

An organization of retirees of the U.S. Geological Survey, whose purpose is to keep its members in touch with each other and their former agency.

President's message

Greetings USGS Retirees! Happy New Year and welcome to the Winter 2025 edition of the USGS Retirees newsletter. This edition contains an inspirational message of appreciation and gratitude from USGS Director Dave Applegate, reminders about our member survey and payment of overdue dues, announcements about the new USGS retirees who are joining our ranks, member events and happenings, and of course, memorials to those who have recently passed. Speaking of memorials, in January the Nation laid to rest former President Carter. Say what you might about Carter's presidency, but the man was committed to service. None of us had as much career-impact as a President, but through our service with the USGS we all contributed, at least in some small way, to more efficient water management, a healthier environment, and a wealthier Nation. Celebration of our individual and group contributions and relationships is an ongoing theme of the USGS Retiree's Organization. Helping those who fill in behind us to do even more is part of our commitment. That is the reason for our scholarship fund, and this is the time of year in which we accept applications for hydro-tech scholarships which interested persons can learn about here (URL: <http://wrdretirees.org/scholarships.htm>).

The Board continues to think through the needs and preferences of the members. Accordingly, we have decided to extend our member survey, initiated last quarter, to gather more of your feedback and to gauge your interest in some potential new activities. The survey will end March 1, 2025. You will find a paper copy in the back, and enclosed, or the web-based version here (<https://forms.gle/LtMebEoR2M7J1uGG8>) or take a picture of this QR code:



The survey is short and should take about 10 minutes to complete. Your answers will help us prioritize ongoing and future activities, including the direction of the scholarship program. If the survey doesn't suit your fancy, you can always send the Board an email or hardcopy note if you have thoughts to share about our organization. We need your input and participation. Dues in 2025 remain only \$10/year and are payable as of January 1. Whether or not you are behind on your dues, please send them soon. To make payment easier we have created a Zelle account (DuesUSGSRetirees@gmail.com) which you can access online through your bank. Of course, hardcopy checks can still be sent to our P.O. Box in Herndon. Remember, there is an amnesty program that caps back dues at \$50 so long as they are paid by March 1, 2025. (We are also delighted to receive contributions for the scholarship program via this Zelle account or paper check.)

I am excited to report that the Board has begun updating the USGS Retirees webpage. The new page will have a fresh look and more information about the USGS, the USGS Retirees Organization, and your USGS friends and former colleagues. We hope to roll it out next quarter.

Rick Treece and his team continue to plan for the 2025 reunion (September 30 – October 3) in Tuscaloosa. You can reserve your room by going to: <https://group.embassysuites.com/a7a9iw> and mention "USGS Retiree Reunion."

We are looking forward to seeing you there. - Robert

Address:
USGS Retirees
P.O. Box 280
Herndon, VA 20172-0280
Web Page: <http://wrdretirees.org/>
Email: usgsretirees@gmail.com

Newsletter Staff:
Editor: Jeff Stoner
Layout Editor: Joanne Taylor
NR: Debbie McLean
SR: John Clarke
CR: James (Jim) Bennett
WR: Matt Larsen

Regional Directors:
Barb Ryan, Northeast
Ed Martin, Southeast
Bob Swanson, Central
Sandy Williamson, Western

National Officers:
Robert Mason, President
Phil Turnipseed, Vice President
Kate Flynn, Secretary
Cathy Hill, Treasurer
Herb Freiburger, Archivist

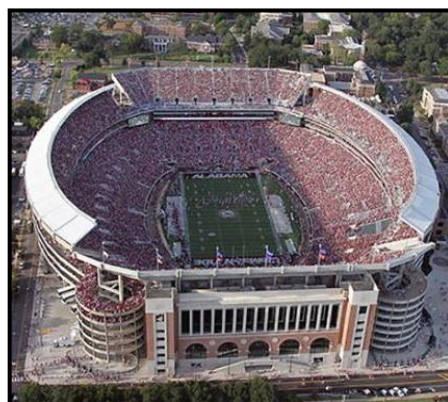


USGS RETIREES' REUNION 2025

Reserve the dates
September 30 - October 3, 2025, in

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

Take some time to visit and reunite with your friends and former USGS colleagues in historic Tuscaloosa, AL. Enjoy a detailed tour of the newly built, state-of-the-art, **USGS Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility (HIF)**, including its extensive new laboratory and flow tank testing capabilities. Also tour the **National Water Center (NWC)**, which is a first-in-the-world facility that will enable NOAA in partnership with other agencies, including the USGS, to deliver a new generation of water predictions and services to the Nation. Explore the **University of Alabama** campus, including the **Paul W. Bryant Museum and Bryant-Denny Stadium** (note the Alabama Crimson Tide football team will be home to play Vanderbilt University on October 4). We'll have an optional golf outing, and **The Riverwalk** (nearby) is a two-mile path along the Black Warrior River that winds past shops and eateries. Stay in the [Embassy Suites](#) conveniently located in downtown Tuscaloosa. Tuscaloosa is just 1 hour's drive from Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport or 3 hours from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Currently, there are no shuttle services available from either airport to Tuscaloosa for the arrival and departure dates of the reunion.



SIGN-UP FOR THE 2025 REUNION NOW!!

Hotel room/venue information:

Embassy Suites by Hilton Tuscaloosa – Alabama Downtown
2410 University Boulevard, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401
(205) 561-2500

Link for reservations is open now: <https://group.embassysuites.com/a7a9iw> . You can also enter the code **CES90X** under "*Special Rates*" to access the available rooms at the reunion room rate of \$160/night (includes taxes and fees). **NOTE:**

- The Registration Form (see page 6) does not include the Hotel Room Reservation (see link above).
- Based on room and rate availability, the hotel may offer a reunion block rate 2 days before/after the reunion if you want to extend your stay.
- No cost for hotel reservations or cancellations (up to 48 hours before arrival).

Tour/Activity Options for the 2025 Tuscaloosa Reunion



Tuesday, September 30 – For those interested in golf, we will arrange for tee times at the Ol' Colony Golf Complex, home of the University of Alabama Golf Team. For those willing to travel to the Birmingham area, there are 2 courses of the 12 courses comprising the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail there: Oxmoor Valley and Ross Bridge. Green fees are \$59 for 18 holes including cart (Monday-Friday) for seniors 62+, \$79 for weekends; \$39 for those choosing to walk.

Wednesday, October 1 – National Water Center (NWC) and USGS Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility (HIF) tours, include box lunch and bus transportation (if signed up). The NWC will strengthen the Nation's water forecast capabilities for floods and droughts, improve preparedness for water-related disasters, and inform high-value water decisions at the local, state, and national levels. With capacity for a staff of 200, the interagency personnel of the NWC include employees from NOAA, USGS, FEMA, visiting scientists and contractors.



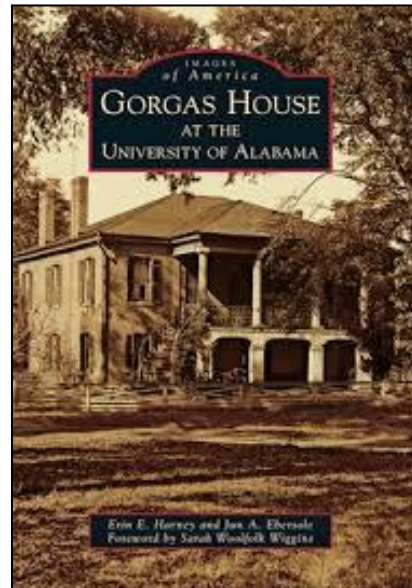
The 92,000 sq ft **USGS HIF** supports the water-resource monitoring efforts of USGS and other scientists by providing quality assured hydrologic equipment and instrumentation support. The new 8.8-acre home starts a new chapter for the USGS facility, which originated in 1970 and was previously housed at Stennis Space Center in Bay St. Louis, MS. A team of about 50 USGS employees will work alongside university students and staff.



The University of Alabama where tradition meets innovation. A trip to Tuscaloosa isn't complete without a visit to campus and all the wonderful museums and galleries. Campus tours showcase stunning grounds, top-tier academic facilities and living spaces from historic architecture to modern amenities. Visit the Gorgas House Museum -- the oldest building on campus.



The Paul W. Bryant Museum exhibits artifacts and memorabilia that trace the long history of University of Alabama football. State-of-the-art displays enhanced by videos highlighting great players, plays, and games are produced from the museum's archives. Bus transport available.



Saban Field at Bryant-Denny Stadium (100,077 capacity) - Visit the 8th largest stadium in the United States (constructed in 1929 at a cost of \$196,000) where Bear Bryant and Nick Saban each won 12 national championships. Tours are offered Monday through Friday at 11am (except Fridays before home football games). The first 35 individuals who purchase tickets will be accommodated for each tour. Tickets may be purchased online beginning one month prior to the desired date. The public tour price is \$30 per person; the group-rate price is \$15 for those buying 15 or more tickets. Bus transport is available.



The **Alabama Museum of Natural History**, located in Smith Hall on the University of Alabama campus, is the oldest museum in the State, founded in 1831. The exhibits depict the natural diversity of Alabama from the Age of Dinosaurs, the Coal Age, and the Ice Age.

