



NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN RETIREE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 2025 Forest Service Retirees Reunion concluded Sept. 26 in Missoula. It was a great success thanks to Lisa Tate and her planning committee and volunteers. It was good to see members of NRMRA in attendance. For those of you who missed the event, here are a few highlights: Chief Tom Schultz was interviewed by former Chief Dale Bosworth in front of all attendees. On Tuesday evening, the 23rd, many traveled to the Conservation Legacy Center and got a sneak preview of the construction in progress. On Wednesday morning, all former Chiefs were on stage (save F. Dale Robertson who joined remotely) to celebrate the retirement of Randy Moore.

It was great to see them all together and each provided stories of interest. Awards were presented Thursday evening. Jim Caswell and Lynn Sprague each received the Leisz Award which was jointly presented by The NAFSR and NMFSH. Twenty new members were gained including a Life Membership for Tom Schultz. In addition, NRMRA picked up a couple of new members. The next Reunion in 2028 will be hosted by Region 9 in Madison, Wisconsin.

Tim Love

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National Association of Forest Service Retirees <https://nfsr.org>

Northern Rocky Mountain Retirees Association <https://nrmra.org>

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

LESSONS LEARNED, OR NOT LEARNED, FROM THE PAST

by Vicky MacLean

Given these times of upheaval in our country and our agency, I thought this was a good place to share some pertinent history. For those of you who live in the greater Missoula area, the Historic Museum at Fort Missoula has a new exhibit well worth visiting. It is at the east end of the outdoor exhibits and contains one original and one replica of the barracks from the Internment camp that was located at Fort Missoula during WWII. One building is a replica of the barracks and the other has displays of photographs and documents. Another part of the exhibit is undergoing development. We apparently have not learned these lessons, this is not taught in high school history or it is, but nobody cares.

In another vein, I have found information about two of our own Forest Service employees from Montana who were targeted by Senator McCarthy's House Committee on Un-American Activities in the 1950s. Forest Service records, the internet, a book titled "The Bitterroot and Mr. Brandborg" by Frederick Swanson, the University of Montana's Mansfield Library, as well as an article in a past issue of Montana Quarterly provided the following information about Forest Supervisor Guy Brandborg and range researcher Dr Roald A. Peterson.

Guy Brandborg was born in Minnesota in 1893, the son of Swedish immigrants. His father was well read, a farmer who had run for governor on the Socialist ticket. Guy headed west in the early 1900s to work for a summer at Glacier Park where one of his sisters managed the Sperry Camp. Guy learned

to pack that summer and eventually headed back to Minnesota to finish school. He first appears on Forest Service records as a seasonal on the Lewis and Clark Forest near Ear Mountain in 1914 where he mainly worked constructing trails and phone lines. In June of 1915 he was appointed as a forest guard and assigned to a station on the South Fork of Dupuyer Creek on the Rocky Mountain Front. In the fall he enrolled in ranger school in Missoula which was adjacent to the school of forestry. He completed his training there in 1916.

On October 20, 1916, Guy passed his ranger exam and was assigned to the Glendale Ranger Station on the Helena National Forest. This was mainly a grazing district with headquarters along Crow Creek in the Elkhorn Mountains. In 1918 he was drafted and spent time at Camp Lewis in Washington. He was back in Helena two years later as the Assistant Forest Supervisor. In April 1925 Guy transferred to the Nez Perce Forest in Idaho with headquarters in Grangeville, where he spent the next decade as the Assistant Forest Supervisor.



Guy Brandborg.

