Sierra Club Oral History Committee

THE SIERRA CLUB NATIONWIDE I

Alfred Forsyth	The Sierra Club in New York and New Mexico, 1965-1978
Grant McConnell	Conservation and Politics in the North Cascades
Stewart Ogilvy	Sierra Club Expansion and Evolution: The Atlantic Chapter, 1957-1969
Anne Van Tyne	Sierra Club Stalwart: Conservationist, Hiker, Chapter and Council Leader

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With Introductions by
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Underwritten by
The National Endowment for the Humanities

Sierra Club History Committee
1983

Sierra Club Oral History Project

PREFACE

The Oral History Program of the Sierra Club

In fall 1969 and spring 1970 a self-appointed committee of Sierra Clubbers met several times to consider two vexing and related problems. The rapid membership growth of the club and its involvement in environmental issues on a national scale left neither time nor resources to document the club's internal and external history. Club records were stored in a number of locations and were inaccessible for research. Further, we were failing to take advantage of the relatively new technique of oral history by which the reminiscences of club leaders and members of long standing could be preserved.

The ad hoc committee's recommendation that a standing History Committee be established was approved by the Sierra Club Board of Directors in May 1970. That September the board designated The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley as the official depository of the club's archives. The large collection of records, photographs and other memorabilia known as the "Sierra Club Papers" is thus permanently protected, and the Bancroft is preparing a catalog of these holdings which will be invaluable to students of the conservation movement.

The History Committee then focused its energies on how to develop a significant oral history program. A six page questionnaire was mailed to members who had joined the club prior to 1931. More than half responded, enabling the committee to identify numerous older members as likely prospects for oral interviews. (Some had hiked with John Muir!) Other interviewees were selected from the ranks of club leadership over the past six decades.

Those committee members who volunteered as interviewers were trained in this discipline by Willa Baum, head of the Bancroft's Regional Oral History Office and a nationally recognized authority in this field. Further interviews have been completed in cooperation with university oral history classes at California State University, Fullerton; Columbia University, New York; and the University of California, Berkeley. Extensive interviews with major club leaders are most often conducted on a professional basis through the Regional Oral History Office.

Copies of the Sierra Club oral interviews are placed at The Bancroft Library, at UCLA, and at the club's Colby Library, and may be purchased for the actual cost of photocopying, binding, and shipping by club regional offices, chapters, and groups, as well as by other libraries and institutions.

Our heartfelt gratitude for their help in making the Sierra Club Oral History Project a success goes to each interviewee and interviewer; to everyone who has written an introduction to an oral history; to the Sierra Club Board of Directors for its recognition of the long-term importance of this effort; to the Trustees of the Sierra Club Foundation for generously providing

the necessary funding; to club and foundation staff, especially Michael McCloskey, Denny Wilcher, Colburn Wilbur, and Nicholas Clinch; to Willa Baum and Susan Schrepfer of the Regional Oral History Office; and last but far from least, to the members of the History Committee, and particularly to Ann Lage, who has coordinated the oral history effort since September 1974.

You are cordially invited to read and enjoy any or all of the oral histories in the Sierra Club series. By so doing you will learn much of the club's history which is available nowhere else, and of the fascinating careers and accomplishments of many outstanding club leaders and members.

Marshall H. Kuhn
Chairman, History Committee
1970 - 1978

San Francisco
May 1, 1977
(revised May 1979, A.L.)

PREFACE--1980s

Inspired by the vision of its founder and first chairman, Marshall Kuhn, the Sierra Club History Committee continued to expand its oral history program following his death in 1978. With the assistance of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, awarded in July 1980, the Sierra Club has contracted with the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library to conduct twelve to sixteen major interviews of Sierra Club activists and other environmental leaders of the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, the volunteer interview program has been assisted with funds for training interviewers and transcribing and editing volunteer-conducted interviews, also focusing on the past two decades.

With these efforts, the committee intends to document the programs, strategies, and ideals of the national Sierra Club, as well as the club grassroots, in all its variety--from education to litigation to legislative lobbying, from energy policy to urban issues to wilderness preservation, from California to the Carolinas to New York.

Together with the written archives in The Bancroft Library, the oral history program of the 1980s will provide a valuable record of the Sierra Club during a period of vastly broadening environmental goals, radically changing strategies of environmental action, and major growth in size and influence on American politics and society.

Special thanks for the project's later phase are due to Susan Schrepfer, co-director of the Sierra Club Documentation Project; Ray Lage, cochair of the History Committee; the Sierra Club Board and staff; members of the project advisory board and the History Committee; and most importantly, the interviewees and interviewers for their unfailing cooperation.