Other Major Attractions in Tuscaloosa and other cities across the State:

1. **The University of Alabama** (informally known as **Alabama, UA, the Capstone, or Bama**) is a public research university established in 1820 and opened to students in 1831. The campus is nationally renowned for its beauty, architectural design, immaculate upkeep, award-winning student housing and first-class academic buildings and laboratories. The university has a rich history and was a center of activity during the American Civil War and civil rights movement.
2. **University of Alabama Football** – The University is perhaps best known for its athletic achievements, particularly UA's football program. The Crimson Tide is among the most storied and decorated football programs in NCAA history. Beginning play in 1892, the program is the third winningest program in college football history with 974 official victories. The Tide claims 18 national championships, 34 conference championships, and has made an NCAA-record 78 postseason bowl appearances. The program has 36 seasons with 10 wins or more and has 46 bowl victories, both NCAA records. The team's rallying cry is "Roll Tide." The team will be home to host Vanderbilt on October 4. Tickets can be purchased on SeatGeek, StubHub, Vivid Seats or the UA Ticket Office.
3. **Moundville Archeological Park** - on the Black Warrior River 18 miles south of Tuscaloosa. The second-largest U.S. site of its era, Moundville preserves 29 massive flat-topped earthen mounds for ceremonial structures and the homes of nobles. The 326-acre site has a museum, laboratory, and nature trail. <https://moundville.museums.ua.edu/>
4. **The River Walk** - is a stunning trail that travels along the banks of the Black Warrior River. The pathway offers many shady areas for a break from the heat, and there are shops and restaurants for people to enjoy during their visit. <https://visittuscaloosa.com/tuscaloosas-outdoor-adventures-the-riverwalk/>
5. **Mercedes-Benz Factory Tour** – The Mercedes-Benz Plant Tuscaloosa houses the only Mercedes-Benz Museum outside of Germany with several vintage Mercedes vehicles on display. Reservations are required for plant tours. Museum admission is free, but there is a charge for the tour when available. <https://mbusi.com/about/contact-info/visitor-center-museum-tours/>
6. **Barber Vintage Motorsport Museum** (Birmingham) -- See more than a thousand mint-condition motorcycles on exhibit at one time. The Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum is recognized by Guinness World Records as the world's largest motorcycle collection. With over 1,800 motorcycles spanning over 100 years of production, the Barber collection represents 220 different manufacturers from 22 countries. The museum also features the world's most extensive collection of Lotus cars, plus an assortment of other rare and unusual cars. With stunning views of the Barber Motorsports Road Course, this high energy environment makes for a one-of-a-kind field trip! Guided Field Trips are prearranged and take place on weekdays. There are several different tours to choose from. <https://www.barbermuseum.org/field-trips/>
7. **U.S. Space & Rocket Center** (Huntsville) -- The State's most visited attraction and the largest space museum in the world: the [U.S. Space & Rocket Center](https://www.rocketcenter.com/) (USSRC). The USSRC is a Smithsonian Affiliate and the Official Visitor Center for NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. <https://www.rocketcenter.com/>
8. **The Tuscaloosa Civil Rights Trail** -- The story of civil rights movement illustrates how the courageous efforts of many foot soldiers broke down the color barrier over the years. The trail is a self-guided walking tour through downtown Tuscaloosa with a total of 18 stops.

REGISTRATION FORM -- USGS RETIREES' 2025 REUNION – Tuscaloosa, AL

Tuesday, September 30 through Friday, October 3, 2025

Complete and print this form, and make check payable to "USGS Retirees Reunion 2025," mail both the form and the check to: USGS Retirees Reunion c/o Ed Martin, 1106 Beth Meadow Ct, Lawrenceville, GA 30043.

[Questions? Rick Treece - mwtreece@aol.com or Ed Martin - edmartin.ga@gmail.com]

Note: This Registration Form does not include the hotel room reservation at the **Embassy Suites by Hilton Tuscaloosa – Alabama Downtown**. To get the special room rate of \$160/night, you are encouraged to use the code **CES90X** under "Special Rates" at the hotel website to access the available rooms at the reunion room rate OR simply click on the following link: <https://group.embassysuites.com/a7a9iw>

REUNION REGISTRATION – Deadline August 1, 2025 - Refunds are available prior to the deadline.

Print first and last name(s) as you'd like on name tag(s):

RETIREE: _____ SPOUSE: _____ YEAR Retired _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

REGISTRATION FEE

Number of guests _____ @ \$ 85 per person=

Includes Hospitality Room, beer, wine, snacks each day, and transportation to/from reunion events

Tuesday, September 30, 2025: Registration table open from 3 to 6 PM. Hospitality Room opens 3 to 5:30 PM. Informal reunion ice-breaker reception at hotel Happy Hour bar 5:30 to 7 PM. Hospitality Room will reopen 8 PM.

Golf outing: at UA's *Ol' Colony Golf Complex* or *Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail course*. Transportation will not be provided. Contact Vic Stricklin (vicstricklin@yahoo.com) for info on reserving a space and possible ridesharing. Pay onsite at the course clubhouse. Leave Hotel about 8:30 AM. Return to Hotel about 2 PM.

Wednesday, October 1, 2025: NWC and HIF tours: Tours & presentations include box lunch. Possible gage or instrumentation demo at Black Warrior River. Leave Hotel via UA campus bus at 9 AM. Return 4 PM.

Number of box lunches _____ @ \$19/box=

Thursday, October 2, 2025 (Choose one or both tours): Capacities may be limited and filled based on data of registration. Refunds will be given for application received after maximum capacities have been reached.

Tour 1: University of Alabama Campus Tour – The walking/driving tour starts with a drive around the perimeter of campus, including a visit to the Rec Center, and concludes with a walking tour of the quad. This tour lasts approximately 75 minutes. Highlights of tour includes Denny Chimes, President's Home, and Gorgas Library. Leave hotel at 8:30 AM via UA Crimson Ride bus. Return at 11:30 AM.

Number for tour: _____ @ \$10/person=

Tour 2: Paul W. Bryant Museum and Museum of Natural History – Each museum tour takes approximately one hour. Leave the hotel at 1 PM via bus. Return about 4:30 PM.

Number for tour: _____ @ \$25/person=

Banquet: 6 to 9 PM in the hotel Ballroom. The Hospitality Room will be closed during the banquet and reopened afterwards. Dinner will be buffet style. Note: Buffet dinner will include salad, bread, beef and chicken entrée, and dessert. The drinks available will be water, iced tea and coffee. A vegetarian option will be available upon request.

Number for Banquet: _____ @ \$55 per person (Price includes all taxes, tip) =

TOTAL COST (including tours) / MAKE CHECK OUT FOR THIS AMOUNT:

Time for a Change

(Letter to All Employees, January 17, 2025)



Dear USGS Colleagues: I want to start by saying thank you – for your service to the Nation, for your commitment to the USGS mission, and for the incredible support you have shown me during the past four years. With the arrival of a new administration, I will be stepping down as USGS Director to make way for an eventual new appointee once that person is nominated and confirmed by the Senate. I want to thank Cindy Lodge, Deputy Director for Operations, for representing us on the transition team for the Department of the Interior (DOI) and to thank Sarah Ryker, Associate Director for Energy & Mineral Resources, for leading our briefings to the incoming administration's Agency Review Team for DOI. Following the acceptance of my resignation, Sarah will serve as the Acting Director and will remain in that capacity until such time as the new administration announces any changes. I have tremendous faith in Sarah's leadership as demonstrated in her current role as AD and lead for oversight of the Bureau's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act investments, and in previous roles across several parts of the bureau starting with the Washington Water Science Center. She also brings deep experience at both DOI and the White House, so she is well prepared to help us all navigate the waters ahead.

I will not be going far. Having come into this appointment from a career Senior Executive Service position, I am in the fairly unusual situation for an appointee of having a right of return to the civil service. I have chosen to exercise that right and fortunately will be able to do so at the USGS. Starting next week, I will begin serving as USGS Chief Scientist, which means trying to meet the high bar set by Geoff Plumlee, who retired from that role at the end of December. I want to express appreciation to Carolyn Ruppel, who has been serving as the Senior Science Advisor to the Chief Scientist since 2022 and who graciously agreed to temporarily act as Chief Scientist following Geoff's retirement.

Although my role will change, I remain committed to doing all I can to serve and support you with a focus on the health of our science mission and fostering collaboration across our organization. I'm already looking forward to holding future Science Lightning Talks, town halls, and many other opportunities to engage with our science and scientists.

When I moved into the Director's office, I taped on the door the USGS offer letter I received in the summer of 1989 for a GS-5 position with the term "not to exceed two months." That summer in Golden, CO, at what is now the Geologic Hazards Science Center, left me completely enamored with the people and mission of the USGS. It took me 15 years to get back to the USGS, and I've stuck around for just under 21 years. I have loved every job I've had here since that internship, and I have most definitely loved this one. With a supportive Department, strong Executive Leadership Team, committed partners, and the amazing work that all of you do, I might admit to having had some hard days in this job, but I haven't had any bad ones.

Four years ago, as I stepped into this role, I pledged to do my best to serve you and the American people, to keep the lines of communication open, and to welcome your input on how we can achieve our mission together. Every day since then, I have tried to do just that. It's not always easy in a far-flung organization, but with the help of our communications team and many others, we have kept up a steady stream of virtual town halls, Leaders Blog posts, *NeedToKnow* digests, shared ELT notes, and other ways to connect. But nothing beats meeting people in person. When I first came back to the USGS in 2004, my predecessor running the earthquake program, John Filson, advised me thus: Whenever the bureaucratic grind was getting to me, I should catch a plane and

visit one of our science centers, both as a reminder of why we do what we do and to feel the energy and purpose in the people. I took that wisdom to heart then and very much so in my time in the Director's seat. Once the pandemic eased and we started moving about the country again, whatever the purpose of a given trip, I tried to include a visit to a science center or other USGS office. Starting in the summer of 2022, I made it to more than 60 centers and offices in 21 states, and the only real regret of my tenure as Director is I didn't get to visit more. I recognize such visits can be disruptive, and I am very grateful to all of you who took the time to walk me through your lab, take me in the field, explain a poster presentation, and just generally show me the passion for what you do and your commitment to do it right.

Those visits showed me that the science being done across our centers varies quite a bit (Dave the geologist meets sea lampreys!), but the consistent thread is that partners and communities rely on the irreproachable and irreplaceable data and analysis provided by the public servants of the USGS. The partnerships that you have created and nurtured are more important than ever – they can help tell the story of our value to the Nation in ways that we cannot do on our own.

A major priority for me as Director has been to foster efforts to make our science useful to those who need it the most, ensuring our actionable information is accessible to all. I have seen great strides achieved through increased partnerships with minority-serving institutions, expanded Tribal engagement, efforts to help the whole Government learn how to interweave Indigenous Knowledge into decision making, making co-production a key element in how we plan and execute our science, and much more. All of this was possible because there was a strong foundation of enthusiasm and willingness at our science centers and among our regional and mission area leadership to make this happen.

Much has been accomplished over these four years. The USGS has made major investments in foundational geoscience data through the BIL, collecting data and producing analyses that will be used for critical minerals, groundwater, hazards, and many other purposes for generations. We also received funding from DOI and multiple other agencies to deliver science that could help shape their BIL investments in ecosystem restoration, wildfire mitigation, and cleaning up legacy pollution. We completed the first-ever USGS strategic plan for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and the USGS played a key role in developing new scientific integrity policies for DOI and the entire Government. We have taken steps to rebuild our scientific and science support workforce, bringing new faces and new energy into the organization. We have made progress in rebuilding our scientific infrastructure so that world-class science can take place in state-of-the-art facilities, not under blue tarps. In all these areas, much work remains to be done, but we have begun.

