

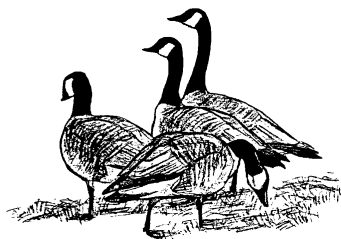


# Field Notes

P.O. Box 81065, Fairbanks, AK 99708 907-452-5162 [www.friendsofcreamersfield.org](http://www.friendsofcreamersfield.org) [director@friendsofcreamersfield.org](mailto:director@friendsofcreamersfield.org)

## Inside this issue:

From our President & Executive Director	2
Refuge Expansion	3
Design Alaska Wild Arts Walk	4-5
ASI News, Babies in the Woods/Preschool Nature Discovery Fall Schedule	6
Camp Habitat	7
Volunteers	8
Saying Goodbye	9



## Our Mission:

Inspiring environmental stewardship and lifelong learning through experience, awareness and appreciation of the natural and historical resources of Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.

## 2018 Sandhill Crane Festival to Feature Author Hank Lentfer



This year marks the 21st annual Tanana Valley Sandhill Crane Festival. The three day event, scheduled for August 24th-26th to coincide with the fall Sandhill Crane migration, welcomes featured guest, author and

conservationist Hank Lentfer. A lifelong Alaskan from Gustavus, Hank Lentfer is obsessed with recording the voices of his Alaskan neighbors. Over the past five years, he has created a deep library of sounds-from the haunting notes of the Hermit Thrush to the rushing breath of humpback whales. When not exploring wild country with his recording gear, Hank is at his desk writing. His publications include "Faith of Cranes: Finding Hope and Family in Alaska", and most recently "Forgotten Voices: The Listening Life of Richard K. Nelson". Hank lives on a stream bank in Gustavus, Alaska with wife Anya and daughter Linnea.

## Friends of Creamer's Field

Join the Friends of Creamer's Field Board and Staff at the

## Annual Membership Meeting and Potluck

Friday, August 24th at  
6:30 - 7:30 PM

Hot dogs, chips and drinks will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

**2018 TANANA VALLEY  
SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL  
AT CREAMER'S FIELD**

**FEATURED GUEST: HANK LENTFER**  
HANK LENTFER PRESENTS:  
"THE LOST ART OF LISTENING"

**RAFFLE  
SILENT AUCTION**

**AUGUST  
24-26**

THREE DAYS OF RESEARCH  
TALKS, KIDS ACTIVITIES, BIRD  
VIEWING, GUIDED NATURE  
WALKS, CREAMER'S HISTORY  
AND FUN!

COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AT:  
[WWW.FRIENDSOFCREAMERSFIELD.ORG](http://WWW.FRIENDSOFCREAMERSFIELD.ORG)  
FRIENDS OF CREAMER'S FIELD (907) 452-5162  
1300 COLLEGE ROAD, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



## Friends of Creamer's Field

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(Alaska Dept. Fish & Game)

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Kerry Savereide

Laurie Boeck

Mark D. Ross

### Staff

Lissa Hughes,

Executive Director

Barbara Logan,

Administrative Assistant

Chris Eckerson,

Camp Habitat Director

Crystal Alexander,

Assist. Camp Habitat Director

## Board President's Report

Hello Friends,

I hope that you are having a wonderful summer and enjoying the sights, sounds, and activities at Creamer's Field.

Writing these letters to you always puts me in a reflective state. There have been a lot of changes these past few months starting with a new Executive Director to the passing of dear friends and supporters, Herb Melchior and Jerry McGowan. As you will see in the articles about these two men, they did a great deal for the Refuge, leaving a remarkable legacy.