Ann Lage
Cochair, History Committee
Codirector, Sierra Club Documentation Project

Oakland, California
April, 1981

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
April 1983

Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library

David R. Brower, Environmental Activist, Publicist, and Prophet, 1980
Richard M. Leonard, Mountaineer, Lawyer, Environmentalist, 1976
Norman B. Livermore, Jr., Man in the Middle: High Sierra Packer, Timberman, Conservationist, California Resources Secretary, 1983
William E. Siri, Reflections on The Sierra Club, the Environment, and Mountaineering, 1950s-1970s, 1979
SIERRA CLUB LEADERS,1950s-1970s:
Alexander Hildebrand, Sierra Club Leader and Critic: Perspective on Club Growth, Scope, and Tactics, 1950s-1970s, 1982
Martin Litton, Sierra Club Director and Uncompromising Preservationist, 1950s-1970s, 1982
Raymond J. Sherwin, Conservationist, Judge, and Sierra Club President, 1960s-1970s, 1982
Theodore A. Snyder, Jr., Southeast Conservation Leader and Sierra Club President, 1960s-1970s, 1982
Wallace Stegner, The Artist as Environmental Advocate, 1983

In Process: Ansel Adams, Phillip S. Berry, Claire Dedrick, Brock Evans, J. Michael McCloskey, Stewart Udall, Edgar Wayburn

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Elizabeth Marston Bade, Recollections of William F. Bade and the Early Sierra Club, 1976
Philip S. Bernays, Founding the Southern California Chapter, 1975
Harold C. Bradley, Furthering the Sierra Club Tradition, 1975
Cicely M. Christy, Contributions to the Sierra Club and the San Francisco Bay Chapter, 1938-1970s, 1982
Nathan C. Clark, Sierra Club Leader, Outdoorsman, and Engineer, 1977
Harold E. Crowe, Sierra Club Physician, Baron, and President, 1975
Glen Dawson, Pioneer Rock Climber and Ski Mountaineer, 1975
Nora Evans, Sixty Years with the Sierra Club, 1976
Francis Farquhar, Sierra Club Mountaineer and Editor, 1974
Marjory Bridge Farquhar, Pioneer Woman Rock Climber and Sierra Club Director, 1977
Alfred Forsyth, The Sierra Club in New York and New Mexico, 1965-1978, 1981
Wanda B. Goody, A Hiker's View of the Early Sierra Club, 1982
C. Nelson Hackett, Lasting Impressions of the Early Sierra Club, 1975
Joel Hildebrand, Sierra Club Leader and Ski Mountaineer, 1974
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Grant McConnell, Conservation and Politics in the North Cascades, 1983
John and Ruth Mendenhall, Forty Years of Sierra Club Mountaineering Leadership, 1938-1978, 1979
Stewart M. Ogilvy, Sierra Club Expansion and Evolution: The Atlantic Chapter, 1957-1969, 1982
Harriet T. Parsons, A Half-Century of Sierra Club Involvement, 1981
Ruth E. Prager, Remembering the High Trips, 1976
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James E. Rother, The Sierra Club in the Early 1900s, 1974
Tom Turner, A Perspective on David Brower and the Sierra Club, 1968-1969, 1982
Anne Van Tyne, Sierra Club Stalwart: Conservationist, Hiker, Chapter and Council Leader, 1981

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California State University, Fullerton--Southern Sierrans Project

Thomas Amneus, New Directions for the Angeles Chapter, 1977
Robert Bear, Desert Conservation and Exploration with the Sierra Club, 1946-1978, 1980
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Arthur B. Johnson, Climbing and Conservation in the Sierra Club's Southern California Chapter, 1930-1960s, 1980
Olivia R. Johnson, High Trip Reminiscences, 1904-1945, 1977
E. Stanley Jones, Sierra Club Officer and Angeles Chapter Leader, 1931-1975, 1976
Marion Jones, Reminiscences of the Southern California Sierra Club, 1927-1975, 1976
Robert R. Marshall, Angeles Chapter Leader and Wilderness Spokesman, 1960s, 1977
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SERIES PREFACE -- THE SIERRA CLUB NATIONWIDE

The Sierra Club Nationwide is a series of interviews with local and regional leaders of the Sierra Club. The interviews focus on the growth and expansion of club chapters across the United States and in Canada and document the most important conservation campaigns undertaken by those chapters.

Attempting to preserve historical information not usually found in the written record, these interviews explore the ideals and perceptions which motivate the club's grassroots leadership. They discuss the behind-the-scenes decision-making processes and formulation of strategies in local and regional environmental battles; the structure and operations of the chapter organizations and their relationship to the national club; and the dealings between chapter leaders and local government, labor, business, media, and other organizations.

All of the interviews in this series are conducted by volunteer interviewers, with the training and guidance of the Sierra Club History Committee. Many interviewers are themselves club activists and chapter leaders who have participated in, or have firsthand knowledge of, the events discussed by their interviewees. Sometimes interviewer and interviewee are personal friends and colleagues in the club. It is hoped that this personal touch lends a lively immediacy to the interviews, while the interviewer training process guards against the intrusion of bias which sometimes results from such interview arrangements.

A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities has made possible the processing of History Committee interviews, the preparation of interviewer training materials, and the coordination of the project. All interview tapes are placed in the University of California's Bancroft Library.