In 1935 Guy, who by now was married and had a family, was promoted to Forest Supervisor on the Bitterroot National Forest based in Hamilton, Montana. By this era, the Forest Service was changing from the days of old with rangers mainly roaming the hills, clearing trails, and putting out fires. Enter the modern age of road building, timber harvesting, and increased recreation. The Depression was in full swing, unemployed men set fires so they could be paid for fighting fires, and cattle rustling was a problem. The CCC and other public works programs could not take care of all the unemployment. Supervisor Brandborg tried to promote employment by balancing the use of private lands, timber, water, forage, and wildlife, with use of National Forest resources. His efforts to decrease sheep use and rehabilitate rangelands were mostly supported by his superiors in the region as well as chief Silcox. However, as time passed, a split developed between backers of more resource production and Guy's support of a local rural agricultural economy. To quote from Swanson's book" to him, *efficient production was less important than preserving a way of life in the Bitterroot Valley – a vision in which supporting small mill owners and backwoods loggers counted more than supplying logs to the nations emerging industrial economy.*"

Jumping ahead through years of change, forest planning, and studies, to January of 1949 when Guy received a registered letter from the executive secretary of the Department of Agriculture's loyalty board saying that the FBI had conducted an investigation of him. A questionnaire was enclosed for him to fill out in quadruplicate. Most of the questions related to his possible contacts with communism; groups he belonged to, books he had read, people he had associated with including Bob Marshall, who had died several years prior and had been a Forest Service employee. It ended with "You

are directed to show cause why you should not be removed from your position in the Department." No evidence for the accusations, Brandborg was given two weeks to answer the charges. Yes, he had met with Bob Marshall and subscribed to the "Peoples Voice" a publication of the National Farmers Union.

Guy's efforts to argue his case were fruitless. Like today, suspicion, a blind agenda and hysteria prevailed. He suspected that the original accusations came from former employees who did not agree with his support of social forestry. His hearing was held in Missoula that June. His supporters included three Montana Supreme Court Justices, Lee Metcalf, an attorney, who was later to become Senator Metcalf, and a Bitterroot Valley rancher. The hearing panel did exonerate him, but there were no apologies or explanations. Several years later, in 1952, personnel ratings were completed for a number of staffers including Brandborg, who was downrated for his administrative abilities largely because he did not buy into the region's timber program which was not compatible with his vision of wildland management. Guy retired from the Forest Service in March of 1955 and commenced his years of service in the private sector. His involvement was in conservation, educational efforts as well as continuing to support the needs of the local communities. Though targeted by McCarthy and Hoover, which certainly had a big impact, Supervisor Brandborg, had supportive backing from local constituents and Montana politicians which likely helped get him through those years. This was probably not as impactful as the situation of Roald Peterson, a PhD range researcher who spent time working for the Soil Conservation service as well as the Forest Service.

Roald A. Peterson "Pete" was born in 1913 in North Dakota to Norwegian immigrants. He was

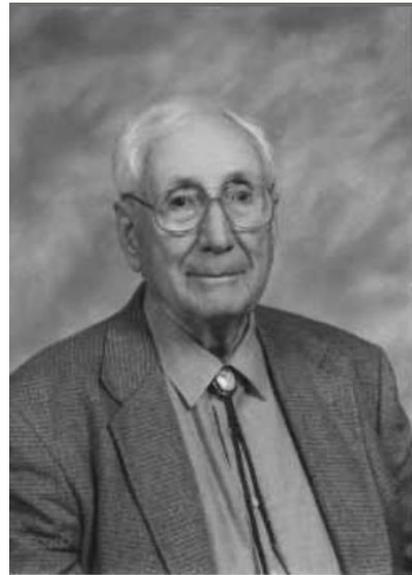
the ninth of eleven children whose family homesteaded in western North Dakota. "Pete" earned his BS and MS in Botany from the University of North Dakota in Fargo and his PhD in Plant Ecology from the University of Minnesota.

