



# NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN RETIREE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Forest Service Retirees:

Hope you are all enjoying your Montana spring. A few noteworthy items in this report include: 1) Revision of our 1991 By-Laws. The proposed changes (new By-Laws) were electronically sent out to members for review and comment. By this time, you will have received a message prompting a response to approve or disapprove the new By-Laws. The changes are minimal and are meant to make the organization operate commensurate to our organization capacity. 2) We have increased monthly dues to \$30 per year and are asking

members who receive a hard copy of the Newsletter for an additional \$5.00 to help cover the printing and mailing costs. 3) We're all aware of changes to the USFS organization. The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) have been sharing concerns and comments with the Department. I know Chief Tom Schutz is a professional, who will do what he can to guide the organization through these challenging times. In the interim we'll stay tuned. Thanks for your service over your careers.

Tim Love

Seemingly no forest in the state was untouched. Terri Anderson, the top labor union official representing employees in Region 1, gathered tallies of fired workers by forest in Montana last month in response to a request from the Missoulian. By Anderson's count, these are how many positions were eliminated:

- 60 on the Kootenai
- 50 on the Lolo
- 40, at least, on the Flathead
- 40 on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge
- 30 on the Bitterroot
- 38 on the Helena-Lewis & Clark

Workers on the Custer-Gallatin aren't under a collective bargaining agreement, so Anderson didn't have their numbers, but a Feb. 27 letter from the Custer-Gallatin Working Group to Montana's congressional delegation stated 36 workers were fired.

Anderson said workers were also fired from the Region 1 headquarters office in Missoula.



## TAKING CARE OF THE MOOSE CREEK STOCK

by Bill Fansler

In 1968 I had the opportunity to work on the all-wilderness Moose Creek District, Nez Perce NF. One evening I was standing by the corrals, munching on an apple, watching the stock mill around, for lack of anything better to do. I was approached by Marlin Kennedy, one of the packers. He said he understood I was from Texas and wanted to know if I had ever worked around stock. I told him I had worked on a ranch one summer while in high school and had ridden horses several times. He wanted to know if I would be interested in learning how to pack with stock. That brightened my eyes!

The other packer was a man named Ted (last name long forgotten) who was also a blaster. He had been assigned to a trail project that required a lot of blasting. He was the blaster, packer, and supervisor for that project. This was an experienced crew and already on the project. But that meant they were short a packer and Marlin would need some help. And so, my training began.

I had never packed stock before so I did not have a preconceived notion of how things should be done. Marlin was a good teacher, taking time to make sure I learned correct techniques since it would keep me from injuring the animals. I eventually packed with up to five head of stock and learned to hitch a team to a wagon and drive it.

It also meant I was to take care of the stock. When it was too dark for a plane to land, I would let the stock out to graze on the runways at night. That

was at 9:30 pm. When it was light enough for a plane to land, I had to have the stock off the runway and in the corrals. That was 4:30 am. (*Note: The Wilderness Act provided for the continued use of aircraft where its use was already established. There were five runways in use on the Moose Creek District in 1964.*) Since I would be keeping different hours than the rest of the crew, I moved out of the bunkhouse and into a wall tent out back of the fenced compound. It was meant for the overflow and visitors who might pass through. It consisted of 10 or 12 cots and nothing more. I slept on one cot and used the adjacent cot to store my clothes. Most of the summer I had the tent to myself.

At first, I was allowed to use grain to bring the stock in. I quickly learned to walk backwards in the manger, scattering the grain as I went to keep from getting run over by the animals as they jostled for the food. If Marlin had a trip to make that day, he would give me a list of the animals he was going to be using, and I would separate them in the corral and give them more grain. The feed shed got swept each morning, making sure the feed was properly stored, to keep the mice population in check. Once a week, the corrals were raked and the manure loaded on a wagon, then spread along the edges of one of the runways.

One morning the District Ranger, Bill Holman, told me it was too expensive to use grain to bring the stock in, but I could use fresh cut hay. That only lasted two mornings before the mules let me know they did not consider that an adequate

substitution by hanging out at the back end of the long runway. The mules would stand and watch me until I reached them before they would take off for the corral. After chasing them for three mornings, I told the Ranger I either wanted to use grain again or get one hour of overtime to chase them down. Later in the afternoon he told me I could use grain again as it was cheaper than paying me OT. That suited me fine as I did not like that early morning venture.