Ann Lage
Cochair, Sierra Club History Committee
Codirector, Sierra Club Documentation Project

Berkeley, California
October 14, 1982

Sierra Club Oral History Project

Alfred Forsyth

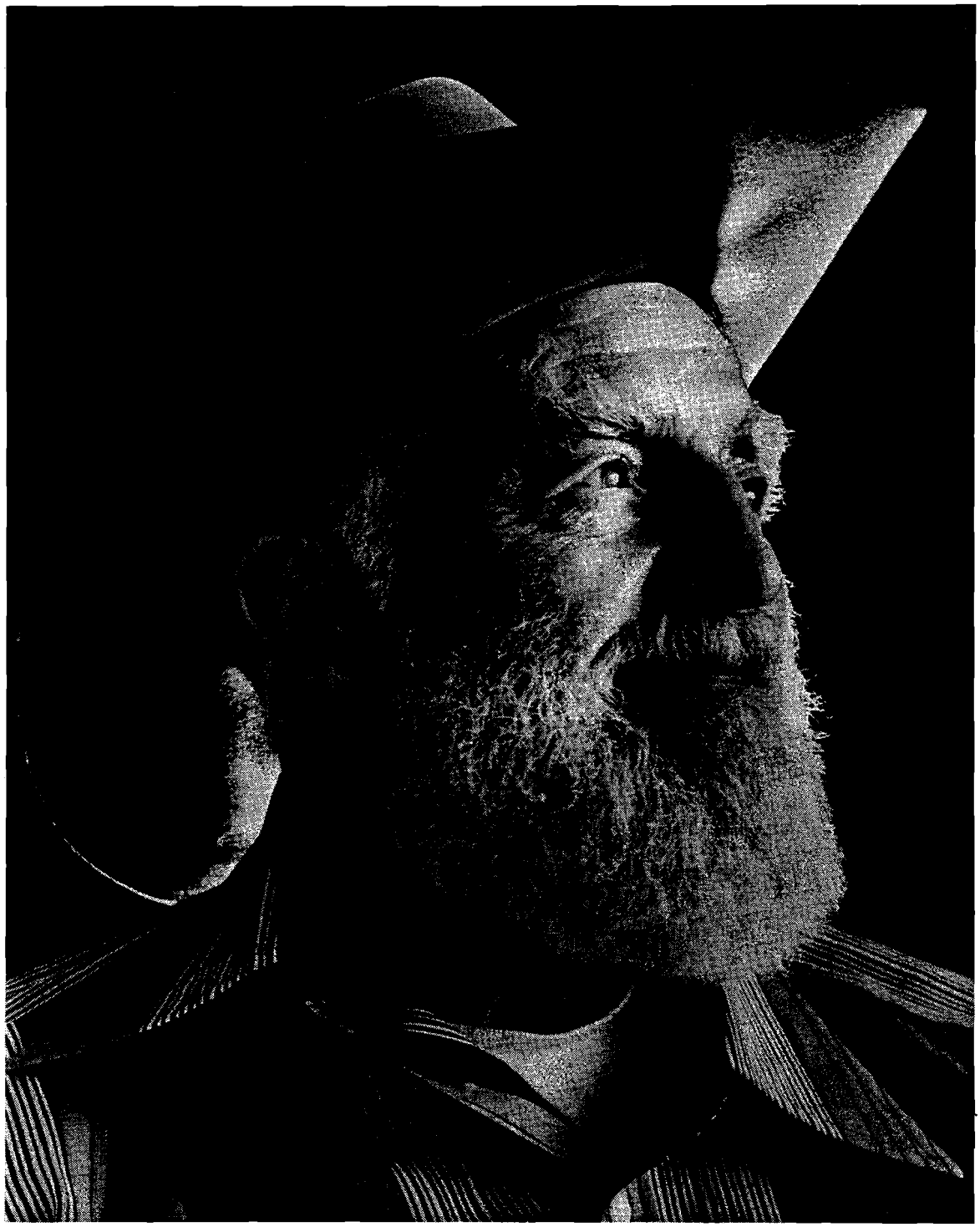
THE SIERRA CLUB IN NEW YORK AND NEW MEXICO, 1965-1978

An Interview Conducted by
Jeffrey Ingram
in 1978

Underwritten by
The National Endowment for the Humanities

Sierra Club History Committee
1981

Sierra Club Oral History Project



ALFRED S. FORSYTH

New Mexico
1977

Photo by Mimi Forsyth

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INTRODUCTION

Far too many years have gone by, regrettably, since I have had the pleasure of seeing Al Forsyth face to face. But several vivid pictures of him flash before my mind's eye:

* A big man striding along the trail, resplendent in the green, blue and white of his Forsyth clan tartan kilt, with a furry sporan swinging before him, the pompon of a rainbow Tam o' Shanter bobbing on his head, and a hunting knife riding in the garter of his calf-high Argyles.

* A puffing, steamy-breathed snowshoer laboriously breaking trail up Mt. Van Hoovenberg for a squad of tenderfoot climbers toiling through eight inches of fresh Adirondack powder.

* A considerate hike leader who always seemed to have a brandy flask available at trail's end to revive his flagging followers.

* A quiet, effective committee member who was ever ready to provide succinct and accurate minutes of a meeting, whether for a Sierra Club task force, group, or chapter, or for Friends of the Earth, or for Negative Population Growth, or for any of the numerous other causes he has championed.

My first contact with Al Forsyth was in the very early sixties, when he and Mrs. Forsyth showed an Atlantic Chapter meeting some spectacular slides she had taken during a summer trip to Alaska. That led to Mary's close involvement with the club and later to her twisting lawyer Al's arm to provide legal help in the club's friend-of-the-court effort to save from desecration (by six-lane expressway) the legendary Sleepy Hollow that had till then remained as rural as it was when traversed by Washington Irving's Headless Horseman. Al wrote a magnificently eloquent brief that should have persuaded the court and shamed Governor Nelson Rockefeller, whose Pocantico property stood to benefit from the new route. Unhappily the highway builders won.

