FIGHT FOR FREEDOM in Iran,’ adding that the administration “will not accept PRICE GOUGING from the fertilizer monopoly.” See more at: <https://www.agweb.com/news/crops/corn/fertilizer-fight-heats-prices-soar-and-survey-points-bigger-price-risks-2027>.

Global Economic Outlook Report

On April 14, 2026 the World Economic Forum (WEF) released a report on the status of the global economy. The WEF reports are “authoritative, data-driven publications analyzing global risks, economic trends, and industry transformations, primarily aimed at assisting leaders in shaping global agendas.”

The Executive Summary of the report states: “Once again, the global economy is threatened with being thrown off course—this time by the outbreak of war in the Middle East at the end of February 2026. Over the past year, headwinds from higher trade barriers and elevated uncertainty have been offset by tailwinds from technology-related investment; accommodative financial conditions, including a weaker US dollar; and fiscal and monetary policy support. The Middle East conflict presents a significant counterforce to these tailwinds through its impact on commodity markets, inflation expectations, and financial conditions.”

Another section of the report suggests: "Under an adverse scenario with larger and more persistent increases in energy prices, global growth would slow further to 2.5 percent in 2026, and inflation would reach 5.4 percent. Under a more severe scenario in which there is more damage to energy infrastructure in the conflict region, the impact would be even larger: Global growth would be cut to only about 2 percent in 2026, while headline inflation would be just above 6 percent by 2027. The impact on emerging markets and developing economies would be almost twice that on advanced economies." See more from the WEF report at: <https://www.WEF.org/-/media/files/publications/weo/2026/april/english/execsum.pdf>.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Paul Benedict, Membership Chair

New Life Members

Karl T. Gilbertson– Viroqua, Wisconsin
 John Andrews – Foxfield, Colorado
 Darwin Newton - Ashland City, Tennessee

New Members

Kristie McKinley – Burleson, Texas
 Catrina Perkinson – Underwood, Indiana
 Ron Nichols – Meridian, Idaho

Membership Contest

The Membership Contest is now over. Thank you to all the individuals that participated in recruiting new ARCSE members. Winners will be announced in the July/August newsletter. The number recruited this year was significantly below last year's numbers, but all new members are greatly appreciated and keep our association viable. I urge you to continue encouraging retirees and NRCS employees to join as you have opportunity. Also, if you have suggestions on how our association can attract more members, please let us know.

ARCSE Directory:

Please take time to review the ARCSE Directory that is included with this issue of the newsletter. If you see any mistakes, please let me know so that we get it right next time. If you know that one of the members listed has passed away, let me know as well. You can email me at soilwarden@verizon.net.

ARCSE MEMBERSHIP DUES Due by January 1st, 2026

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

NOTE: Dues payment includes receipt of the bimonthly electronic newsletter only. All members (both life members and those who pay annual dues) who desire a hard copy of the newsletter must pay an additional fee of \$15.00 per year.

Please submit Dues to ARCSE at P.O. Box 131 Stillwater, OK 74076

Welcome new Intern

Welcome to **Kendall Deutmeyer** who will serve as the SWCS/ARCSE intern this summer. Kendall is a senior at the University of Iowa majoring in Economics, Public Policy, and Sustainability. She describes herself as a sustainability-oriented leader with a passion for non-profit and mission-driven work. Kendall will be helping us with social media, photo organization, a series of interviews, and our annual meeting logistics this year. We look forward to working with her.

Informational Resources on the Thrift Savings Plan

Effective management of Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) accounts is critical for NRCS retirees and employees, given it is a core component of the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Key management strategies include maximizing contributions to receive full government matching, diversifying investments, and carefully planning withdrawals in retirement.

The TSP website offers free recorded webinars, live webinars, and other scheduled training which cover many topics for TSP participants and their beneficiaries. The training covers important topics for TSP participants such as contribution strategies, loans, in-service withdrawals, and post-separation options. These 1-hour to 2.5-hour sessions are designed for federal employees and uniformed service members, with additional visual guides available on the official YouTube channel.

As a note of caution, it is crucial to be careful when looking for TSP information and training material to ensure that the information is accurate, up-to-date, and tailored to the specific needs of federal employees. The TSP underwent significant program changes with the Modernization Act over past years, and it is important to ensure that materials address current rules regarding loans, withdrawals, and beneficiary designations.

Information on the TSP and strategies for savings investments is often available from other trusted retirement sources, including the National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) and American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). As of early 2026, the NARFE magazine highlighted key TSP program updates, including new in-plan Roth conversion options starting January 2026, and expanded withdrawal flexibility under the Modernization Act.

TSP Recorded Webinars

The recorded webinars are a great way to learn about the TSP and its benefits, and they are always available. The list below shows the kind of training materials available on the site at: <https://www.tsp.gov/online-learning>.

- Intro to the TSP
- TSP Contributions
- TSP Investment Funds
- TSP Loans
- TSP In-Service Withdrawals
- TSP Distributions
- TSP Death Benefits
- Roth TSP
- TSP Live Webinars

To attend a webinar, users select the topic and available session under “View schedule and attend” and follow the prompts to join. Participants can join only through the “attend” link, and all scheduled start times are listed in Eastern time and subject to change or cancellation. If you have questions about TSP webinars, please contact staff at training@fritb.gov.

Note: The Federal Retirement Board (FRTIB) uses Microsoft Teams to deliver TSP online learning. You can access Microsoft Teams through any internet-connected device and attend TSP webinars without a Microsoft Teams account.

Official Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) training videos, including webinars on loans, withdrawals, and investment funds, are available on the official TSP4gov YouTube channel and through TSP.gov educational resources.

Donate to ARCSE

Your donation to ARCSE provides essential funding for special projects that allow us to offer additional services to our members, increasing our organization's visibility and relevance.

Please consider making a contribution to ARCSE today through one of the following methods:

By Mail: Please make checks payable to ARCSE with "Donation" in the memo line and mail to: ARCSE, PO Box 131, Stillwater, OK 74076.

Online: Contributions can also be made at <https://arcse.org/give/>.

Thank you for your support. Best regards,

–JMac

Update on ARCSE Mentoring Program

In recent years, NRCS has experienced a dramatic influx of new employees, many of whom come to the agency without prior farm or ranch experience. Recognizing this challenge, former Chief **Terry Cosby** invited ARCSE to assist with mentoring and training efforts to help strengthen the agency's workforce. As a result, a MOU was created, and in 2023 and 2024 we promoted volunteer participation and developed resource materials to support mentoring and training activities.

While progress was temporarily halted during administrative changes in 2025, we are now re-engaging with the NRCS Training and Technical Development Division and Acting Director **Dr. Edwin Almodovar**, who confirms that the need for retiree involvement remains significant—not only within NRCS but also across Conservation Districts.

Currently, both NRCS and Conservation Districts are facing a critical capacity crisis due to significant staff turnover. Consequently, there is an urgent need for experienced retirees to assist with both mentoring and technical training, especially in critical areas, such as conservation planning and soil health.

ARCSE strongly believes that retiree involvement as a mentor or trainer provides immense value. Retirees bring deep institutional knowledge, practical experience, and historical perspective—assets that cannot be replicated in a classroom. Research also shows that retirees themselves benefit from continued engagement. Organizations such as AARP and Moorings Park note, “*Staying involved and active can boost retirees’ mental and social well-being, while giving them a renewed sense of purpose and a way to leave a lasting legacy.*” More information: <https://www.mooringspark.org/news/benefits-of-lifelong-learning-for-seniors>.

Call to Action – While final decisions regarding specific ARCSE involvement are pending, we are actively recruiting members and non-members to self-identify their interest in these activities. You can sign up using our online form here: <https://arcse.org/resources/arcse-nrcs-mentoring-program/>.

We appreciate your continued dedication to conservation and your willingness to support the next generation of employees.



Key Benefits of Retiree Mentoring

- **Knowledge Transfer** — Retirees share essential professional skills and institutional knowledge, helping bridge generational gaps and accelerating new employee development.
- **Purpose and Well-Being** — Continued involvement provides retirees with a sense of purpose and supports mental and social health.
- **Support for Youth and Early-Career Professionals** — Retirees offer trusted, non-threatening guidance in career development, education, and life skills.
- **Improved Organizational Retention** — Organizations that utilize retiree mentors often see stronger retention among newer employees.
- **Flexible Engagement** — Opportunities range from in-person mentoring to virtual support, allowing retirees to contribute from anywhere.

PROBLEM – How to Stay in Contact with Retired Agency Employees?

One significant challenge faced by ARCSE in identifying individuals interested in mentoring and training opportunities is maintaining contact with retirees. As NRCS and other organizations are unable to share employees' personal contact information upon retirement, efforts to connect must be proactive. For example, some NRCS State Conservationists, such as **Robert Lawson** in Nebraska, actively inform retiring personnel about ARCSE and other volunteer or employment opportunities available through the Earth Team or the ACES program.

Given the ARCSE priority to recruit retirees to assist with mentoring and training, we have been exploring best practices for staying in contact with retired agency employees. A search of information from available sources suggests a mix of proactive and personal outreach techniques is effective. The sources also suggest leveraging digital platforms and creating formal alumni programs to maintain professional and social bonds.

According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM): "Effective methods include using LinkedIn, organizing regular social meet-ups, creating dedicated newsletters, and inviting retirees to mentor or guest speak, which helps retain institutional knowledge while fostering a sense of community." See more at: <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/hr-magazine/companies-stay-connected-ex-employees>.

Multiple sources indicate the following as leading approaches to remain connected with agency employees after retirement: **A list of cited sources is provided at the end of this portion of the article.*

1. Build an Official Alumni Network

- **Create Dedicated Groups:** Set up dedicated LinkedIn groups, Facebook groups, or dedicated alumni portals to share agency news, upcoming events, and personal updates.
- **Alumni Newsletters:** Send regular, but not overwhelming, newsletters featuring organizational milestones, staff changes, and highlights of other retired employees.
- **Annual Events:** Host a "Worldwide Alumni Day," annual luncheon, or "Retiree Reunion" to encourage in-person connection, particularly outside of traditional working hours.
- **Keep Databases Current:** Regularly survey alumni (at least annually) to keep email addresses, locations, and personal job information updated.

2. Leverage Social Media and Digital Tools

- **LinkedIn Connection:** Follow and connect with retired colleagues on LinkedIn to stay updated on their new projects and to comment on their milestones.
- **Messaging and Video:** Use platforms like Zoom, WhatsApp, or Facebook Messenger for regular check-ins and to maintain visual connection, regardless of distance.
- **Virtual "Coffee Chats":** Organize informal, recurring video chats to replace the casual water-cooler conversations of the office.

3. Maintain Personal and Social Connections

- **Initiate Regular Meet-ups:** Do not wait for retired employees to reach out first. Schedule recurring lunches, coffees, or in-person get-togethers, such as meeting on the first Saturday of each month.
- **Shared Interest Activities:** Invite retirees to participate in non-work activities like book clubs, walking groups, or community volunteer events, which help transition the friendship from purely professional to personal.
- **Celebrate Milestones:** Reach out on birthdays, work anniversaries, or special holidays with a personal note or phone call rather than just an automated message.

4. Provide Professional Value and Continued Involvement

- **Mentorship Programs:** Create a program where retirees can offer their expertise to new staff, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship.
- **Advisory or Guest Roles:** Invite retirees to participate in advisory roles, present at staff meetings, or speak at agency events, keeping them connected to the mission.
- **Referral Incentives:** Consider offering incentives or recognition for alumni who refer potential new hires to the organization.

Sources: *Eddy Platform* at <https://eddy.com/hr-encyclopedia/employee-alumni-network>
Senior Helpers at <https://www.seniorhelpers.com/nc/waxhaw-monroe/resources/blogs>

Alumni Access at <https://blog.alumniaccess.com/34-inexpensive-alumni-engagement-ideas>
Enterprise Alumni at <https://enterprisealumni.com/blog/company-alumni>.

CALIFORNIA

Bill Ward, ARCSE Representative

Email: bluegrassbillward@gmail.com

Hello to all my fellow retirees all across the Country from California!

California Retirees continue to enjoy connecting on our monthly retiree Zoom meeting I host the first Wednesday of every Month. I generally Share a group Photo of those attending our most recent meeting.

The folks shown below enjoyed taking part in our recent March 2nd Zoom Meeting these meetings are a great opportunity to reminisce about past experiences working together, or see old friends and familiar faces.



*Julie MacSwain, Bill and Dana Ward, Chester Bush
Sidney Davis, Jennifer Foster, Bob Snieckus
Ron Harben, Rob Roy*

Reminder, The SCS, NRCS Musicians Team is Still Looking for more Musicians that worked for SCS NRCS to develop their personal biographies to be uploaded shared on the ARCSSE website.

In general biographies will include and share information about each individual's life experiences as a musician as well as their professional experience working for SCS/NRCS and other professional experience. Interested musicians can forward any questions about this musician's project erectly to me at my personal email address: BluegrassBillWard@gmail.com.

WANTED!



MUSICIANS

from the
Soil Conservation Service
and the
Natural Resources Conservation Service

for a special project to document

Biographies of Musicians from the SCS & NRCS

For more information and how to apply, go to:

<https://arcse.org/musicians/>

Until next time, Best Wishes to all!