What hasn't changed is the undying support from our volunteers. In fact, through our transition they've really stepped up, going above and beyond their normal level of activity. Their steadfast support and commitment to

our mission have been awesome! I am always impressed by how quickly and often they respond to our need whatever it may be. They have done more than just support our programs and events. They've done clerical work, information technology, solicitation of in-kind and cash donations, nature walks, gardening, weeding, greeting, helping visitors, and serving on the Board of Directors and committees to ensure proper governance and planning. We certainly couldn't do it without them and it means so much. I am so proud to be part of such a great team. I want to thank you all for everything that you do to support Friends of Creamer's Field. See you on the field!

*Laurie*  
Laurie

## From the Executive Director

It's great to be back working for Friends of Creamer's Field! It's hard to believe that it's been 20 years since I began working as an Intern for Mark Ross at the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and then onto working as the Volunteer Coordinator for Friends of Creamer's Field in the summer of 1998. I am thrilled to be serving as the organization's new Executive Director. From day one, I have hit the ground running with a packed schedule of summer programs and events, which have included the Sharing Nature & History volunteer training, Spring Migration Celebration, Guided Nature Walks and History Tours, the Design Alaska Wild Arts Walk and planning for the upcoming 21st Annual Tanana

Valley Sandhill Crane Festival. My priority for the first year as your new Executive Director, is establishing "best practices" for our bookkeeping and accounting procedures. Having a strong understanding of our financial position is necessary for long-range strategic planning, growing the organization and making informed decisions about how to move forward. I am excited to be working with the Friends of Creamer's Field Board of Directors, the membership and the many volunteers who continue to make Creamer's Field one of the best things about Fairbanks.