The mules eventually learned I was staying in the tent and would show up there every morning at daybreak. They were as good as any alarm clock. I would stay in bed until they began to drift away, then I would get up. That gave me about 30 extra minutes in the sack.

Water was heated in the bath house through water pipes in a wood stove. So, my next chore each morning was to start a fire so we would have hot water for the day. Afterwards, I would get cleaned up and dressed and headed to the dining hall to see if the cook needed any help. He usually did.

We made our own lunches for the day, and I usually set those items out on a table. My one advantage was I had first choice on any leftovers from the previous night. I might have a pork chop or fried chicken instead of a sandwich. When the cook told me it was time, I would go ring the breakfast bell.

If Marlin was packing that day, I would help him mantle up the supplies until we heard the breakfast bell. After breakfast, we finished getting everything ready to go and loaded up on the stock. If Marlin was headed up Moose Creek, I would walk ahead and open the gates for him. Whenever he returned, regardless of the time, I would help unload and help take care of the stock.

There was only one basic schedule for the seasonal crew in 1968: eight to five with one hour off for lunch. At 8:00 am, I would go on the clock. Anything done outside the base hours was free service to the agency. Anyone that has ever worked on a ranch knows that chores with animals must be done seven days a week. So even on my days off, I was up at 4:30 and out in the corral. There was no pay that day. I easily donated 8 to 16 hours each week to the Forest Service. I understood I was expected to donate my time outside the base hours when I accepted the assignment.



Emil Keck, FMO, was the supervisor of most of the seasonal crew. There were a couple of nights that he had the crew do some work and I am sure they were not compensated and donated their time as well. I always escaped those evening assignments.

There was a time when most employees were required to donate some extra time without compensation. Prior to 1967, Forest Service employees were required to travel from the office to the work site on their own time. In 1968, one way was on the employee's time and one way on government. By 1970, the government was paying for all travel to the field. Some will remember when you could max out on a fire and still be ordered out on the fire line in a non-pay status.

Work attitude and ethics have changed considerably since those long-ago years. By the turn of the 21st century, donating time to the agency was not as common or expected by work supervisors, and, in some cases, discouraged or prohibited. Some permanents would still take phone calls from contractors or permitters at home, but I worked with a few that refused to do any work outside their scheduled work hours. The Forest Service has slowly metamorphosized into a

different agency over the years. I'm thankful I had the opportunity to work in those earlier years.

*Bill Fansler graduated from Steven F Austin State University in 1970 with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry with a Wildlife Option and a Minor in Biology. He started his career as a seasonal on the Nez Perce Forest in 1968, retiring from the Kootenai Forest in 2008. He worked on the Nez Perce, Bitterroot, Kaniksu, Lolo, and Kootenai National Forests. He lives in Libby Montana.*



## THE STORM

by John Crawford

Left alone on the mountaintop, I feel the wind against my cheeks and yell out over the wilderness at my feet...I'm Free! The sound of water greets my ears after the words echo off the bluffs in the head of Bluff Creek. A cry from a redtail hawk circling high above the lookout ridge. A ground squirrel chirps out an alarm below the rock wall that some industrious lookout person-built years ago to keep ground fire from reaching the tower. More water sounds. Louder this time. They mix with the wind that gets stronger as it bears down on the mountaintop from the west. Mountains upon mountains are stacked upon one another like a series of gigantic green waves, ending in the Bitterroot Crest, a half state of Idaho away. The Selway River snakes like a fifty-mile-long python off to the north. The Selway Crags stand sentry above it, further to the north, a majestic island of gray jagged ridges and peaks above the restive sea of green below it. The country drops steeply off to the west and Meadow Creek, ushering the high-

country snowmelt to the Selway confluence on its long journey to the Pacific. I close my eyes and breathe in deep the fresh mountain air, bringing the intoxicating evergreen/snowmelt brew to my senses, making me realize how close to heaven I truly am. The wind stops, the local Townsend Solitaire concert begins, her trills of joy going on and on and on, until it seems like some sort of magic act, she has that much breath in such a small body. The building cumulus out over the Gospel Hump Wilderness is already 30,000 feet and growing. The skies are darkening. A deathly still settles in over the mountaintop. The Townsend Solitaire stops singing, the ground squirrels hide in their burrows. A low rumbling in the distance. The storm is being born.

The storm gains momentum, pencil-thick flashes stabbing into the mountainsides, the rumbling getting louder, the thick layer of clouds extending to the ground in a torrent of rain. It's coming. Slow, but sure.