Sincerely,

Bill Ward, PE, Retired NRCS Engineer, CA ARCSE State Rep

COLORADO

Jack Carlson, ARCSE Representative

Email: pspicata@gmail.com

The Fort Collins breakfast club convened the first Tuesday in March and April, including **Wendall Oaks, Stu Keil, Dave Butler, Ken Rojas, Travis Rome, Chuck Hart in March; and Wendall Oaks, Chuck Hart, Owen Unangst, Dave Butler, Tim Carney, and Phil Smith** in April. Several Fort Collins retirees attended **Sherry Casper's** Celebration of Life on March 15th including those in the photo below.

A personal note regarding the passing of **Curtis Sharp** (see In Memoriam). In spring, 1972 he and area agronomist **Clarence Finch** stopped at the Patterson, California field office to check my work with cover crop plantings in fruit and nut orchards. Fresh out of college, I had decided to try SCS for a while before deciding whether to go to grad school. In the middle of an almond orchard, Curtis down on his knees inspecting the cushion of the soft chess cover crop drying up past winter precipitation, its residue keeping dust and mites at bay, dissipating by late summer enabling a clean harvest, the roots penetrating wheel traffic compaction improving infiltration, this prior to widespread drip irrigation keeping flood irrigated water clear at the end of the row, Curtis exclaiming "I can't believe I get to do this work!" Had me hooked. Lucky to have had his mentorship.



April Fort Collins Breakfast Club attendees



Sherry Casper Celebration of Life

Standing: Renee and David Vigil; seated: Barb Pursley, Luis Gamboa, Michele Gidcomb, Chuck Hart, and Stu Keil.

CONNECTICUT, RHODE ISLAND, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Carl DuPoldt, ARCSE Representative

Email: cdupoldt@gmail.com

CT—In May and June 2026, Connecticut focuses on wildlife protection, legislative action, and grant opportunities. Key initiatives include leaving young wildlife undisturbed, the conclusion of the 2026 legislative session on May 6, and the anticipated release of the Resilient Forestry Practices Grant on June 15

Connecticut River Valley Environmental Summit: Held May 2, 2026, at Wesleyan University with a "Stewardship in Action" theme. Sustainable CT Virtual Equity Training Series: Sessions scheduled for May 6, May 20, and June 3, 2026.

CT—May 2, 2026—Connecticut River Valley Environmental Summit: Held at Wesleyan University, focusing on "Stewardship in Action" for the river watershed.

CT—May 6, 2026—SCRCOG CT Green Bank Workshop: A session focused on Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) for green upgrades to buildings. May/June 2026—

CT–Sustainable CT Virtual Equity Training: Three-part series (May 6, May 20, June 3) covering equity in municipal practices and measuring, sustaining, and building trust in community projects.

CT–May 12, 2026–Commission on Environmental Standards Meeting: A public meeting to discuss proposals related to offshore wind power.

CT–June 21, 2026: [Free Fishing License Day] (<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Fishing/General>)

NH–In May and June 2026, New Hampshire’s environmental and natural resource conservation efforts focus on volunteer training, wildlife habitat management, and water quality protection, guided by the updated 2025–2035 State Wildlife Action Plan.

NH–Key initiatives include the NH Coverts Project training, field workshops, and the development of a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan due in July 2026

Key Conservation Events & Programs (May–June 2026) NH Coverts Project Training (May 6-9, 2026): Held at the Barbara C. Harris Conference Center in Greenfield, this 4-day workshop trains 25 volunteers in forest stewardship and wildlife habitat management. Turtle Fest 2026 (May 9, 2026):

NH–Organized by the Newmarket Conservation Commission, this event focuses on wetlands and turtle conservation. Chocorua Mountain Club Trail Clearing (May 9, 2026): A volunteer work-day and dinner focused on trail maintenance. Women

NH–in the Woods Walk (May 14, 2026): A guided walk at Branch Hill Farm focusing on forest and farm management. Small Mammals of Field & Forest (May 27, 2026): A field education program led by the Harris Center. Wildlife

NH -Tracking Workshop (June 12, 2026): Hosted by the New Hampshire Association of Natural Resource Scientists (NHANRS)

NH–Air and Waste Management: The Waste Management Council and Air Resources Council will hold meetings on May 21 and June 8-18, 2026, respectively

RI–Rhode Island environmental and natural resource conservation efforts in May and June 2026 are heavily focused on community cleanup, coastal management, and habitat protection, with several key initiatives and events scheduled.

RI–Conservation Events & Education (May-June 2026) Field Naturalist Series (Audubon Society of RI): May 9, 2026: Vernal Pools & Other Wetlands (Marion Eppley Wildlife Refuge). May 16, 2026: Spring Birding for Beginners (Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge). June 20, 2026: Investigating Insects in Spring (Caratunk Wildlife Refuge). June 27, 2026: Coastal Ecosystems Exploration (Audubon Nature Center & Aquarium).

RI–RINHS BioBlitz 2026: Scheduled for Friday, June 5 – Saturday, June 6, 2026, at URI Eart Farm, focusing on documenting biodiversity.

RI–Water Resource Recovery Tours: The RI Clean Water Association is sponsoring tours of water treatment facilities to educate on water quality and infrastructure.

VT–In May and June 2026, Vermont will be finalizing a major statewide conservation strategy, conducting in-person environmental trainings, and holding key environmental justice summits. The overarching focus for this period is the development of the Vermont Conservation Plan (Act 59), which aims to conserve 30% of land by 2030 and 50% by 2050.

VT–EJ Summit: We Are One Vermont (June 12–13, 2026): Held at the North Branch Nature Center, this event focuses on environmental justice, featuring community leaders and an Abenaki perspective.

VT–Herricks Cove Wildlife Festival: Sunday, May 3, 2026 (Nature education).

VT–Upper Valley Farm to School Gathering: May 9, 2026.

VT–NRCC Board Meetings: Scheduled for May 28 and June 17, 2026.

IOWA

Mark Jensen, ARCSE Representative

Email: amjens1@gmail.com

For many years, **Brian Peterson** has been the announcer for many of Corning High School’s athletic events. This winter, on January 30 during the halftime of a high school basketball game, the Iowa High School Athletic Directors Association presented Brian with their Outstanding Service Award. Congratulations Brian!



Brian Peterson (right) being presented the Outstanding Service Award by the Iowa High School Athletic Directors Association

In the January newsletter, **Greg Mathis** told us a little about his and his wife, **Francoise’s**, trip to Ecuador to visit their son’s family who lives near the coast. He told us a little about his family, the climate, and everyday life in Ecuador. In this newsletter, Greg tells us a little more about the landscape and agriculture in Ecuador. “We had arranged to travel five hours inland to spend four days

at the foot of the volcanic mountain called Chimborazo whose peak is at 19,000 ft. We stayed at an Air B&B that, in its hay day, was a working dairy farm. Its elevation is 14,000 ft. The actual working dairy was about a mile down the road.” Greg said “I’m fascinated with the landscape of Ecuador and how people farm the mountainous land. Hopefully these pictures will relay to you some similarities and some differences to the ‘way we live.’”



Chimborazo showing off its splendor



Mountainous Landscape in Ecuador



Cow tethered on hillside



Dairy farm rotational grazing system



Milking system



Greg and Francoise Mathis with their son and family

“Most farmers are sustainable farmers striving to basically provide for the family. Many will tether their one or two cows on the mountain side to graze and bring them in for the night for water and protection. Dairy farmers have their own version of rotational grazing. The Air B&B dairy farm’s milking process is similar to ours. They milk 120 cows twice per day – at 3am and 3pm.” Greg concluded his Ecuador story with “As is with most of us retirees, we thrive on hanging out with family.”

One of our regular contributors to the newsletter recently received some challenging news. **Marty Adkins** was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. He has begun chemotherapy treatments. Marty said they caught it fairly early during a routine checkup. He said the doctor has developed a good treatment plan, and they are hopeful and confident in a good outcome. I know that Marty and his wife **Carol** would appreciate your prayers.

Ernie and Pat Aust had a busy year in 2025. They made a trip to Scotland and Ireland which was planned and arranged by their daughter **Theresa**. Grandson **Ryan Aust** went with them and served as their concierge. They went from Edinburgh to Abernethy, Scotland, to Menzies Castle. This was on Pat’s bucket list as **Janet Menzies** married **Duncan Ross** and came to the USA generations back as Pat’s 2nd great grandmother. From there, they went down through Ireland; Dublin, Killarney, Galloway, White Cliffs of Dover, and Shannon. They visited many sites with good pubs, good food, etc.

Ernie and Pat have six living kids, 26 grandkids, plus five spouses, and one great grandson. Two of the grandkids got married in the past year. Eight grandkids are in college. One plays basketball for Dubuque University; some of them have overseas studies; three will graduate this year. Two more of the grandkids will graduate from high school this year. With a family this size, Christmas has to be special! Ernie said 22 of the 26 grandkids plus their parents and spouses were home for Christmas. After Christmas Eve Mass they had a traditional dinner of breaded pork chops, spinach soup, oyster stew, and all the other dishes. After dinner they gathered around the Christmas tree singing carols; then listened to Silent Night and O Christmas Tree in German with the only light being from the candles lit on the tree. He said that is a little reflection from back when he was a kid, and they did not have electricity. They then open gifts to finish off the night.

This winter Ernie and Pat spent three weeks visiting their daughter and son-in-law in Orlando. He said they try to keep up with Legion of Mary, Bible study, Ladies Guild, daily Mass as often as possible, American Legion Color Guard, Knights of Columbus, soil conservation, and what’s happening around Shenandoah. Ernie and Pat definitely keep busy!



Ernie and Pat Aust with their kids (left to right): Annamarie, Mark, Theresa, Angela, Michele, and John

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen was thrilled to welcome her first grandchild in January. **Millie** was born to Tanya's son and daughter-in-law, **Colin and Lacey Mansager**. She had a challenging start in the NICU but is very healthy and strong now, almost 3 months later! When Colin was in high school, NRCS had a program for high school students. He worked in the Iowa City Field Office for 18 months on this program. Now he is using his agronomy degree in the private sector.



Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen with granddaughter Millie



Colin and Lacey Mansager with Millie

Mike Sucik leads a spin class at the Waukee YMCA every Wednesday at 9:30am. He's been doing this at central Iowa YMCA locations for the past 10 years. He invites any retirees who are interested and members of the Y to join him! He has been a member of the Y since 1999. This summer Mike will be going on his 15th RAGBRAI (Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa). He is on a team of 15 to 20 people. Three of the riders are over age 70. RAGBRAI this year will have overnight stops in

Onawa, Harlan, Boone, Marshalltown, Independence, and Dyersville. Perhaps we'll get a follow-up report from Mike on how the ride goes – Hey Mike, that's a hint!

Leroy Haeffner reported that he and his wife relocated from Iowa to Villa Park, Illinois, around 10 years ago to be closer to kids and grandkids. They help with childcare and get to attend a lot of school activities. Leroy said they have 13 grandkids ranging in ages from 5 to 22. They just attended one granddaughter's senior recital in cello performance at Roosevelt University. Leroy enjoys driving a school bus for middle and high schoolers. He said they also enjoy travelling to Iowa and Kansas to see other grandkids, soccer, graduations, etc.

During the past few months, there have been a number of retirements. Following are folks who have joined our retirement community: **Jonathan Tesdell**, SCT on the Audubon Resource Team; **Doug Adams**, CET at Fort Dodge; **Lori Altheide**, ASTC-FO in Atlantic; **John Bruene**, Resource Team Leader (RTL) in Vinton; **Brian Holmes**, RTL in Red Oak; **Tony Maxwell**, DC in Washington; **Jason Moore**, DC in the Garner FO; Cindy Slagle, Secretary in the Des Moines SO; **Sue Thomas Snyder**, RC in the Des Moines SO; **Lawrence Green**, RTL on the Garner Resource Team; **Mike Henderson**, SRC in the Des Moines SO; **Lorne Miller**, DC in Denison; **John Paulin**, RC in the Des Moines SO; **Carolyn Schwartz**, CET in Audubon; **Kevin Kuhn**, DC in Guthrie Center; **Robert Moser**, SC in Indianola; **Shiloh Bradley**, SC in Wapello; **Brian Warson**, SCT in Donnellson; and **Anne Weston**, Office Assistant in Fort Dodge.

Recently we have been saddened by the passing of the following retirees: **Keith Hunt**, a member of the contract administration staff in Des Moines; **Dale Ceolla**, Assistant State Soil Scientist in Des Moines; and **Clif Foster**, a long time Sol Conservation Technician in eastern Iowa.

MAINE

Mary Thompson, ARCS Representative

Email: mpthom@roadrunner.com

In Maine we continue to gather for our monthly breakfast with the regulars that come, and once in awhile someone will show up. Talk centers around solar energy and Social Security benefits that are now for Civil Service retirees.

Spring has been slow to come up our way, but at least it keeps the blackflies at bay for now. Below are a couple of photos. The first two show two boys, I assume brothers exploring the new Libby Pond project. The third is a wild blueberry field taken during harvest. Just now the fruit buds are forming the blossoms. Lastly, a wild blueberry rake, how the berries have traditionally been harvested, but now we have many using mechanical harvesters with side-mounted rakes.

This is all for now. We are heading up to first Roach Pond, north of Greenville, Maine, for a week. The ice has not gone out, and I am sure we will find patches of snow. Until next time have a safe and enjoyable spring!

Yours in Conservation, Mary E. Thompson





MIDATLANTIC STATES

Terry D'Addio, ARCSE Representative

Email: tmdaddio@aol.com

The breakfast group meets at the Bob Evans in Woodbridge the first Tuesday of each month. Today's breakfast (4/7/2026) opened with a salute to John Peterson.