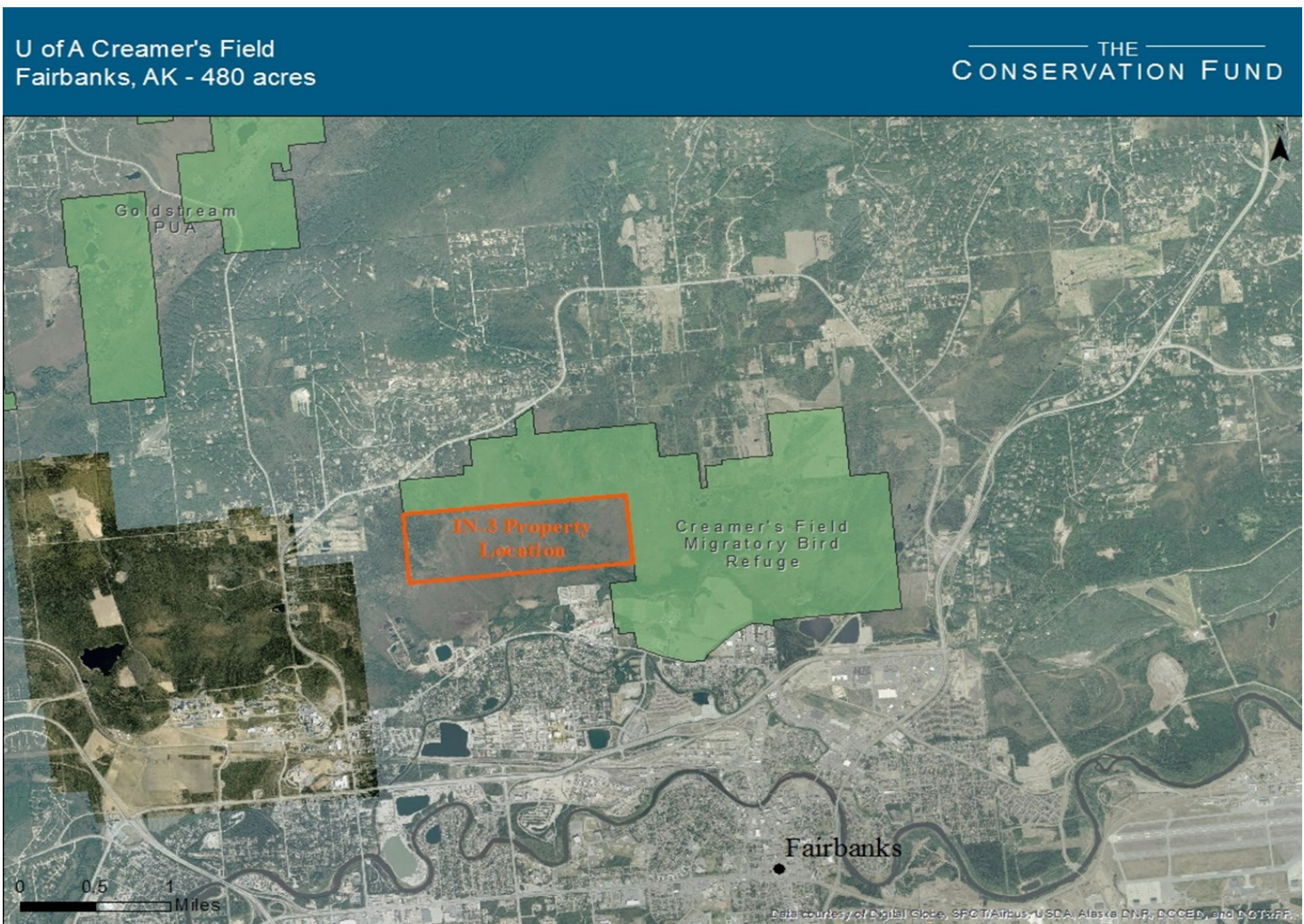
*Lissa Hughes*



# Proposed Expansion for Creamer's Refuge

Friends of Creamer's Field is pleased to support the Acres of America application by The Conservation Fund. The request for a \$135,000 capstone grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation would provide the 25% match to Pittman-Robertson funds to conserve 520 acres of additional habitat by expanding Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge by nearly one third. 480 acres of wetlands would be purchased from the University of Alaska, adjacent to the existing boundary, while a private land owner has committed to donate an additional 40 acre parcel upon completion of the purchase for a total of 520 acres. The property is approximately 94% wetlands, and provides habitat for migratory birds, waterfowl, raptors, songbirds, fish, mammals and plant species.

The Conservation Fund has worked significantly with the University of Alaska to demonstrate the significance of the habitat and to negotiate the sale for conservation. If not purchased for conservation, the land owner received a counter proposal to use the site as a coal ash dump, which could have harmful effects on habitat that supports birds, waterfowl and other wildlife within the refuge boundary. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Interior Alaska Land Trust have all voiced support for this project. All proceeds from sales of the University of Alaska Land Grant support the educational missions of the University of Alaska.





# *Wild about Art at Creamer's Field*

The 13th Annual Design Alaska Wild Arts Walk was a huge success! Heather Kraweic was hired to coordinate this year's event, and did an outstanding job. This year we hosted over 30 local artists, with over 500 attendees and record sales from both the Quick Draw and art concessions. Joe Campbell from the Fairbanks Auction Company got the bidding going as our Auctioneer and Mike Mertes kept the crowd engaged as the Master of Ceremonies. Thank you to everyone who turned out to support Friends of Creamer's Field.



(Above) Attendees enjoy chatting with local artists.  
(Top Right) Art displayed by a participating artist.  
(Below) Heather Kraweic and Jan Michin communicate about event set up. (Photos by Jim Hunter)



## **Thank You to our Volunteers!**

Brenda Sadler, Jan Michin, Gail Mayo, Fawn Wyatt, Becky Hassebroek, Bill Holman, Marilyn Hunter, Betsy Sturm, Helen Howard, Jeanne Armstrong, Kyle Lester, Mary Burtness, Sherry Lewis, Lynn Slusher, Pat DeRuyter, Kathy Dudek, Stan Michin, Chris Larrick, Ryan Hughes and Jim Hunter, our event photographer.

The Planning Committee: Laurie Trotta, Amy Geiger, Dave Vick, Kym Pihlaja, Mary Zalar, Barbara Logan, Heather Kraweic and Lissa Hughes.

A special thanks to Tim Carder from ADFG and Creamer's Refuge Hosts, Nathaniel & Jennifer Wood, for the extra lift with event set-up and breakdown.