Serving as the 18th Director, I have a profound sense of the history of this organization and the many ways it has evolved through time. The USGS was founded in 1879 to meet a need for understanding the natural resources and mapping a physically expanding Nation. Today, the expansion is in population, the economy, and technology. As the Nation grapples with increasingly complex environmental-, resource-, and public-safety issues, the need for our practical, pragmatic science has never been greater. It is an enduring mission to deliver science to inform decision making. People need us, and we need you. I'm glad that you chose public service at the USGS. Thanks for everything and I will see you around the Survey!

Dave Applegate
Director

Unlocking Arkansas' Hidden Treasure: USGS Uses Machine Learning to Show Large Lithium Potential in the Smackover Formation

(USGS National News Release, October 21, 2024)

RESTON, Va. — Using a combination of water testing and machine learning, a USGS-led study estimated between 5 and 19 million tons of lithium reserves are located beneath southwestern Arkansas. If commercially recoverable, the amount of lithium present would meet projected 2030 world demand for lithium in car batteries nine times over.

This map of the U.S. shows an inset area displaying highlighted areas for the Smackover Formation and sampling area. The Smackover formation (highlighted in yellow) covers the southern to eastern portion of Texas, southern portion of Arkansas, the upper half of Louisiana and some eastern areas, southern half of Mississippi, southwest area of Alabama, and portions of the Florida panhandle. The sampling area is located in the lower portion of Arkansas (highlighted with red stripes).



The study's novel methodology, carried out collaboratively by the USGS and the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment's Office of the State Geologist, made it possible to quantify the amount of lithium present in brines located in a geological unit known as the Smackover Formation. Extracting lithium from brines co-produced during oil and gas operations provides an opportunity to extract a valuable commodity from what would otherwise be considered a waste stream.

"Lithium is a critical mineral for the energy transition, and the potential for increased U.S. production to replace imports has implications for employment, manufacturing and supply-chain resilience. This study illustrates the value of science in addressing economically important issues," said David Applegate, USGS Director.

The Smackover Formation is a relic of an ancient sea that left an extensive, porous, and permeable limestone that extends under parts of Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida. It dates to the Jurassic geological time period and is known for its rich deposits of oil and bromine. In recent years, the Smackover Formation has also gained attention for potential lithium in brines—high-salinity waters associated with deep salt deposits.

"Our research was able to estimate total lithium present in the southwestern portion of the Smackover in Arkansas for the first time. We estimate there is enough dissolved lithium present in that region to replace U.S. imports of lithium and more. It is important to caution that these estimates are an in-place assessment. We have not estimated what is technically recoverable based on newer methods to extract lithium from brines," said Katherine Knierim, a hydrologist and the study's principal researcher.

Global demand for lithium, a critical mineral essential for battery production, has increased substantially in recent years. This trend is projected to persist as the transition from fossil fuels to electric and hybrid vehicles intensifies, underscoring the mineral's growing significance in energy technology advancements.

The U.S. relies on imports for more than 25% of its lithium. The USGS estimates there is enough lithium brought to the surface in the oil and brine waste streams in southern Arkansas to cover current estimated U.S. lithium consumption. The low-end estimate of 5 million tons of lithium present in Smackover brines also is equivalent to more than nine times the International Energy Agency's projection of global lithium demand for electric vehicles in 2030.

The USGS predictive model provides the first estimate of total lithium present in Smackover Formation brines in southern Arkansas, using machine learning, which is a type of artificial intelligence. Samples from Arkansas were analyzed by the USGS Brine Research Instrumentation and Experimental lab in Reston, VA, and then compared with data from historic samples within the [USGS Produced Waters Database](#) of water from hydrocarbon production. The machine learning model was then used to combine lithium concentrations in brines with geological data to create maps that predict total lithium concentrations across the region, even in areas lacking lithium samples.

"The USGS – and science as well-- works best as a partnership, and this important research was possible because of our strong partnership with the Office of the Arkansas State Geologist," said Dr. Knierim.

Since 1879, the USGS has been the Nation's primary source of impartial scientific information on geologic, energy and mineral resources. The USGS also tracks lithium production, demand and imports in the U.S. as part of its role mandated by the Energy Act of 2020 to maintain the whole of government List of Critical Minerals.

The study, which was published in Science Advances, can be found at <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.adp8149>.

RETIREMENTS

Trudy Bennett, Kansas Water Science Center (KSWSC) Wichita Studies Field Office (WSFO) Supervisory Hydrologic Technician, retired at the end of December 2024 after 35 years of service. Trudy started her USGS career in the Garden City, KS, office in May 1989 under a student program while earning an Associate of Science degree at Garden City Community College. During her time as a student in Garden City, Trudy processed all disciplines of hydrologic data. Trudy left the USGS in 1991 to continue her education in Wichita and also worked for the 89th Army Reserve Command under the Student Aid Program. She returned to the USGS in 1992 in the Wichita office under a student program. She earned bachelor's degrees in general studies and business administration and also completed several Master of Business Administration courses. Trudy was converted to a term appointment in 1994, converted to career conditional in 1996, became a Lead Hydrologic Technician in 2000, and became a Supervisory Hydrologic Technician in 2002. Trudy worked on numerous groundwater and water-quality projects. Her first long-term water-quality project was working with autosamplers along the Little Arkansas River in the early 1990s and she often processed up to 28 samples a week. At that time, two spare desks covered with trash bags functioned as a laboratory; the reverse osmosis water system for sample processing. The first water-quality monitor she used was a Hydrolab that was a "stick with a box" that constantly needed maintenance. Because of her experience with the monitor, she was called up to the Lawrence Studies Office to teach others monitor operation and maintenance. Trudy installed continuous water-quality monitors at sites along the Little Arkansas River in 1998, leading to two of the longest-term continuous real-time water-quality records in the USGS. Because of her experience with the new (at the time) YSI monitors, Trudy participated in several external technical reviews and was an instructor for the Continuous Water-Quality Records and HIF's Water-Quality Monitors courses. Trudy also took over as the Database Administrator for the QWDATA database and helped shepherd in the new AQS system for the KSWSC. Over the course of her career, Trudy has led the collection of *thousands* of water samples collected by the WSFO. Congratulations to Trudy on her retirement! Trudy is looking forward to having time to travel, read, and pursue several hobbies, including photography.

-- Mandy L. Stone, Supervisory Hydrologist, KSWSC



Doug Chambers, Biologist and Water-Quality Specialist with the Virginia and West Virginia Water Science Center (VA-WV WSC) retired in early January 2025. Doug began his career with the USGS in the West Virginia District in 1992. His first assignment was a study of wetlands biogeochemistry in West Virginia's Canaan Valley. Doug then became the Study-Unit Biologist for the NAWQA Program's Kanawha-New River Study Unit, covering parts of West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina. In 2001, Doug was selected to serve as the West Virginia WSC's Water-Quality Specialist. In 2016, Doug was selected as the Water-Quality Specialist for the recently formed VA-WV WSC. Doug also served as the acting Water-Quality Specialist for the Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia WSC for over 2 years. Working with USGS Hydrologic Technicians and scientists in this capacity has been a highlight of Doug's career. Doug has had the good fortune to work on a wide variety of projects with amazing USGS colleagues, including leading the West Virginia portion of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Non-Tidal Network since 2005. Other projects that Doug has led include investigations of ecosystem effects of selenium from mountaintop removal coal mines, modeling organic contaminant uptake by biota, groundwater and surface-water water-quality monitoring, land-use effects on aquatic communities, and the occurrence of endocrine disruptors in West Virginia streams. In the past several months, Doug has been simultaneously concluding and starting up studies in the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. In retirement, Doug and Janet, his wife of over 40 years, plan to spend time with their adult offspring and their families, traveling, and enjoying the outside through fly fishing, birdwatching, and hiking. Congratulations Doug!

-- Mark R. Bennett, Director, VA-WV WSC



Toby Feaster retired on December 28, 2024, from the USGS after 33 years of service. Toby started his career in the Columbia, SC, office in January 1992, and later moved to the Clemson Field Office in 2004. In his first project, he was part of a team doing Level 1 bridge-scour assessments in SC. The project involved a quantitative assessment of the channel and overbanks at and around bridge sites. That project was

followed up by a Level 2 bridge-scour project, which involved flow modeling that also required lots of field work. Both projects were great learning experiences for young hydrologists. Toby went on to lead projects developing water-quality and flow models, watershed modeling, and statistical hydrology focusing on urban and rural flood frequency and low-flow frequency analyses across the South. Along the way he also was involved in several high-water mark campaigns, assisted on a bridge-scour project in Connecticut, was involved in a NAWQA project that included sites in the Sand Hills of SC and the Adirondacks of NY, and had the privilege to be part of a team that provided a water-resources workshop in Brazil. After the historic flooding in SC in early October 2015 from Hurricane Joaquin, Toby led a team that put together what was called a “quick hitter report” to publish preliminary peak stages and flows. The team was given that assignment on October 6, 2015, and the Open-File Report was published on October 20, 2015, which likely holds the record for the quickest development and publication of a USGS report. Toby says that someone rightly told him once that in our careers, the days are long, but the years are short. He feels blessed to have had the privilege of getting to know and become friends with USGS staff across the country and he will always cherish the years he spent at the USGS. He says his more recent interactions with many of the young up-and-coming USGS scientists and technicians gives him confidence that the Survey is in good hands. He encourages everyone to keep doing good science and remember, “The reason we need long-term records is because we have short-term memories.” We will miss his wit, his wisdom, and his hydrologic expertise! --**Victor C. Engel, Director, South Atlantic WSC**



Jay Fouquee retired on September 30, 2024. Jay joined the Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility (HIF) in 1996 as an Electronics Technician coming from Minnesota. Jay worked in the Electronic and Electro-Mechanical Inspection and Repairs Section and assisted the HIF Engineering Department in testing bubblers and rain gages, and performing various miscellaneous electronic repairs as needed. Jay's career totals 41 years, with 28 at the HIF. Jay contributed to many achievements in the engineering section and helped the HIF succeed in delivering

quality instrumentation to our customers. Jay will always be remembered as a dedicated, dependable employee who was a friend to all. Jay's plans for retirement are increasing his visits to Italy to spend time with his stepdaughter and eventually returning to Minnesota to be with his family and escape the heat and humidity of the deep South during the summers.