L-R: Jerry Bernard, Dave Thackeray, John Moore, Bill Irwin, Paul Benedict, Ron Marlow.

John Peterson passed away on March 3. As of this printing, interment is planned for Arlington National Cemetery.

His Career in USDA / NRCS

- Served 40 years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service (SCS), which later became the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- Held major leadership roles including:
- Director of Watershed Programs
- Deputy Chief for Administration
- Assistant Chief (his final role before retirement)
- Known for shaping national watershed conservation policy and guiding major federal conservation programs.
- Watershed Policy Leadership
- After retiring from USDA, he became Executive Director of the National Watershed Coalition.

- He was the initial drafter and lead champion of the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Act of 2000, the first major USDA water-resources legislation passed in decades.

Held major leadership roles including:

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Watershed Policy Leadership

- After retiring from USDA, he became Executive Director of the National Watershed Coalition.
- He was the initial drafter and lead champion of the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Act of 2000, the first major USDA water-resources legislation passed in decades.

Military Service

- Served over 30 years in active and reserve duty in the U.S. Army, retiring with the rank of Colonel.

Continued Conservation Leadership

- Represented conservation interests in Congress, including testimony before the House Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry on watershed programs.
- Served as a locally elected director on the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District and participated in national conservation committees.

John W. Peterson is widely recognized within NRCS and the broader conservation community for:

- Shaping national watershed policy
- Strengthening federal conservation programs
- Advocating for long-term watershed infrastructure rehabilitation
- Mentoring conservation professionals across the country

His legacy continues to influence how NRCS and partner organizations manage watershed protection today.

Julie MacSwain wrote the following, in commemoration of John W. Peterson, who died on March 3. See the In Memoriam section for more details.

“Legacy of the Waters”

*In Honor of John Peterson
He walked where the rivers bend
and where quiet dams hold watch
over towns, farms, and fields.*

*For forty years he served the land
through the work of the
Soil Conservation Service
and later the*

*Natural Resources Conservation Service,
guiding programs that protected
the nation’s soil and water.*

His vision reached beyond retirement.

*With steady voice and careful hand
he helped shape the
Small Watershed Rehabilitation Act of
2000—*

*renewing the promise
to care for the structures
that guard our communities.*

*A soldier for his country,
a Colonel in the United States Army.
A champion for watersheds.
A mentor to those who followed the path.*

His work lives on

*in every restored dam,
every protected valley,
every conservationist
who still believes
that caring for the land
is a calling.*

*And so the waters flow forward—
carrying his legacy
through every watershed
that endures.*

MONTANA

Lori Valadez, ARCSE Representative

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Retired and current NRCS employees from Montana got together in early March to catch up on their busy lives.



Montana retirees, L–R: Stacy Mitchell, retired public affairs specialist; Joyce Swartzendruber, retired state conservationist for Montana; Lori Valadez, retired public affairs specialist; Heidi Brewer, former NRCS public affairs specialist and retired Farm Service Agency conservation programs manager; Gayle Barry, current state conservationist for Montana; Wendy Williams, retired resource conservationist; and Jane Karinen, retired soil scientist.

NEBRASKA

First Friday of the Month NRCS/SCS Retirees Breakfast Club

Participating during the March 6th, 2026 First Friday of the Month Retirees breakfast were Ed Chmelka, Jim Harder, Mike Kucera, Steve Scheinost, Jim Culver, Dave Griffith Craig Derickson and Rich Torpin.



Attending our March meeting from left to right were Mike Kucera, Craig Derickson, Ken Noonan, Dave Griffith, Jim Harder, Steve Scheinost, Rich Torpin, and Ed Chmelka.

Steve Chick continues to get excellent response and success in established a Nebraska NRCS Facebook Group page where we can share updates about what retired and current NRCS/NRD employees are up to. A number of retired SCS/NRCS individuals have contributed photos and information about older photos. Current/past NRCS employees with ties to Nebraska can join by searching for Nebraska NRCS on Facebook and requesting to join.





Chairperson **Doug Christensen** opened the April Retiree Meeting with the following in attendance: **Harold Klaege, Gary Muckel, Norm Helzer, Dana Snyder, Dave Camper, Larry Brown, Steve Scheinost, Jim Culver, Thomas Reinsch, Gus Dornbusch, Craig Derickson, Arlis Plummer, JoAnne Thiele, Steve Stover and Donna Dornbusch.**

Jim Culver noted the National Agriculture Week during the week of March 21, 2026 is an important event in Nebraska. There were nine Kiwanis Clubs in Lincoln that collectively work together to Honor FFA students in Lancaster County in an event called "Kiwanis Salute to FFA." On March 31st members of the FFA Chapters and members of Kiwanis Clubs in the area met at the Waverly Community Center for a breakfast at 6:30am. There was an excellent attendance of over 100 FFA and Kiwanis participants. Each year the Kiwanis Clubs in Lincoln rotate on who has the leadership for this annual event. This year the Sunrise Kiwanis Club had the responsibility for organizing this event.

Gus Dornbusch, President of the Sunrise Kiwanis Club and one of our retirees' club most dependable members was effective in organizing an outstanding program. The program included excellent short talks by Kiwanis Leadership and reports from the FFA Chapter members and Advisors on their current activities. In attendance were FFA Chapters of The Career Academy FFA, Waverly High School FFA, Norris High School FFA, and Raymond Central High School FFA. During the meeting a \$1,000 scholarship was awarded to an FFA student at Norris High School FFA by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. The awardee plans to attend the University of Nebraska with the goal of becoming a veterinarian.

Harold Klaege, who has been very active in and is the current President of the Nebraska Chapter of the NARFE announced he plans to reduce his leadership roles in NARFE. Harold and his NARFE contacts significantly influenced legislation contributing to no Nebraska State income tax for CSRS retirees.

Jim Culver reported that several members of our retiree's club—**Gary Muckel, Steve Scheinost and Gus Dornbusch**— have had major leadership roles in Lincoln Kiwanis Clubs and International Kiwanis activities. Gary is a member of Lincoln Center Kiwanis, Steve – Capital City and Gus – Sunrise Kiwanis. Many children benefit from the work and contributions from Kiwanis Clubs throughout the United States and Internationally.

Donna Dornbusch reported that **Gus Dornbusch** will receive the Quilt of Valor for his service in Vietnam on Friday, April 17th. Congratulations and appreciation to Gus for his outstanding service to our country.

Gus was in the National Guard in Kansas at the time of the Vietnam War and was selected from his National Guard unit to go to Vietnam as a special highly qualified person in fire direction control for large guns. Gus was assigned to a direct long range fire support unit that had responsibility for directing the activity for many large artillery guns over a large area.

Linda Helzer and **Norm** celebrated their birthdays in April. Both were born in 1944.

Arlis Plummer had a new granddaughter on March 23, 2026, **Eloise Mae Plummer**.

Doug Christensen had a new grandson on January 23, 2026, **Lincoln James Howe**.

Steve Stover thanked the group for the Get-Well card while in the hospital and rehab after breaking his hip.

Norm Helzer and wife **Linda** went on a bird watching safari to the Sandhills (Ogallala, Alliance, and Valentine, NE) on April 6–9, 2026. They saw 78 species of birds and a lot of burnt grass from the fires.

Meeting adjourned. Meeting notes compiled by **Jim Culver** and **Doug Christensen**

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

NEW JERSEY

Nancy Paolini, ARCSE Representative

Email: npaolini@comcast.net

Greg Westfall, following his retirement in 2015, ran (as an Independent) for and was elected Mayor in Allentown, NJ. During his four-year term the governing body approved an upgrade to the 50-year-old wastewater treatment plant and permanently preserved and began development of a 3-acre park.

Greg continues to be an active member of the local environmental commission, watershed association, and church council. Additionally, he is actively involved with land preservation in the Allentown Borough vicinity. He and his wife **Jane** have also been enjoying traveling to a number of destinations, including Alaska, Canada, the Netherlands and Belgium.



OREGON

Denise Troxell, ARCSE Representative

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We welcomed a new attendee to our quarterly luncheon, **Mitch Cummings**. Mitch retired about four years ago from his position in Tillamook County. He and his wife, **Jillian**, recently welcomed their first grandchild! There has been travel to New Zealand, and this summer Mitch is building a new shed.

Dick Sylvester (ret. 2011) is doing quite a bit of gardening preparation. **Kathy Sylvester** continues to recover and is looking forward to getting back to regular activities. We wish her the best!

Gail Voge recently made a spur of the moment visit to a cousin in a new home in The Dalles and enjoyed the drive through the Gorge and catching up with her cousin.

Kay Denfeld is enjoying her grandnephew (1 year) and grandniece (7 mo.). She is looking for a haberdasher to imprint/stencil her and her father's initials in a Stetson hat she inherited from a grand uncle (that belonged to her father at one time) in order to pass it down but hasn't found any place yet. She has a Rockaway beach trip coming up with high school friends. She is also doing chair yoga! Namaste Kay!

Bobbi Hart reports that things are quiet on the homefront. They're not heading to their beach place due to her husband's fall but hope to get there soon. **Bernie Hewes** shared that he and **Colleen** have moved back into Pendleton.

Colleen Hewes mentioned they will be celebrating their 50th anniversary this year! There were congratulations all around! She shared that some of the grandchildren are up and off, and others are still at home and involved in violin, fencing, and soccer. Her service dog joined the event as well!

Don Stettler will be 25 years retired in May. He enjoys luncheons in Keizer with other members of the last graduating class of Salem. **Jim Marron** is keeping busy with grandchildren. They help with transportation and after-school care.

Karen Robbins has not had any recent travel (Cuba 2 times last year) but is leading a team to Kenya in July (for the 8th time). Hats off for all your good work, Karen!

Lamont Robbins (ret. 2006) had been involved in home repairs. He also talked about helping his sister-in-law in North Carolina with assisted living and care after the passing of his brother in 2021. They were there for an extended amount of time, with a few trips home in between. She passed in 2023, and they are back home as of 2024. They are looking forward to taking a coast trip soon. They will be celebrating their 57 anniversary soon. Congratulations Lamont and Karen!

Joe Sahlfeld (Rural Development 12 years, NRCS 28 years) was in Enterprise two weeks ago branding cattle. He is enjoying gardening this spring.

Me, I was discharged from PT on 4/2 after my knee replacement. No more cane! Still working on getting my stamina back and getting back to yoga and workout routine. Started lots of seeds, and getting antsy to get the seedling planted!

Our next luncheon will be July 22nd at Elmer's Restaurant on 181st Avenue in Portland. I have tentatively scheduled Oregon's State Conservationist, **Greg Becker**, to join us!

Because I was too focused on my Schezwan beef, I neglected to take any photos. Instead, I thought I'd include some pictures of some of our native shrubs that are in bloom.



TENNESSEE

Traci Horne, ARCSE Representative

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The retirees met on 3/19/2026 at the Shoney's in Lebanon with 17 in attendance. Attending were:

Jeff Young, Harold Jones, Allen Crowe, Gary Handley, Anna and Jack Chidester, Patty Lane, Traci Horne, Terry Gupton, James Woodall, Dewitt Simerly, Grace Lutz, James Sims, Bobby Moore, David Barker, Dot Barker, Pam Hoskins.



Donald Dotson had a scheduled appointment and could not attend. **Dana York Ensley and Bob** were in Maryland and could not attend.

Denise Watkins was taking her husband to a dr. appointment then flying to Tampa to visit her brother. She is now an ACES employee, staying busy and enjoying retirement. She had rescued a pig and was adopted by a cat on the same day. Both animals are getting along well.

Darwin Newton had SCD work during our meeting. He has trips planned to Washington DC, Chicago, Michigan, the beach in North Carolina, and Alaska. He just got back from Death Valley and Vegas. He says hi to all.

Nancy Harris was running last minute errands before her daughter **Laura Leigh's** wedding this Saturday. **Mike Hart** is in Australia. **Kevin Brown** had something come up the last minute and was unable to make the meeting.

Gary Handley is a former Contracting Officer and retired 19 years ago. He is enjoying the social security boost with the elimination of the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset. He is doing some work on his house, remodeling, and painting.

Jeff Young has now been retired for 5 years. He farms and has 40 cows on his farm on the edge of Overton and Clay counties.

James Woodall was the DC in Carroll and Benton counties, and he retired 7–8 years ago. He recently served a 2-year mission at Cove Fort in southern/middle Utah. He enjoys fishing, working on vehicles, and his 12 grandchildren.

Harold Jones was the Resource Conservationist in Knoxville and was a DC in both Tennessee and North Carolina. He retired while in Goldsboro, NC.

Dewitt Simerly was the DC in Marion and Grundy counties. He retired to a farm in Pall Mall, TN 6 years ago. It is very isolated. He only sees 5 to 6 vehicles a day. He has some cows and calves and is enjoying retirement.

Bobby Moore retired 30+ years ago and worked all over the state from Bolivar to Johnson County, and several points in between. He has been in all 95 counties in Tennessee. He still has the family farms. His wife passed away last fall.

Terry Gupton retired from the Kingston and Morgan County DC position in 2004. He currently runs 50 head of cattle, enjoys his grandkids and great grandkids and is in good health.

Allen Crowe started in 1965 as a student trainee and worked all over West Tennessee. He built dams in several counties, worked in Oneida and Sweetwater, where his wife began teaching, and went on to teach 31 years across the state whenever they would relocate. He followed **James Sims** to several sites and eventually came to the State Office. He retired in 2004, then came back and worked on Cane Creek for 18 months. His twin granddaughters recently graduated, one from Tennessee Tech and one from UT Knoxville. He recently welcomed twin great grandkids.