His early professional career was spent in the South where he worked with the Louisiana Farmers Union and was involved with civil rights and helping sharecroppers. Pete was a member of the American Civil Liberties Union and said, "*I have always had strong feelings for the welfare of my community, country and government.*" He noted that he had curiosity about all manners of ideas, people, and things. His obituary said, "*he was a pioneer in integrating cooperative work, empowering both poor blacks and whites, who worked lands they did not own, throughout the South: as well as encouraging and helping farmers in the North to form Cooperatives that gave them both economic and political power and clout unheard of in those days.*"

Like Guy Brandborg, he joined the service during the war and was stationed in Texas with the Army Air Force. In 1945 Pete went to work in Montana as a range ecologist at the Agricultural Experiment Station at Fort Keough. It was here that the FBI went after him after two men from Louisiana accused him of being a member of the communist party probably because of his conservationist views that went against the agenda of the big ranchers who tried to force the sale of millions of acres of public lands and dismantle conservation agencies.

In 1949 Pete was brought before a loyalty board in Missoula. Fortunately, like Brandborg, he was defended by some prominent citizens as well as fellow Forest Service range ecologist Leon Hurt. Writer, supporter and conservationist Bernard DeVoto said of the hunt for communists in a column titled "Due Notice to the FBI", *There is loose in America today the same evil that once split Salem Village*

between the bewitched and the accused and stole men's reason quite away." FBI director Hoover went on a hunt to find out what had precipitated De Voto's article, scrutinized the Park Service but not the Department of Agriculture. Fortunately, Pete passed his first loyalty investigation.



Roald Peterson

The strain of the investigation, however, wreaked havoc on his family. His wife, who already suffered from the stress of relocating from the south to Montana ended up in an asylum for the insane. She also told people she had married a communist. Divorce ensued along with a move to Missoula to work at the Northern Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, where Pete's children were taken away from him. In 1952, after settling in the Bitterroot he got his children back and the FBI went after him again. His wife had shared stories of her husband with an informant who contacted the FBI. The informant also told the FBI that Pete was "behaving like a homosexual." The second loyalty board hearing was convened, and he was investigated on the statements of FBI informants who accused him of being a communist. Once again Pete was supported by the Montana Stockgrowers Association, the Undersecretary of

Agriculture, and others. Letters in support of Peterson were sent to Senator Mansfield. Comments included “*one also wonders how a man investigating the lives of browse plants on the Montana range can be a security risk,*” and “*if Peterson is now an active communist, why has he chosen work that keeps him largely to himself in the woods.*” Again, Roald was cleared. In 1953 he was summoned before the loyalty board and the civil services loyalty board ruled that there was reasonable doubt about Pete and he was fired from the Forest Service. Three years later, and after his divorce was finalized, he lost his ranch in the

Bitterroot, packed up his children, and moved to Uruguay then Peru.

Pete spent the next 20 years all over the world working in agriculture and was honored by several foreign governments. Meanwhile Senator Metcalf fought for Pete who was offered his job back, but he declined and did not return to the United States until 1979 when he settled in Arkansas. There he taught rangeland ecology at a local college. He died in 2004 at the age of ninety.

BOOK REVIEWS

- A History of the USDA Forest Service Aviation Program

The Government Printing Office printed this book, and paper copies are hard to obtain. I have not found copies for sale, and since it was produced by the USDA-FS and printed by the GPO in 2024, copies are unlikely to be available for purchase.



After several months of trying, Tim Stauffer from the RO was able to obtain a dozen copies, which he shared within the FS here in Missoula, and a couple of copies for the FS Museum. The book has 280 pages, and the major chapters are:

1. Early History through the 1930s
2. Smokejumping
3. Airtankers
4. Aerial Supervision
5. Helicopters
6. Aerial Infrared Detection & Mapping

It is an excellent book. The authors are Pat Kelley and Jonathon Rollens with Peggy Rollens as Editor. [FS aviation-history.pdf](#)

Submitted by Fred Cooper

MUSEUM ARCHIVES ON THE MOVE

Moving the Museum’s Repository from 1615 Catlin Street to the National Conservation Legacy Center is planned for April 2026. The move will be big job and will require eight to ten volunteers for up to ten days. The shelving system will be installed in January of 2026. We will need several of the volunteers trained to direct

the volunteers and we need to see the existing storage and the new repository. It has been suggested that a volunteer team be organized around the Incident Command framework.