## 2018 ARTISTS

Frances Shultz, Black Raven Pottery  
 Shelly Firestone  
 Iris Sutton, Ice Wedge Art  
 Ann Wood, Midnight Sun Arts  
 David Gerrish  
 Barbara Gabel,  
 Denali Lone Star Studio  
 Randall Compton  
 Somer Hahm, Bug Free Babes  
 R.J. Nelson, Face Painting  
 Jessica Morse, Cold Spot Studio  
 Caitlin Perry, Caitlin's Creations  
 Kimberly Rogers, Numinosity  
 Fairbanks Watercolor Society  
 Jim Barr, Arctic Burls and Bowls  
 Anne Aleshire, Anne Aleshire Fine Art  
 Calypso Kocsis  
 Winter Osbourne  
 Laura Nutter  
 Allison Zhang, Shanksmare Studios  
 Wayne Jex  
 Shannon Waterbury, Corrupted Cartoonist  
 Bud Marschner, Bud's Alaska Photos  
 Lindsey Copelin, Firebreak Art  
 Lisa Rogers, Tundra Walker Studio  
 Indi Walker, Capita Mortua Arts  
 Marji Plessinger, My Alaskan Passage  
 Erica Mathews, Lola Bug Creations  
 Teresa Shannon  
 Harrison Carpenter, HC Art



(Above) Artist Tammy Holland paints in the Quick Draw competition. (Below) Jessica Morse from Cold Spot Pottery provides a Do-It-Yourself experience for attendees! (Photos by Jim Hunter)



## THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS



## News from the Alaska Songbird Institute

The Alaska Songbird Institute (ASI) is hard at work for another field season at Creamer's Field! In May and June, ASI's youth and teens volunteered over 500 hours through our youth mentoring and high school internship programs. Together we monitored almost 80 Tree Swallow nests, half of them on and around the Creamer's Field trails. We taught many trail users about the birds and also hosted visits from Camp Habitat! This year's Nature Sprouts got a close up look at these world-traveling birds as they helped capture and band adult Tree Swallows nesting near camp. This year was a tough one for swallows at Creamer's Field. At least six nests were stolen or lost to human disturbance. Please remind your friends, family, and fellow trail users that all migratory birds and their nests are protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of this landmark law that makes it illegal to disturb nests and nesting birds without a permit. (ASI has federal and state permits, and protocols in place to ensure that our work is done safely.)

Although the summer nesting season is barely behind us, fall migration is already underway. ASI's bird banding station, located on the Seasonal Wetland Trail, will be open 7 days a week beginning July 30, from 6 AM-noon, weather permitting. Call ASI at (907) 888-2121 for updates. Drop in visitors are always welcome, but we ask groups of 5 or more to please call ahead and schedule a visit. You can find more information about ASI and a map to the station in the Farmhouse Visitor Center. By Trisha Blake

## Our Children's Programs

Are you looking for something new to do with your preschooler? Stop by the Farmhouse for **Babes in the Woods** or **Preschool Nature Discovery**.

**Babes in the Woods** is intended for preschoolers ages birth – 2, and is at 11 am on the **FIRST Saturday** of each month.

**Preschool Nature Discovery** is intended for preschoolers ages 3 – 6, and is at 11 am on the **THIRD Saturday** of each month.

Both programs are an hour of story time, crafts, music and play, presented by volunteer Debra Babcock and Barbara Logan.

Debra teaches special education preschoolers for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

Barbara is Administrative Assistant at Friends of Creamer's Field, volunteering since 2011 as a walk leader, an intern bird bander at the ASI Bird Banding Station and a Bird Lab volunteer at the UA Museum of the North.

