

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

USFWS Heritage Committee 2019 Annual Report



COVER: Waterfowl Survey (1951).

As soon as the birds are trapped they are place in separate cages according to species to facilitate and speed up banding operations, especially in hot weather when the mortality rate might become a factor without proper organization.

Credit: Rex Gary Schmidt, 1951

2019 USFWS Heritage Committee Annual Report

Protecting History—For the Future

Message from the Chair

Nearly 30 years ago, the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) established a Heritage Committee with the goal of fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Service's unique history and values in the management of our Nation's fish and wildlife resources. Understanding our agency history is essential to charting a course of wise natural resource management into the future.

Heritage Committee members are former and current Service employees who represent the full breadth of geographic and programmatic experiences.

I am proud to serve as the Chair of this Committee and am very pleased to present this report of the Heritage Committee's accomplishments for 2019.

As you will read, the work of the Heritage Committee is varied: from fostering the acquisition and protection of priceless conservation artifacts, to collecting oral histories from retired employees, to providing educational materials for field stations. High on the work list for the Committee in the coming year is helping the field prepare for the 150th anniversary of the Service, dating back to the establishment of the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries in 1871. New publications, educational materials, and a symposium are in the works to help celebrate this first federal conservation effort, which helped lay a foundation for North American fish and wildlife conservation.

I hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report. And, next time you are at the National Conservation Training Center, check out changes in the USFWS Museum, and ask about Archives tours in the Archive's new location in the Laboratory Building, to see what's old that's new again!

—Charlie Wooley, Regional Director, Great Lakes Region

2019 In Review

Your Heritage Committee had a productive year—planning, implementing, and producing resources for the Service. The Committee meets in person once or twice a year and monthly by phone. This year, we met in March at the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, and again in November in Annapolis in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees Association reunion, where we honored this year's Heritage Award honoree, Dr. Matthew C. Perry. Committee members also contributed to the National Conservation Training Center's 2019 *Conservation History* journal, with its outdoor sportsmen and women theme, and to the upcoming 2020 issue, with its women in conservation history theme.

The USFWS's Heritage Award is our agency's highest award for historic preservation. Past award winners have included Dale Hall, Jim Kurth, author Douglas Brinkley, and other luminaries. Matt Perry is the latest addition to this distinguished cadre.

Dr. Matthew C. Perry has served as the unofficial historian at Patuxent Research Refuge for decades. He has helped preserve important records, images, and personal documents of many important Patuxent scientists ranging from Fran Uhler to Chan Robbins. Matt was instrumental in the success of the Patuxent's 75th Anniversary several years ago and helped facilitate an important oral history project in conjunction with the event. He was also a major organizer of the 50th anniversary celebration in 1989.

Matt edited the opus, "The History of Patuxent" a monumental contribution to both the refuge system's history and the history of American wildlife. In addition, he is a member of the Friends of Patuxent and written numerous articles for their website and newsletter. In one of his articles, he contrasted the views of former Director of Patuxent, Lucille Stickel, and Rachel Carson on pesticides. He also wrote several articles on historic houses at Patuxent, and a very interesting one on Jim Fowler, a friend of Patuxent.

Finally, Matt has been an active participant in both the USFWS Heritage Committee and the USFWS Retiree's Association. He is still working to preserve old FWS documents at Patuxent as they are running out of space for documents that need to be reviewed for possible archiving at the National Conservation Training Center. For all these reasons, Matt Perry has earned and been awarded the 2019 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Heritage Award.

Three subcommittees also met monthly: The Oral History, Artifacts, and 150th Anniversary subcommittees. Here are their accomplishments.



Dr. Matthew C. Perry and Nate Hawley
Credit: Maria Parisi

Oral History Program Accomplishments

Preserving Our Heritage through the Voices of Our People

The goal of the Oral History Program is to preserve the heritage and culture of the Service through the voices of our employees. We interview current employees, retirees, friends, partners, and others. We want to talk with everyone who helped create our history. This includes employees in every job classification at all levels. It also includes conservation partners who work closely with the Service to conserve natural resources. Anyone can nominate candidates to be interviewed. Active and retired employees conduct audio or video interviews. The National Conservation Training Center transcribes interviews and uploads them to the FWS Conservation Library at <https://nctc.fws.gov/resources/knowledge-resources/#>.

Since the Oral History Program began in 1999, we completed more than 1,500 interviews and more than 600 written transcripts. Conservation scholars from around the world have used this resource to tell our environmental history.