-- **Cory E. Angerth, Acting Chief HIF**



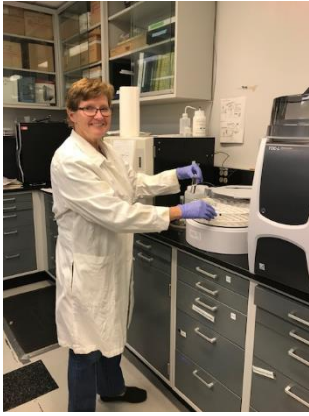
Dan Hess, Field Office Chief, retired December 31, 2024, after over 36 years and 9 months of service with the USGS in Indiana, Nevada, Alaska, and Idaho. Dan started working with the USGS in Indiana in 1988, covering 3 field trips ranging from Goshen to Gary, IN. In 1991, Dan moved to Carson City, NV, working on the Truckee River and the beautiful Lake Tahoe. In 1997, feeling the call of the wild, Dan took the job as Field Office Chief in Juneau, AK, where he proceeded to get wet, constantly, I guess not realizing this would happen going from 7 inches of rain/year to over 100, he states, "An upgraded wardrobe change (was needed)," and probably warranted buying stock in Gor-Tex (missed opportunity). After 11 years in the wilds of Alaska, Dan

decided to move "back home" to N. Idaho as Field Office Chief of the Post Falls Field Office (soon to be known as the Upper Columbia Idaho Field Office) where he finished out his career. We will miss Dan and all his expertise, QW, Cableway installation, Boat operator (Boat Master), and his comforting laid back manner. Dan led his office with a comforting hand, taking a considerable amount of enjoyment from mentoring, working with, and ribbing his field office, causing some health concerns with all the eye rolling from those employees. Dan can now enjoy his passions of photography and running/skiing insane distances over rugged terrain to his heart's content. We will miss you Dan, thank you for your service, and enjoy your well-deserved retirement! Please join the Idaho WSC in wishing him well. -- **Roy Bartholomay Director, ID WSC**



John Hoffman, Director, Arizona Water Science Center (AZWSC), retired on December 31, 2024. John started his career with the USGS as a Geologist at the Hawaii Volcano Observatory in 1984 through the National Association of Geology Teachers Fellowship program. After graduating with his M.S. in Geology and Geophysics from the University of Hawaii in 1988, John returned to the USGS as a Hydrologist for the Hawaii WSC. John went on to lead the USGS field office in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (1989-1995), where his work and relationships with the people of Saipan have endured to this day. While in Saipan, John recognized the need for enhancing U.S. Associated Pacific Islands science capacities

and continues to provide education, internships, and training to these communities. Following his time in Saipan, John joined the AZWSC as a Hydrologist and conducted numerous groundwater resource availability studies and water quality investigations. John is noted for his work using geophysical methods to measure and estimate groundwater aquifer recharge in arid and semi-arid basins. John's ability to lead was easily recognized as he accepted greater responsibilities as the Groundwater Specialist, Supervisory Hydrologist, Associate Director and Chief of Hydrologic Investigations, and eventually the Center Director for the AZWSC. During his tenure as the AZWSC Center Director, John served as the primary DOI representative on the Management Oversight Team establishing the Grand Canyon Uranium 15-year workplan. His leadership led to the successful implementation of the plan, production of numerous science reports, and ongoing collaborations. John decided to change gears and was selected to lead the Water Mission Area's (WMA) Water Science Field Team and later as the Director of the WMA's Office of Quality Assurance. John eventually decided to return to the field and became the Center Director for the Pacific Islands WSC in 2020. Through his USGS leadership positions, particularly as the Pacific Islands WSC Director and Arizona WSC Director, John taught and inspired employees to embrace their roles as public servants, fulfill their trust responsibilities, and to engage with underserved communities. John is originally from Michigan and graduated from Michigan Technological University in 1984. So, while he still roots for Michigan teams, he intends to remain in the warmer climes of Hawaii and Arizona. During retirement John plans to put a few more miles on his bike, visit his daughters, and travel to destinations unknown. Congratulations, John! -- **Dianna Crilley, Director, Office of Planning and Programming, WMA**



Jeanne Jaeschke retired on December 28, 2024, after a long career at the USGS, in Reston, VA. She started as a contractor in 1982, helping the Map Sales Office and running customer search queries from the tape library on topographic maps. Jeanne became a USGS employee in 1989, working in the National Research Program in the Reston Tritium and Stable Isotope laboratory under Dr. Tyler Coplen. In 1990, she took a permanent position with Dr. Isabelle Cozzarelli, studying inorganic and organic chemistry and hydrogeology. Her research focused on complex mixtures of contaminants like hydrocarbons, biofuels, oil and gas wastes, and landfill leachate. For over 25 years, Jeanne organized and led many sampling trips to Bemidji, MN, related to the Legacy Crude Oil Spill. Jeanne continued

her work by analyzing samples from Goose Lake unconventional oil and gas sites, accidental oil and brine releases in the Williston Basin, hydrofracking studies in Colorado, and storm events in stream restoration areas of Difficult Run. She also worked with contaminated wetlands at the Delaware City Superfund Site and analyzed samples from the Marcellus Shale Energy and Environment Laboratory Site in Morgantown, WV. There, she focused on fracking methods and the environmental impacts of unconventional resource development. Jeanne also collected and analyzed samples related to urban stormwater, green infrastructure, and agricultural biosolids. Some of the highlights of her career were the field trips on Oahu, HI, at the Red Hill bulk storage facility sampling in underground tunnels, mentoring of many young scientists, and meeting with Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland. Jeanne has been involved in over 100 publications, including 30 data releases. She often says she is fortunate to have had a career she loves, filled with interesting fieldwork locations and collaborations with dedicated and creative scientists. Her colleagues in Reston and the Upper-Midwest, Pacific Islands, OK-TX, and MD-DC Water Science Centers are all part of her "work science family." After retiring, Jeanne plans to spend more time with her family. Wishing Jeanne a happy, healthy, and long-lived retirement! --**Selene Hernandez Ruiz, Director, Laboratory and Analytical Services Division, and Gary Rowe, Chief Operating Officer, WMA**



Joanne Jones, Technical Information Specialist, retired on October 31, 2024. Joanne completed 46 years of Federal service and nearly 41 years at the HIF. Starting as an Editorial Clerk Typist, Joanne assisted in report processing and became an Editorial Assistant and then Writer-Editor. She was the Water Resources Division (aka WMA) Instrument News editor for nearly 30 years as well as the USGS Benchmark Plaque Coordinator. Joanne was also instrumental in the successful HIF Outreach and Mentoring Program for the area's high

school students. Joanne's imaginative creativity assisted her as a Visual Information Specialist in many graphics and designs for the HIF printed catalog, conference displays, web content, and HIF printed stock. Joanne was a team player, jumping in to fill administrative duties as needed, such as accounts payable, timekeeper, NASA Liaison at Stennis, Communications, and numerous other tasks behind the scenes to help support the HIF. Joanne helped maintain the HIF Family's morale for three decades by creating and holding the unofficial "HIF Social Entertainment Coordinator" position by organizing and planning retirement and holiday parties, potlucks, and social gatherings. In retirement, Joanne plans to stay busy and travel with her husband, family, and friends to places near and far. --**Cory E. Angeroth, Acting Chief HIF**



Gary Loman, Engineering Technician, retired on August 31, 2024 as the longest-working Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility (HIF) employee, reaching 50 years! Gary started his USGS career in 1967 as a Hydrologic Field assistant in Albany, NY. He was such an asset to the USGS that New York District Chief Russ Wagner recruited him to help establish the new HIF in 1974. Over the years, Gary's field experience, knowledge, and skills have contributed to the success of the HIF in engineering, fabrication, quality control,

dimensional force and sediment samplers, sounding reels repairs, boat equipment, sounding weights, float wheels, crest-stage gages, electric tape, wire-weight gages, and flumes to name a few. He was instrumental in creating the Wire-Weight Gage Reel Exchange program, saving the field offices much expense. Gary's future will entail staying active and keeping in shape with his love of basketball, fishing, and spending time with his children and grandchildren. Gary's long-time presence has inspired the HIF's workforce, and his absence will be greatly missed.

-- **Cory E. Angeroth, Acting Chief HIF**



Brenda Lopez, Caribbean-Florida Water Science Center (CFWSC), retired in December 2024. Please join me in congratulating Brenda Lopez on her retirement after over 31 years of Federal service and over 30 outstanding years at the USGS. After a little over a year at the IRS, Brenda joined the USGS in 1994 as a Secretary (Stenography) in the Caribbean District of the Water Resources Division of the USGS. She quickly progressed and was promoted to Administrative Operations Assistant in 1997. In 2006, she became an Administrative Specialist, and in 2014 became the

Administrative Officer for the CFWSC. In that role, she contributed to the smooth transition of one of the earliest water science center mergers across the bureau, to become the CFWSC. After an intense period managing the Puerto Rico office move in 2023, and while gazing longingly at her projected and approaching retirement date, she jumped in to the role of CFWSC Administrative Officer with both feet, and helped to lead a unit that had been without a supervisor for several years - she gave new life to the unit, filling existing vacancies, training new staff in new positions, rebuilding the Budget unit from scratch, and transitioning the Admin. unit to address the current and future functions and center needs. Brenda has brought exceptional service and ethics, the highest quality standards, and dedication to the work and staff of the CFWSC. I call her the Budget Ninja, and the Puerto Rico office affectionately calls her the office "mom." She has been a model of outstanding service to the USGS, and she will be missed greatly. Congratulations Brenda!

--**Dorothy F. Sifuentes, Director, CFWSC**



Chiquita Lopez, Oklahoma-Texas Water Science Center (OK-TX WSC), retired on January 31, 2025. It is with pride and heartfelt appreciation that we announce the retirement of Chiquita Lopez, who will conclude an impressive career of over 35 years of dedicated service to the Federal Government. Chiquita's tenure with the USGS has been marked by exceptional commitment and performance. Her distinguished career began with a four-year service in the U.S. Air Force, after which she transitioned to San Antonio, TX, where she served as an Interpretive Ranger for the National Park Service at the San Antonio Missions. In 1992, the grass was clearly greener with the USGS, so she became an Administrative Assistant for the San Antonio office of the Texas District and subsequently transitioned into the role of Hydrologic Technician.