<b>Babes In The Woods</b>	<b>Monthly Topic</b>	<b>Preschool Nature Discovery</b>
	<i>Stately</i>	
Aug. 4, 2018	<b>SANDHILL CRANES</b>	Aug. 18, 2018
Sep. 1, 2018	<b>Gregarious GEESE</b>	Sep. 15, 2018
Oct. 6, 2018	<b>BATS of the Boreal</b>	Oct. 20, 2018
Nov. 3, 2018	<b>Raucous RAVENS</b>	Nov. 17, 2018
Dec. 1, 2018	<b>Merry Chris-MOOSE</b>	Dec. 15, 2018







(Above) Camp Habitat Director, Chris Eckerson leads an activity with group of Nature Sprouts( Photo by Sarah Lewis). (Below) Claire Stuyck from the Alaska Songbird Institute provides hands-on experience gathering data on Alaska songbirds (Photo by Eugene Cole).



Camp Habitat has had yet another successful summer for its 28th season! Chris Eckerson and Crystal Alexander led the ecology-based camp for kids, serving nearly 200 campers aged 4-11, for a five day experience throughout Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. Our wonderful team of instructors and counselors inspired children to love and care for Creamer's Field and everything it has to offer. Campers were incredibly joyful to discover, learn and create through many of the activities and hikes offered through the program. From an outside eye, it may look like children are simply running wild but they are actually engaging in both structured and unstructured learning experiences. Some of the structured learning includes watching the banding process of a tree swallow with the Alaska Songbird Institute, learning songs to remember parts of the insect, and feeding lichen to reindeer from UAF's Reindeer Research Program, probing the earth to determine permafrost depths, catching aquatic invertebrates, and determining water quality in our wetlands. Unstructured learning included picking and tasting wild strawberries, cloudberry and blueberries. Our staff encouraged off-trail exploration to get a closer look at insects, strange fungus, flowers and more. We were blessed to enjoy smoke and mostly rain-free overnights in the boreal forest and many days in the mud, as our seasonal pond dried up.

Our staff came from a variety of backgrounds such as wildlife biology, elementary education, evolutionary ecology, forestry, physics, museum studies and public education. These fields combined with our staff training speakers led to a diverse wealth of knowledge to pass on to our campers. Our staff training speakers included Friends of Creamer's Field's Executive Director, Lissa Hughes, Mark Ross, Bob Hunter and Louise Foster from the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADFG), Cynthia Nelson from Tanana Valley Watershed Association, Ornithologist Bennett Wong, UAF's Environmental Educator Carrie Green, UAF's Botanist Cam Webb, and recent theater arts graduate, Eugene Cole. A special thank you goes to our Camp Habitat Advisory Board, Friends of Creamer's Field, ADFG and the Northern Alaska Environmental Center for their endless support! Also, special thanks to our amazing volunteers and donors who helped in all areas of Camp from events, photography, administrative work and the overnight. We are very appreciative to work with you, which makes running our program possible!

By Chris Eckerson & Crystal Alexander

## Thank You to our 2018 Refuge Hosts and our Staff of Volunteers!

### Creamer's Refuge Hosts:

Nathaniel & Jennifer Wood, Ken Hooker & Mary Perkins and Bob & Becky Heeney.

### Visitor Center Staff:

Brenda Sadler, Betsy Sturm, Janet Taylor, Susanne Billings, Gail Mayo, Ruth Kramer, Jan Michin and Susie Crevensten.

### Nature Walk Leaders:

Bud Marschner, Jan Michin, Betsy Ross Smith, Laura Lopez, Jeff Adams, Susanne Billings, Lynn DeFilippo, Betsy Sturm, Charles Collins, Janet Taylor, Bill Holman, Christine Huff, Mark Ross and staff from the Alaska Songbird Institute.



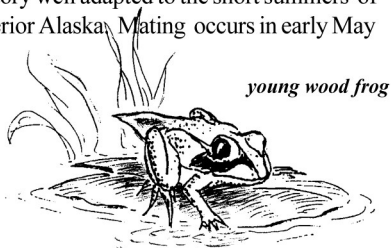
### © Field Sketches:

Mark D. Ross, Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge

## Summer Heat is On!

July 28th marks the date of Fairbanks' record high temperature: 99F in 1919. Summers of interior Alaska are short; often hot and dry. Our continental-type climate averages a mere 11 inches of total precipitation per year (5 inches during June, July and August combined); interior Alaska fits the definition of a semi-desert. Creamer's creatures have different strategies for dealing with summer conditions.