A brief lull before the storm descends on the mountaintop. Then suddenly the wind picks up, the tower starts to sway on its forty-foot legs, the shutters start to flap up and down like a bird's wings. I retreat inside the single-pane glass protection of a lookout building. The wind gets stronger, the hawk takes cover in the bluffs on the lee side of the ridge. I close all the windows and the door. My partner, Judy, is five hours away, safe at home in Montana. Sane decision. The war is about to begin...me against the elements.

The tower takes a sudden gust from out of the west, heeling the lookout over with the first real wave of invisible fury. Then another gust hits. The lantern sways above my head. I sway on top of my glass-insulated stool. Sweat builds on my forehead, in my armpits.

The storm marches closer, raining fire down from the sky, the million-volt firebrands searing the mountainsides in its deadly path, starting fires the rain doesn't seem to have much effect on. Another huge gust of wind, the tower feeling like it's about to become part of the ground, my body soon to become scrunched under lookout wreckage. Day quickly turns into night. I feel like I'm in a hurricane...the torrential rains, the hundred-mile-per-hour winds, carrying the golf ball-size hail stones that bang into the windows, sounding like a machine gun going off, the lightning crashing down from the heavens, sticking the nearby firs and lodgepoles, blasting them apart, starting fires, flames licking at the black udders of the monstrous storm behemoth.



*John Crawford and his model of the Indian Hill Lookout.*

Then, as quickly as it started, it magically stops. The birds return. The ground squirrels come back out of their burrows. The sound of water cascading off the rocks in Bluff Creek. The redtail hawk soaring again out over the ridge. My nerves settle down. I spot the little columns of blue that infect the green with its residue of smoke. The fires are plotted, then called in to Fenn Dispatch over the Forest Service radio. Then I return to the catwalk for the final treat, the reason I love storms on the mountaintop...the rainbows. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet fuse together out over Bluff Creek, one end arching into the mouth of the stream, the other end connected to the bluffs at the head of the valley. The Townsend Solitaire starts up its serenade again. Millions of water-bead diamonds glisten from the perfectly shaped alpine firs that wrap the lookout clearing at my feet. I

miss Judy. But I pretend that she's here with me, sharing in the beauty, feeling the peace that flows into our souls...

*John lives in Lolo Montana and spent his career as a lookout in Idaho and has written a number of books about those years.*

**From your newsletter editor**

I recently talked to one of our retirees, Joe Church, he is 100 and walks two and a half miles a day. This made me think, that with the reunion coming up and which I will cover in the fall newsletter, that it would be fun to include some photos of our retirees in from their early days in the Forest Service. We are an amazing group of retirees and should be recognized. So . . . if you have a photo of yourself from your early FS days, please send it on to me . . . with a bit of information. If you don't have an electronic copy, you can send me an original and I will scan it and return it promptly.

Thanks,  
Vicky, your newsletter editor



*Trail Crew, Blackfeet Forest Reserve. August 1909.*

## BOOK REVIEW

by Vicky MacLean



**Smoke Chaser** by Warren Yahr is an older book about the years Warren spent as a teenage smoke chaser in the 1940s on the Bungalow district of the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho. The author details his adventures and the people he worked with along the North Fork of the Clearwater River. If you know this area you will know the places he talks about. In these “old days” firefighting was often left to just one of these smoke chasers as he hiked trailless country, chatted over the radio with other lookouts and ate whatever rations were supplied while hoping to nab a grouse or two to supplement the supply of canned goods. Old copies of this book can be found on Amazon for a few dollars.

**Tarzan, The Mountain Man and the Pete King Fire of 1934**, by John Crawford of Lolo Montana, is the story of old - time smoke chaser Ernest “Tarzan” William Bohn and his summer on the Otter Butte Lookout on the Nez Perce Forest in 1934. It chronicles his story about actually building the lookout, chasing smokes in the area south of the Selway river and culminating in his terrifying time lying in a small creek near his lookout while the fire swept over him. The author interviewed the elderly and frail “Tarzan” over a few days to get the story of this legendary man.