Chiquita quickly became an integral part of the NAWQA program, expertly sampling groundwater and surface water across the great State of Texas. Her exemplary skills in the field of water

quality led her to become the lead water-quality technician for the South Texas Branch and to oversee their continuous water-quality monitoring network. The high caliber of data she collected for this network earned her special recognition, including an award of appreciation from the Governor of Texas. Throughout her career, Chiquita has consistently led by example, inspiring younger colleagues and providing invaluable mentorship. She has shared her extensive experience in coordinating complex sampling projects while maintaining a high standard of excellence in every task she undertook. Her dedication to quality science, infectious laugh, and willingness to jump in and help with any task have been a mainstay in the San Antonio hallways for over 30 years. She will be greatly missed by her colleagues. In her retirement, Chiquita plans to devote time to her grandchildren, embark on travel adventures, and enjoy life's simple pleasures, including dark chocolate and a fine glass of wine. – **Tim Raines, Director, OK-TX WSC**



Francisco "Paco" Maldonado, Caribbean-Florida Water Science Center (CFWSC), retired in December 2024. Paco started with the USGS in 1989 as Cartographic Aid in the Caribbean District of the WRD – but with an enthusiasm for learning and an appetite for new challenges, throughout his career he also worked as a Scientific Illustrator, collected hydrologic data, served as a safety officer, was an NWIS database administrator (DBA), and ultimately an Information Specialist in the CFWSC. As a Cartographic Aid he brought his expertise in architectural drawings, cartography, and computer programming to support the Illustrators, and worked on computer animations, including numerous forms of graphic products. He helped manage updates and operating systems. In 1995, Paco was promoted to Scientific Illustrator, handling all

the illustrations, presentations, and the printing process. Paco also took on the responsibility of managing all aspects of the reports process and preparation. In 2005, he increased his responsibilities as the collateral duty safety officer. In 2011 and 2012, he developed skills to support and ultimately replace the retiring DBA, to assist field operations, for example taking streamflow data measurements, employing Flow Tracker and Acoustic Doppler Instruments, assisting in the installation of gaging stations, repairing and programming Data Collection Platforms (DCP's), and installing and programming weather stations. These experiences resulted in a broader understanding of the mission and the vision of the USGS for the Caribbean, which helped build his confidence for performing community outreach, as well as developing a heightened awareness of safety issues in the field. His many years of safety leadership and dedication to the well-being of the Puerto Rico office staff, exemplified by his actions to support the office and staff in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017, resulted in his FY23 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence. In addition to all of this, Paco took advantage of the recent Puerto Rico office move to address a substantial part of CFWSC records disposition requirements, and has provided guidance to center staff. Over the last few years, Paco has brought together his broad and varied expertise and institutional knowledge, to help redesign the laboratories and computer/server rooms for several of the offices in the CFWSC; to implement a system for addressing vulnerabilities; to thoughtfully design and support communications, from development of a new employee orientation guide, to layout and design of the CFWSC internal Sharepoint site; and to preserve many print-only USGS publications on Caribbean Hydrology. Ever vigilant for the well-being of his colleagues and the office, he is known affectionately as the PR office "dad." What has always driven him in his career of excellence is the mission and the people – he identifies what is needed and acts upon it, always prioritizes others and our science ahead of himself, never taking any credit or glory for himself, and always giving 120%! In his own words: "My pride in this agency is my colleagues. Every day I see in them their commitment and enthusiasm in making our agency achieve, protect and care for the natural resources in our island. Day by day all of them are risking their lives to make sure that the stations work in a proper manner to identify any issue that our water resources have, and creating complex software to alert any hazards that are happening for the protection and care of our people, as our mission says...." Congratulations, Paco! We will miss you! --**Dorothy F. Sifuentes, Director, CFWSC**



Dave Owens, Upper Midwest Water Science Center (UMidWSC), retired on December 27, 2024, after an extraordinary career spanning over 35 years. His career was based in Wisconsin, now part of the UMidWSC, and although he stayed in one place, he wore many hats: from student to supervisor, lead IT specialist to operations manager, and project chief to instrumentation specialist. Dave has been a foundational pillar of the UMidWSC and his leadership and innovative

spirit have advanced our capabilities in datalogger programming, instrumentation, communications, and camera imagery. Under his guidance, we have not only kept the UMidWSC at the forefront of scientific exploration but have also expanded the horizons of USGS projects and initiatives including SSTL (Storm Summary Time Lapse) the predecessor to the USGS National Imagery Management System (NIMS) and the Hydrologic Imagery Visualization and Information System ([HIVIS](#)). Dave's influence has reached far beyond the borders of the UMidWSC. His unique expertise has made him a sought-after resource for other Centers, leading to monitoring station installation trips across the country—from Hawaii to New York, Canada to Texas, and many points in between. Later in his career, he recognized the importance of knowledge transfer, leading numerous training sessions on Campbell dataloggers, cellular modems, and camera installations throughout the United States. His dedication in sharing his skills has created a ripple effect, empowering countless individuals in our mission. The impact that Dave has had on the USGS mission cannot be overstated. His legacy is one of innovation, collaboration, and unwavering commitment, and it will undoubtedly live on for many years to come. In acknowledging this transition, I am grateful for Dave's willingness to assist us during this period, offering his invaluable support as we navigate a "Daveless" USGS. --**Steven M. Peterson, Director, USGS UMidWSC**



Tim Raines, Director, Oklahoma-Texas Water Science Center (OK-TX WSC), retired on January 31, 2025, after 30+ years of public service. Tim's journey with the USGS began in October 1991 as a Hydraulic Engineer in the Fort Worth Subdistrict of the Texas District. Over the years, he has made significant contributions to various projects, including watershed modeling in the West Fork of the Trinity River basin, NPDES water-quality sampling in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, and flood frequency projects for the Brazos River basin. In February 1997, Tim transitioned to the Studies Section in Austin, TX, where he continued to excel as a Hydrologist. His work included HSPF modeling for the Arroyo Colorado and a source water protection initiative. In November 2000, Tim took on a new challenge as the Data Section Chief in the San Antonio Subdistrict, where he spent his time ensuring the Subdistrict Chief,

George Ozuna, stayed out of trouble! In June 2004, Tim moved to the Oklahoma District in Oklahoma City to serve as the Studies Chief. During his tenure, he provided oversight for studies, including monitoring and modeling lead from the Tar Creek Superfund site, water-quality research at the Norman Landfill, and addressing naturally occurring arsenic in groundwater for the City of Norman. After a brief but valuable stint leading a Municipal Stormwater Team for a consulting firm in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Tim returned to the USGS in August 2008, thanks to the encouragement of Bob Joseph and George Ozuna. He became the North Texas Office (Branch) Chief and later, in November 2017, the Center Director for the Texas WSC. In October 2019, he oversaw the merger with the Oklahoma WSC, continuing his impactful leadership in the role of Center Director for the OK-TXWSC. Originally from North Dakota, with roots in eastern South Dakota (shoutout to the Mid-Continent Region), Tim moved to Texas in the 4th grade. He graduated from high school in Plano, TX, in 1986 and earned both his BS and MS in Civil Engineering from Texas A&M University in 1990 and 1991. Tim remains a passionate Aggies fan, hoping to see them make it to the College Football Playoff one day. In retirement, Tim and his wife will be relocating to

Hot Springs Village, AR. He looks forward to spending time playing golf, hunting, and traveling to visit various MLB ballparks he has yet to experience. Please join us in celebrating Tim's remarkable career and wishing him all the best in this exciting new chapter of his life! Congratulations and Best Wishes, Tim!

--Rodney R. Knight, Southeast Region, Acting Regional Director



Roger Trader retired at the end of December 2024 after almost 25-years of Federal service with the USGS in Texas. Roger turned in his red pencil and rating French curves (for old timers in the know). After college and a 20-year stint in the private sector working in the coal and oil and gas service and consulting business on the east coast and in Texas, Roger made his way to the USGS Fort Worth surface water data section. Spending his entire USGS career in Fort Worth, Roger slowly rose through the ranks, eventually becoming somewhat of an annual data report aficionado (leaving trees quaking in their roots at the number of data volumes being published in the old days) and eventually landing as the Data Chief with a liberal sprinkling along the way of project work in urban stormwater, phytoremediation, and stream gain/loss studies. During retirement, Roger plans to spend more time with Brenda, his wife and partner in crime of 44-years, along with family, friends, and the grandkids. Also, more world travels in their spare time.

-- Marsha Gipson, North Texas Branch Chief, OK-TX WSC



Johnny Wheat, Engineering Technician, retired on October 31, 2024. Johnny is the second-longest tenured Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility (HIF) employee, having reached 46 years! Johnny started in 1979 as a Machinist and was highly appreciated as he assisted Engineers in the HIF Research and Development Section by fabricating numerous parts and instruments. Johnny's expertise and skills in the HIF's machine shop were critical in creating and modifying innumerable instruments. Johnny was the HIF expert for tailfin repairs of sediment samplers, taglines, wading rods, water-quality equipment, staff gages, Conoflow sight feed assembly and parts, submersible-temperature sensors, shaft encoders and cable cars. Johnny also assisted in testing and reporting of the samplers for the Federal Interagency Sediment Program. Johnny is a Mississippi native and was fortunate to have his career close to home. Johnny's dependability, dedication, and

commitment to the USGS will be challenging to replace. Johnny will enjoy his retirement fishing and spending time with his family and friends.

-- Cory E. Angeroth, Acting Chief HIF

NEWS FROM RETIREES

Zelda Bailey ('06) and Pat Tucci ('07) write: In March 2024, we went on the trip of a lifetime to Egypt. It was a 19-day cruise up the Nile, including 4 days on Lake Nasser, stopping at many of the important archeological sites and museums along the way. After a night at the luxurious Mena House Hotel, we boarded our ship, the Jaz Senator which is part of the Steigenberger company. The ship was relatively small as river ships go, only having 17 guest cabins for our 25-person tour group and guides, but the ship, service, and food were first class. The first 2 days were spent touring the pyramid sites near Cairo and the 2 major museums there. At Giza, we were granted early access to the pyramids and Sphinx, before other tourists were allowed in. It was well worth getting up before dawn to have this private access. The scale of the pyramids is incredible and hard to appreciate just from photos. The new Grand Egyptian Museum was only partially open at the time, but we were given a private introduction to the museum before touring what was open. The old Cairo Museum still has some incredible relics, including many of the King Tut treasures. Our cruise up the Nile was relaxing. Stops included the Valley of the Kings, Valley of the Queens, Luxor and Aswan. We were able to see the surrounding countryside and



wave to the kids as we passed by. It's amazing how narrow the strip of green land is along the river, before the abrupt change into barren desert. We switched ships at Aswan to transfer from the river to Lake Nasser. Our ship, the Omar El Khayam along with all the others on the lake, was built at the lake. We stopped at a few sites along the way, culminating in our arrival at Abu Simbel, where the entire site was moved about 600 feet to the southwest and up more than 200 feet to avoid being drowned by the filling of Lake Nasse

***Our private access to the Sphinx,
including our travel mascot,
Lawrence.***

Judith Cornwell ('94) writes: My address has changed to an assisted living residence, as of last March. I still have my husband, Richard; will be married 73 years, Dec 22. We are blessed with 4 daughters and 4 sons-in-law, all in long-term marriages; 10 grandchildren, 9 of them married; and great grandchild no. 13 is due in March. God is good! May He bless all our retirees!