Nevertheless, the involvement had "hooked" Al for the club. He became a chapter mainstay, serving as hike leader, legal counsel, multiple committeeman, national Council delegate, conservation chairman, chapter chairman, envoy to other conservation groups, and prime mover in a number of important battles. I hope his modesty has not omitted those from his oral history interview (which I hope sometime to hear or read). Al's legal training, his superb gift of language, his sure judgment, and his diplomatic abilities were valuable assets to the Atlantic Chapter and to the New York conservation community for years. On his departure for the Sun Belt, a splendid party, complete with Scottish bagpiper, was given in his honor by a wide coalition of groups he had worked

with in the Northeast. I have no doubt that his work for the environment (as well as Mary's and their son's) is continuing in the Southwest. May they have many more years to pursue it.

Stewart Ogilvy

19 June 1981
Yonkers, New York

INTERVIEW HISTORY -- Alfred Forsyth

Alfred Forsyth was suggested as a participant in the Sierra Club Oral History Project in 1977, by club staff familiar with his many contributions to conservation and the club. David Brower, who knew Mr. Forsyth both through his work in the Atlantic Chapter and his service on the board of Friends of the Earth, seconded the suggestion and offered the name of Jeff Ingram as an interviewer for the project. Mr. Ingram, southwest representative for the Sierra Club in the 1960s, now living in Tucson, Arizona, was a natural choice for the volunteer task; his knowledge of the Atlantic Chapter, Sierra Club affairs and concerns, and Mr. Forsyth's contributions are evident in his conduct of this interview.

The interview took place on August 2, 1978, in the Forsyth home in Pecos, New Mexico, where Mr. Forsyth and his wife, Mary, moved from New York after his retirement in 1975. Mary Forsyth, who has also been active in the Sierra Club and environmental affairs, was present and participated in the interview. Mr. and Mrs. Forsyth reviewed the transcription for accuracy, but made no substantial changes. Expenses involved in editing and preparing this interview for final presentation were funded through a grant to the Sierra Club History Committee from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

With Mr. Forsyth's interview, the Sierra Club Documentation Project begins to explore several areas of interest in Sierra Club and environmental history: the expansion and activities of the club on the Eastern Seaboard; the important precedent-setting early cases in environmental law involving the Storm King power plant and the Hudson River Expressway; and the development of the Sierra Club into an international organization. Mr. Forsyth also discusses his work with Friends of the Earth and with the Upper Pecos Association in New Mexico.

It is fitting that in 1974 the Sierra Club's second highest award, the William E. Colby Award, was presented to Alfred Forsyth "for his extraordinary contributions to conservation and the development of the Sierra Club in the eastern United States and Canada."

Ann Lage, Cochair
Sierra Club History Committee
April, 1981

Conservation Interests##

Jeffrey Ingram: My name is Jeff Ingram, and I am interviewing Al Forsyth. This will be an attempt to help Al fill out the historical memory of the Sierra Club, a project which I appreciate very much; because of some work I have been doing on the Grand Canyon, I know how important it is to have this material.

Alfred Forsyth: Memory is not one of my stronger faculties; today as I grow older I find I forget more and particularly have a weakness for forgetting names. It's very embarrassing. I've been trying to think of one of the early Sierra Club members back there, Harry something-or-other, and I'm damned if I can remember his name. The weakness is inherited from my mother I guess. I can see their faces, I remember their mannerisms, I remember things they've said, but damned if I can remember their names.

Ingram: We'll do the best we can with names like that, and if we can't get them all, maybe we'll get some relationship that will indicate to someone else who they are.

I want to ask you about the Atlantic Chapter, but before we talk about that, one of the key questions that I was always asked when I worked for the Sierra Club was, how did you get involved with conservation and why are you interested in the Grand Canyon? I think, in the questionnaire that you answered, you mentioned your interest in joining the club as being conservation.

Forsyth: Yes. Well, all my life I've been interested, in one form or another, in conservation. In earlier days it was mostly preservation of hunting species--rabbits, pheasants, grouse, and trout, and things like that--the field-and-stream type of conservation. I do recall that every time I got an issue of Field and Stream magazine, the first thing I turned to was the page on conservation. But I never took any real part in it and never really had any awareness of the problems of conservation until quite a lot later.

Ingram: You mentioned Field and Stream. Were you a fisherman? Did you hunt? Were you active outdoors?

Forsyth: Yes, I used to go fishing and hunting, most all of my life.

Ingram: What about any other activities like hiking and the kind of things associated with the Sierra Club?

Forsyth: I did very little of that sort of thing, mostly just by myself, hunting and fishing led to exploring, and I always loved that.

Ingram: Do you fish in the Pecos?

Forsyth: Occasionally. It runs right through the bottom of the land there; there are three nice pools there. If you care to try it, I've got a rod ready for you.

Ingram: Let's talk about the time when your environmental interest got really sharply awakened.

Forsyth: Mary was always deeply interested in conservation and was an amateur biologist, amateur ornithologist. Her interests were deep and longlasting; I guess lifetime. She was active in the Audubon Society back in New York and did a lot of splendid work for them. But I always kept in the background at least, or completely out of it, because I didn't want to steal the show so to speak. I thought it was her thing, and she ought to be free to do it. She always tried to get me interested, but I resisted it because I felt that I would overshadow her. Lawyers have that universal demand for their services and because you are a lawyer, because you can write well and speak well, and first thing you know you're in center stage. Mary wouldn't agree with this, but I feel it's so.