I am suggesting a meeting to share ideas. Sometime in November? If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me at dave.stack@forestservicemuseum.org

Dave Stack

PRESERVING YOUR FOREST SERVICE AND FAMILY HISTORY

by Vicky MacLean

A brief discussion at a recent retiree's lunch gathering prompted me to put this together in hopes of saving some of our members' memorabilia, especially as it pertains to their Forest Service Career.

What to do with your old Forest Service photos, letters home from your first FS job when you were eighteen, or perhaps pertinent newspaper clippings? First, though you do not want to hear this, your children and grandchildren probably do not want your old shoe boxes of letters written home to your parents. They do not want a photo of the first ranger station you worked at. When you move into assisted living or pass away, much of your stuff will sadly end up in the trash.

I am very much in favor of donating these items to an agency or a historical society or the like where they will be preserved, cataloged, and made available for research. With a little bit of sleuthing you should be able to come up with a suitable institution, based on location or subject matter. Written items such as letters can be scanned, and or transcribed and possibly made into a booklet so that your family can hang onto those without worrying about a house fire or the dumpster. I scanned, then donated, three family photo albums from the early 1900s to the Adirondack Museum in upstate New York. My family had a camp on one

of the lakes there and the photos very much fit into the history of the era of the "Great Camps" of the Adirondacks. Years from now perhaps a family member will find those when they are researching family history. On another side of the family, I had letters written to my great-grandmother from her 17-year-old brother during the Civil War. The letters described his job guarding prisoners and how lonely he was far away from home. Those went to the New England Historical and Genealogical Society and in less than a year a cousin, who I never heard of, found them when doing genealogy research and contacted me through the society. An uncle of mine had a huge collection of family letters when he died 20 years ago. There was considerable correspondence between my great-great-grandfather and his teenage son written home from boarding school in the 1870s. What to do with those? For starters I scanned them and sent electronic copies to all twenty-four of his descendants of my generation. I am still not sure where their final destination should be.

Your Forest Service-related memorabilia might be suitable for the Forest Service Museum/Legacy Center, <https://forestservicemuseum.org> or it might be better off in a local historical museum or university. The University of Montana's Mansfield

Library has quite a bit of Forest Service information and photos in its archives as does the University of Idaho. When researching my ranger station histories, I was incredibly lucky to find a set of five photo albums from an early Montana ranger whose granddaughter had donated them to the Montana Historical Society <https://mhs.mt.gov> . Unlike many photos, most of them were labeled

and dated, what a treasure. Larger institutions have the means to preserve them and keep them safe for future researchers. Do a favor for future and clear out your boxes of “stuff” and donate them where generations they can be appreciated. Refer to [the spring newsletter from 2018](#) for information on writing your memoir. .



The restored Hogback homestead from the Rock Creek retiree's tour.

LETTERS HOME

By Charlie Fudge

The old trunk contained items from my grandfather including two boxes of old family letters. A year ago, I began the task of “cleaning house.” Surprise! My mother had saved my letters written during 1951-1953 summer employment with the Forest Service.

Two days after finishing my junior year of high school in Jefferson, Iowa, I boarded a train for Haugan, Montana, and a summer at Big Creek

Blister Rust Control Camp. A new adventure awaited and my boyhood ended.

Sunday, June 11, 1951

“In answer to some of your questions I don’t need the long underwear as during the day it is really hot. The train got into Haugan at 5:45 Thursday and I asked the station master if I could call the Forest Service Headquarters and he rang for me, and I told them who I was and asked them if they could

come and get me. A man from the Savenac nursery came and got me and had me fixed up. I slept in an old CCC barracks at the Nursery. The next night after supper, Mr. Daniels, the head man asked me and four other fellows if we wanted to sleep up at the camp that night and sort of watch over things. We did and that's how I got in with three fellows from Wisconsin."

The letter continues with a thorough discussion of white pine blister rust and its control. Little did I know how this summer would guide my career and life.

