



50+Living our best lives now and in the future!

For the Love of Outdoors & Service of The Greater Good

Sharing similar interests and values, Jim and Beth Houseman met while working for the National Park Service at Gateway National Recreation Area. Jim had just graduated from college when he met Beth. "We met on the job and learned we both shared a fondness for baseball, leading to our first date at a Yankees' game." Three years later, Jim proposed. Both continued to work as rangers for the National Park Service. An appreciation for the outdoors and living lives that serve the greater good have been a central part of the Houseman's story.



Drawn to the Outdoors

Jim developed an appreciation for the outdoors as he was growing up. "My family would take camping trips to national forests and parks.

Also, backpacking in the Sierra Nevada mountains became a favorite summer activity. These life experiences gave me an appreciation for the natural world and an interest in wildlife management as a career."

Beth had grown up in The Rockaways, a beach community in New York City. While in college, she worked for the National Park Service during the summer. During her second summer, she "worked with disabled visitors, assisting them in the ocean for a program called Adapted Aquatics." The summer after she graduated from college with a degree in marine biology, she worked in interpretation/environmental education. Beth discovered that she "enjoyed interpretation and the educational lightbulb moments, and the journey began."

A Diverse Set of Skills

Jim explained that park rangers need a "broad skill set," which can vary with each park. "Interpersonal skills are essential since you're dealing with the public and coworkers." In addition, they must develop specific "knowledge and understanding of the park's natural and historical resources." Park rangers also need advanced CPR and first aid training. They are sometimes called upon "to provide wildland firefighting, search and rescue, and law enforcement, which requires specialized training and physical requirements."

Because Beth was a park ranger interpreter, she utilized a different skill set on the job. "You should really enjoy public speaking," and "you have to enjoy lifetime learning as you study the local culture, history, flora, and fauna." Depending on the park and the position (and the "collateral duties" a ranger is assigned), other skills such as spelunking, firefighting, photography, scuba, or mountain climbing could be needed.

Favorite National Parks

Beth: "My favorite park visits have a theme: Acadia, Biscayne, Channel Islands, and Glacier Bay National Parks. My favorite land-locked parks are Bryce Canyon and the quieter North Rim of the Grand Canyon."

Jim: "My favorite parks are Yosemite, Yellowstone, and Redwood."

Caring for Our Environment

Beth believes that "economic growth and environmental protection are not exclusive; there can be balance and compromise." Nonetheless, "biodiversity is the barometer of our planet's health." Expressing a similar view, Jim believes "we have a duty to care for the environment and wildlife to ensure functional ecosystems survive into the future."

Uniquely Equipped

About twenty-one years ago, the Housemans moved to Sutherlin, Oregon—a rural Southern Oregon Community. After settling into their new home with their young daughters, they recognized a need they were uniquely equipped to help address.

Told 'Seniors' Don't Need Parks

Beth recalls there were no safe places to walk or ride a bike on the west side of their new community. "We were told the demographics for the future west side housing would be for 'seniors,' so nearby parks weren't needed. Why did anyone think seniors

wouldn't want to get outside for a walk? Parks for adults are just as important as parks for kids."

A New Vision for Their Community

The Houseman's new home was in West Sutherlin and located directly across the street from Ford's Pond—a 95-acre body of water that had once been used to hold logs. At the time, access to the pond was generally limited to overgrown, narrow paths. However, locals did frequent the area to fish for bass or to take in some bird watching.



Developers had an eye on the pond and the 107 acres of open space surrounding it as a potential housing development site. Jim and Beth had a different vision for the Ford's Pond property.

Jim understood that "being outdoors in nature is essential because it is restorative, and allows our minds to declutter." Beth was familiar with the "almost daily articles citing studies of the physical and emotional benefits of walking in nature, walking with friends or family." The couple envisioned a "year-round walking path at Ford's Pond for the health and benefit" of their community. Taking the first step in making their vision a reality, the Housemans began sharing what they envisioned for Ford's Pond with neighbors, friends, and others.