Early Involvement with the New York Group

Forsyth: My first contact with the Sierra Club was when Dave Sive called a meeting of members. It was held at the Alpine Club in New York. I remember it very well. And he made an urgent plea for more volunteer help. He asked that after the meeting anyone who was willing to volunteer for anything, come up and talk to him.

Ingram: Was this a request for any kind of volunteer help, or was it strictly legal?

Forsyth: No, just any kind of volunteer help: envelope stuffing, record keeping, reading and speaking, and so forth.

Ingram: Was Dave chairman?

Forsyth: I'm not sure whether he was chairman of the chapter at that time or not. I believe he was chairman of what was called the New York Group, which at that time was the entire state of New York, the

Forsyth: present boundary of the Atlantic Chapter. The Atlantic Chapter at that time took in from Florida to Maine, all the coastal states. I think Harry (I remember his name now, Harry Neece) was the chairman of the chapter.

At any rate, Mary had sent me to that meeting because she couldn't go; she asked me to attend and to volunteer for anything Dave thought she could do. As a result Mary did become the next chairman of the New York group and spent a couple of years trying to organize subgroups throughout the state, up in Rome, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, I don't know where else. She can speak better about that than I can. Shortly after that, another activist in the New York group (and I believe a charter member of it), Stewart Ogilvy, approached me and asked me if I would please write a brief on a case involving the construction of a road through the famous Sleepy Hollow area in Westchester County.

Ingram: Maybe you could expand on that a little bit, because I'm not familiar with that particular area.

Forsyth: Sleepy Hollow is historically an attractive place. It is, as its name implies, a sleepy, quiet community, beautiful valleys and quiet, within about twenty miles of New York City. It was made famous, of course, by Washington Irving. I don't recall whether Rockefeller was governor at that time, but anyway there was a road planned through part of the Rockefeller estate near Sleepy Hollow, but going right through the historic part of Sleepy Hollow, a super highway. There was much feeling among the Sierra Club members that this should never be allowed to happen, and they did take it to court. I came in at the point where the final briefs were to be written, and, at Stew's request, I prepared a brief on it. It was not a very firm legal brief; there were very few legal points that we could hit upon. The brief was mainly a plea for preservation of beauty in the state.

Ingram: Was this before the court decision about Storm King, saying that the FPC [Federal Power Commission] had to look at these things?

Forsyth: It was about that time. But this was in the state court.

Ingram: Right.

Forsyth: The decision went against us, but the effort was productive of a good deal of public sentiment. The New York Times took it up, and eventually--I don't recall what the points were that compelled the state to change the routing of this road, but they did finally. So we had a partial victory at least, by just trying. It was a little before that, a year or so before that, that Mary and I and our son Bill went up to Alaska and visited Camp Denali.

Ingram: Before we leave the Sleepy Hollow case, if we could come back to these legal things: Was there any discussion at that time of the appeals process, that is, should we carry it further?

Forsyth: My recollection is a little hazy on this, Jeff. I believe that there was so little prospect of success, so little legal handle on the thing, that we decided not to. As a matter of fact, we had no money to devote to things like this. The chapter did pay the cost of printing the brief, I recall that. But later I found that that was a tremendous effort for them. The chapter wasn't very large at that time, and fund-raising was not one of our strongest points either.

Ingram: This had to have been then some time around 1965, 1966?

Forsyth: It was about '66 I would guess. I recall there were a couple of paragraphs in that brief. They were not legal arguments; they were arguments for preservation of beauty. I was surprised later on, in another road case in the New York area, to hear the public testimony against the road, and the speakers were reading from that Sleepy Hollow brief. There were one or two paragraphs that rather surprised me; I didn't know that I was that eloquent at the time!

Ingram: Do you have a copy, or do you know where there is a copy?

Forsyth: I may have a copy here, I don't know. There is a copy, of course, in the New York office.

Well I started to say about the visit to Alaska; I think that was the turning point in my attitude toward conservation. We were guests up there at Camp Denali of Celia Hunter and Ginny Wood. Most of the table conversation up there was conservation, and those two enthusiasts really struck a spark with me.

Ingram: This was after the Sleepy Hollow case?

Forsyth: No, this was before it, before Sleepy Hollow. But the visit to Alaska--not only the influence of the people at the camp, Del Eberhardt, Ginny, and Celia, and several young people there with their enthusiasm for preservation of nature--really did turn my interest a lot more actively toward what could be done to save things. And after Stew inveigled me into writing this brief, which was not my forte at all, I did become interested in what the Sierra Club was doing and could do. I found a really deep interest in conservation, particularly Stew Ogilvy's part in it. He lived and breathed conservation. Stew, many years ago on the weekend hikes out there, at the luncheon break, would give about a fifteen

Forsyth: or twenty minute talk on some local conservation matter. And he, in that manner, recruited a lot of active interest in conservation work. Shortly after that--

Law Practice

Ingram: I'm going to interrupt a minute, because what I want to ask about is something that may lay a little groundwork. Could you talk a little bit about your legal career, what kind of law you were interested in?