Anna Chidester retired in 1995. She and **Jack** are doing fine.

David Barker retired in 2025 with the deferred retirement plan. He was a GIS Specialist and Cartographer in the State Office before being moved to Murfreesboro and working with the MLRA in Cookeville. His mother recently moved in with them after his retirement. They are doing some updates on their house.

Dot Barker met **David** at work. They married at work during lunch at the Murfreesboro Area Office, outside in a garden area. She came here from Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina and traded hurricanes for tornadoes and built a shelter at her house as soon as she could. She has been retired for 2 years. They share 5 grandkids and are heading to Fort Myers for a visit soon.

Patty Lane was a State Office Contracting Officer and retired 15 years ago. She worked closely with a lot of engineers. She has 6 grandkids and 8 great grandkids. Husband **Larry** is having knee replacement surgery tomorrow, and she will be taking care of him.

Traci Horne is heading to Tampa on Saturday for a visit with her mother and brother. She has a trip planned this summer with **Faye Floyd**, **Nancy Harris**, **Patty Lane** and hopefully **Lynice Broyles**. They are heading to Johnson City, Boone, and Blowing Rock, NC and also to Mt. Airy, NC where they are meeting **Denise Watkins** for lunch. She also had lunch last week with **Bob and Mary Karger** as well as **Nancy Craig** (wife of **Jeff Craig**).

Grace Lutz retired in 2025, also taking the deferred retirement plan. She was the Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy (formerly the SAO position). Her husband retired in December but is working a part time job. They are working on some home and yard projects, and a kitchen remodel. Her daughter was married last year and is living in Quantico, VA. They are going to Florida in May, Montana in June, and Hawaii next year. Her mother lives on their property in a detached dwelling. She loves retirement.

Pamela Hoskins spent most of her career in the field, but the last 4 years were in the State Office as an Easement Program Officer. She has been retired 2 years now. She lives on her family farm along with her daughter, son-in-law and grandson who are saving to build on the property, too. She has cattle, goats, sheep, and chickens. Her son lives in Murfreesboro and works in Brentwood. She has not travelled yet since retirement but is planning a trip to Washington DC.

James Sims is 85 years old and still in good health. He has an uncle that is 104 who is still living. He wound up in the State Office as the State Engineer. His favorite position was when he was the State Design Engineer. He still works ACES. Current projects include the Waverly flood, McNairy Cypress flood, and the Jamestown, Oneida, and Spencer water works, reviewing A&E plans. Daughter lost her job last year with the IRS, but his son-in-law is still working there.

Our next meeting will be in Dickson, TN on Thursday June 18, 2026 from 11am – 1pm at Colton's Steakhouse & Grill located right off the I-40 exit 172 ramp. The address is 2341 TN-46 Dickson, TN 37055. The phone number is 615-560-5118. We have a private room reserved for us, and we will be ordering off the menu. I hope to see you all there. [Colton's Steakhouse](#).

It was great to see some more new faces at this meeting. Please come again!

–Traci

TEXAS

Mike Bogard, ARCSE Representative

Email: mbogard41@gmail.com

The 33rd Annual Texas SCS/NRCS Retirees Reunion held on April 14–15, 2026 was attended by 40 people.

Activities started Tuesday afternoon with a golf tournament at Sammons Golf Course in Temple.

Wednesday's program at the Grassland Soil & Water Research Laboratory started with coffee/pastries, registration, and visiting. Chairman **Arnold King** gave a welcome followed with an invocation by **Charles Melton** and a pledge of allegiance to the US flag by chairman King.

John Mueller presented the memorial service/roll call for all retirees/spouses lost in past 12 months. **Brian Wenberg** gave results of the golf tournament.

Speakers were **Kristy Oates**, Texas State Conservationist, and **Dr. Pavelock** with Ag Workers Auto Insurance.

Following the speakers a barbecue lunch was provided by Ag Workers Auto Insurance.

After lunch 30 items provided by attendees were raffled off, raising \$900.00. The money provides scholarships to youngsters attending The Texas Brigades summer camps. The Texas Brigades teaches young people about conservation of our natural resources and provides leadership training.

John Mueller wrote: As a quick update, **Kate** and I recently rented a condo at Rockport, Texas to do some fishing and take in the sights. While pretty windy, we had good luck a couple of days and ended up catching about a dozen fish and had a great time. With this particular condo, we could fish off the back deck, so that was very convenient. We also enjoyed watching a dolphin early every morning, just making his rounds around the bay.





WEST VIRGINIA

Peg Reese, ARCSE Representative

Email: pegreesevv@gmail.com

Willis J. Ridenour died in Largo, FL on March 15, 2026. Although Willis was the Area Conservationist in Parkersburg, WV when he retired, he was most remembered for his contributions as the Little Kanawha RC&D Coordinator. A few of his many achievements were creating Mountwood Park in Wood County and establishing a network of Rails to Trails. The LKRC&D established the **Willis Ridenour Special Achievement Award** in honor of its namesake. **Dick Waybright**, president of the LKRC&D and former director of the WV Forestry Association, won the award in 2025. Willis was an avid runner who ran the Boston Marathon 10 times. Willis was survived by his wife, **Janice** and their children. More details about Willis can be found on the In Memoriam section of this newsletter.

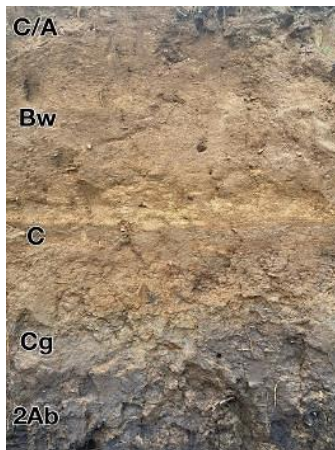
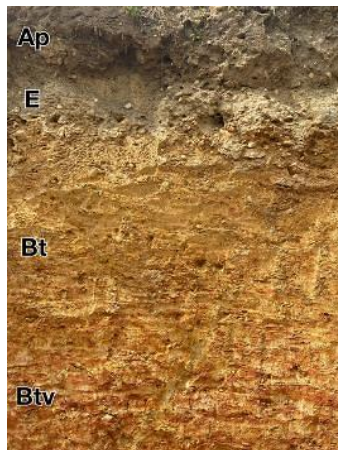
Coach **Jim Thompson** provided the following update on the WVU Soil Judging Team:

The WVU Soils Team was in Raleigh, North Carolina, on March 22–27 for the [2026 National Collegiate Soils Contest](#). The students who traveled with the Team were **Haydon Ammons** (freshman, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences); **Aubrie Benavidez** (junior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences); **Aaron Finley** (junior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences); **Thomas Giggenschach** (senior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences); **Emma Quint** (sophomore, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences); **Will Simpson** (senior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences); **Raleigh Sterling** (freshman, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences); **Daisy Stemple** (junior, Environmental Soil and Water Sciences, Wildlife and Fisheries Resources); **Abigail Thornbury** (senior, Environmental Engineering); and **Doreen Winter** (sophomore, Biochemistry).



WVU Soil Judging Team

These ten students from the Davis College of Agriculture and Natural Resources were among the 270 students from 28 schools from across the country who gathered for the 64th annual soil judging championship. The team spent four days practicing for the two-day contest, examining some of the diverse soils and landscapes of the Piedmont and Upper Coastal Plain, including soils that formed in recent alluvial deposits (less than 300 years old) to soils formed in ancient marine sediments (greater than 3 million years old).



I am pleased to report that the WVU Soils Team again performed well in the contest. Among the 112 participants in the individual judging portion of the contest, WVU's **Emma Quint** claimed 8th place. Combined with a 5th place score in the group judging portion of the contest, the WVU Soils Team placed 9th in the contest, which was won by Virginia Tech. As a result of her success in the contest, Emma has earned a spot on the U.S. National Team at the [5th International Soil Judging Contest](#) in Nanjing, China, in June.

WISCONSIN

Deb Legear, ARCSE Representative
 Email: deb.legear@gmail.com

The luncheons around Wisconsin have begun for 2026. The first gathering was in the southwest part of the state on March 8th in Spring Green at Anita's Café.



(L-R) Ted Manning, Keith Behling, Scott Mueller, Kirsten Mueller, Todd Cockroft, Dan Chroniger, Roman Statz, Jim Kaap

The second gathering was on April 23rd in the northwest part of the state. A large group of 25 met at Grizzly's in Eau Claire. A few recent retirees were also in attendance. We were happy to welcome the new retirees into the group.



(L-R) Deanna Peterson, Allene Howard, Pete Lindgren, Linda Lindgren



Standing: Deb LeGear
(Sitting L-R): Emeron Christianson, Phyllis Christianson



(L-R) Tedd Manning, Keith Sengbusch, Mike O'Shea, Dean Sylla



(L-R) Roger Dahl, Cheryl Dahl, Mike Koehler, Tim Miland



(L-R) Lisa Custer, Jay Custer, Greg Rebman



(L-R) Matt King, Mary King, Judy Derricks (Not pictured)



(L-R) Vic Price, Mary Price, Geri Natzke, Larry Natzke

WI Conservation Partners

Spring Golf Outing

THE FIELDS OF CLOVER HILL
W192 WI-67, LOMIRA WI

2-person Teams, Scramble Format

May 15th, 2026
Start at 9:00am
Be at course by 8:00am
\$75 per person - paid in advance

Includes: includes 18 holes of golf, lunch at the turn, beverage ticket, prizes for 1st and 2nd place, hole prizes

Send Check/Money to Sawyer Schmidt by May 6th
or Venmo Jacob Johnson (@Jacob-Johnson-453)



Please cut along line and return bottom portion.

Registration Form: Conservation Partners Golf Outing 2026

Name: _____
Cell Phone #: _____
Email: _____
Partner's Name: _____

If you have questions please contact: Sawyer Schmidt
Sawyer.Schmidt@state.gov, 920-851-4282

Please send check/money
by May 6th to:

Sawyer Schmidt
451 W North St
Juneau, WI 53039

As many of you know, **Sue and Howard Gundlach** have attended most of the luncheons around the state for many years.

Sue wanted me to send this message out to everyone.

“Just wanted to let you know that Howard and I won't be at the Eau Claire luncheon. Howard is under Agrace Hospice care at this time. He didn't want to go into a skilled nursing care facility after his last hospitalization. Our sons and I welcomed him home. We also have 24-hour care with the company, Home Instead. Alan, Adam, and David insisted that I have extra help, and I'm so grateful. Physically and mentally I

couldn't handle everything by myself. I have the support of family and so many friends. God bless them all.

Enjoy the luncheon and please pass on our greetings.

Sue Gundlach”

I asked Sue if I could send out their address and she approved: Howard and Sue Gundlach, 5205 Academy Drive, Madison, WI 53716-1901, or email: hgundlac@chorus.net.

Thanks, **Deb LeGear**

SENIOR CONSERVATIONISTS – Paul Benedict. 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.