Our lone amphibian, the wood frog, has a life history well adapted to the short summers of interior Alaska. Mating occurs in early May

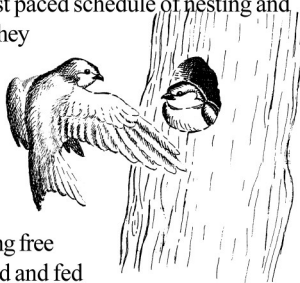


young wood frog

when there is plenty of standing water necessary for egg development. Eggs hatch in early June. By mid-July when many seasonal ponds have evaporated or seeped into thawed soil, the tiny young frogs (with tiny tails nearly gone) leave their drying nursery to forage elsewhere.

Birds that summer on the refuge have different ways to deal with hot, dry conditions.

Tree swallows, like many migratory birds in the north, have a fast paced schedule of nesting and raising young. They arrive the first few days of May and as early as July 4th young tree swallows are fledged and flying free (closely attended and fed by parents).



tree swallows at nest

Dabbling ducks (those that tip-up to feed) such as pintails and mallards nest near the edges of seasonal ponds. During June, one can see the females with a string of ducklings in tow paddling through the shallow water taking advantage of the abundance of aquatic food before the water disappears. And when the water disappears? No problem. Dabbling ducks can walk



horned grebe with young

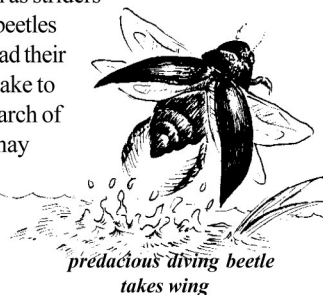
overland easily and will travel in search of more permanent water. The situation is not so easy for horned grebes (small diving birds). They visit the seasonal pond every spring, too and sometimes attempt to nest. But grebes can't just walk away from the disappearing pond like a dabbling duck. Their legs are positioned far back on their bodies - great for swimming and diving but not for walking. Adult grebes often abandon their drying nest site and unhatched eggs. They take to the air in search of a permanent pond where they may raise a new brood.

What about smaller, purely aquatic creatures? Their life-styles are well adapted to the "boom and bust" water situation. Small crustaceans and



swimming fairy shrimp

other invertebrates such as graceful, inch-long, fairy shrimp will reproduce and lay eggs before the water is gone. The eggs, which are very resistant to drought and temperature extremes, will remain dormant through long dry periods. Larger water insects such as striders and diving beetles simply spread their wings and take to the air in search of water that may outlast the summer heat.



predaceous diving beetle takes wing

### Refuge Walks at Creamer's Field

Mon - Sat 10am; and Wed evening at 7pm  
Meet at the Farmhouse by the barns  
Call 452-5162 for Information

Get the Field Sketch collection- 205 Field Sketches-- at the Farmhouse



# Saying “Goodbye”



Former Creamer's Refuge Manager and Friends of Creamer's Board member Herb Melchior passed away on June 5, 2018.

Herb's career ranged from camp counselor in New England to botanical investigation of an area in Northwest Alaska that was designated for an atomic blast site as part of Project Chariot. He worked as a park naturalist at McKinley National Park and helped found the Alaska Conservation Society. He researched the behavior of Arctic ground squirrels, taught ecology and biometrics in California and was a research ecologist in Barrow in the early 1970's.

Herb worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game from 1977-1998. He served as the Barrow area wildlife biologist, then moved to Fairbanks and was the statewide furbearer coordinator for many years. We will always be grateful for his efforts and successes as refuge manager for Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. At the time, Creamer's was about 1800 acres and included the Boreal Forest Trail. The fields were farmed, and the buildings had recently been purchased by the state, but the farmhouse was not in good condition. Herb and his staff obtained grant money to create and install interpretive signs on the refuge. Through a cooperative effort with local contractors, the farmhouse was retrofitted as a safe, clean and energy efficient building. Signs and displays were designed and installed to create the Nature Center. Roads and driveways were changed to allow safer access to the refuge. The changes made under Herb's supervision were significant and dramatically improved the overall experience for visitors to the refuge.