Forsyth: Well, my law work was almost wholly as corporate counsel to a tobacco company, the United States Tobacco Company, that makes the Copenhagen brand snuff. And my job was to keep them out of court by giving them good advice as to how to comply with laws. It wasn't a very thrilling, spectacular kind of law practice; it was all just work. And it had to do with such dry subjects as the SEC [Securities Exchange Commission] rules, the Robinson-Patman Act, the requirements of fair trade, and a lot of other things of commercial interest with absolutely no connection with conservation work or court work or brief writing or anything of that sort.

Ingram: Did you personally deal with federal--I want to call them bureaucrats, I don't see why I shouldn't--with members of the staff of these commissions?

Forsyth: Oh, yes.

Ingram: Did this shape any kind of a feeling or a philosophy on your part about how to deal with government employees?

Forsyth: I couldn't say that it did, no. [coughing; tape off]

Ingram: We were talking about whether or not your legal experience had given you any view of government bureaucracy.

Forsyth: Not particularly; most of it was with junior bureaucrats. My own feeling was that the government was against business at the time. My zeal for my client I think blinded me a little bit to the various sides of legal issues. I was a protagonist, advocate. But I don't think my law practice had any effect on how I would later, in conservation matters, regard government agencies. I think the two were entirely separate.

Ingram: I ask because one of the reasons lawsuits have become very popular is the frustration that people feel dealing with, say, a local Forest Service office, and some people just say, "Let's go to court." And I wondered if you had something to add there.

Forsyth: No, I wouldn't say so. One thing that I think the practice of law did instill in me is that there are two sides to everything, and you've got to know both sides, and that nobody's a complete rascal. He may, at the moment, have an interest that warps his vision, but he's still a human being and still a dedicated public servant, and you've got to look at both sides of all questions. I'm a good deal more moderate in this environmental law than any of the younger environmental lawyers. I tend to--I don't know, it's not exactly a desire to compromise, but I proceed from a desire to reach a just result. I take more of a judicial attitude toward legal questions than a lot of the younger advocates do. Consequently, many of my friends in the environmental law today feel that I'm not really stern enough about the whole subject.

Sierra Club Legal Committee and Legal Defense Fund

Ingram: Let's follow up on that a little bit, because you were a member of the club's Legal Committee and aren't you now a member of the Board of the Legal Defense Fund?

Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Could you just describe a little bit that organizational development?

Forsyth: Well, the organization of the Legal Committee as far as I'm concerned was very casual. Dave Sive was a lot more active in legal affairs at the time. I got into it largely as sort of a spinoff to the conservation committee of the chapter. In San Francisco I think they were looking for somebody to organize some lawyers in the New York area. And it just came my way, I don't know why. It really should have come Dave's way. But Phil Berry was organizing as many lawyers as he could and I developed a list of mostly young Sierra Club members. It wasn't a fully effective committee.

Ingram: This was the committee on the national level?

Forsyth: Yes. I recall that my file on the legal committee was one of the thinnest files in my desk. But I was able to find a number of young lawyers who were willing to devote their time, such as it

Forsyth: was. The problem was that these were all younger men, just getting started, working for large law firms that demanded twenty hours of twenty-four of their junior lawyer associates, and I never could count on them. I could look forward to a brief being due thirty days hence and twenty-nine days would go by before I'd find somebody to work on it. As a consequence, I did a lot of that work myself rather than getting much help from the committee. And a lot of it, of course, did not get done at all.

Ingram: Of course this was all free.

Forsyth: It was all pro bono, and in those days, that was up to about '73, the larger law firms did very little to encourage their junior associates to do outside work of this sort. It did come about in the early seventies that many of the large law firms gave their junior associates time off to do environmental work, and some very fine work was done by those young men. Today, I believe, that most large law firms throughout the country encourage this. At the moment we're trying a case here in New Mexico, the NRDC [National Resources Defense Council] versus NRC [Nuclear Regulatory Commission] and others, on the licensing of uranium mills. The case is pending before Judge Bratman; I can't comment on it, but the legal work has been done by two young men from the office of O'Melveny & Myers in Los Angeles, and it's taken them--I think the last time I talked to them about their hours it was something like, well at O'Melveny & Myers' rates it would run over a hundred thousand dollars. Now this is all contributed by large law firms as a public service. That was pretty much unknown when I tried to organize a legal committee there.

Ingram: Did you, during those years, discuss that kind of problem with people, some of the senior partners?

Forsyth: No, I didn't. As a matter of fact, I was pretty well occupied with my own law practice, and taking an hour or two a day out of it was difficult.

Ingram: So you don't know, other than just the general change in opinion, why New York firms began saying this is something we should be doing, and letting younger lawyers do this kind of public service.

Forsyth: I would suspect that Earth Day had an awfully strong influence on the large firms.

Ingram: And on the Bar Association?

Forsyth: Well, I guess it was about 1972 that the Association of the Bar of New York City established an Environmental Law Committee. Dave Sive was the first chairman of it and chaired that for about

Forsyth: two or three years. It drew a considerable number of New York lawyers. Our meetings were held at the Bar Association building on 44th Street, and they were dinner meetings. I well recall many meetings there when there were twenty-five or thirty young lawyers in attendance at those meetings. That's pretty active interest. Dave was wonderful in organizing that. He's an outstanding guy.

Ingram: I think later on we might talk a little bit about some of the things that you and Dave did together. I want to go back to the point about the Legal Defense Fund itself, which, of course, was set up as a separate entity, and anything you recall about how that came about, and why it was thought to be necessary?