OBITUARY INFORMATION**Paul Benedict, Membership Chair**

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

Surname	Year	<i>In-Memoriam</i> (Note: These are recent notices. For a complete list, please see www.arcse.org)
Barker	2025	Senior Conservationist Warner Ray Barker (93) of Elliott County, Kentucky passed away June 11, 2025, at Community Hospice Care Center in Ashland, Kentucky. Ray was born December 01, 1931, in Elliott County, Kentucky a son of the late Thomas Everett and Lucy Music Barker. Ray was a born again Christian and of the Baptist faith and visited different churches. He was retired from the USDA-Soil Conservation Service where he worked several years as a Soil Conservation Technician. He was also a farmer. He loved visiting church family, his flowers, raking hay, bush hogging, and listening to bluegrass music. Ray was preceded in death by his spouse; Edna Ellen Skaggs Barker in 2005. He is survived by his children and their spouses; Dean (Wanda) Barker, Wayne (Rhea) Barker, Joey and Mandy Barker, Jimmy Barker (Karen Morgan), Lucy Dickerson, Regina (Larry) Waddell, and Robin Porter, eleven grandchildren and several great grandchildren.
Bogusch	2026	Henry Bogusch (82) of Cleburne, Texas, passed away on March 7, 2026, in Fort Worth, Texas. Henry was born on December 2, 1943, in Mason, Texas to Henry Charles, Sr. and Beatrice (Lange) Bogusch. He married DeeAnna McClesky on January 23, 1966 in Abilene, Texas. Henry was a retired agronomist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. He loved to paint with pastels, mostly nature. He was a Master Naturalist Club Member and enjoyed hunting, fishing, and horses. Above all else, he was a devout Christian who loved the Lord and his family. Survivors include his beloved wife of 60 years, DeeAnna Bogusch; sons, Charles Bogusch (Kari) and Trent Bogusch (Shay); grandchildren, McKena Cuellar (Richard), Jessica Aguirre (Nathan); Owen Craven, Allison Craven, Aleya Bogusch and Zachary Bogusch; and one great-grandchild due in August; sister, Charlene Taylor; several other extended family; and many friends. An oral history interview with Henry Bogusch was recorded on April 19, 2016 by the Southwest Special Collections Library and is available Here: https://swco-ir.tdl.org/items/82b8eec7-5f56-485f-bf50-517815e1f43c
Burton	2026	Durl Ray "Wimpy" Burton (91) of Alex, Oklahoma, passed away peacefully at home on March 31, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of faith, family, dedication and laughter. He was born on April 30, 1934, in Alex, Oklahoma, to Hugh and Viola Burton, and was raised in the Alex community he always called home. On July 18, 1953, Durl married the love of his life, Loretta Cox, at Hawkins Freewill Baptist Church. Durl worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a Soil Conservation Technician. Durl had a lifelong passion for farming, often talking about his farming career beginning at just two years old alongside his father. After retiring he dedicated himself to caring for his father and the family farm. Alongside his wife, he also raised and raced horses for many years, traveling across the country and making cherished memories along the way. He was a devout Christian. He was preceded in death by his wife, Loretta Burton in 2023 and his son Steven Burton, Sr. in 2024. He is survived by his sons David Burton and Barry Burton (Leigh Ann), daughter-in-law Robin Burton; and his grandchildren: Jennifer Burton, Linsey Reynolds (Bert); Ashley Foster (Garrett); Whitney Sikes (Jeff); Steven Burton, Jr. (Sheri); Courtney Burton; Veronica Roberts and Ronald Roberts. He is also survived by his great-grandchildren: Mallory and Ella Burton; Samuel Sikes; Zane and Briggs Burton; Emmerson, Creed and Sloane Foster and Liam Owings.
Casper	2026	Sheryl Lynn Casper (73) of Wellington, Colorado passed away February 25, 2026, after a brief illness. She was born on May 25, 1952, in North Platte, Nebraska, daughter of the late George Esper Casper and Nellie Jean Park Casper. For over 38 years, Sheryl served the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and Federal Government as an IT Specialist Information Security Officer. She knew everything and was always there to help anyone. She held several awards for her service with USDA. She loved every moment with her family she made there. Through her journey of a short 73 years, she touched many lives with her playful sense of humor, her unapologetic, fearless attitude, and her unforgettable laugh - especially her laugh. It was the best part of her. Sheryl is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Jennifer Brattain and Andrew Brattain, and her grandchildren Ethan Brattain and Kennedi Brattain of Wellington, Colorado. She is also survived by her sister, Karen Casper of Indianapolis, Indiana.
Ceolla	2025	Dale John Ceolla (72) of Urbandale, Iowa, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family on July 19, 2025. He was born June 25, 1953, to Robert and Shirley Ceolla. On February 25, 1978, Dale married the love of his life Kathy, with whom he shared decades of partnership, laughter, and devotion. Dale was a man of deep dedication—to his family and his career. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resources Conservation from the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, Dale went on to build a distinguished career with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation, retiring as the Assistant State Soil Scientist, where his expertise and commitment made a lasting impact on conservation and agricultural stewardship in Iowa. Dale's life was enriched by the outdoors. He found joy in cooking, fishing, boating, and spending time in nature. A lifelong Green Bay Packers fan, Dale could often be found cheering on his team with passion and loyalty. Whether casting a line on a quiet lake or sharing stories, he found peace and connection in the natural world. Dale is survived by his wife Kathy; children Christopher (Marissa Kuiken) Ceolla, Jonathan (Katie) Ceolla, and Nicholas Ceolla; and grandchildren Charlotte and Jackson Ceolla, whose presence filled his heart with pride and joy.
Chapman	2026	Senior Conservationist Eldon Wayne Chapman (93) of Paris, Texas, passed away on April 2, 2026. Wayne was born on October 28, 1932. He was an honors graduate of East Texas State University. Wayne dedicated 34 years to the United States Army National Guard and 35 years to the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. His meaningful career took his family from Texas to Montana, Alabama, and Washington, D.C. In retirement, he and Pat moved back to Paris, Texas and traveled extensively, from Alaska to the Rio Grande Valley, where he and his wife Pat wintered for many years and enjoyed square dancing, round dancing, and dear friendships. What he was most proud of having done was raising funds for childhood cancer research. Following the loss of their son, David, Wayne and Pat began organizing St. Baldrick's events in 2009. He personally raised more than \$123,000, shaving for the 17th time this past November, and the events he and his friends started raised hundreds of thousands and helped to save lives. A devout Christian and lover of the outdoors, Wayne found joy in fishing, gardening and mowing, genealogy, his nightly games and ice cream, and being

		with friends and family. He was loved and respected by all, had a mischievous sense of humor, and made a mountain of memories. One of the last things he said was, "It's been a wonderful life." Wayne is survived by his beloved wife, Pat; daughters, Becky Weaver (Wayne), and Tammy Ratliff (Steven); cherished grandchildren, Faith Chapman (and her mom Karen Chapman), Kate Ratliff, and Thomas Ratliff; his sister, Wanda Thorpe and brother, Jimmy Chapman (Jan), and a host of nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his son, David Chapman.
Chouinard	2026	Dori Lynn (Wolf) Chouinard (66) of Lakeville Minnesota, passed away March 17, 2026, at home surrounded by a group of friends and family. Dori fought a courageous battle with ovarian cancer, just shy of five years. She was born September 18, 1959, to Nicholas R Wolf and Gloria M Wolf, and raised in Minnesota. Dori attended and graduated from Faribault school for the Deaf. There she met future husband (Bob) Chouinard at a homecoming football game between Devalan School for the Deaf in Wisconsin where Bob attended school and Faribault school for the Deaf. Being introduced by friends. They were married Oct 6, 1990, until her passing. Bob took his vows seriously "In sickness and in health". He was always by Dori's side throughout her illness, tending to her every need. Dori worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for 34 years as a mail clerk in the Minnesota State Office. A lifetime at the same job meant a lot to her. Although they never had children, Dori was always delighted to play with the kids of friends and family. She would be over-the-moon happy when the kids would pick up on learning bits of sign language. She was always willing to teach them and thrilled when they signed back to her. Dori and husband Bob were deeply rooted in the deaf community activities. They took cruises, snowmobiled, camped, along with many more activities of which the list is long. All geared for the hearing impaired. Dori was preceded in death by brothers Dean Wolf, Neil Wolf and father Nicholas R Wolf; in-laws Peter Preussner; Charles Chouinard, Betty Chouinard; and Don Chouinard. She is survived by husband Robert (Bob) Chouinard; Mother – Gloria M Wolf; Sister - Debra Preussner; Brother – Nick Wolf; Nieces- Carrie Preussner, Katlyn Wolf; Nephews – Christopher Preussner, Keegan Wolf.
Clardy	2026	Glynda Rose Nichols Clardy (68) of Mendenhall, Mississippi, passed away at her home on Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026, after a long battle with cancer. Glynda was born on February 18, 1958, in Houston, Mississippi, to Kenneth Murl Nichols and Rose Smith Nichols. Glynda graduated from Houston High School with honors in 1976. She went on to attend Mississippi University for Women and Mississippi State University, where she earned her degree in Wildlife and Fisheries. After earning her degree, she worked with the Mississippi Extension Service in Plant Pathology. After a short time, she returned to school to earn her master's degree in Ag Economics. On July 29, 1978, she married the love of her life, Boyce Edward (Eddie) Clardy Jr. In 1985, she began working for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in Jackson, Mississippi. She remained with the Federal Agency as their wildlife biologist until her retirement in 2020. She loved her job, especially the part that involved working with animals. The outdoors was her favorite place to be. She loved all of God's creatures and plants. Glynda also loved gardening and canning. She loved giving her canned items to others. She was a devoted wife who supported her husband in all of his horse adventures. Her voice at shows is heard not only on videos of Eddie but also on many others. Her faith was very important to her. She thought you should live your life in such a way that someone could tell you believe in Jesus Christ without saying anything. Glynda leaves behind her husband of forty-seven years, Eddie; two children, Erin (William) and Trey (Abney); grandchildren, Oliver, Monty, and Cord; parents, Kenneth and Rose Nichols; siblings, Clipper Nichols (Jenna), Carol Faulkner (Mark), and Joe Nichols; mother-in-law, Norma Clardy; and many other nephews and nieces that she cherished.
Cloutier	2025	Life Member Hardy Cloutier (95) of Germantown, Tennessee, lovingly known as PawPaw, passed away at his home on August 18, 2025. Hardy was born on May 14, 1930, in Cloutierville, Louisiana, to Daisy Mae Hust and Julbert Cloutier. He grew up amid the rural farmlands of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, coming of age during the Great Depression a time that shaped his work ethic and enduring love for community and family. Hardy married the love of his life, Nina Jane (Bradley) Cloutier, on December 27, 1958, in Warren, Arkansas. Their marriage was a true partnership of 51 years, lasting until Nina's passing in 2010. Completing eighth grade, Hardy later entered military service at the age of 17, joining the military police during post-World War II wartime prosecutions was a formative period that reflected his sense of duty and principle. He later served as First Sergeant in the National Guard for thirty years, displaying exemplary leadership and commitment. Hardy pursued his passion for agriculture, earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees in agriculture from the University of Arkansas. He was a proud Razorback, always "Calling the Hogs" on gameday. His professional legacy includes years as an Arkansas Soil Conservationist in McGehee, Arkansas and District Conservationist in Marianna, Arkansas, and as Lee County Appraiser. He contributed to the welfare of his community through meaningful work and active civic engagement. Hardy was a Rotary Club member, served as president, and was honored as a Paul Harris Fellow. He organized American Red Cross blood drives (donating over 30 gallons in his lifetime). A man of deep Catholic faith, Hardy was closely connected to St. Andrews Catholic Church in Marianna. He is survived by their four devoted children, Michael Cloutier (Kathryn) of Germantown, Stephen Cloutier (Noel) of Coppell, Texas, Jenna Grubbs (Eric K.) of Las Vegas, Nevada, and Tracy Doyle (Tim) of Morristoryn, Texas; twelve grandchildren: Anna Grace Doyle; Lauren (Jeff Pflanz), Caroline, and Julianna Grubbs; Lindsey (John Griesse), Cole, Kyle (Emma), and Kaylee Cloutier; Meagan (Dillon Jenkins), John Michael, James (Anna), and Abbie Cloutier; and three great-grandchildren, Bennett, Bauer and Lucy. He is also survived by his special friend, Mary Patricia Wright.
Diehl	2026	Honorary Member Carl Sanford "Sandy" Diehl (94) of Warsaw, Indiana, passed away peacefully on January 26, 2026 at Lutheran Kosciusko Hospital in Warsaw with his son, Claude Diehl, daughter Brenda Lamon and faithful assistant Chante Harter at his side. Carl was born in Leesburg, Indiana to Carl Sanford and Adaline Sayles Diehl on November 8, 1931. In 1950, Carl started study at Purdue University and then joined the United States Navy during the Korean War. On November 12, 1955, he married a widow, Barbara Ellen Hepler. She brought with her two toddlers, Ted Bast and Brenda Bast. The family immediately moved to California where Carl finished his stint in the Navy. In 1956 he moved the family, which now included a son, Carl, to the West Lafayette, Indiana area to finish his study at Purdue. After graduating from Purdue, the move was made back to the family farm. Their son, Claude, was born after this move. There he resided almost continuously until his death. He there began his career as a soil and water conservation technician in Kosciusko County. In the 1970's Carl took a position with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as the district conservationist. His district included Elkhart County, Tipton County and Noble County. He retired from what is now known as Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in 1986. Carl was a member of the Indiana Forestry and Woodland Owners Association and served as president for 2 years and was on the Board of Directors from 1987- 2006. He was a Walnut Council member and The American Chestnut Foundation member. In 1990 he was awarded the Outstanding Tree Farmer and in 2010 the State Charles Deam Forestry Stewardship Award. Even after retirement Carl was very active in forestry