The Friends of Ford's Pond

In 2014, when the City of Sutherlin considered purchasing the pond area, Beth convinced the City Council that the property could best serve the community as a park. To support the development and maintenance of the park, neighbors, and friends who embraced the Houseman's vision for the pond and the surrounding area helped establish an all-volunteer nonprofit, [The Friends of Ford's Pond](#).

Jim serves as the Board's president, and Beth serves as the secretary.

The Friends of Ford's Pond has partnered with the city to write grants to support the park's development. The nonprofit also partnered with Sutherlin High School FFA students to [help](#) "restore the oak savanna habitat on the west hillside." Other community volunteers have spent countless hours clearing pathways, keeping the paths mowed, building new trails, and installing picnic tables at various locations around the pond and on a hill overlooking the water.



As a result of a lot of grant writing and fundraising by the Friends of Ford's Pond, the city hired a firm to develop the master plan for the park. As of



summer 2021, the park now has an ADA-accessible parking area with landscaping and an accessible asphalt pathway around more than half of the pond's perimeter. By late summer 2022, the 2-mile pathway around the pond will be completed, picnic shelters and restrooms will be built, and an inclusive, natural playground will be installed. The Friends are actively fundraising for the playground equipment.



On any given day, people of all ages and abilities visit the pond. Mothers stroll with their infants, and couples walk hand-in-hand along the

water. Younger and older people can be seen walking dogs or fishing in boats or along the shore.

Sometimes local artists set up their umbrellas and canvases near the water. Small groups will stop along the path to chat with friends and neighbors or visitors from outside the area. Others jog by or pedal along on their bicycles, often waving as they pass.

The Houseman's initial vision has become a community reality. Ford's Pond Community Park is a place for everyone. "It has become a healthy gathering place."

Finding Time to Relax

Not surprisingly, Jim relaxes when he is hiking, kayaking, or fishing. He also enjoys making homebrew beer. Beth loves to cook and likes "learning new cuisines and exploring new spices and ingredients" and likes drinking Jim's homebrew. She also enjoys beach-combing, warm-water snorkeling, and reading historical fiction.

Advice for Others

Jim: "Focus on a few things that bring you joy and be aware of how easy it is to overcommit your time."

Beth: "Keep learning, verbalize gratitude daily...surround yourself with positive people and enjoy laughing together. I'm guided by the Jewish teaching of *Tikkun Olam*, translated to 'repairing the world,' meaning it is our responsibility to improve the world now and for future generations. Spend this time of your life using the skills you've gathered through your life to take action and bring about a positive change in your community or beyond."

Thank you, Jim and Beth Houseman, all the volunteers, and Friends of Ford's Pond. You have created a welcoming, intergenerational gathering place for your community and have established a model for other communities to follow.

To learn more about The Friends of Ford's Pond and the Park, visit: <https://fordspond.org>

In our September newsletter, we featured best-selling author, Dr. Connie Zweig. We learned what prompted her to write her latest book, *The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul*. If you would like to learn more about this book, her other books, or current work, visit her website: <https://conniezweig.com/>

People of Influence

Long after we are gone, our influence lives on. Consider the people who have inspired you in some way –family members, neighbors, teachers, or others who encouraged you to live your best life.

Beth Houseman shared that her high school marine biology teacher, Maxwell Cohen, inspired her to study science. “He taught with a twinkle in his eye and seized those teachable moments.”

Jim Houseman said that one of his former supervisors, a district ranger, taught him “the importance of a positive mental attitude.”

Who are some of the people who have inspired you? How will others remember your lasting influence on their lives?

Some Benefits of Outdoor Exercise

Studies have suggested that outdoor exercise and activities are good for our health. Spending time in nature—even if only for twenty minutes—may [lower our stress levels](#) and can [improve](#) our overall health and wellbeing.