Rick ('03) and Sharon Goss ('99) write: Hello fellow retirees. It's been a couple years since we submitted news. We all should be better about that, but it is so easy to push it to another day and then it never gets done. The Newsletter is many times the only way we have of keeping up with our coworkers and friends from the past as we age and move around the country. I'm going to try to do better. Even if it is only a line or two, it lets others know that we are still kicking which is great news as we get older. Two years ago, I wrote about our geriatric chihuahuas. One year ago, we had to say goodbye to our grandpup and in April of this year we had to say goodbye to our two 16-year-old sibling chihuahuas. We only have a 15.5-year-old Chiweenie now and she is very demanding of my time. In May 2024, I had a total hip replacement. I am doing well and am able to do everything

except hip rotation (golfing, etc.) until mid-November. For an entire year I was in a lot of pain and sedentary because of the delays getting the surgery scheduled. Seems COVID is still having major impacts on the health system. Now I am working on getting back in shape. Last March a

very tall fir tree fell across our yard during an ice storm. Rick and I cleaned up most of the mess and an arborist removed the trunk. We used all of the branches and greenery in our backyard habitat and continue to add more native plants. Rick and I have been volunteering for the Oswego Lake Watershed. Last fall, we conducted field trips at the local elementary schools for 5th graders. Our experiments included water-quality, infiltration, and macro-invertebrates. This spring they started a second-grade program to teach the properties of water (liquid, solid, gas) and how water can move things. It has been an enjoyable experience to be back working with the kids. Rick is now a board member for our local Heritage House (local history museum, etc.). Kyla (daughter) and I are looking forward to getting back into our hiking routine. I truly missed that this past year. We are all also hoping to get back into the swing of things (golfing) soon. Recently, Pat Tucci & Zelda Bailey were in Oregon visiting their daughter and her family and they included a visit to us on their PNW touring. We had a wonderful time sharing some beverages, food, conversation, and theatre. I included photos of us doing just that. It seems the only time we thought of taking a photo was just prior to eating/drinking—sort of a way to document our thanks that we are still able to keep in touch after decades of friendship. If you are visiting the Portland area, please let us know as we would love to visit with you.

Al Rutledge ('06) wrote: Here are a few things about my hydro-hobby. I've prepared a document explaining things that can be done to minimize errors in certain methods for estimating groundwater recharge and discharge. There are no plans to publish the document. Which is mostly a compilation of results that have been published over a considerable period. Cited are USGS reports plus articles in three journals. It should be emphasized that the methods were developed for humid settings. The focus of the document is specific methods but some findings might apply, to a limited extent, to other methods. [Anyone interested in the document or more information may reach out to me at: rutledgealbert@gmail.com]

\$\$\$ DUES AND SCHOLARSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS \$\$\$

Please act today to catch up on your dues and/or contribute to the Scholarship Fund. It is even easier now that we have created a Zelle account (DuesUSGSRetirees@gmail.com) which can be accessed online through your bank or Zelle itself: <https://www.zellepay.com>. Please note the purpose on the Zelle transfer form. Of course, hardcopy checks can still be sent to: USGS Retirees, P.O. Box 280, Herndon, VA 20172. Thank you!

Updates for Directory needed by March 31, 2025

The 2025 Members' Directory will be distributed in May. Please let us know if:

- * Your mailing address, email address, or phone number has changed in the last few years.
- * The listing for your significant other is inaccurate.
- * You know of the passing of any member, significant other, or non-member who was eligible to have been a member.

The directory and quarterly newsletter are distributed in print or pdf format. The newsletter is also distributed as a link. If you want a format different from what you last received, please let us know. Thank you! Send updated information/requests to: wrdretirees2014@gmail.com or USGS Retirees, P.O. Box 280, Herndon, VA 20172. Thank you!

MEETINGS & GATHERINGS

North Carolina Retirees Fall Luncheon & Visit to the Newly Renovated USGS Raleigh Office

November 19, 2024. The North Carolina Retirees Fall Luncheon was held at City BBQ on Lake Boone Trail in Raleigh, NC. Everyone was doing well and the group enjoyed lunch and fellowship. Many of us then met fellow retirees Becky Deckard, Mary Giorgino and Doug Walters for a tour of the recently renovated Raleigh office. Not only did we get to see the fabulous new space but we were also treated to dessert, as the employees were enjoying their annual Thanksgiving Pot Luck lunch that day, too. We also shared advice with the newer employees to “max out their TSP savings” and told the older employees that retirement was “simply fabulous!”



Left to Right: Rose Pinnix, Doug Harned, Nelson Williams, Jeanne Robbins, Callie Oblinger, Jerry Ryan. Thanks to Nelson's wife Rosemary, our photographer, who also attended!

Reston Retirees

November 4, 2024. The Reston Retirees met for lunch at that USGS National Center. Rama Kotra, Scientist Emeritus, spoke on Ocean-based Carbon Dioxide Removal and Sequestration. (No photograph.)

December 2, 2024. We gathered again to celebrate the holiday season.

Seated Left to Right: Debbie McLean, Katherine Lins, Sue Marcus, Lee DeCola,
Standing Left to Right: Pat Leahy, Richard Winston, Tony Meunier, Rama Kotra, John Keith, John Repetski, Carolyn Olson, Ken Lanfear, and David Morganwalp.



January 6, 2025. Our gathering was postponed for snow – kids in Fairfax County got four full snow days and a 2-hour delayed arrival for the 5th day.

MEMORIALS



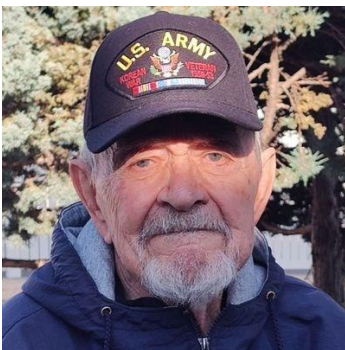
Lloyd Charles Blackburn, 95, passed away October 10, 2024, in Lincoln, NE. Lloyd was born January 24, 1929, in Lincoln, NE, to Robert and Zelma Blackburn. He grew up in Lincoln and graduated from Lincoln High School. In the late 1940s, Lloyd enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He served in Louisiana, Brazil and England. Following his release from active duty, Lloyd began his career as a hydrologic technician in the Water Resources Division of the USGS. He worked in the Missouri River Basin Regional lab in Lincoln until the reorganization to District offices. After that, he worked in the Lincoln Field Office doing Surface Water, Groundwater, and Water Quality field trips and data processing. Lloyd completed over 30 years of service with the USGS. Throughout his career, he was known for his hard work and dedication. Lloyd loved books, he enjoyed reading about World Wars I and II, the ancient cultures of Central and South America, the archaeology of the Holy Lands, and world geography. He also enjoyed

reading British murder mysteries, watching British TV series and listening to traditional music of Ireland, Scotland, and England. Lloyd loved being outdoors and treasured his long walks around Holmes Lake in southeast Lincoln. Lloyd was a very kind and thoughtful person, a real gentleman and friend. His memory will be cherished by all who knew him.

Robert Swanson writes: Lloyd was one of the first people that I met when I joined the USGS Nebraska District in 1978. He was the backbone of the Lincoln Field Office and a real mentor to me. I learned how to manually compute surface water records from an A-35 chart recorder. We all learned a lot from Lloyd and he will be missed.

Glenn Engel writes: Lloyd was in the QW section when I started. We ran many field trips together after the USGS was reorganized. Later, I supervised him in the GW well program. Great guy to work with.

Richard Engberg writes: In June of 1962, my wife and 7-month-old daughter moved back to Lincoln from California so I could go back to school at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I found a job at a pharmacy at 17th and South streets. Lloyd was a frequent customer of the store and we talked frequently. I remember that in August, he told me I should apply for the part-time dishwasher job at the lab where he worked in downtown Lincoln, the USGS Water Resources Division laboratory – that it paid better than the pharmacy. I applied and Les Petri hired me. I worked part time during the school year and full time during the summer. I was promoted from dishwasher after about three months and worked on the bench along with Lloyd and some others. Sandy Downs was lab supervisor. After graduation in 1965, I was hired full-time. So that was how I first went to work at USGS and Lloyd was the first USGS person who got me involved.



Eugene Gene Joseph Charbonneau, 92, passed away on December 9, 2024. Gene Charbonneau was born on September 22, 1932, to Adolore and Aldea (LaBarge) Charbonneau in Clyde, KS, and raised on a nearby farm. He moved to Concordia, KS, for his high school years. Gene enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1953, served as a company clerk in Korea and moved to Denver, CO, after being honorably discharged in 1956. He began a career working for the U.S. Government. His last job was as a hydrologist with the USGS. He retired on December 28, 1990. Gene loved Colorado and explored it throughout his years. Gene loved to hunt and fish. His favorite fishing was chasing brookies in Shoe and Stocking Creek

on Gore Pass, ice fishing with his son Worm, hunting elk and deer for many years on the Troublesome Creek drainage near Kremmling, and setting up a huge camp with his life partner Betty Jane Cochran. Gene was on the volunteer staff of the bicycle tour "Ride the Rockies" for 19 years. He was a very accomplished wood carver. He created many lifelike bird carvings, as well as some animals and mountain men. Gene was interred at Fort Logan National Cemetery with full military honors.



Gary Donald Cobb, of Fairfax, VA, passed away on September 24, 2022. Gary was born and raised on a cattle ranch in the Sand Hills of Nebraska and was a 1960 graduate of Colorado State University. After a stint with the U.S. Army, Gary began his career with the U.S. Government, achieving Senior Executive Service as Director of the Office of Saline Water within the Department of the Interior (DOI). He was honored with multiple DOI awards. In 1982, the DOI reorganized, transferring Gary and other senior leaders and staff along with their functions to the USGS. The Water Resources Scientific Information Center and the Environmental Affairs Program were assigned to the USGS. These functions were combined with the USGS Office of Water Data Coordination's National Water Data Exchange (NAWDEx) to form the Branch of Water Information Transfer. Gary was assigned to serve as the Chief of that Branch. The Branch reported to the office of the Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Scientific Information Management (Jim Daniels). Jack Fischer wrote that Jim and Gary had the daunting task of trying to keep WRD in step with the disconcertingly fast development of new information systems. Gary retired from the USGS in 1996. Gary had a passion for learning and a love of travel, whether attending horse races, football games, or enjoying good food with family across the United States. Celebrating 35 years of sobriety, Gary was an active mentor in his community, serving on the Penderbrook Homeowners Association Board as Treasurer for many years until the time of his passing. Loving father of 3 daughters and their families, including 9 grandchildren. He was also a bonus Grandpa to many. He was also a dear brother and cherished uncle.