Forsyth: I have no very particular recollections of that. I really don't know how that came about. It was mostly done through California, Phil Berry and Dick Leonard. Jim Moorman, who was I think its first executive director, had come from the New York area. He was one of about five young lawyers in the U.S. Attorney's office there, under Morgenthau, I believe. John Adams, Dick Hall, Jim Moorman, and one other, whose name I don't recall, left the U.S. Attorney's Office and undertook the formation of the Natural Resources Defense Council. There again, one of the moving people in the founding of that was Dave Sive. He organized the meeting at Princeton, at which the whole idea was hatched and the general outline of the organization of NRDC was discussed. Jim Moorman, I remember, was there at the time. I guess he remained associated with NRDC for about two years before taking over the SCLDF [Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund].

Ingram: You've been on the board since the Legal Defense Fund was created?

Forsyth: No. I just came on two years ago.

Ingram: How does the board function? I mean, what is its purpose? Do you actually decide on whether cases should be taken up?

Forsyth: Well, the board functions as a governing body of the SCLDF, setting salaries and policies, passing on the arrangements for office space for attorneys and what not. But they have a Litigation Approval Committee. And an Executive Committee, of course, is available in the San Francisco area, for instant decisions on urgent problems. But the Litigation Committee is different from the Executive Committee. There have been four of us on that committee; there are now five, with a lady member, Barrie [Ramsey] Girard, who just indicated an interest and was added to the committee. All cases that come before SCLDF for handling are subjected to a rather rigorous review by Earl Blauner and the

Forsyth: executive director, who is now Rick [Fredric P.] Sutherland. They prepare about five pages of information on the personalities involved, the attorneys to be employed, the issue, the forum, the chances of success; they examine very carefully the possibilities of counter claims for damages. And these papers are circulated among the committee and each one approves or disapproves or comments. It's quite active. Since I've been on this committee, I get about one or two a week.

Ingram: Do you have a rough idea of how many cases there are? I mean if that's a hundred cases a year?

Forsyth: I have a bad head for figures, Jeff. I recall that there's something like eighty-eight active cases on the docket now. Some are quite limited and local issues, others are national and broad scoped.

Ingram: Of course, again, this is all public service work, by you, the board, and the Litigation Committee?

Forsyth: The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund does hire outside counsel in many cases, and in some instances, pays them, not at commercial rates, not at a hundred dollars an hour, but maybe twenty-five dollars an hour. So the attorneys who handle these cases for SCLDF are in part doing it pro bono publico, certainly at a loss of revenue to them.

Ingram: I was thinking more of your part.

Forsyth: Most of the lawyers who do handle these are contributing their services, donating their time.

Ingram: We had that situation in the Grand Canyon River suit, where we have a lawyer in Arizona who is receiving a reduced rate.

Mary Forsyth and the Sierra Club

Ingram: What I'd like to do now is to jump back and bring in Mary Forsyth, who was active, as Al was saying, in Sierra Club chapter and group affairs in the New York area before Al was. I'm going to let her talk about that. [addressing Mary Forsyth] I think what I'd really like to do to start off, in this somewhat unorthodox interview of two people at the same time, is to talk a little bit about origins--your growing up in Tucson, and your beginning interest in conservation, the Sierra Club, and so on. Is that enough prompting?

Mary Forsyth: That's a lovely way to start. My interest in conservation began with my father, who was an ardent outdoorsman. And I grew up in the back country of Arizona, which was very back in those days, and the Rockies in Colorado, and the Sierras in California. So there was a tie-in with all the high country of the West; and the Sierra Club was to be the ultimate in turning on this interest.

Ingram: Were you aware of the Sierra Club from early days, from your early days?

M. Forsyth: Yes, quite far back. When I was in California, some years ago, I decided I'd better get busy and get a membership, and this took place, and then I was back in New York with Al, and--

Ingram: Can you give me a feeling for dates, that is when you moved from California to New York, or something like that?

M. Forsyth: When I finished school I went to the big city to learn to paint Indians, so I could go back to Arizona and paint Indians. But I met a very handsome young lawyer from Columbia University, and that's where the painting ended for a few years. And we spent many very interesting years in New York. Both of us like the out-of-doors, and we settled up in Westchester so we could get out and walk around on weekends and tried to keep our feet on some rough ground.

Ingram: But you were a member of the Sierra Club, then before the move, before you went to New York?

M. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: And when you came, was there a chapter, was there an organization in New York?

M. Forsyth: Yes, there was, but we didn't get involved in it. I don't know what <u>was</u> the turning point exactly. We went to some of the meetings, which were interesting.

Ingram: Social meetings?

M. Forsyth: We were always interested in people coming through. And I recall a reception for Dave Brower, put on by Time-Life; I guess Stew Ogilvy was with them and he was giving interviews to various people. That was when one of the dear little ladies rushed up to Dave Brower and said bubblingly, "And I

M. Forsyth: hear there's a chapter in California," [laughter] which amused him mightily and made the afternoon. But my tenure really with the club as an officer was quite short. I took over from Dave Sive and that was a hard act to follow, because it was a time of upheaval. This was when the shepherd of the flock, Dave [Brower], was leaving, and there was a lot of publicity, pro, con, and so forth. The membership jumped in the New York area, climbed rapidly. And the club became so large that we realized—

A. Forsyth: Could I interrupt? It seems to me that you were active well before the Brower episode with the club.

M. Forsyth: Not really, not until after there was a shift.

A. Forsyth: I'm sorry, I thought you were active well before that.

M. Forsyth: I just attended meetings.

A. Forsyth: Do you recall when it was that you asked me to that meeting where Dave Sive called for volunteers, and I volunteered your name.