		and conservation. He also helped with the local tree sales for the Kosciusko Soil and Water Conservation District. Carl proudly planted over 80,000 trees in his lifetime, improving the productivity of the forests and the environmental benefits they impact. He promoted no-till farming and cover crops with landowners. He was a member of the Kosciusko County Historical Society. Carl is survived by his children: Brenda (Jon) Lamon of Warsaw, Carl V. (Gaby) Diehl of Houston, Texas and Claude Diehl of West Lafayette, Indiana; seven grandchildren: Matthew (Susie) Walton, Mark (Christine) Walton, Andrew (Sarah) Bast, Ryan Bast, Jessica (Ryan A. Thomas) Diehl, Stephanie Diehl and Carl Diehl Jr.; and seven Great-grandchildren: Ava, Henry, Joseph, Emily, Alexandra, Cora, and Lincoln. He was preceded in death by his wife Barbara in 2016 and his son, Ted Bast in 2022.
Ellis	2020	Senior Conservationist Jeff Ellis, Jr. (94) of Newport, Arkansas, passed away on November 24, 2020. He was born George Jefferson Ellis, Jr. on January 6, 1926, to Pearl Miks Ellis and George Jefferson Ellis, Sr. in Dardanelle, Arkansas. After graduation from Dardanelle High School, he worked on the Alcan Highway. At the age of 17, he enlisted in the United States Navy and was sent to Chicago to be educated on the Morse Code. He served as a radio operator on the L.S.M. 329, protecting U.S. forces in the South Pacific until the end of WWII. Upon returning home, Jeff followed his dream and enrolled in Vanderbilt University. With the unexpected death of his father, he chose to be near to family and attended Arkansas Tech University. In 1951, he was awarded a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Arkansas. From this, he became a lifelong Razorback fan. More importantly, on a class field trip to the Fayetteville Water Works Plant, he met the love of his life, Frances Smith of Searcy. They married on Veteran's Day of 1951. After his attending R.O.T.C. camp, Jeff and Frances worked in Niagara Falls, New York and Pensacola, Florida for E. I. DuPont Company. He then worked as City Engineer for the City of Pensacola. Jeff and Frances returned to Arkansas and settled in Newport where Jeff continued his career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Services. He retired in 1998, after 42 years of service. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church at which he served on multiple Boards and Committees. Jeff loved being active in the Newport and Jackson County communities. Reflecting his pride in being a WWII Veteran, he remained active in the American Legion, Neil Griffin Post #47. He would serve as the Arkansas American Legion Baseball Commissioner and local organizer of the Arkansas Boys State. Perhaps, his greatest pleasure was his 30-year tenure as the Public Address Announcer for the Newport Greyhound Football Program. Being an avid outdoorsman, preparations began early for duck and deer seasons. Frances and he shared a friendly competition when fishing for trout on the White River. Later years found Jeff and Frances traveling from Alaska to the Holy Lands. Jeff enrolled in classes from computers to woodworking. He was known for his carving of competition worthy duck decoys and Razorback pins. Jeff is survived by Frances, his wife of 69 years; daughters Lisa LaGrone (Andy) and Jeffrey McKinley (Lester); grandchildren, Ellis LaGrone, Anna LaGrone, Mary Katherine McKinley and Ed McKinley.
Enz	2023	Senior Conservationist Richard William Enz (98) of Tempe Arizona passed away on March 14, 2023. Richard was born in Nutley, New Jersey on November 13, 1924, son of Paul and Frieda Enz, first generation Americans who immigrated from Switzerland early in the 1900s. Fondly known as Papa Dick by his grandchildren and great grandchildren, he served in the United States Navy during World War Two. He moved to Arizona after the war where he lived the rest of his life. A graduate of the University of Arizona in Agricultural Engineering, Dick worked as a soil scientist and hydrologist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service from the late 1940s through his retirement in the 1980. He was instrumental in predicting snow melt and water runoff after actively climbing the mountains of Arizona to conduct snow surveys. His data analyses, forecasts and land management expertise helped many desert communities responsibly manage water use. In the latter years of his long and productive life, he actively engaged in community and church activities alongside his wife, supporting the First Congregational Church of Tempe, and the Tempe Historical Society to name just two of his charitable interests. Dick had a passion for the majestic western landscapes which he hiked, skied, snowmobiled, and photographed. His children will always remember family visits to national parks, very long hikes, learning to identify trees and scrubs, and of course being called back to camp for dinner with his melodic and distinctive alpine yodel. Dick was predeceased by his wife of a lifetime Betty in 2014. He is survived by his three children and their spouses, Donald (Billie Jean), Connie (Paul), and Cathy (Jim), his seven grandchildren and his twelve great grandchildren.
Evans	2026	Everett "Junior" Evans, Jr. (88) of Seminole, Oklahoma, passed away on March 9, 2026, in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Junior was born on July 8, 1937, in Seminole to Everett Emery and Ruby Butler Evans. He was a 1956 Varnum High School graduate. He also attended East Central University. He worked as a Soil Conservation Technician at the USDA-Soil Conservation Service for over 40 years. After retiring, he joined Beacon as a consultant for an additional 21 years. Junior married the love of his life, Carolyn Sue Harris on December 27, 1958, in Seminole. He was a devoted member of Twin Oak Baptist Church, where he worshiped faithfully and sought to serve the Lord through a life of obedience and quiet strength. A man who believed in the dignity of honest work, Junior worked at a job he truly loved until the day the Lord called him home. He was gifted with remarkable skill in woodworking and mechanical work, and he found great joy in working the land and tending his garden—using his hands to create, repair, and nurture. Junior is survived by his wife of 67 years Carolyn Sue Evans; two daughters, Tammy Evans Hall and Kari (Karen) Evans and many other family and friends. Junior was preceded in death by and infant son, Keith Evans.
Evans	2023	Life Member Earl Eugene "Gene" Evans (86) of Champaign, Illinois, passed away April 19, 2023 from complications related to late stages Alzheimer's disease at Amber Glen Alzheimer's Special Care Center in Urbana, Illinois. Gene was born October 23, 1936 on a farm in Moultrie County close to La Place, Illinois. His parents were John R. Evans and Sylvia C. (Morr) Evans. Gene enrolled at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During the summers he worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as a Trainee in Madison County, Illinois. Gene graduated from the University of Illinois in 1960 with a dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Agricultural Engineering and Agricultural Science. He began working full-time for the SCS as an Agricultural Engineer. He moved around Illinois during the next eight years, working in Quincy, Pittsfield, Litchfield, Hillsboro, Sterling, Decatur, Pekin, and Lincoln designing watershed improvement projects. While stationed at Pittsfield, Gene became acquainted with Deloris Durr. He and Deloris were married at Pittsfield in May 1962. In 1969, Gene was transferred to the SCS Office in Champaign, Illinois as a Civil Engineer on the Watershed Planning Staff. Deloris was instrumental in the creation of the Center for Women in Transition (now Courage Connection) in Champaign-Urbana. Gene also volunteered 'whenever Mom asked him to do things' for the shelter and for all sorts of events at Faith United Methodist Church. Gene even got his CDL when the youth group needed a bus driver to take them on trips. After he retired in 1994, Gene continued to volunteer for groups such as the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), delivering Meals on Wheels, serving as Treasurer for NARFE (Chapter 348), etc.

		Gene was always helping neighbors with yard work and shoveling snow. In 2016, Gene was one of five people honored with the "Service Together Achieves Results" award "for the excellence in neighborly service". Gene was preceded in death by his wife Deloris M. Evans in 2002. Gene is survived by 3 adult children: James A. Evans (Kim E. Sims) of Urbana, Illinois, Karen E. Medina (Stuart Levy) of Champaign, Linda M. Evans (Eric Schacht) of Champaign-Urbana; and 3 grandchildren Parker A. Evans, Demetrius S.P. Evans, and Milo P. Evans
Farnes	2026	Member Phillip Edward Farnes (91) of Bozeman, Montana, passed away peacefully on March 12, 2026, in Bozeman, with his daughters by his side. Phil was born on September 28, 1934, in Billings, Montana, to Phil and Katherine Farnes. After attending Eastern Montana College in Billings and graduating from Montana State University with a degree in Civil Engineering and serving in the United States Army, he settled in Bozeman. Phil was a legendary figure in mountain hydrology and snow science. He dedicated more than six decades to understanding the relationship between mountain snowpack and water resources. For 36 years, Phil served as a Supervisory Hydrologist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service) in Bozeman, where he became the primary architect of Montana's snow survey data collection process through technology and vision. He was involved in the installation of one of the first computers in his field which at that time filled an entire room with processors from ceiling to floor along with developing their own open aired snow bug to get them to the snow sites throughout the mountains of Montana. His expansive knowledge was sought out from organizations throughout the country up until his death. Phil published several books, papers and articles on water resources and climate change which are still available and used today. Phil was a cornerstone of the Western Snow Conference, where he served for over 40 years. In 1990, after retirement from the Soil Conservation Service, and spending the summer camping, exploring, and working in Alaska, he founded Snowcap Hydrology and Snowcap Photos which allowed him to continue working in two of his passions. He was a frequent contributor to the Bozeman Daily Chronicle Letters to the Editor. In 1996, Phil's contributions were formally recognized when he was named a "Legend" by the Montana Chapter of the American Water Resources Association. In 2012, Phil received the UUNO SAHINEN Medalion from Montana Tech in Butte. Phil was well known as a photographer of nature, having many of his pictures published in magazines, books, and used as inspiration for other art forms. Phil is survived by his children, Kathie Sybrant (Bill), Glenda Rall (John Hastings), Dennis Farnes, 10 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, nephews, and nieces, Sister-in-Law, Ruth Farnes, and former wife, Barbara Farnes, along with many beloved friends that were family. Phil was preceded in death by his longtime partner, May Mace.
Feil-Erskine	2026	Theresa Mae Feil-Erskine (56) of Richmond, Missouri, passed away March 3, 2026, at her home. Theresa was born on September 6, 1969, in Cowgill, Missouri, the daughter of Wayne Edwin and Rita (Elliott) Feil. She was united in marriage to William "Will" Erskine. Theresa was a Soil Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service working out of the Higginsville Field Office. Theresa found her greatest joy in the outdoors and in the company of those she loved most. She enjoyed hiking, camping, kayaking, and fishing, always appreciating the peace and beauty of nature. Theresa also expressed her love through cooking, often creating new dishes and bringing family together around the table. One of her proudest and most meaningful accomplishments was training service dogs for Retrieving Freedom in Sedalia, an organization that trains service dogs for veterans with disabilities and children with autism. Survivors include her husband, Will Erskine of Richmond; two daughters, Aspen Erskine of Richmond, and Samantha (Preston) Pippin of Texas; grandson, Parker Pippin; four brothers: Wayne Edwin Feil of Warsaw, John (Regina) Feil of Braymer, Leonard (Julie) Feil of Cowgill, and James (Britni) Feil of Warsaw; several nieces and nephews also survive.
Fimreite	2026	Olin Charles Fimreite (92) of Whitehall, Wisconsin, passed away on March 31, 2026. He was born on August 25, 1933, to Theodore and Olinda (Schultz) Fimreite on the family farm a mile north of Eleva, Wisconsin. He was part of the first graduating class of Eleva-Strum High School, the first consolidated school in Wisconsin, and was a standout athlete for the Cardinals in both basketball and baseball. He was also a member of the Future Farmers of America. After high school, Olin remained on the family farm for two years before joining the U.S. Army. A Korean War veteran, he served as a "map maker" and took great joy in his time stationed in Japan. Upon returning home, he used the GI Bill to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. While there, he met Janice Marie Kaneen, whom he married on December 27, 1959. Olin briefly taught at Plum City High School before realizing education was not his calling. He then accepted a position with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, where he discovered his true professional passion, a love for the land. After one year, he moved to Alma, Wisconsin, to work with the Buffalo County SCS. In 1967, he accepted a promotion to Whitehall, Wisconsin, where he led the Trempealeau County SCS until his retirement in 1994. Never one to sit still; Olin remained active throughout his life. He and Janice established Fimreite's Sunset Gardens greenhouse, sharing their love of plants and soil with the community. He was an active member of the Lions Club and participated in several mission trips to Nicaragua. Olin served nearly 25 years on the Trempealeau County Board, where he was known as a fair and honorable leader who advocated for fiscally responsible solutions. An avid photographer, Olin won first place in the 1968 National Soil Conservation Society photography contest. Olin is survived by his wife, Janice; his four sons, Robert (Angie), Duane (Kathy), Gordon (Arlene), and Jeffrey (Anne); his grandchildren, Luke (Abigail), Tyler, Zachary, Lydia (Kevin), and Tessa; his great-granddaughters, Aurora and Gwen; his sister, Evelyn (Harland) Wegner; and sister-in-law Audrey (Henry).
Foster	2024	Clifford "Cliff" James Foster , (68) of Chelsea, Iowa, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family at his home on December 22, 2024. Cliff was born July 22, 1956, in Laurens, Iowa, the son of Jack E. and Beverly Marsh Foster. He and his brother Terry enlisted together in 1974, with Cliff enlisting in the United States Air Force and his brother Terry in the United States Marines. After serving Cliff enrolled in a vocational school in Jackson, Minnesota, for sales, marketing, and management. He was united in marriage to Catherine Kepler on July 25, 1981. Cliff worked as a soil conservation technician for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service where he designed and completed installation of conservation practices in Emmett, Poweshiek, and Tama counties in Iowa totaling 100 ponds for livestock water and recreation. He also ran miles of terraces for water and sediment control basins and over 200 acres of grazed waterways. Cliff was given the Golden Buffalo Award for his close work with the Meskwaki settlement. He always had a big garden, growing vegetables and selling them at Holiday Lake and also donating to local food banks for many years. He was also influential in GALFA (Grinnell Area Local Food Association). He dedicated many years to coaching little league baseball in Brooklyn. Cliff is survived by his children, Chad Foster, Jeremy Foster, both of Brooklyn, Iowa; Jessica (Brian) Wilcox of Prairie City, Iowa; John Foster of Knoxville; Iowa and an honorary son Eric Garringer of Brooklyn; eight grandchildren; his brothers Rod (Kathy) and Terry Foster and his sister Kay (Dave) Besaw. He is preceded in death by his wife Cathy in 2017.

