

## Charles A. Wellner, 1911 - 2001

June 7, 2001

Died on June 5, 2001, at the age of 90. Born January 3, 1911, in Enid, Oklahoma to August and Adelia (Anderson) Wellner, Chuck grew up in Twin Falls, Idaho where he graduated from High School in 1928. He attended the University of Idaho from 1929 to 1933, graduating with a Bachelor of Forestry degree.

From 1933 until 1973 he worked for the U.S. Forest Service as Silviculturist, Research Scientist, Division Chief, and Assistant Director in the Northern Rocky Mountain and Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Stations. During an educational leave in 1937-1938 he earned a Master of Forestry degree from Yale University, and during 1942-1946 he served as an Aerology (weather) officer in the U.S. Navy, serving on the U.S.S. Boxer in the Pacific at the close of WWII.

Chuck married Ethel Dorothy Wolf of Moscow, Idaho in June, 1939, and together they had four children: Jon August (born 1945), Chris Alan (born 1947, died 1985), Sandra Jean (born 1950), and Kent Thomas (born 1960). Ethel died in Ogden, Utah in 1969. He is survived by his children and their spouses: Jon and Vera H. (Raezer) Wellner (Seattle, WA), Sandra (Wellner) and Steve Wall (Olympia, WA), and Kent and Donna (Emert) Wellner (Rifle, CO) and their three children (Chuck's grandchildren) Dylan Ray Wellner, Austin Shane Wellner, and Hannah Rose Wellner; and his friend and companion of the last ten years, Sonja A. Lewis.

After retiring from the U.S. Forest Service in 1973, Chuck began a second career as a Forest Service volunteer with the goal of establishing a system of Research Natural Areas in Idaho. During the period 1973 - 1991 he spent the summers scouting for potential RNA's all over Idaho, while the winters were spent writing establishment reports for 120+ RNA's and innumerable letters to rangers and other responsible agency officials. When this project began in the mid-1970's, there were less than 20 RNA's in Idaho; by the early 1990's there were over 100 areas proposed or on the books. The current RNA system in Idaho, with somewhere between 150 and 200 Research Natural Areas, is due in large measure to his vision, dedication, and stubborn hard work.

Often described by his peers as "a Forester's Forester", Chuck was recognized for his achievements in Forestry and Conservation by a number of awards, including Superior Service Awards from the U.S. Department of Agriculture

in 1962 and 1972, the Oak Leaf Award from the Nature Conservancy (1982), Chevron Conservation Award (1989), and the George B. Fell Award from the Natural Areas Association (1991). He was elected as a Fellow of the Society of American Foresters (1985), and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Idaho (1989).

A private family ceremony will be held. Memorials to celebrate Chuck's passionate crusade to create Research Natural Areas should be made to the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, or the University of Idaho College of Forestry.

The Nature Conservancy of Idaho P.O. Box 165 Sun Valley, Idaho 83353  
<http://nature.org/states/idaho/>

Trust for Public Land Attn: National Development 116 New Montgomery Street, 4th Floor San Francisco, CA 94105 <http://www.tpl.org/>