Active duty employees and retirees on the Heritage Committee partner to support and manage the Oral History Program through an Oral History Subcommittee. The Subcommittee has monthly conference calls to coordinate the Program, and we report progress monthly to the Heritage Committee and Board of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Association of Retired Employees (Association). The Association supports the Program with grant funds for oral history interviewer travel (for retirees), recording equipment purchase, and assistance with interview transcription.

In 2019 we:

- Conducted 37 individual oral histories.
- Continued working on an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) data collection clearance package for oral histories.
- The National Conservation Training Center contracted with a new full-time transcriptionist in the spring.
- Nurtured the development of two regional oral history teams, in the North Atlantic-Appalachian and Great Lakes regions, to train more interviewers and increase interviewee recruitment.
- Increased the number of interviewers to 20, up 15 from a decade ago.

- Identified oral history priorities: prioritize oral history interviews based on known ill health or advanced age of nominated interviewees, and prioritize transcriptions based on the oldest interview recordings among interviewees known to be living, then oldest interview recordings among interviewees known to be deceased.
- Launched an effort to interview former Department of the Interior Secretaries. We interviewed Ken Salazar in 2019 and scheduled interviews with Sally Jewell, Bruce Babbitt, and Dirk Kempthorne in early 2020.
- Conducted three group oral history panel interviews in Massachusetts to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge and Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. Once transcribed, the National Conservation Training Center will upload the transcripts to the FWS Digital Library and archive the recordings in the USFWS Museum/Archives. Refuge managers and deputies offered an interesting, chronological perspective of each refuge including how they were managed and the challenges they faced, going all the way back to the 1960's! Heritage Committee members Peggy Hobbs and Libby Herland organized, moderated, and filmed the interviews. The photos below identify panel members for each interview.



Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (left to right): Libby Herland, Ed Moses, and Linh Phu
Credit: Peggy Hobbs



Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (left to right): Ed Moses, Matt Hillman, Sharon Marino, and Dave Brownlie
Credit: Peggy Hobbs



Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (left to right): Graham Taylor, Janet Kennedy, Frank Drauszewski, Pat Martinkovic Pascuzzi, George Gavutis, and Ed Moses
Credit: Peggy Hobbs

Artifacts Subcommittee Accomplishments *Every field station has its story, its heritage*

The Artifacts Subcommittee developed a mission statement to clarify our purpose and to guide our work. We also designed a poster to promote awareness about saving items of historical significance among Service staff: "Think before you toss!" The poster is online at <https://training.fws.gov/history/HeritageCommittee.html> and, to request a printed poster, contact the National Conservation Training Center at 304.876.7676 or history@fws.gov.



The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Heritage Committee's Artifacts Subcommittee is to engage active employees, retirees, and partners in preserving conservation history, consistent with Service policies. We:

1. **Identify** artifacts and collections found or based on Service lands, or Service artifacts found elsewhere, to aid in the preservation and continuation of the Service's history and culture;
2. **Educate** on identifying what items may be considered historic so they know what to keep and care for on station or transfer to a Service collection;
3. **Advise** on proper cataloging, preservation, and curation of historic items retained at field stations;
4. **Serve** as a resource for field stations on proper in-house curatorial methods required for the preservation of items found on Service lands—using the expertise of the Service's main collections:
 - a. USFWS Museum/Archives at the National Conservation Training Center,
 - b. National Fish and Aquatic Conservation Archives at D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery,
 - c. The National Wildlife Property Repository at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, and
 - d. DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge's Bertrand Collection.
5. **Inspire** use of objects (properly) in the field for education, outreach, or exhibit purposes to reach a wide range of visitors.

150th Anniversary Subcommittee Accomplishments

Celebrating our Sesquicentennial—150 Years as the Oldest Federal Conservation Agency

This subcommittee focuses on supporting field stations that wish to celebrate our sesquicentennial. Our agency dates back to February 9, 1871 with the creation of the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries. The Commission became the origin point of the North American Model of Wildlife Management, which promotes public access to and use of sustainable wildlife resources—a success story achieved with partners including state agencies, sportsmen and women's groups, and other conservation organizations. Through the decades, wildlife conservation has been an economic success story supporting tourism and recreation industries at the national, state, and local levels. Planning underway includes displays, a film, traveling toolkits, and communication, including a social media campaign with fun facts, to help field stations share the Service's story. The National Conservation Training Center has been working with partners to install new museum exhibits to tell this story. In addition, preliminary planning began to host a symposium at the Center, the home of the Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2021 for invited partners, historians, employees, and others.