Frerich	2026	Charles Patrick Frerich (68) of Rowena, Texas, passed away on April 1, 2026. Charles was born on August 1, 1957, to Arnold and Alice Frerich. On February 19, 1977, he married the love of his life, Linda Halfmann-Frerich, and together they built a life centered on faith, family, and hard work. Charles dedicated many years of service working with the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service as a Conservation Engineer Technician and received several awards over the past 30 years. After retirement, he operated heavy equipment for Buddy's Plant Plus. He served on the Ballinger ISD School Board for 23 years. Charles was also involved with the Earthmoving Contractors Association of Texas. He had a true passion for operating heavy equipment and "playing in the dirt", a job he genuinely loved. A man of deep faith, Charles was an active member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Rowena. He served the Lord in many ways, including as a member of the Knights of Columbus and the St. Joseph Choir. He was a volunteer firefighter on Rowena Volunteer Fire Department. He is survived by his loving wife, Linda Frerich; his children, Patrick Frerich (Wendy), Adam Frerich (Amanda), and Trisha Hunter (Jeff); his mother, Alice Frerich; grandchildren Isabella Frerich, Ty Frerich, Oliver Frerich, Eve Frerich, Carson Hunter, and Easton Hunter. His greatest joy in life was following his grandchildren to their activities and supporting them in all they did.
Helmey	2026	Senior Conservationist and Life Member Edgar Lebey Helmey (97) of Raleigh, North Carolina, passed away February 9, 2026. Ed was born in Effingham County, Georgia, on April 8, 1928, the son of the late Randall and Mamie Cook Helmey. He was married to Marilyn Howe Helmey for 58 years. She preceded him in death in 2015. Ed served as a pilot in the Air Force on active duty during the Korean and Vietnam wars, with other service in the Air Force Reserves and Air National Guard until retiring in 1978 as a Lieutenant Colonel with 28 years of service. Edgar worked for 32 years with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. He was a Civil Engineer in Gainesville, Georgia, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and as a Conservationist in Athens, Georgia, retiring there in 1994. He continued to live in Athens until October of 2004, when they moved to Raleigh, North Carolina. At the time of his death, he was a member of St. Philip Lutheran Church in Raleigh, having served on the Church Council. He was a life member of the Georgia Salzburger Society and a charter member of the Atlanta Chapter of the Georgia Salzburger Society. He was also a member of the Athens Rotary Club, the Military Officers Association of America, the Air Force Association, and the National Active and Retired Federal Employees. He was the author of a three-part book series covering his life titled, <i>Life As I Remember It</i> . Survivors include two sons, Donald (Julie) Helmey of Little River, South Carolina, Brian (Kim) Helmey of Charleston, South Carolina; four grandchildren Robert Helmey, Jordan Vinck, Christopher Helmey, and Kiersten Helmey; and two great grandchildren.
Hobson	2026	Life Member Stanley Neil Hobson (91) of Boise, Idaho, passed away March 29, 2026. Stan was born December 30, 1934, in the Panama Canal Zone to Robert and Helen Hobson. He joined the United States Navy following an early high school graduation in 1951. He proudly served four years' active duty aboard the aircraft carriers USS Oriskany and USS Sicily as a Navy photographer during the Korean War. After an honorable discharge, Stan returned to his parents' home in Roswell, New Mexico. He worked as a cameraman at a local television station until enrolling at New Mexico State University. He graduated with a master's degree in civil engineering. While working as a summer intern in Tucumcari, New Mexico, Stan met the cutest soda jerk in the town's only ice cream parlor, a local girl named Kathryn. They married on his birthday, in a snowstorm, in 1958. Stan worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, transferring and living in California, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, where he served as State Conservationist before becoming head of the NTC for the 13 Western states in Portland. He retired in 1992 after 32 years of service, after which Stan and Kathy returned to Boise. He also loved tennis, golf, photography, woodworking, reading, square-dancing with his favorite partner, and playing competitive games. He and Kathy travelled many miles throughout their beloved Southwestern desert, camping and exploring with family and friends. Stan was committed to volunteering. He was most proud of working with the Veterans History Project through the Warhawk Air Museum in Nampa, Idaho. Many years also were devoted to being a weekly docent at The Discovery Center of Idaho and serving on the citizens advisory board for the Idaho National Laboratory. Stanley is survived by his loved wife Kathy of 67 years, his sister Dottie of Utah, as well as his three children and their families of seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.
Hunt	2026	Keith Hunt (77) of Milo, Iowa, passed away on April 13, 2026, surrounded by his family. Keith was born in Maryville, Missouri, and was raised on the family farm south of Mt. Ayr, Iowa. He proudly served his country in the United States Army, enlisting in October 1969 and being honorably discharged in December 1970. During this time, he served in the Vietnam War. Keith worked in the contract administration staff in the Iowa State Office of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. He had a great sense of humor and a deep love for life's simple pleasures. Keith was a proud fan of the Iowa Hawkeyes, enjoyed spending time fishing, and cherished every moment he could playing pitch with his family. Above all, he loved his grandchildren dearly—they were truly his pride and joy. He also carried a deep respect for his fellow servicemen and women—any time he saw a veteran, he made it a point to thank them for their service and welcome them home. Keith will be greatly missed by his wife, Rhonda Hunt; children: Tim (Shawna) Hunt, Stacie (Bret) Lawler, and Jennifer (Matt) Hall; 10 grandchildren: Casey, Cory, Kelsey, Kourtne, Zachary, Kyle, Taylor, Kaleb, Emma, and Lincoln; eight great-grandchildren; siblings: Kenny Hunt and Marjorie Tully; along with many nieces, nephews, relatives, and friends. He was preceded in death by his son, Kelly Hunt.
Irinco	2026	Julita Geronimo "Julie" Irinco (77) of Salinas, California, passed away peacefully at home on February 15, 2026, surrounded by the family she loved so dearly. Julie was born October 18, 1948. She was married to Avelino Ultra Irinco who passed away in 2024. She worked at the United States Army Fort Ord Base as a Secretary before she worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in Salinas, first in the Salinas Field Office and then in the area office where she became the Area Administrative Assistant. She baked cakes adorned with care for birthdays and graduations, crafted decorations by hand, and became known for her intricate bouquets of folded money — small works of art that turned celebration into something unforgettable. She was a devoted mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, Auntie and friend, Julie lived a life rooted in generosity and joy. She is survived by her children, Avelino P. Irinco Jr., Lorenzo (Yolanda) G. Irinco, and Julee (Eric) L. Rarang; her cherished grandchildren, Jaysen, Marissa, Janine, Jaylyn, Eryk, Sophia, Ejaya, and her great grandson, Adan. To them, she was lovingly known as "Gammie" — a name spoken with warmth, laughter, and immeasurable love.
Jantz	2026	Donald R. Jantz (92) of Fairview, Oklahoma, passed away February 3, 2026. Don was born to Dave and Mabel (Koehn) Jantz November 4, 1933, in rural Kingfisher County near Okeene, Oklahoma. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Soil Science at Oklahoma A&M (Now Oklahoma State University) in 1956 and was a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor

		<p>Society. After college he took a job with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in Hugoton, Kansas. That job was short-lived for after a few weeks he was drafted into the United States Army at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. After Basic Training he remained at Fort Chaffee as a supply clerk instructor until he was discharged in 1958. While in the military the job with the Soil Conservation Service was reserved for him so he returned to that job now in Garden City, Kansas as a Soil Scientist. For the next 33 years he worked across the state living in 5 different towns, working in 19 different counties, plus a 30-day special assignment in Jamaica. Don retired in 1988 and shortly thereafter moved to Enid, Oklahoma residing there until moving to Fairview in 2021. He was a member of Enid First United Methodist Church. He attended there until he moved to the Fairview Fellowship Home. He rarely missed attending Sunday School at the nursing home. Don is survived by sister Jean Jantz of Yukon, Oklahoma; brother Darrel Jantz of Fairview, Oklahoma; and sister-in-law Donna Jantz of Cushing, Oklahoma; He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Robert Jantz and Gary Jantz; and sister-in-law Ellen Jantz.</p>
Judy	2019	<p>Senior Conservationist Harris W. Judy (89) of Davidson, North Carolina, passed away September 9, 2019. Harris was born in Maxwellton, West Virginia on May 4, 1930, to Roy W. Judy and Ula Blanche Judy. He received a scholarship to attend Greenbrier Military School in Lewisburg, West Virginia, which he attended for one year. He graduated from West Virginia University with a degree in Agricultural Engineering. He served in the United States Air Force for two years and in the Air Force Reserves for six years. He worked for 33 years with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. He was Watershed and River Basin staff leader and later in administration in the Washington, DC office. The last two years with Soil Conservation, Harris and Dottie moved to Jakarta, Indonesia where Harris worked with the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry. They retired to Fredericksburg, Virginia for 27 years. They were residents of the "Pines at Davidson" in North Carolina for the past four years. Harris was a member of Davidson College Presbyterian Church. Harris is survived by his wife of 65 years, Dorothea (Dottie Baker) Judy, his four children Barbara Davis (Bob) of Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Stephen Judy (Robin) of Fredericksburg, Virginia, Robin Wagner (David) of Clifton, Virginia, and Lisa Oliver (Perry) of Huntersville, North Carolina; 10 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.</p>
Medlin	2026	<p>Larry Dennis Medlin (79) of Salado, Texas, passed away at his home on April 21, 2026. Dennis was born on September 24, 1946, to L.H., Jr. and Betty (Gage) Medlin. He graduated from Texas Tech University in 1969 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Engineering. He married his high school sweetheart Marilyn McCall and they just celebrated 59 years of wonderful marriage in January. Larry worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for 34 years as an engineer and was the State Conservation Engineer when he retired in 2001. After he retired, he started his own company, M&E Consultants. Dennis loved watching his grandchildren's activities and his beloved Texas Tech Red Raiders. Dennis and Marilyn are member of the Restoration Fellowship in Holland, Texas. Mr. Medlin is survived by his wife Marilyn; two sons, Dwayne Lee Medlin (Brenda), and Jason Scott Medlin (Jenny) and a daughter Becky Parks (Steve). Also surviving are six grandchildren: Preston Jerome Medlin (Abby), Courtney D'Ann Gilbert (Jimmy), Chandler Dennis Medlin (Vicky), Colby Scott Medlin (Jazi), Megan LeAnn Surgi (Tyler) and Trace Capps Medlin (Jannie), as well as great grandchildren Hazel McCall Gilbert, GiGi Medlin, Davi Medlin and Diana Marie Surgi.</p>
Peterson	2026	<p>Senior Conservationist and Life Member John William Peterson, Jr. (89) of Burke, Virginia, passed away at his home on March 3, 2026. A resident of Burke since 1978, John was born in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, on July 25, 1936, to John and Gertrude (Hagerty). He graduated from South Dakota State University in 1959 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering and continued his education by obtaining a master's in public administration from Central Michigan University in 1973, and an Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) from LaSalle University in 1974. He was commissioned in the United States Army in 1959, retiring as an infantry colonel in 1991 after a 32-year active and active reserve career. John had a successful 40-year career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS), now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), where he planned and constructed watershed projects in Minnesota, Ohio, Indiana, and Arizona, before working nationally in Washington, D.C. He retired from the Senior Executive Service in 1994 as the Assistant He also served as the SCS Deputy Chief for Administration. He founded KEMPS Consultants, Inc. with expertise in natural resources public policy, water resources, and erosion and sediment control in April 1994. From 1994 to 2004 John also served as the Executive Director of the National Watershed Coalition (NWC). In that role, he was the National Watershed Coalition's representative in Washington, D.C., and was the initial drafter and a lead champion for the successful passage of PL 106-472, the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Act of 2000. That was the first major USDA water resources legislation passed in over 22 years, and it allowed USDA to assist watershed sponsors in bringing their dams up to current safety standards. John was recognized internationally for his expertise in watershed planning, dam safety, and erosion and sediment control. He directed USDA's Watershed Programs nationally for six years. He was a three-term president of the International Erosion Control Association (IECA), past IECA Mid-Atlantic Chapter President, and a Fellow of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS). He belonged to the Land Improvement Contractor's Association and served as a volunteer conference manger with the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. He served as a locally-elected director and chairman of the board of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District in Fairfax County, Virginia, and was also on the Board of Directors and past Board Chairman for EnviroCert International, Inc. John's life reflected his love of family, faith, travel, and sports. In addition to his professional accomplishments, John was deeply involved in the lives of his family and an active member of the community. Being an Eagle Scout himself, John served as both a Pack Leader and a Troop Leader for his sons. He enjoyed a variety of sports, coaching Little League Baseball and acting as a scorekeeper for the Lake Braddock Girl's Softball Team. He was known to root for local sports teams at all levels, including GMU basketball, the Potomac Cannon's/National's baseball team, and the Baltimore Ravens, not to mention the university sports teams of his children's alma maters. A lifelong Catholic, he was a parishioner at Nativity Catholic Church in Burke for over 47 years. John and Blanche enjoyed traveling, visiting a multitude of countries such as India, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, England, Italy, Spain, Slovenia, China, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, in addition to visiting 49 of the United States. He was a past director of the Potomac Nationals Baseball Booster Club and was an elected director and president of the Time-Share Owners Association of the Ocean Cove at Palmetto Dunes Resort at Hilton Head Island, SC. One of the things John was proudest of is the John W. Peterson Agricultural Scholarship established by the Organization of Professional Employees of the US Department of Agriculture (OPEDA). John is survived by his wife of 67 years, Blanche (Sorensen); their five children, Michael Peterson (Katie) of Manassas, Virginia; Patrick Peterson of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina; Kathie Bailey (Derek) of Leesburg, Virginia; Shannon Dube (Jeremy) of Cumberland, Maine; and Erin Peterson of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; and his seven cherished grandchildren, whose</p>