**Above it All**, another book by John Crawford, is a new book written about John’s 40 plus years as a lookout, on the Indian Hill Lookout on the Nez Perce Forest and 10 more years on the Idaho Panhandle’s Sundance Lookout after he “retired” from the Indian Hill Lookout. The author chronicles in detail several of his summers watching for smoke and observing the wildlife and plants of his mountain top neighborhood. Several names he mentions are on our list of Region 1 retiree. These books are both available through Stoneydale Press Publishing in Stevensville MT. [www.stoneydale.com](http://www.stoneydale.com)

**In the Selway Shadows: Last flight of 148Z** by Richard H. Holm Jr. This is the story of the 1979 flight of a DC-3 with 12 people aboard. It was bound for the Moose Creek Ranger Station in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness when it crashed into the Selway River due to mechanical problems. Those on the plane were FS employees and volunteers heading to the Moose Creek Ranger Station for spring orientation. Ten people died, two passengers and two dogs survived. Available from Amazon

**Why Not** by Barry Flamm is a memoir of a self - proclaimed tree hugger and environmentalist. It chronicles his life, with emphasis on his professional life, starting at a Ranger District in New Mexico in the mid-1950s on up through Forest Supervisor on the Shoshone Forest and on to Washington DC. A stint in Viet Nam to study the effects of the war on forestry and agriculture, back to DC as chief of fire management then

involvement with the Council on Environmental Quality. A time in the Amazon, concerns with biodiversity and time with the Wilderness Society. Barry spent time working in on forestry plans in Nepal and Mongolia. He officially retired in the 1990s to become an orchardist in Polson where he had 40 acres of organic fruit trees, enjoyed out-doors activities and continued to do consulting work around the world.

Available from Amazon. If you would like to get your copy signed check with your newsletter editor who is a friend and neighbor of Barry's and can probably make that happen.

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## BURN BOSS CASE DISMISSED

A criminal case was dismissed on June 6 against a U.S. Forest Service employee arrested in 2022 by a rural Oregon sheriff after a prescribed burn on federal land unexpectedly spread to private property and burned roughly 20 acres.

In February, a Grant County grand jury indicted Ricky Snodgrass, 41, on a reckless burning charge, a misdemeanor. The case was later moved to federal court, and last month Snodgrass' lawyers had asked a judge to dismiss it. Grant County District

Attorney Jim Carpenter, who just months ago presented the case to the grand jury, did not oppose that motion, and the judge approved it this week.



*Tom Reynold at the Moran Ranger Station,  
Flathead National Forest.*

“Mr. Snodgrass was charged because the State — or more precisely, the local sheriff — took issue with the Forest Service’s decision to conduct the prescribed fire,” defense attorneys for Snodgrass wrote last month in court documents. “But the State cannot charge Mr. Snodgrass with a crime simply because it disagrees with the Forest Service’s decision. The (U.S. Constitution’s) Supremacy Clause controls, and Mr. Snodgrass is immune from prosecution. This case must be dismissed.”

On Oct. 19, 2022, Snodgrass oversaw a planned burn. A release from the U.S. Forest Service, said the weather conditions were safe for the agency to begin a prescribed fire and that it planned to thin 300 acres to help reduce wildfire risk. But afternoon winds caused the fire to jump onto property owned by the Windy Point Cattle Company. The Forest Service crew got the fire under control within an hour before any people or livestock were harmed.

Before the day was over, Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley arrested Snodgrass.

“I believe that my actions, both before the prescribed burn was ignited and throughout the day, until I was removed from the burn because I was arrested by the Grant County Sheriff, were necessary and proper to perform my duties as Burn Boss,” Snodgrass wrote in a May 10 declaration filed in federal court.

Snodgrass’s arrest was captured on McKinley’s body camera.

“Are you guys wanting to have this prosecuted?” McKinley asks someone with the ranch, according to a redacted transcript of the footage filed by Snodgrass’s lawyers. “Because I’m willing to arrest

him at this point, OK, because he’s the burn boss who made the call.”

Just before arresting Snodgrass, the sheriff said there would be a criminal investigation into the fire.

“Snodgrass, you’re not free to leave,” McKinley said.

“Why is that?” Snodgrass replied.

“Because I’m gonna place you under arrest,” the sheriff said.

Snodgrass protested, saying it would be better to let him help put out the fire, since he was in charge.

“You have some very qualified people out there to take it from here,” McKinley said, according to the transcript. “I understand all those implications, trust me. And I don’t know if you realize what kind of a position your agency puts me in by the actions you just took.”

During the grand jury hearing, the sheriff testified that once Snodgrass was in handcuffs, “he took off and ran from me, and went over onto the other side of the road and said, ‘I’m standing on federal land, now you can’t touch me,’ which is not true.”