William Vincent Daniels, Jr. "Dan," 76, of Henrico, VA, passed away Saturday, April 20, 2024, with his wife by his side. Born November 11, 1947, to the late, William Vincent Daniels, Sr., and Margaret Meade Daniels. Dan was a U.S. Coast Guard Veteran. Following his service in the Coast Guard, Dan started his USGS career with the Virginia District Office on March 15, 1971. He was a fixture in Virginia's surface water and groundwater programs making greater than 11,000 water level measurements and 2,120 discharge measurements. He saw more hurricanes and was involved with more flood events than most, all the while keeping a positive attitude and performing whatever task he was assigned. He retired in 2016 after over 45 years of service. Dan loved history and he never met a stranger that he couldn't talk to. Dan loved his family, but his grandchildren were the light of his world. He is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Gayle; his son and daughter, and their families including two grandchildren.



Stephen J. Field, 88, of Janesville, WI (formerly of Cross Plains, WI), a remarkable individual who lived a life of dedication and excellence, peacefully passed away surrounded by his family on February 14, 2024. He served in the U.S. Army from 1954-1956 and earned a B.S. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1960. Steve revitalized Boy Scout Troop 87 in Cross Plains and served as Scoutmaster until 1972. Passionate about the outdoors, he enjoyed hunting, archery, fishing, and woodcarving. Steve taught woodcarving at Madison Area Technical College from 1990-2007 and donated some of his carvings to various organizations, including a 2/3 sized bald eagle in flight, clutching a trout in its talons, to the Ice Age Trail Alliance center in Cross Plains, WI. He also carved full-size rocking horses for each of his five grandchildren as gifts on their second birthdays, ensuring that they had cherished memories to last a lifetime. Steve translated his love for the outdoors into a fulfilling career with the USGS, Water Resources Division. Steve joined the USGS in 1960 and retired in 1995. Steve developed a lake program and conducted a groundbreaking two-year study on Delavan Lake. As a biologist and trout

fisherman, he conducted a hydrologic and water quality study of Black Earth Creek. The data collected during this study played a vital role in securing Black Earth Creek's designation as a priority watershed. Steve authored eight publications and received numerous awards for his contributions to the scientific community and stewardship of Wisconsin Lakes. Upon his retirement in 1995, the USGS dedicated their Black Earth Creek gaging station to him. Steve is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Jane; his two daughters, five grandchildren, his first great-granddaughter, three sisters-in-law, one brother-in-law, and many loving nieces and nephews. Services were held on May 11, 2024. Stephen J. Field lived a life of passion and accomplishment, leaving behind a lasting legacy of dedication and artistic brilliance.



John Fisher passed away on October 11, 2024, at his home in Beverly Hills, FL. John was born and grew up in Binghamton, NY. He began working for the USGS in the Williamsport office of the Pennsylvania District in 1969 as a Hydrologic Technician. In 2002, he came to Georgia as a Lead Hydrologic Technician in the Atlanta Field Office. John was known for his dedication to sound and reliable hydrologic data collection. John had a contagious sense of pride and confidence that positively affected everyone he worked with. In addition to helping to instill the USGS culture and train many new hydrotechs, he also led the effort to remove many discontinued streamgages towards the end of his career. He retired in April 2007. John spent his retirement years with his wife,

Cindy, spending family time between New England and Florida. He enjoyed his hobbies, which included woodworking, turning, and furniture restoration. John is survived by his wife Cindy, 3 children, and 5 grandchildren.



Elaine Ann Gockel, 83, of Iowa City, IA, formerly of Longmont, CO, passed away on November 16, 2024. Elaine was born on February 10, 1941, in Iowa City, IA, to Paul and Genevieve (Leeney) Rohret. She grew up on the family farm near Cosgrove with her three sisters. She enjoyed showing their Angus cattle in 4-H as well as national shows. In addition, she loved playing basketball and was a feisty forward for her high school basketball team. After graduating from the Iowa City Commercial College, she started her career with the USGS in Iowa City. While at the USGS she met Daniel J. Gockel and they were united in marriage on January 20, 1962, at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Cosgrove, IA. They soon started a family and raised their four children on a farm near Iowa City. Elaine enjoyed being on the farm and was an

active participant in the work it entailed to successfully run it. She was also very engaged and proud of her career. The USGS provided her and Dan opportunities for which they relocated to Louisiana, California and ultimately Colorado, where she retired after nearly 40 years of service. Elaine never met a stranger, was always good for a game of basketball, wore tall boots with shorts while gardening in case she met a snake, liked to ride motorcycles, hike the Rocky Mountains, travel, and especially loved spending time with friends and family. Dan preceded her in death in 2019. Those left to cherish her memory include her 4 children, grandchildren, siblings, nieces and nephews and their families. A Funeral Mass was held in November.



Andrew Stephen Halper, 55, IT Specialist with the USGS Water Mission Area in Tucson, AZ, passed away December 23, 2024. He was born on February 18, 1969.

Amy Galanter writes: I loved working with Andy. Such a kind and thoughtful person, always ready to help with patience. After so many virtual meetings, I was surprised to meet Andy in person, as this tall man climbed out of his sporty car. He and Anne gave me a lovely tour of downtown Tucson, showing me the quirk and uniqueness that they loved. I'll remember many wonderful memories of Andy, and will always admire his dedication to helping people and animals. Sending Anne

and his loved ones love and comfort.

Candice Bostwick writes: I worked with Andy on the National Water Information System primarily in Reston. He was a welcome member of our team and always thought outside of the box which I appreciated. He was a sweet, endearing man and I'm saddened by his leaving this earth at such a young age. My condolences to his family and colleagues in Tucson.

Jim Leenhouts writes: *Andy's USGS family is in a state of sorrow over Andy's passing. Andy was kind and generous and always fun to talk with. We will miss him.*



Mark D. Hamill, 67, of Florence passed away January 5, 2025, at Cooley Dickinson Hospital. Mark was born in Schenectady, NY, on February 1, 1957 to the late James and Leona (Zielinski) Hamill. He grew up in New York and went to local schools, then moved to Florida with his family where he graduated high school. He attended the University of Central Florida earning his bachelor's degree in Communications and went on to George Mason University in Virginia where he achieved his Master's degree in Software Engineering in the mid-90s. Mark was the system manager for the USGS public portal for the USGS National Water Information System. He led a team of in-

house developers and systems administrators to enhance the critical highly trafficked real-time USGS water site. He retired in 2015 and moved to Northampton where he remained very active in the community. He held a side business, PHPBB software maintenance and was a founding member of the Community Network Coalition to help bring municipal fiberoptic internet to homes in Northampton, even meeting with the mayor. Mark enjoyed spending time with his wife and enjoyed taking walks in Look Park. He will be greatly missed by his wife of 40 years Terri (Breedlove) Hamill, his daughter, three brothers, and four sisters. Services for Mark will be held privately and at the convenience of the family. Mark served as the Chief of the NWIS National Internet Data Systems unit.



Blendon Hammond, 92 (wife of Wayne Hammond), of Asheboro, NC, passed away peacefully October 17, 2024, surrounded by her loved ones at The Randolph Hospice House. She was born September 12, 1932, in Archdale, NC, the daughter of the late Delbert Slack and Cloie Lucas Slack. She is also preceded in death by her beloved husband, Wayne Hammond; brother, Farrell Slack; and sister, Mavin Dal Slack. Blendon was a woman of quiet faith and a dedicated attending member of Pisgah Church in Asheboro. She was strong and fiercely independent. Her artistic hand could be enjoyed by those who had the opportunity to see her perennial garden every year. The garden she tended was a passion that she enjoyed throughout her life. Blendon was a talented secretary for

numerous executives throughout the years and was able to type 100 words per minute with no error. Following her business school education, she began her career in administrative work. Her career started out with the Automobile Dealership Association in Raleigh, NC, then on to George Mason University as secretary to the Graduate Dean, the USGS in Reston, VA, Faraday National in Fairfax, VA, and numerous other employers. After retirement, she and her

husband volunteered at Randolph Hospital and the NC Zoo in Asheboro. Most of all, she was a dedicated wife, mother, grandmother and beloved great grandmother that adored her family and close friends. Left to cherish her memory are her daughter and son-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren, as well as many other family members and friends.



Kay Powell, 88, passed away peacefully in her sleep on August 30, 2024, in the comfort of her home in Millcreek, UT. She was born in Salt Lake City, UT, November 2, 1935, to John Van and Itha Stevens Rowley. She graduated from South High School and attended both BYU and the U of U. Kay married William "Bill" Robert Powell on November 2, 1957, together they had three daughters. She had a strong work ethic throughout her life and was an example of mixing hard work with fun. She was a breast cancer survivor. Kay retired from the USGS and weekend work at St. Marks Hospital. Followed by part time work at the U of U Neuropsychiatric Institute, fully retiring at the age of 86. She was a lifelong bowler and later added golf. Bowling in winter and golfing in summer up until earlier this year. After Kay was widowed from her sweetheart Bill in 1982, she shared her life and was loved by her partner and buddy John Ward. Known as Grandma K or "Big Red" for her red hair and big fun personality, her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren were her joy. She loved spending time with them and was always present at their special activities and life events. Kay is survived by her three daughters, and their families, including 10 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren, as well as her siblings. She is preceded in death by her parents, her spouse, and one granddaughter.