		professional, academic, and athletic accomplishments he actively followed and cheered on: Megan, Lilly, Emily, Sofia, Jack, William, and Ryan.
Pinkerton	2026	Life Member Paul Harvey Pinkerton, Jr. (82) of Marble, Pennsylvania, passed away unexpectedly at the Clarion Hospital following a sudden illness, on March 18, 2026. Harvey was born June 8, 1943, in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, son of the late Paul Harvey Pinkerton and Carrie Margaret Brink Pinkerton. On August 23, 1969, he married Victoria Lee "Vickie" Hise at the First Church of God in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Harvey began his career with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service as a student trainee while attending Pennsylvania State University in State College, Pennsylvania. Upon graduation in 1965, with a degree in Agricultural Mechanization, he became a full-time employee in Mercer County, Pennsylvania as a Soil Conservationist. During his career he was assigned to Jefferson County (District Conservationist), Tioga County (Soil Conservationist), Susquehanna County (District Conservationist), Clarion County (Rural Abandoned Mine Program Specialist), and ended his 40 plus year career in Clarion County as the Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator (RC&D) with the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service, retiring in 2004. As RC&D Coordinator, he was very proud of his work raising funds and coordinating the installation of dry hydrants in Northwest Pennsylvania. He was a member of the Faith Lutheran Church in Venus, Pennsylvania. Harvey was a founding member of the North Clarion Players, presenting numerous musicals at the Verna Leith Sawmill Theatre at Cook Forest State Park, where he had the opportunity to exhibit his terpsichorean talents. He was also a horologist. Survivors include Vickie, his wife of 56 years; two children: Paul David Pinkerton of Cascade, Maryland, and Cheryl Dianne Bailey (Matthew) of Fryburg, Pennsylvania; grandchildren: Kayla Nikol Hendrickson and Jordyn LeeAnne Bailey, of Pennsylvania, and granddaughter, Brittany Bailey and great-granddaughter, Skyler, of Massachusetts.
Ricks	2026	Judith Annette Lewis Ricks (76) of Frankfort, Kentucky, passed away on March 21, 2026. She was the wife of retired Soil Conservation Technician Robert C (Bob) Ricks, Jr., who worked for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. Judith was born on May 15, 1949, in LaGrange, Georgia, to the late Wilbur M. and Dora H. Lewis. She became the first in her family to attend and graduate from college, earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Tuskegee Institute in 1971 and 1973, respectively. In 1975, she relocated to Kentucky and began her distinguished career with Kentucky State University in the Division of Land Grant and Cooperative Extension. A Registered Dietitian and Licensed Nutritionist, Judith served as an Area Specialist in Family Development and Management until her retirement in 2010. Judith leaves to cherish her memory her devoted husband of 48 years, Robert C. Ricks, Jr.; her loving daughter, Elaina B. Ricks of Aldie, Virginia; and her beloved siblings: Wilbur Joyce Lewis of LaGrange, Georgia; Milton Lewis (Hea) of Columbus, Ohio; Cheryl Wright (Gary) of Denver, Colorado; Carol Faye Lewis of LaGrange, Georgia; and Willard Charles Lewis of College Park, Georgia.
Riddling	2026	Nyla "Beth" Riddling (85) of Sherwood, Arkansas passed away peacefully on April 7, 2026 surrounded by her loved ones. Beth was born on September 11, 1940, to Sarah "Ellen" and Robert "Earl" Lynch in England, Arkansas. She and Bill were married on October 17, 1958. Their loving marriage continued for 67 beautiful years. She was a dedicated employee for Kelly Girl and for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service where she worked in the Budget and Finance section of the Little Rock State Office. She was a longtime loyal member of the Kellogg Valley Baptist Church and deeply loved her church family. Beth was truly a beautiful, elegant, kind, and loving woman to all. Her gentle and nurturing nature continued throughout her entire life. She was fair, selfless, and adored by everyone that had the honor of knowing her. She is survived by her husband of 67 years, Billy "Bill" Joe Riddling, two daughters, Sonya Edwards (Bobby) of Sherwood, Tamara Ivey (Terry) of Jacksonville, Arkansas; five grandchildren, MacKenzie Phillips (Will), Ericka Ivey, McCall Reynolds, Amber Erickson (Travis), Chase Wilson, and seven great grandchildren.
Ridenour	2026	Willis J. Ridenour (91) of Largo, Florida (formerly of Parkersburg, West Virginia) passed away on March 15, 2026. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Janice Foster Ridenour. He was born December 3, 1934, in Stone Creek, Ohio and graduated from Stone Creek High School. He graduated from The Ohio State University, and he loved his Buckeyes; he received his master's degree from Oklahoma University. Willis spent his young life working on the family dairy farm and after graduating college, he spent 39 years working for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. This included several years as a successful Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator. He was an Area Conservationist when he retired in 1994. After retirement, he volunteered for several organizations in Parkersburg. Between the ages of 50 to 85 years old, he was an avid runner completing numerous races in the area as well as 10 Boston Marathons. In addition to his wife, Willis is survived by 1 son, Gene (Christy) McCutcheon, of Jacksonville, Florida; 5 daughters, Linda Ridenour (Jeff) Long of Longmont, Colorado; Lisa Ridenour Wilson of South Weber, Utah; Julie Ridenour (Ken Harcrow) of Arlington, Texas; Julie McCutcheon (Jon) Law of Parkersburg, West Virginia; Sarah Ridenour (Doug) Robinson of Little Elm, Texas.; grandchildren: Zachary (Cynthia) McCutcheon; Brittany (Orlando) McCutcheon Redrino; Joshua (Jessica) Long; McKenna Long (Travis) Chambers; Theo Ridenour; Amelia Ridenour; Andrew (Brittney) Wilson; Linda Wilson (R.J.) Perry; Courtney Law (Cameron) Resuta; Luca Robinson and Jude Robinson; and great grandchildren: Cannon, Jace, and Paisley Wilson; Wren Chambers; Collin and Mateo McCutcheon; Quinn and Hayden Perry; Charlotte Resuta.
Setness	2025	Senior Conservationist and Life Member Duane Kenneth Setness (92) of Salem, Oregon, passed away peacefully on September 28, 2025. Duane was born on July 2, 1933, in Silverton, Oregon, the only child of Kenneth and Anna Setness. He earned a degree from the University of Oregon and proudly served in the United States Army in 1955 at Herzo Base in Herzogenaurach, Germany. In 1959, Duane married Audrey Pettengill in Lebanon, Oregon. The couple lived in Oregon City and Medford, where they raised their three children: Ron, Diane, and Brian. After retiring in 1989, Duane and Audrey moved to Salem. Duane devoted 30 years to a career as a Soil Scientist with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service, reflecting his lifelong love of the outdoors. In retirement, he and Audrey enjoyed traveling with an RV club and were active members of First Christian Church, volunteering with Meals on Wheels and Marion Polk Food Share. Known for his storytelling, love of nature, and passion for gardening, Duane touched the lives of many. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Audrey; and his son, Brian. He is survived by his children, Ron and Diane, and three grandchildren.
Setness	2024	Audrey Diane Setness (87) of Salem, Oregon, passed away peacefully on July 16, 2024. She was the wife of Senior Conservationist and Life Member Duane Kenneth Setness, retired soil scientist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Audrey was born on September 3, 1936, in Port Angeles, Washington, the only child of Orville and Virginia Pettengill. She earned a degree in Education from the University of Oregon in 1958. She taught elementary school for two years before marrying Duane Setness in 1959 in Lebanon, Oregon. They lived in Oregon City and Medford, where Audrey

		devoted most of her life to raising their family. Upon retirement, she and Duane relocated to Salem, Oregon. Audrey found great joy in the outdoors, gardening, baking, and holiday gatherings. She also had a deep love for animals and nature. In retirement, she and Duane enjoyed RV travel with an RV club and were active in the First Christian Church, particularly through her volunteer work with Meals on Wheels and Marion Polk Food Share.
Sharp	2026	Senior Conservationist William Curtis Sharp (96) of Castle Hayne, North Carolina, passed away at his home on March 30, 2026. Curtis, as he was known, was born on October 31, 1929, in Frost, Pocahontas County, West Virginia to John Mitchell Sharp and Edyth Morrison Sharp. In 1949 Curtis entered Potomac State College, then completed his requirements for a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy at West Virginia University in 1953. In 1955 he graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with a Master of Science degree in Soil Physics. Later that year he entered the military and was honorably discharged in 1957. On October 5, 1957, Curtis married Peggy Louise Bell. During summers while in college he was employed as a student trainee with the USDA-Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in Greenbrier and Pocahontas counties, and after completing his military service, took a permanent position with them in East Aurora, New York. Except for two and half years of employment with The State University of New York, Curtis' career spanned over 40-years with SCS, (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service or NRCS), in various locations, including New York, New Jersey, California, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C, until his retirement in 1996. His employment concentrated on the development of new plants and related technology for the conservation of natural resources. During his last 20 years of service, he was a Regional Plant Materials Specialist (PMS) in Broomall, Pennsylvania and in Washington, D.C., he directed the Plant Materials Program as a National PMS. His most rewarding accomplishments were the development of plants and technology for stabilizing east coast sand dunes and tidal stream shorelines, and his efforts in the Service's program redirection during his last ten years in D.C. Following retirement Curtis published several books regarding the history of the Plant Materials Program (Conservation Plants - A USDA Success Program.) and about 20 genealogical books on his parents and wife's families, plus six books on the genealogical history of 100 Pocahontas Pioneers. His busy retirement also included collaborating with fellow plant materials folks for 13 annual botany tours (2008-2024) known as "Grass Treks" serving as key editor of the reports. Preceding him in death were his wife of 61 years, Peggy Louise (Bell) in 2018. Curtis is survived by his four children: Mitchell Clifford Sharp, Downingtown, Pennsylvania; Rebecca Bell Ward, Castle Hayne, North Carolina; Melissa Lee Terrels, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Johanna Dene Sharp, Jupiter, Florida; 11 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. Curtis will be buried on top of a hill near Frost, Pocahontas County WV, beside Peggy in the cemetery established in 1912 by his grandfather and grandmother William Alexander Gilmer Sharp and Nancy Elizabeth Arbogast Sharp. It is on the property where he and his father and grandfather were born.
Smith	2026	Senior Conservationist and Life Member Burns "Ed" Edward Smith (91) of Columbia, Missouri passed away on February 9, 2026. Ed was born October 14, 1934, in rural Reynolds County, Missouri to the late Areville and Muriel (Young) Smith. On December 26, 1955, he married Judith Whitaker in Salem, Missouri. He moved to Columbia with his young family in June 1962, and this is where he established his life and home until his final day. Ed worked for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service for many years as an engineering technician. After retirement, he went back to work for several years for Bartlett & West, Inc. Ed was a member of Memorial Baptist Church for 63+ years and served in many roles there. Ed enjoyed traveling, especially to Colorado. After retirement he and Judith spent many winters in Avon Park, Florida, and made lots of great memories there. He enjoyed fishing whenever he could, but his favorite hobby was golf. He played as often as he could, any time of year. In his later life, he liked to challenge himself to have his golf score match his age, and he accomplished this goal many times. He was still playing golf into the Fall of his 91st year. He also got great joy from spending time with his grandchildren and great grandchildren. Ed was preceded in death by his loving wife, Judith, and his daughter, Christa Schilb. He is survived his daughter, Cindy (Steve); five grandchildren, Mallory, Joel, Justin, Kalie, Aaron; and seven great grandchildren.
Twitty	2023	Julia Drodody Twitty (88) of Fort Worth, Texas, passed away on September 4, 2023. She was the wife of Walter Kenneth Twitty Jr, retired engineer at the South National Technology Center for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Julia attended college at Texas Women's University, Southern State College and Louisiana Tech University where she earned her degree Elementary Education in 1961. Julia taught school in Colorado, Arkansas, and The American School in Lahore Pakistan and Montessori Children's House in Fort Worth, Texas. Julia and Kenneth lived in Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Lahore Pakistan, Rome Italy, Maryland and Texas. She was preceded in death by her daughter Carole. She is survived by her husband, Walter; daughter, Diane Williams; grandchildren, Michelle Sanders, Julia Parr, Carole Graves and Jordan Williams; great grandchildren, Kenneth Sanders, Elaura Sanders, Victoria Sanders, Stella Graves, Beatrice Graves and Mieshka Ann Parr.
Wiggins	2023	Marjorie Love Jackson Wiggins (88) of Raleigh, North Carolina, passed away December 26, 2023, surrounded by her family. Marjorie was the wife of Senior Conservationist and Life Member Talmadge J. Wiggins, retired Area Conservationist for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Marjorie was born in Sampson County, North Carolina on August 12, 1935, to Jasper Dempsey Jackson and Florrie Marshburn Jackson. She was a graduate and supporter of Meredith College. Marjorie lived her life in North Carolina - settling back in Raleigh over the last 3 years. She served as Executive Officer of the Wilkes County Homebuilders Association and was a successful real estate broker and property manager. She and husband Talmadge enjoyed square dancing, storytelling events, her "Little House" on the Blue Ridge Parkway, and North Carolina State football games. Marjorie is survived by her husband of 67 years, Talmadge Wiggins, a daughter, Lisa Wiggins Taylor, and a son, Bryan Wiggins (Annette) all of Raleigh, and a granddaughter, Sarah Wiggins, of Stockholm, Sweden.
Yolton	2024	Elva Mae Yolton (85) of Canastota, New York, passed away on August 5, 2024, in the Oneida Health Hospital. Elva was the wife of Life Member William P. Yolton, retired Physical Scientist Technician for the USDA-Soil Conservation Service. Elva was born in Madrid, New York on September 22, 1938, the daughter of Earl and Elva Moulton. She married William P. Yolton on August 17, 1957. Prior to her retirement, Elva was employed with GNC Stores in Syracuse, New York as a manager and had previously been employed by General Electric. Surviving besides her husband William are her two daughters, Cheryl (Joel Regis) Sgarlata of Canastota and Felna (Joe) Sweet of Syracuse; her two grandchildren, Ty Smith and Jason (Kaitlyn) Sgarlata; and her three great-grandchildren, Brooklyn Smith, John Sgarlata and Will Sgarlata. She was predeceased by a granddaughter, Amberlee Sgarlata in 2023.

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