Herb retired in 1998 and joined the Board of Friends of Creamer's Field. He had a passion for the history of Creamer's as well as the natural ecology. Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge was a special place for Herb, and the only regret he had was not being able to get the barns open to the public during his lifetime. We share his passion and plan to work toward those goals. Thanks Herb, for sharing your time, expertise and spirit with Creamer's Refuge, and with us at Friends of Creamer's Field!



We recently learned that a Creamer's Refuge pioneer passed away October 27, 2016.

Jerry D. McGowan was a wildlife biologist who worked to re-establish ruffed grouse populations in Missouri and taught zoology early in his career. He was hired by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1967 and studied upland game birds and raptors in the Interior. He served as Assistant Management Coordinator of the Game Division for the Department in Fairbanks, and as one of the first Creamer's Migratory Waterfowl Refuge Managers.

After the purchase of 300+ acres of what had been Creamer's Dairy by the state in 1968, the fields were the responsibility of the Habitat Division.

Management was transferred to the Game Division and Jerry was chosen to manage the "Creamer's Wildlife Area," as it was then known. He researched farming techniques, devised crop rotation schedules and worked cooperatively with local farmers to maximize the benefit of the fields for migrating birds. He oversaw construction of the first nature trail, which is now known as the Boreal Forest Trail.

During his tenure, an additional 1500 acres of state land was added, and the land was officially designated as Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. Meanwhile, a series of businesses were operated out of the barns and other buildings, which were not included in the original purchase. Jerry worked extensively with legislators to purchase the 11 acres containing the historic buildings and add them to the Refuge in 1982.

Jerry saw the value of wildlife habitat so close to Fairbanks and until he retired in 1987, worked to increase, maintain and improve the habitat to benefit migrating birds and other species. It is safe to say that Creamer's today wouldn't be what we now enjoy without his efforts. Thank you Jerry, and we congratulate the Department on continuing your legacy of wildlife management at Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.



**Friends of Creamer's Field**

**P.O. Box 81065**

**Fairbanks, Alaska 99708**

**[www.friendsofcreamersfield.org](http://www.friendsofcreamersfield.org)**

## 2018 RAFFLE

"Looking Back"

An Aluminum Photo Print by Roger Marty

Value \$550



1 Tickets \$5 ~ 5 Tickets \$20

Drawing held August 26, 2018

Creamer's Farmhouse Visitor Center

Need Not Be present to Win

Alaska State Gaming Permit # 1894

### Join Friends of Creamer's Field with a tax deductible donation

*You can also donate online at [www.friendsofcreamersfield.org](http://www.friendsofcreamersfield.org)*

**Membership Donation Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_** *Do you wish to have this donation remain anonymous? YES* ☐

☐ \$15-34 Chickadee ☐ \$35-49 Swallow ☐ \$50-99 Canada Goose ☐ \$100-249 Wigeon

☐ \$250-499 Peregrine Falcon ☐ \$500-999 Swan ☐ \$1000 or more\* Sandhill Crane

☐ \*For donations of \$1000 or more, please check here if you would like to receive a historic Randall Compton print of Creamer's Dairy signed by the Creamer family (valued at \$150).

☐ NEW MEMBER ☐ RENEWAL ☐ This is a gift from \_\_\_\_\_

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Billing Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ (3 digit code on card back)

☐ If renewing, I have a new mailing address, phone number or email address.

☐ I would like to receive my Newsletter and Event Announcements via email.

☐ I would like to volunteer. Please contact me with information about volunteer opportunities.

*Friends of Creamer's Field is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donation is fully tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.*

**Friends of Creamer's Field**

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Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

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website: [www.friendsofcreamersfield.org](http://www.friendsofcreamersfield.org)