Adelaide H. Shields (Addie), 83, (wife of Ronald Shields) of Helena, MT, died October 10, 2023. Addie was born on January 5, 1940 in Winsted, CT, to Joseph E. Bolger and Adelaide H. Bolger. Addie initially grew up in Connecticut and lived with her family in Texas, Maine, and Pennsylvania. In 1957 Addie met her future husband Ron Shields while attending Penn State University. She earned a B.S. degree in Biology and Secondary Ed and graduated in 1961. Addie married Ron that same year. She accompanied Ron and traveled to numerous assignments during Ron's Army service. While assigned to a posting in Hawaii, Addie taught GED classes to young soldiers in the Army. In 1964, her son, Brian was born. Months later, Ron, Addie, and Brian returned to Penn State in 1965 for Ron's graduate training. The family spent time living in upstate New York and eventually ended up in Helena. In 1972, Kelly was born. Addie had a passion for ancient history, British mysteries, and science to include science fiction. She was also a talented artist and musician who painted multiple pieces and wrote numerous poems and songs. In the 80's she worked as a Senatorial Assistant to U.S. Senator Max Baucus. In the 90's she was very active in the worship team at the First Presbyterian Church in Helena. After Ron's retirement from the USGS in 2002 they traveled to the Southwest and Alaska. In 2009, she was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma cancer and began the arduous task of treatment while conducting life and taking care of her family. Addie will be remembered for her gentle positive outlook on life and peaceful spirit. Addie is survived by her husband Ron, her son and daughter and their families.

TREASURER'S REPORT, FOURTH QUARTER 2024

Treasurer Cathy Hill reports the organization had \$20,006 at the end of the fourth quarter. Special thanks for contributions above dues go to Andy Anderson, Derrill Cowing, Jim Eychaner, Bob Hirsch, Phyllis Jeffery, Larry Jones, John Klein, Carolyn Norton, Gary Paulachok, Kevin Richards, Stewart Rounds, Don Schaefer, Gloria Stiltner, and Joanne Taylor. Many thanks for your generosity.

USGS Retirees Account Balance, December 31, 2024



USGS/WRD RETIREE EXPENSES

Expenses	2022	2023	2024
Quarterly Newsletter	2,589	2,187	1,902
Directory	1,074	1,068	1,047
PO Box	216	216	230
State Corp Comm. Renewal	25	25	0
Scholarships	9,689	3,700	4,489
Annual Adobe license	155	100	0
Zelle Charges			6
Misc (table runner)			61
Postage/Supplies	150	0	0
Bounced check	22	0	0
Water Bottles--50th	500	0	0
Total Expenses	14,420	7,296	7,735

DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MARCH 1, 2025:

Retiree's Current Member Survey

The mission of the USGS Retirees' Organization is to help USGS retirees keep in touch with one another and our former agency.

We publish a quarterly newsletter and an annual directory, hold a biennial reunion, and support the Retirees' Scholarship for active USGS employees. The newsletter provides announcements and updates on member activities and news, memorials for members who have passed, and the occasional technical article. The annual directory provides names, address, phone numbers, and email addresses of members. For privacy protection, the directory is not accessible via the internet. The biennial reunion offers members opportunities to see, hear, and converse in person with other USGS retirees. We also maintain a "Facebook page" for the Retirees where retirees can post news, notes, and photos to the group. Finally, we provide small academic assistance scholarships to active USGS employees who are seeking to qualify for advancement in rank and grow their knowledge. All of these things are put together by unpaid volunteers who donate their time and energy.

The Board would like you to help us prioritize these activities, improve them, and add to them. The following survey is our attempt to gather some of your thoughts and opinions. **Please respond to the survey questions by March 1, 2025.** You may use the enclosed paper copy (and return it to the address noted below) or you may use our preferred online version at:

<https://forms.gle/r1Tkm4RFTsYS47Uv8>

If you have other ideas, suggestions, or questions that don't fit this survey format, please feel free to write to us at USGSRetirees@gmail.com.

How important is the USGS Retirees Newsletter?

- ☐ 1-Most important
- ☐ 2-Somewhat important
- ☐ 3-Somewhat unimportant
- ☐ 4-Least important

How important is the USGS Retirees Annual Member Directory?

- ☐ 1-Most important
- ☐ 2-Somewhat important
- ☐ 3-Somewhat unimportant
- ☐ 4-Least important

How important is the USGS Retirees Biennial Reunion?

- ☐ 1-Most important
- ☐ 2-Somewhat important
- ☐ 3-Somewhat unimportant
- ☐ 4-Least important

How important is the USGS Retirees Scholarship Fund?

- ☐ 1-Most important
- ☐ 2-Somewhat important
- ☐ 3-Somewhat unimportant
- ☐ 4-Least important

NEWSLETTER SECTION

How do you use the Newsletter? *(Check all that apply)*

- ☐ I read the newsletter to learn about the activities and news from former USGS colleagues and friends
- ☐ I read the newsletter to gain ideas about travel or volunteer opportunities
- ☐ I read the newsletter to keep up with what is going on at the USGS
- ☐ My significant other occasionally reads the newsletter
- ☐ News from retirees
- ☐ Other _____

The Newsletter length is.... *(Mark only one oval)*

- ☐ Too short
- ☐ Too long
- ☐ Usually just right

The Newsletter level of technicality is.... *(Mark only one oval)*

- ☐ Too technical
- ☐ Not technical enough
- ☐ Usually just right

What regular newsletter features do you like? *(Check all that apply)*

- ☐ President's message
- ☐ New retirement announcements
- ☐ Memorials
- ☐ Technical articles
- ☐ Travel articles

What features/topics would like for us to add to the newsletter?

Do you know how to contribute an article to the newsletter?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you like to help us put the newsletter together?

☐ Yes ☐ No

MEMBER DIRECTORY SECTION

Do you use the member directory?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you used the directory recently to contact a former USGS friend or colleague?

☐ Yes ☐ No

I prefer to use Facebook to keep track of USGS friends and former colleagues.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Instead of a directory, I'd prefer access to an online database that I could search.

☐ Yes ☐ No

BIENNIAL REUNION SECTION

Have you been to a Retirees reunion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you plan to attend a reunion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, why not? (*Check all that apply*)

- ☐ Too expensive
- ☐ Too much of a bother
- ☐ Too much of a time commitment
- ☐ Too far
- ☐ I am not able to travel
- ☐ NA
- ☐ Other _____

What activities should we include in future reunions? (*Check all that apply*)

- ☐ More technical sessions
- ☐ More outdoor excursions
- ☐ More indoor excursions
- ☐ More on current USGS programs/activities
- ☐ Breakout sessions (Pubs, Admin, IT, Groundwater, etc.)
- ☐ Healthcare strategies-focused breakout sessions
- ☐ Fitness strategies-focused breakout sessions
- ☐ Group exercise classes (Yoga, 5K, Photo-walk, Bike ride?)
- ☐ Sing-a-long/Karaoke/band events
- ☐ Other _____

If you can't attend the reunions in person, would you participate in hybrid reunion sessions (sessions that are done both in-person and via a Zoom meeting or similar electronic format)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

OTHER MEETINGS/MEETING FORMATS

1. Virtual Meetings

In addition to the reunion, technology can help us stay in touch with former USGS friends and colleagues. Virtual meetings of the Retirees organization could be held to inform members about Retirees activities and plans, permit members to hear from USGS officials, and even engage one-on-one with one another. Though they are not the same as in-person meetings, they are far less expensive and much more convenient than traveling to in-person meetings.

Would you attend virtual meetings of the USGS Retirees? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What features would you prefer in a virtual meeting? *(Check all that apply)*

- ☐ Reports from Org officers (e.g., president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer)
- ☐ Reports from regional Retiree Representatives
- ☐ Presentation/Interviews of USGS Leadership
- ☐ Technical topic breakout sessions
- ☐ Lifestyle breakout sessions
- ☐ Travel breakout sessions
- ☐ Healthcare-strategies breakout sessions
- ☐ Fitness-strategies breakout sessions
- ☐ Other _____

2. Virtual Reunions

Some software would enable us to hold virtual reunions in which attendees can see and interact with other attendees individually or on a small group basis, remotely.

Would you welcome/attend a virtual Retirees national or regional reunion (60-90 minutes in length)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you be willing to pay a small fee (\$3 to \$5) to attend a virtual reunion?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Virtual Communities

It is also possible to build communities of practice or “virtual communities” or “clubs” in which small groups of people sharing specific interests can meet remotely via a technology like Zoom and talk as a group about that interest/activity. Small-group clubs could be formed around hobbies, cooking, barbecuing, games, sports/fitness, travel, lifestyles, professional interests.

Would you be interested in joining a **Virtual Community**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you be interested in starting/leading a **Virtual Community**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If we were to offer **Virtual Communities**, what topics/groups would you be interested in joining? *(Check all that apply)*

- ☐ A USGS Mission Area oriented community
- ☐ Retirement lifestyles (RV living, senior communities, etc.)
- ☐ Retirement travel (cruising, adventure travel, biking, boating, fishing, etc.)
- ☐ Hobbies (crafts, gardening, knitting, woodworking, tying flies, photography, bird watching, etc.)
- ☐ Games (card games, video games, board games, etc.)
- ☐ Sports and fitness activities
- ☐ Health concerns
- ☐ Book clubs
- ☐ Discussion groups
- ☐ Other _____

Volunteer Opportunities

Many retirees volunteer for the USGS, other agencies, non-governmental organizations, and many charities. We have been having discussions with USGS leadership about recruiting for USGS volunteer opportunities, including projects handled through the USGS emeritus program.

Would you be interested in learning about volunteer opportunities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What types of volunteer opportunities would like to learn about? *(Check all that apply)*

- ☐ USGS emeritus and volunteer projects
- ☐ Non-USGS volunteer science programs (FWS, NASA, NOAA, Nature Conservancy, etc.)
- ☐ Environmental issues and policies (Union of Concerned Scientists, Sierra Club, Climate Action, etc.)
- ☐ Societal issues and policies
- ☐ USGS Retiree officer or committee activities
- ☐ Other _____

Retirees Scholarship Program

The USGS Retirees have been sponsoring a scholarship program for many years. Each year we solicit applications from USGS employees who want to take college or technical courses to acquire skills in a priority area or who need select courses to advance their career. In recent years, we have emphasized applications from students and early career hydro techs, but we consider all applicants without bias regarding position series. However, the scholarship amounts are small, often less than half of that requested by any student.

Do you favor continuation of the scholarship program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Who do you think should be eligible for a Retirees scholarship grant? *(Check all that apply)*

- ☐ All USGS career employees regardless of position description
- ☐ USGS hydrologists
- ☐ USGS hydrologic technicians
- ☐ USGS student and intern employees

Would you support expanding the impact of the scholarship program with larger individual grants?
☐ Yes ☐ No

END OF SURVEY

Mail your completed paper survey to: **USGS Retirees, P.O. Box 280, Herndon, VA 20172**

We sincerely thank you for providing the USGS Retiree's Organization with valuable insight into our members' wishes and concerns. Please feel free to write to us at:

USGSRetirees@gmail.com or visit us at <http://wrcretirees.org/>