Curious staff can access, and contribute, to a growing list of fun facts for a 150th anniversary social media campaign. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Retirees Association is also helping collect fun facts, with images, to support the campaign. Staff can access the Heritage Committee's Intranet [Team](#) site; retirees can request to see the draft list by contacting Maria Parisi at maria_paris@fws.gov or 304.876.7728.

FWS Fun Fact!

Some folks may think of Clint Eastwood or *Starksy & Hutch* when the iconic Ford Gran Torino is mentioned, but the Fish and Wildlife Service has its own Gran Torino story. When Ecological Services (then River Basin Studies) opened a new office in Maryland in 1972, the first biologist, Marvin Moriarty, didn't have an office or a government vehicle. So, he ran the office out of the trunk of his green 1972 Grand Torino and stayed in hotels. Moriarty eventually became the Regional Director of the Northeast Region (2003 to 2011). The Chesapeake Bay Field Office is now located in a modern office building in Annapolis, Maryland. —Submitted by Karen Mayne.

On the Horizon for 2020

The Heritage Committee will meet in April at the National Wildlife Property Repository at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. In April, and throughout 2020, we will:

- Revisit the Heritage Committee charter and update the Committee’s strategic plan.
- Improve prioritization of oral history interviews and transcriptions.
- Continue recruiting and training new oral history interviewers and expanding the Oral History Candidate list.
- Implement strategies to significantly reduce the backlog of 580 oral history interviews that need to be transcribed and uploaded online.
- Launch a quarterly history and heritage newsletter.
- Develop new online training and training tools to support history and heritage preservation at field stations.

Heritage Committee Members

As chartered, members represent our geographic regions and key positions including active and retired staff. The Service’s Director appoints the Chair, and Regional Directors appoint their regional active and retired members.

Role	Legacy Role	Name	
Chair		Charles Wooley, Regional Director	
R1	R5	Peggy Hobbs	Libby Herland*
R2, 4	R4	Paul Tritaik	Sandy Tucker*
R3	R3	Greg Dehmer	Tom Worthington*
R6, 7, 8	R2	Amber Zimmerman	Deborah Holle*
R7	R6	Vacant	John Cornely*
R8, 10	R8	Vacant	Mendel Stewart*
R9, 12	R1	Vicki Finn	Cindy Uptegraft Barry*
R11	R7	Debbie Steen	Debbie Corbett*
Headquarters	R9	Mark Madison	Mamie Parker*
At Large Retiree	Jerry Grover*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees Association		
Research	Dr. Matthew C. Perry*		
Ex-Officio	<p><i>National Conservation Training Center:</i> Steve Chase, Director Nate Hawley, Division Manager, Creative Resources Maria Parisi, Heritage and Partnerships Coordinator, and Steve Floray, Curator, Heritage and Partnerships Branch, USFWS Museum/Archives</p> <p><i>Cultural Resources:</i> Eugene Marino, USFWS Federal Preservation Officer and National Curator</p> <p><i>D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery and Archives:</i> Carlos Martinez, Manager April Gregory, Curator</p> <p><i>National Wildlife Property Repository:</i> Elisa Dahlberg, Wildlife Repository Specialist</p>		

	<p><i>Research</i> Dr. Richard Coon*, Research</p> <p><i>Fish and Aquatic Conservation:</i> Dave Miko, Division Chief, Programs Bennie Williams, Fish Biologist, Communications and Partnerships</p> <p><i>National Wildlife Refuge System:</i> John Schmerfeld, Acting Division Chief, Visitor Services and Communications</p>
Emeritus	Jim Kurth*, Dale Hall*, John Blankenship*, Rick Bennett*, Patrick Leonard*

* Retired



Heritage Committee members (left to right, front to back): Sandy Tucker, Maria Parisi, Cindy Uptegraft Barry, Eugene Marino, Linda Friar (outgoing member), Peggy Hobbs, Deborah Holle, Nate Hawley, Libby Herland, Paul Tritaik, Dick Coon, John Cornely, Jerry Grover, Matt Perry, and Tom Worthington, photographed at the November Heritage Committee meeting in Annapolis, Maryland, in conjunction with the Association's retiree reunion. Credit: Marvin Moriarity

Questions?

Please contact your regional Heritage Committee member, or contact the USFWS Historian at history@fws.gov or 304.876.7276, for questions or to request copies of Heritage Committee products. For additional information, see <https://nctc.fws.gov/history/HeritageCommittee.html> and follow the "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service History" and "National Conservation Training Center" Facebook pages and @USFWSHistory on Twitter.