At another point, Snodgrass reportedly said he would go with McKinley but asked the sheriff to remove his handcuffs.

“I have to take you in cuffed. That’s the way it works,” the sheriff said. “It’s our policy.”

“This looks bad, dude, for you,” Snodgrass replied.

During the grand jury, McKinley testified that the arrest got “huge national exposure.”

That exposure came in part because McKinley’s predecessor, former Sheriff Glenn Palmer, drew national attention in 2016 by declaring his support for armed militants who took over the Malheur

National Wildlife Refuge in nearby Harney County in a dispute framed around federal authority in rural Oregon.

“I don’t know if you guys want to know how many hundreds of phone calls I got over this,” McKinley testified. “Either I was a pariah, the enemy, or they’re trying to make me a hero out of it.”

The sheriff also made several false statements during the grand jury, according to Snodgrass’ lawyers. For example, McKinley testified that he tried to subpoena records from the U.S. Forest Service, and the federal government “refused to cooperate at all.” But Snodgrass’ lawyers said the sheriff didn’t follow the process the Supreme Court has outlined for getting documents to be used in court.

McKinley also speculated as to why the U.S. Forest Service authorized the prescribed burn.

“I have my theories like it had been a slow year, hadn’t been a whole lot going on,” the sheriff told the grand jury. “They were looking for something to do.”

Snodgrass’ attorneys said there was no evidence of reckless behavior, but rather a policy disagreement.

In a statement early Friday, McKinley stood by his decision to arrest Snodgrass and said he believed state law was sufficient enough to bring charges.

“I am saddened that our own Government, which was established, ‘of the People, by the People, for the People,’ would choose to not ‘do the right thing’ and make the damaged party whole, for fear of assuming responsibility for their actions,” McKinley wrote. “The hope out of all of this, is in the future, that more care will be taken, guidelines followed, and the United States Forest Service will heed their own motto: ‘Caring for the Land and Serving People.’”

Carpenter didn’t return a request for comment. Neither did Snodgrass’ attorneys.

During Snodgrass’ 2022 arrest, the sheriff told the federal employee that the arrest wasn’t personal and said he was a “huge supporter” of the Forest Service.

“I can’t look sideways on something that’s criminal just because we get along and we’re working agencies,” McKinley told Snodgrass in 2022. “My job requires me to hold up the law despite who it was. If you were my mother doing something criminal, I would have to deal with it.”



## **National Smokejumper Association**

*Keepers of the Flame*

National Smoke Jumpers Reunion – June 20-22 at the University of Montana

[smokejumpers.com](https://smokejumpers.com) for information

# MY DEAR FRIEND, JAN MCLAREN

by Dick Rath

It was midafternoon, on September 23, 1976, when the siren went off. Dick Shaw and I were on top of the jump list and soon boarded a DC-3 heading north out of Missoula. Our destination was the Spotted Bear Ranger District on the north end of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Our spotter was a close friend Jan McLaren. The flight went by quickly. The fire was located just south of Outfitter Roost near Slide Rock Mountain. Jan, a very able spotter, dropped us into a meadow just north of the fire. The fire was small and the pack out was one we both long remembered.

This happened to be my last fire jump, but not my last encounter with my friend Jan. In 1977, we both left the SJ organization. Earlier Jan passed the test as a CPA exam and began a career path that would take him from private industry back to a long career with the Forest Service.

Jan passed away last week after the parts of his body ganged up on him and he drew his last breath. His passing brought back an avalanche of memories.

In the fall of 1973, Jan, CR Holder, my brother Tom and I took a fall detail to the Superior Ranger District on the Lolo NF. Our supervisor was a young forester named Arnie Brosten, MSO mid-60's.

Jan was an avid bow hunter. Each evening, he would be looking for an elk. On one evening, Jan had bugled in a bull, but his arrow had gone just over the bull's back. As he recounted the story, we could tell that he was just that - a good elk hunter, who did not always need to bring home an animal. Yes, he was a real sportsman.



*Jan McLaren, June 1971.*

In 1967, Jan joined the Marines and served in Vietnam. In 1968, he finished his service commitment and returned to his family farm in Iowa working with his father. The following summer Jan found himself working as a seasonal for the Fortine Ranger District on the Kootenai. One of the highlights of that summer was the time he spent as the last lookout on Stahl Peak along the Canadian border.