June 24

"The mountain we are working on now is really a rough one. It is really brushy and from camp it is probably one thousand feet above us. The trail climbs at a 50-to-60-degree angle. That will be fun climbing all summer."

"I went fishing and was coming down the trail and as I came around a bend, I saw a medium size black bear standing in the path."

"We will probably get fire training sometime soon. Firefighting is a tough job. Eighteen hours a day or until you drop from exhaustion. Then they drag you off and let you sleep for a while and then back to work."

"My first check was for \$47.29 for 60 hours---56 regular and 4 overtime."

I was having the time of my life. On the other hand, my mother's vision from my letter was of her only son working in a difficult environment and threatened by hungry bears and roaring fires.

Monday, July 16

"The fire danger is up to 50-60. That is how fire danger is measured. We have had our fire training now."

A week later we walked into a fire in the Cabinet Mountains. Our fire packs contained WW2 K-Rations. The rations included 3 Chesterfield cigarettes, three pieces of spearmint gum, hard tack crackers, chocolate, and jerky. We watched a Ford Tri-motor make a turn in a narrow U-shaped valley and drop cargo. Three of us shared two sleeping bags and used a parachute for cover.

1952 Big Creek and White Pine Creek

My fellow high school classmate, Jim Baldwin, joined me for my second-year blister rusting. Jim and I arrived at the camp early and volunteered for any and all jobs in setting up this established camp site. We were later chosen to establish a new camp. I was made a straw boss.

Sunday, June 1

"Mr. Daniels came down to get the milk just after the train came in and took us up to the nursery to eat. We then went up to camp. Jim, and I and a fellow who was in the same crew as I was last year are staying together."

Sunday, June 8

"Since Sunday I have done many jobs. I have been a carpenter, plumber, metalsmith, dish washer, telephone lineman, longshoreman to trucks, cleaner-upper, washed dishes, straightened up, put up tar paper, nailed tin around the stove pipes, built a stand for garbage cans, put up stoves and tents and flies, unloaded trucks, put the pipes-boiler-and- tank up on the shower, and put up telephone line. This way I can learn a little bit about everything."

June 25

"Jim and I were moved to White Pine a week ago. We are staying at the Trout Creek Ranger Station. The other night a boy stationed here came in after

dark from fishing and said shakily 'I've just had the scare of my life.' He was fishing and from the bank behind him he heard a hiss. He turned and there staring at him face to face was a mountain lion. He yelled and the cat hissed right back, turned, and slinked off. "

August 15

Blister rust crews provided a dependable firefighting source. Their physical fitness and endurance equaled that of smoke jumpers. They supplemented ranger district crews for initial attack and quick backup support. For more distant project fires they travelled by bus, plane, and train.

"We were on two fires in three days last week. I was foreman. I had only been on one fire, so I wasn't sure of what I had to do. We left for the fire at 4:00, got to the trail at 5:00, and after 5 miles via trail and four overland we reached the fire. We mopped it up and started down at 6:45. We walked until we did it by habit. We finally reached the road at 9:30 and Noxon at 11:15, ate, and went to bed. We left for another fire at 2:00p.m., got to the trail at 3:20 and reached the fire at 11:00 that night. At about 1:00 it started raining. We mopped up the fire and left at 2 in the afternoon and got to Noxon at 7:00. It was about a seven mile walk out from the fire."

1953 White Pine Creek

Friday, June 18

"I am the camp boss at White Pine this year. It was something I had not expected, but yet I welcomed it. It will be a wonderful experience although quite hard. I will be in charge of 25 men and will be responsible for them and for all of the work which must be done. I also have a lot of forms to fill out."

In my early letters to my parents, I explained blister rust, its control, and the logistics of working within

lanes to cover mountainsides where white pine was fairly prominent. I did not dwell much on the other processes such as food order, equipment maintenance, dealing with mercurial cook feelings, animal visitors, and the like. The Korean War was on, and young people led such venues as blister rust control camps. I was not unique. The benefit was that it gave some of us a head start once we decided we wanted to live a Forest Service life.

