

# Ron Nicotera

Ron retired on his 55th birthday, January 1992, as Director of the Endangered Resources Bureau, 30 years after starting as an assistant game manager at Whitewater.

He graduated in 1958 from UW - Madison, with a Bachelor of Science degree in biological conservation and with a goal of becoming a conservation warden. Soon after graduating Ron married his high school sweetheart and together they had a family of three boys.

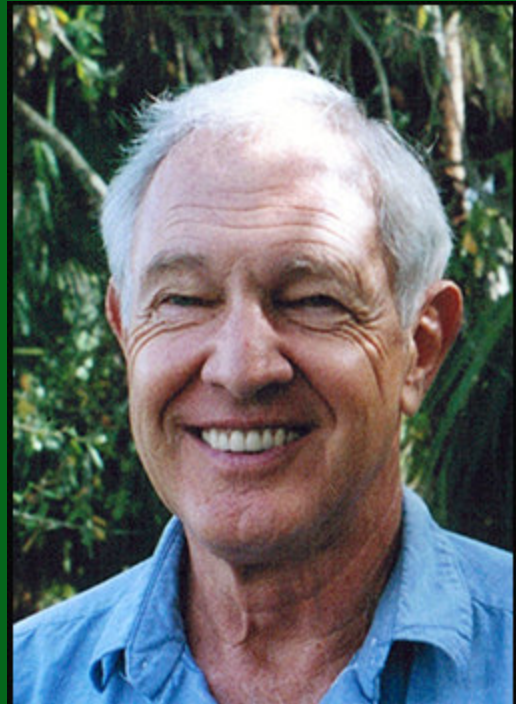
Ron began his career as an assistant game manager at Whitewater and four years later was promoted to supervise the district, including Kenosha and Racine counties. He was stationed at Burlington.

His major assignment was to develop the abandoned Bong airbase into a wildlife and recreation area. He became its first manager. At the time, Bong was a wild unmanageable mess! During the next four years many features, such as roads, flowages and plantings were established. The development at Bong continued after Ron left and was eventually completed very similar to the plans Ron developed in 1968.

In 1970, Reorganization came along and the South East District was created. In 1972, Ron became the first District Wildlife Supervisor and was stationed in Milwaukee.

The Bureau of Game Management established a new position in 1974; half waterfowl, half nongame. Ron became its first staffer and moved to Madison. While In Madison, he convinced the administration to change the name from Bureau of Game Management to Bureau of Wildlife Management, a name that continues today.

Ron spent most of his time working with nongame species and gained great experience working with the legislature, especially during the



**development of the endangered species laws. He was also successful in demonstrating the need for a separate program of endangered species. In 1978, the Office of Non-Game was created. In the same year, Secretary Besadny's assistant administrator position became open, a position Ron competed for and was selected to serve. His new responsibilities included budget oversight for the Resource Management division and a subject near and dear to all field staff, Master Plans!**

**Continuing his efforts to elevate the endangered species programs to bureau status, in late 1982 he was successful and the Bureau of Endangered Resources was created. Jim Hale, the Bureau's new director, retired a few weeks later and Ron managed the program until a new director was hired.**

**In mid 1983, Ron took a demotion and became the Bureaus first long term director, a position he remained in for nine years until his retirement in 1992. Several important pieces of legislation were passed during those days, one of the best was the Natural Heritage Act. The Wisconsin Nature Conservancy was and remains a strong ally.**

**The Bureau and its programs are still going strong and it is something Ron remains extremely proud of helping accomplish.**



**Marlene and Ron at their Florida home, 1998.**

**Marlene and Ron are now residents of Bonita Springs, Florida. They live in a mobile home park, their home being one of two on a beautiful little tropical wild like river with manatees, an occasional alligator and more birds than they can count. Cypress trees and live oaks line the banks. The park also runs a 315 unit RV park. Ron keeps busy as the park planner and finance committee member. The planning keeps his mind busy and pool volleyball, biking, swimming and construction work help keep his body limber and achy.**



**Biking on the Katy Trail, Missouri, 2002.**



**At Lovers Key, Bonita Springs, 2000.**

**The Nicoteras enjoy long motor home trips in the summer. They try to visit a foreign land once a year, twenty six countries since 1992! A wonderful way to learn about other people and their history.**



**Maui helicopter tour, Maui, 2008.**

**Marlene and Ron have three children. Tim, in Colorado (who works in Antarctica), Dan in Milwaukee, and Mark in Connecticut who has given them 3 grandchildren.**

**Ron enjoys playing his Fender Stratocaster guitar and plays it nearly every day. Often at Happy Hours he'll team up with someone to sing and play duets or solos.**

**It was a great and rewarding career and so is retirement!**