After the AFD, Jan's career with the FS, included assignment to the, Clearwater, Willamette, and Beaverhead. It was during his time on the Beaverhead NF that he accepted a short detail back to the AFD. I believe that the year was 1986, a long-protracted fire season in R-1. Later he told me that he made some fire jumps, but that he realized just how much he had aged, and he was glad to go back home. After that, Jan took an

assignment to Gresham, Oregon for the Willamette NF and the FS Albuquerque Resource Center.

In 1990's Jan, Cheri and their Boys moved back to Missoula. Jan was one of the budget analysts for the Region, a position that he was mighty good at. One of his colleagues recently told me that Jan would not break any of the rules, which gained him great respect within the Region.

While he was in the Regional Office and I happened to have business at the RO, I would often stop by his desk and the two of us would have lunch together. At these lunches he was always interested in what was going on in the world of fire management. It was at these times that I could tell he missed the world of wildland fire and those close relationships that he had made at the AFD.

Jan is survived by his devoted wife Cheri and three sons, David John, Grayson and Gavin. Jan was a devoted father, a loving husband and, from my end, a very dear friend.

Rest in Peace My Friend



*Field crew North Fork of the Flathead, 1909.*

## THE WALLS ARE GOING UP AT THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEGACY CENTER

The walls are going up as construction of the National Conservation Legacy Center on our Missoula MT campus continues! View more photos

here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/hpoUc4ioRd4hjL5x5>

We still are short ~ \$1 million to cover the exhibition, Center furnishings, building design changes and inflation adjustments. Many efforts are underway to close the gap (e.g., volunteers making furniture, portions of exhibits), and of course our continuing fundraising efforts. Check

out the museum's website at <https://forestservicemuseum.org>

We have volunteer opportunities to help stain the cedar siding (Spring and Summer), build the Lookout (Summer/Fall), and help with interior work (Fall and Winter). If you would like to help out contact **Lisa**

**Tate**, [lisa.tate@forestservicemuseum.org](mailto:lisa.tate@forestservicemuseum.org), or **Tom Petersen**, [tom.petersen@forestservicemuseum.org](mailto:tom.petersen@forestservicemuseum.org), or call the Museum at (406) 541-6374. You may also call Lisa at (208) 484-6667 (mobile).





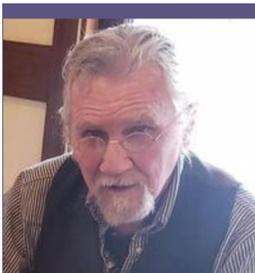
## WE REMEMBER



**George Durnin Agar** of Sandpoint Idaho passed away September 18, 2024. He was born to Josephine and Charles Agar in Missoula Montana on October 7, 1937. George spent his early years in Plains, Montana then at age 10 moved to Sandpoint, Idaho where his family ran a dairy farm. George grew up loving the outdoors of Idaho and met his wife, Margaret, when they were teenagers. Married for 65 years they had three girls who they raised on Kootenai Bay on Lake Pend Oreille.

George spent his Forest Service years as a Geo-Tech engineer designing Forest Service roads in the Idaho panhandle. George was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting, competitive bicycling and cross-country skiing. After retirement he and his wife enjoyed hiking and biking in the southwest.

George is survived by his wife, a sister, his three daughters, seven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.



**Peter "Pete" D'Almeida** of Darby Montana passed away February 12, 2025. He was born July 6, 1941, in Tiegenhof, Danzig, Werst Prussia, Germany and arrived in the United States in 1948 and his family settled in California. Pete joined the Air Force as a young man in 1961. During his service he sustained injuries in Viet Nam and during his recovery met Betty Slater and they were eventually married.

After retirement from the Air Force Pete began working with the Job Corps and then the Forest Service. In 1970 he was offered a job at the Trapper Peak Job Corps as the Corpsman Supervisor and retired from there in 1994. In retirement he and Betty enjoyed history and shooting events. Pete's wife preceded him in death. He is survived by his three sisters, four children and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. As per his request there will be no service, but a shoot will be held later this year.



**Kenneth Gallik** age 91 passed away March 13, 1925. Ken was born in Great Falls Montana on October 11, 1933, the youngest of 7 children of Andrew and Anna Gallik. He grew up in the mining areas south of Great Falls; Stockett, Tracy and Sand Coulee. Ken graduated from Stockett-Sand Coulee High school and joined the Air Force. After his Air Force years Ken enrolled at MSU and studied engineering. Following his marriage to Beverly Freeman they spent time in the private sector in California, Utah, Colorado and Nevada.