The Final Frontier

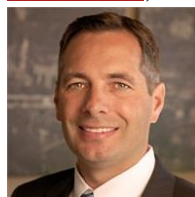
On Wednesday, October 13, 90-year-old William Shatner of Star Trek fame left planet earth and headed for the final frontier. Like Shatner, we’ll all eventually leave planet earth. Unlike Shatner, most of us won’t return. A global community learned about Shatner’s departure plans long before



the Blue Origin’s count down. Hopefully, our departure plans will be known to those we care about most.

Fall Webinar to Feature Creator of Good to Go

[Ben James](#), CFA, CFP, is the founder of Elevate Wealth Management and the author of *The Playbook: 7 Fundamentals of Financial Planning*. Elevate Wealth Management offers free quarterly webinars on various topics related to the Playbook process.



The next webinar will be held on **Wednesday, October 27, 2021, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

Topic: An Interview with Amy Pickard, creator of Good to Go.

“Amy has been featured in multiple publications, including Oprah Magazine. She has a passion for making our earthly departure as easy as possible regarding the paperwork side of things. She calls this passion and process ‘The Departure File,’ and I am excited to discuss it in more detail with her.”

Moderator: Ben James, CFA, CFP

To register for this free fall webinar, click [here](#).

Scams on the Rise

Scams targeting older adults are on the rise. Among other reasons, older adults are more likely to be [targeted](#) because they are generally more financially stable than younger people and tend to have good credit.



One of the current phone scams may look like it is coming from our local area. When we answer, a

cheerful-sounding person on the line asks us a question that would likely prompt a particular kind of response. For example, a scammer might call and ask, “Hi, is this Paula?” If I answer “Yes” without knowing who is calling, then the scammer may have just snared me.

According to [Lifehacker](#), when we answer with “Yes,” it lets the scammer know that our number is active. Active numbers can be sold to telemarketers for a higher price. Even more nefarious, scammers can record our affirmative response and then use that [voice recording](#) to sign us up for various services associated with our phone number.

Another scam involves callers who claim they are from the IRS. If the caller is threatening or asks for a credit card number over the phone, warning bells should be going off. Other current scams include calls from alleged police officers claiming you failed to show up for a court appearance, robocalls claiming to be from Amazon about a large purchase made on your Amazon account, and calls involving “expiring” car warranties.

In addition to being on the alert for an increase in scams and letting calls from unknown numbers go to voice mail, we can take the following actions:

1. Sign up for the [National Do Not Call Registry](#).
2. Report complaints about unwanted phone calls to the [FTC Complaint line](#).
3. Report suspected fraudulent phone calls or emails to the FTC [fraud reporting site](#).

Liz Estrada Reading on YouTube

Last month, author and playwright Allen Huffstutter announced that his play, *Liz Estrada—An Adaptation of Aristophanes’ Lysistrata*, would be performed by the Instant Shakespeare Company and live-streamed. If you missed the reading, you may still enjoy the play on [YouTube](#). Also, check out the play’s [channel](#) on YouTube for more information.

Purpose and a Better Life

[Research](#) suggests a link between having a sense of purpose and memory. Purpose was also linked to greater positivity.

Interested in a Retirement Speaker for Your Group or Organization?

Retirement represents a significant life transition and can involve some significant adjustments. Fortunately, several resources are available to help pre-retirees (and new retirees) prepare for their next chapter.

Mike Drak, speaker, and author of *Victory Lap Retirement* and *Retirement Heaven or Hell*, is offering two free webinars about the nonfinancial aspects of retirement for groups or organizations with a minimum audience size of 20 participants.



Each talk is 45 minutes long, followed by a 15-minute Q&A. One talk focuses on nine retirement principles for a long, happy, and fulfilling retirement. The other talk centers on the importance of finding your purpose and designing a retirement lifestyle around that purpose. If interested, contact Mike: michaeldrak@yahoo.ca

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