Sunday, June 28

"So far, all the trouble I have had from animals has been from porcupines and chipmunks. The chipmunks chew a little bit of everything. The porkies get into the kitchen, supply tent, or under the meat house and gnaw. I killed a porky by the grocery tent but couldn't see a bear by the meat house. Since then, I have brought my total to ten with two porkies last night."

July 5

"I'm getting along alright so far except I don't have enough backpack sprayers for the amount of spraying to be done this summer. The hand eradication is coming along alright but unless we get some sprayers the creeks will go dry and will necessitate hand eradication."

"We are getting just as good food here as last year and the meat is the best. Last night we had pork chops of which I ate eight."

August 13

"Just got back from 3-day fire Sunday and just received another call. I am going to Lolo Forest over by Missoula so it must be a good one. All BRC camps in area are going. Write when I get back"

This was a fire on Mt. Princeton, Ninemile R.D. of around eight hundred acres. My crew and I had to flee flames blowing across the wide dozer line.

Sunday, August 30

“We had just gotten back for two days when we received another fire call to report to Holland Lake. We arrived there at 1:00 at night, slept till 3:30, and started walking to the fire at 5:00.

At 12:30 we finished walking the eighteen miles. The fire started in a cabin by unknown reasons and was estimated at five hundred acres.”

I lay in my sleeping bag near a warming fire and under a starlit sky as Blackfeet Indians did a rain dance. Around 3 a.m. rain began to fall and we went home.

POSTLUDE

Reading these letters brought back such dear memories. My early work took me from a boy to a man. I still meet people who chose work other than the Forest Service but began their early work life on blister rust control. The program finally fell out of favor. However, it put a lot of young men through college, put out a lot of fires, taught a work ethic, and added character to those who worked and lived together seven days a week. And my mother was always happy and relieved when I walked through the door at summer’s end.

In the end, there are some basics that haven’t changed in many decades, like using a Pulaski tool



Charlie on a fire – Mt Princeton, Lolo NF.

to dig line, or the reliance on protocols to keep us safe. Everyone these days is coming to terms with climate change, and while some have seemingly been more insulated from the impacts, firefighters have been directly confronted. While we continue to work out how to live with catastrophic fire and its impact on the ecosystems which we are part of, for those that fight fire, whether for a few seasons, or for a lifetime, there’s a sense of being part of a continuum of folks dedicated to each other and our communities.

SMOKEJUMPERS REUNION

by Barry Hicks

The smokejumpers reunion was held in Missoula over three days in June. There was a good turnout of seven hundred retired jumpers including George Cross who is 100 years old and had jumped at Normandy in WWII. The biggest draw of the

reunion was flights of Miss Montana, and we had a generous donor who made donations to the Museum of Mountain Flying to cover the expenses of the flights. Jumpers were able to take family members on flights with them. Thanks to ex-

jumper Fred Rhorbach for his very generous donations.

Folks were also able to visit the jumpbase and actually watch a training jump. There were excursions to Ninemile as well.



Smokejumpers Reunion, Missoula, Montana 2025.



REUNION FIELD TRIPS

The Retirees Reunion in September was a great success. Attended by nearly 500 people, attendees caught up with former co-workers and enjoyed programs and activities at the Hilton Garden Inn in Missoula. The silent auction netted over \$19,000. There were two days of field trips in and around the Missoula area including the Nine Mile Ranger Station, historic homesteads along Rock Creek, The Smoke Jumper Center and Fire Lab, the Lolo Pass Visitor Center and the Travelers Rest State Park as well as a tour of the under-construction Conservation Legacy Center.



Tour at Smokejumper Base, Missoula.



Dutch oven desserts at Ninemile.



Lunch was served at the Ninemile Ranger Station.