Upon returning to Montana in 1962 Ken joined the Forest Service and served on the Lolo, Kaniksu, Lewis and Clark and Custer Forests. Later he served as Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Gallatin Forest. He worked with the Greater Yellowstone Recovery Fundraising project and later worked at the Washington Office.

Ken enjoyed spending time doing outside activities with his family. He is survived by a son and a daughter, several grandchildren and step grandchildren as well as great grandchildren, nieces and nephews.



**Charlotte Hall** – age 84 of Kalispell passed away September 28, 2024, after an 18-month battle with cancer. She was born August 23, 1938, to Alf and Elizabeth Ueland in Grand Rapids Michigan. The family moved to Kalispell as a child and graduated from Flathead High School. Charlotte retired from the Flathead National Forest where she had worked for 24 years.

Charlotte is survived by her daughter, five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and two sisters. A sister and two sons preceded her in death.



**Ronald Eugene “Hoop” Hooper** of Biloxi, Mississippi passed away December 23, 2024. He was born January 1, 1951, in Toledo, Ohio. Ronald was with the Forest Service for 41 years. His job took him to Utah, Wisconsin, California and Washington DC where he retired. After a brief retirement he became CEO of Neptune Aviation. After retiring from Neptune, he and his wife Vicki relocated to the Gulf Coast in Mississippi.

Ron was an avid NASCAR enthusiast and enjoyed life at the beaches where he spent time enjoying nature and the serenity it provided. Ron is survived by his wife, Vicki, six children, 19 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to the National Museum of Forest Service History, Watsons Children Shelter of Missoula or Silver Lining Foundation of Montana.

**Carl Cooper Jacobs** – of Stevensville Montana passed away February 8, 2025, at the age of 87.



**Francis “Frank” Lyons** - of Polson Montana, was born in Kellogg, Idaho January 14, 1939, at just over two pounds. He thrived despite his premature birth and passed away January 29, 2025, after a brief illness. As a child he hunted in the mountains near his home. After graduating from Kellogg High School, he attended the University of Idaho where he studied Business and Mechanical Engineering. There he met Barbara Kroll, and they were married in 1962.

Frank worked for the Forest Service in northern Idaho and Montana for over 30 years and retired in 1980. He enjoyed hunting, skiing, fishing and singing. He was preceded in death by his sister, He is survived by his wife, three children and four granddaughters.



**Joanne McElfrish** age 90, of Stevensville Montana, passed away November 10, 2024. She was born September 28, 1934, in Fort Sam Houston Texas to Jeanette and Col. Joe E. Golden. The family moved numerous times because of her father's military career. Joan graduated from high school in Puerto Rico in 1952. Upon graduation Joanne bought a bus ticket to Missoula where she enrolled at the UM school of forestry. Joanne was the first female graduate there to go into the field with her degree in timber management. Her career was primarily in region 1. Along the way she completed a certificate in Forest Ecology and Silviculture and earned an MS in Forest and Range Management from Washington State in 1980. Joanne met Richard McElfrish in Wisdom where he was the district Ranger in 1962. Two years later they were married, and their first home was in Forest Service housing in Wisdom.

Joanne enjoyed many outdoor activities: hunting, fishing, camping and rock hounding. She was an artist and enjoyed painting and photography. She was a champion of women and of education. She is survived by two sisters and numerous nieces and nephews.

**Jan McLaren** – (please see pages 11 and 12).



**Robert "Bob" Mutch** of Sheridan Wyoming passed away December 18, 2024. He was born in Cleveland Ohio March 5, 1934 to Earl and Nellie Mutch. Bob graduated from Orange High School and Albion College with a degree in Biology and English. Bob was a smoke jumper in 1954 and 1955. He married Sally Ball in 1956, and they moved to Montana and attended U of M where he earned an M.S. in Forestry.

Bob lived at the Priest River Experimental Forest where he was Superintendent for several years. He then moved to Missoula where he conducted research on wildland fuels and fire behavior. Subsequent positions were on the Lolo Forest in fire management, forest planning, development of fuel management programs and the wilderness fire program. In the 1980 and early 1990s Bob served as the Forest Service's Disaster Assistant Support program in DC. This position took him to Spain, Senegal, Switzerland and Costa Rica. His last position was back in Montana at the Intermountain Forest Fire Laboratory from where he retired in 1994.

Bob is survived by daughter Linda and sons Dale and Brian, and a grandson. A memorial service for Bob and his wife Sally is planned for this spring. Memorial donations may be made to the Wildland Firefighter Foundation ([wffoundation.org](http://wffoundation.org)).



**George Ostrom** was born July 24, 1928, in the Flathead Valley. He passed away January 1, 2025. His education was in a one room schoolhouse. He never graduated from high school or college. Although not a Forest Service retiree, he had been a paratrooper during WWII and after that a Forest Service Smoke Jumper. He performed the lone jump at the dedication of the Smoke Jumper center in Missoula in 1954 in front of many spectators including President Eisenhower.

George had a passion for education and was involved with the University of Montana and Flathead Valley Community College. He was a journalist who was involved in founding the KOFI radio station and various newspapers in the Flathead area. George was involved with many civic organizations and an avid hiker.

George is survived by his two daughters, three grandchildren, two great grandsons and many other family members and friends.



**Jerry Reese** was born in Ely Nevada on September 6, 1945, and passed away December 20, 2024. He attended high school in Idaho Falls and graduated from the University of Idaho where he obtained a B.S. in Forestry and an M.S. In Ranger Management. He had a 35-year career with the Forest Service, retiring in 2005 as Supervisor of the Caribou-Targhee Forest in Eastern Idaho.

Jerry enjoyed the outdoors and was involved with the Teton Land Trust and the local Trout Unlimited chapter. He particularly enjoyed upland bird hunting and fly fishing.

Jerry is survived by his wife Barbara, sons Bruce and Steve, two grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Donations may be made to the Teton Regional Land Trust or the University of Idaho College of National Resources Scholarship Fund,

**Tom Schenarts** – age 91 of Missoula passed away December 9, 2024. Tom was born June 22, 1933, to Thomas and Marion Schenarts in New Haven CT. Tom developed a love of the outdoors through his years in the boy scouts. His artistic talent was discovered through a high school art class and throughout his life he expressed himself through painting and sculpture. In 1955 Tom left the urban Northeast of his youth for the forests of northern Idaho where he began his 35-year career with the Forest Service.



In 1957 Tom married Barbara Prouty and in their early years of marriage they lived on Forest Service Ranger Stations in small communities of Idaho. During these years, the family welcomed two daughters. In 1963 Tom was appointed to the District Ranger position at Bungalow on the North Fork of the Clearwater where he was one of the youngest rangers in the country. In 1968 the family moved to Missoula where Tom held several positions at the Regional Office.

In 1976 Tom and his family returned to the east to serve in the Washington Office, he also was “loaned” to USAID and spent time in Liberia developing a forest management plan. His last position was in Pennsylvania serving as director of the Northeast Area of State and Private Forestry. On retirement he and Barbara established a Christmas tree farm and restored their 200-year-old farmhouse. They moved back to Missoula in 2005.

In his retirement Tom devoted himself to his art and volunteered at Travelers Rest State Park. Tom is survived by his wife, daughters, a brother, grandchildren and great grandchildren. A service is planned for this summer.



**Dr Hans Robert Zurring** of Missoula passed away December 1, 2024. Hans was not a Forest Service retiree but had been a professor at the University of Montana where a number of our retirees and other Forest Service employees had taken classes from him.

Hans was born in the Netherlands on August 21, 1942, and immigrated with his family to Canada where he obtained a forestry degree from the University of Toronto. He went on to Iowa State University for a PhD and then accepted a position at the University of Montana in 1974. He and his wife enjoyed traveling the world, music, and many community service activities. He is survived by his wife Barbara, two sons, a brother, a sister, four grandchildren and numerous other relatives and friends.

Obituaries have been edited for length; complete ones may be found by Googling their names.



**2025 Forest Service  
Retiree Reunion**  
Monday, Sept. 22 - Friday, Sept. 26, 2025  
Missoula, Montana  
[www.2025usfsreunion.org](http://www.2025usfsreunion.org)

Catch up on Museum info, the RO newsletter and the 2025 Reunion on our web page

<https://nrmra.org>

For National Retirees information follow or join them at <https://nafsr.org>

This site is keeping retirees informed about all the reorganization and turmoil at the Forest Service.



*Near Lolo Pass.*

**Northern Rocky Mountain Retiree Association**

P.O. Box 3215  
Missoula, Montana 59806

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