WE REMEMBER



Dwight Alvin Dauber of Idaho Falls passed away at his home on May 21, 2025. Dwight was born December 3, 1933, in Brainerd Minnesota to Daniel and Angels Dauber. He grew up in Salmon Idaho. Dwight and his wife Patricia Ann lived in Hungry Horse Montanan where he worked for the Forest Service for 33 years.

Dwight enjoyed hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family. He is survived by a daughter, a son, a sister as well as two grandchildren. His wife predeceased him in 2021.



William Albert Fortune "Bill" – From Harlowton MT passed away May 1, 2025. Bill was born in Butte Montana on June 7, 1947, to Albert and Eva Fortune. He was married in 1968 to Susan Grant in Bozeman. Bill graduated from Montana State University in 1969 with a degree in range management and went to work for the Montana State Land Board before starting his Forest Service career. Bill started his Forest Service career as a seasonal on the Deerlodge Forest. He then spent time as a Range Conservationist on the Beaverhead, Custer and Winema Forests as well as the Grasslands in North Dakota. In 1990 he arrived in Harlowton as District Ranger for the Musselshell and Judith Ranger Districts until his retirement in 2003.

Bill is survived by his wife, Susan, sons Luke and JT as well as five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



Mary Gonzales – passed away in Billings Montana June 25, 2025, after a two-year battle with cancer. Mary was born in New London Connecticut to Herbert and Winifred Fridge on July 29, 1962. She spent her childhood growing up in Mystic Connecticut with her four siblings. She attended St. Bernard's Parochial School where she was a member of the National Honor Society, an all-state athlete and captain of the cross country and track and field teams. Mary was nominated to the US Naval Academy but chose to attend the University of Connecticut where she majored in Agriculture and Forestry.

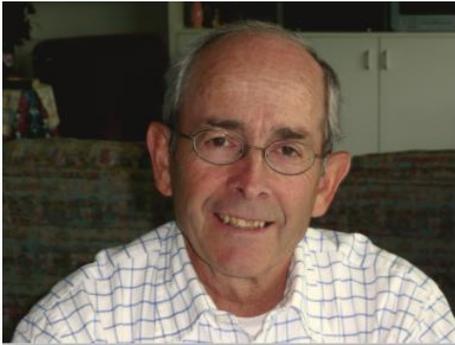
Mary's love for the outdoors brought her to Montana where she met her first husband Melvin Haglnd they had two daughters. Mary started her career at Ennis on the Beaverhead- Deerlodge in 1985 as the timber data base manager. She then worked at the Stanford Ranger District, Musselshell, and Bozeman Districts and lastly as a GIS Specialist on the Hoosier and Custer Forests. In 2001 Mary married a childhood friend Derek Gonzales and they had a daughter who was an integral part in caring for her parents in their time of need. She retired in 2021.

Mary was a member of the Fellowship Baptist Church in Lockwood Montana. She is survived by her husband of 23 years, three daughters, five grandchildren as well as three of her siblings.



James Francis Homison “Jim” age 71 passed away at his home in Stanford Montana on May 9, 2025. Jim was born in Butler Pennsylvania to James and Francis Homison on October 3, 1953. Jim graduated from Montana State University and worked for the Forest Service for 20 years. Jim was an Engine Foreman at the Judith District for many years then FMO for the Judith/Musselshell district (Lewis and Clark Forest) from 2005 until his retirement in 2010.

Jim loved to hunt and fish. He is survived by his brothers Alan and Paul as well as several nephews and a niece.



Art Howell of Helena died at age 85 on August 23, 2025. Art was born in Potlatch Idaho to Hugh and Doris Lucille Howell. He had two older sisters, and they all grew up in Coeur d’Alene where he attended junior high and high school. After high school he attended North Idaho Junior College where he married Bonnie Tate who was the love of his life for 62 years. Art then transferred to the University of Montana where he earned a degree in Forestry.

Art began his Forest Service career in Clark Fork Idaho after graduation from U of M. Later assignments were at the Powell and Trout Creek Ranger Stations followed by the remainder of his career at the Helena Forest

Supervisors Office. After 32 years with the Forest Service, he spent 16 years as a contractor with the EPA.

Art was very involved with his community teaching hunter safety, as an EMT along with various committee positions with St Paul’s United Methodist Church. He enjoyed hiking, skiing, biking and time with family and friends. Art is survived by his wife and two sons as well as three grandchildren and a sister.



Forest Beryl Johnston Jr of Frenchtown Montana was born in Alabama October 6, 1937, and passed away on July 13, 2025. Beryl was director of Engineering in Region 1 in the 1980s into the 1990s ending his Forest Service career of 40 years. Beryl was active in the Frenchtown Community Church. He is survived by his wife Lillian Inez, three daughters, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Virgil Leroy Lindsey “Verg” – was born on the family ranch near Curlew Washington October 2, 1929, and passed away in Meridian Idaho April 17, 2025, at the age of ninety-five. His ranch life initiated his love of horses and as a child rode his horse to school. After high school Verg joined the Army and served from 1952 to 1954. After his discharge he attended Washington State University where he studied range management and forestry. He began his Forest Service career in Idaho near the Slate Creek Ranger Station where he and his wife Donna had two sons. Their next stop was in Choteau Montana on the Lewis and Clark Forest. In 1965 he took the Madison District Ranger position in Ennis Montana on the Beaverhead Forest. He retired in 1989 after 31 years with the Forest Service. In his retirement Verg enjoyed doing odd jobs, cutting firewood, and riding in the mountains. He is survived by his wife and two sons along with six grandchildren and his youngest brother.



Robert “Bob” Pfister passed away July 25, 2025. He was born July 29, 1938, in Decorah Iowa and was a scholar athlete in high school and in high school met his wife to be and where they shared a love of music and singing.

Bob received a B.S. in Forest Management from Iowa State University, a M.S. in Silviculture from Oregon State and a PhD in Botany from Washington State. He and his family moved to Missoula in 1967, worked for the Forest Service from 1961 until 1981. After the years at the Forest Service Bob began a new career at the University of Montana as a professor and research director for the School of Forestry. He officially retired in 2000 but continued

mentoring students and teaching short courses.

Being in the forest was Bob’s passion and he also enjoyed singing Barbershop Chorus, bowling, and golf. He is survived by his sister and his three sons as well as numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

William Edward “Bill” Timko passed away in Fairfax Virginia July 18, 2025. He was 73 years old. He spent 38 years with the Forest Service after earning his BS at the University of West Virginia and his Master of Forest Science from Yale.

Bill spent his early career in Idaho, Oregon, and Montana where he was the District Ranger in Big Timber on the Gallatin Forest. From Montana Bill moved to the Washington Office where he retired as Deputy Director of Forest and Rangeland Management. When he retired, he spent time advocating for the National Forests and the Forest Service Retiree Association.

Bill is survived by his wife Pamela, a daughter, a son as well as two grandchildren and a sister.



Lori Jean Wollan passed away on May 14, 2025, after a lengthy battle with cancer. She was fifty-nine. Lori was born May 5, 1966, in Paw Paw Michigan to Allen and Barbara Rendel. She earned a BA from the University of Montana in 1988 and started her thirty-five career with the Forest Service that year in Columbia Falls Montana. She met her husband Thad Wollan that summer when they worked for the timber crew on the Hungry Horse Ranger District. They moved to Great Falls in 1992 where she worked as the GIS specialist on the Lewis and Clark Forest.

Lori and her husband both retired in 2024 and planned to start traveling when she began her battle with cancer until she suffered a stroke on May 13, 2025, and passed away peacefully

with Thad by her side.

Lori is survived by her husband, two sisters, a brother as well as two nieces and nephews.

Complete obituaries can be found by using Google.



Northern Rocky Mountain Retiree Association

P.O. Box 3215
Missoula, Montana 59806

[Type the recipient name]