M. Forsyth: I don't recall the exact date of it.

A. Forsyth: I think that must have been around '65 or '66. It was before I became active in the club.

M. Forsyth: Yes, it was.

A. Forsyth: You became New York chairman, chairman of the New York group.

M. Forsyth: There was a New York group at that time. But following Dave Brower's leaving, the group expanded so rapidly, and we had people coming, trying to get to meetings, from upper New York State, and it was very difficult. So the plan was to try to break up into smaller groups, more regional. And then, hopefully, people from these groups would come into the main meetings. And it was working fairly well. We had a group going on Long Island; we had one in Poughkeepsie, and one starting in Syracuse.

Ingram: When you were chairman of the New York group, that was when it included the whole state.

M. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Did you take over from Dave Sive?

M. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: He was chairman of the group before you?

M. Forsyth: That's correct.

Ingram: And do you happen to know, offhand, who followed you?

M. Forsyth: I am so embarrassed; I hope she never hears this, but I can't remember her name. It was another woman, Barbara something.

A. Forsyth: I don't recall.

M. Forsyth: I really don't remember.

Ingram: Okay. I was just trying to fix it a little bit.

M. Forsyth: I left when I had a family crisis; my mother passed away in Virginia, and I had to bow out--I spent so much time down there.

Ingram: So before you were head of the chapter, then, are you saying that you really weren't active? You were a member, but not an officer.

M. Forsyth: Not an officer, no.

Ingram: Not a participant in committees?

M. Forsyth: I was too busy doing Audubon work and [working with] other groups up in Westchester County. I was very, very interested in the Sierra Club and all those kinds of things.

Ingram: What do you feel--and we're talking now about the most tremendously heavily populated area, the metropolitan area of New York City--how do you see, or how did you see, the tasks? In other words, what was the chapter or the group there to do for these people who were members? Was it a social function? How did you conceive of the job? What did you see as what you were doing?

M. Forsyth: I don't remember being involved in the legal aspect which came on. Of course the Storm King case was on when Dave [Sive] was there and he was very much on hand for that, but it was mostly social. It was to keep people abreast of what was happening, not only in New York state, but nationally. And we endeavored to get somebody of stature in particular problem situations. It was, I would say, more social than anything.

A Forsyth: It was a chowder and marching club with overtones of conservation, largely stimulated by Stew Ogilvy.

M. Forsyth: He was the man who was always there, for everything.

Ingram: So the chapter had a social existence; it was not just a shell for conservation.

M. Forsyth: [with A. Forsyth] No.

Ingram: That was a feeling that you might get from a distance, but there was an active social movement.

M. Forsyth: [with A. Forsyth] Yes.

Ingram: And it also had a hiking schedule too?

M. Forsyth: Yes, a hiking and a meeting schedule.

A. Forsyth: It had several meetings a year at which interesting speakers appeared, and we had some panel debates, as I recall. It was about four meetings a year, I guess, wasn't it?

M. Forsyth: Yes.

A. Forsyth: They used to hold them at the Alpine Club and pretty much filled the hall. I recall some meetings there with five hundred people.

M. Forsyth: New York was such a marvelous crossroads of everything--

A. Forsyth: I might mention that at the Alpine Club the capacity of the number of moveable chairs they had was always overtaxed; there were a hundred or more people attending those meetings, and everyone spoke their piece; somebody got up and said they shouldn't have outboard motors on Lake So-and-So in the Adirondacks, and that would be debated for a half an hour without conclusion. They were wonderful people.

Conservation Committee, Atlantic Chapter

Ingram: Was there an active conservation committee during this time, which was run sort of separately?

A. Forsyth: I can tell you a little about that. When I got active after writing that brief, Stewart Ogilvy asked me to take over the conservation committee.

Ingram: Had he been chairman of it?

A. Forsyth: He had been chairman of it, and he turned over to me all of his correspondence file, which was very interesting. Stew had been very active. He's a journalist; he wrote beautifully, convincingly, and did a lot of good. But not knowing what the organization was (I knew very little about the Sierra Club's organization), I asked Harry Neece and Stew to have lunch with me, and we went over to the University Club. I remember the occasion very well. What I was trying to find out was, if I take over this job as chairman of the conservation committee, who's going to help me?

Ingram: Now this was the committee of the group or of the chapter?

A. Forsyth: Of the chapter. And I tried to find out what the conservation committee organization was: what do we do, who helps. According to the papers that Stew had given me, it looked like Stew was the only member; and so it turned out. And he said, "Well, the conservation committee will be you." That was kind of a startling disclosure. And it did remain that way for some time. There were a lot of people interested in one issue or another, who largely went their own way. It was difficult to get a report from them. I tried to organize it so that periodically I'd have a report from each person handling a certain issue, or interested in a certain issue. I'd tried to get them to give me carbon copies--that was before xerox--carbon copies of their letters. It was very disorganized. How anything ever got done, I'll be damned if I know. I can't recall what happened.

Ingram: Did you see what you were doing as organizational?

A. Forsyth: That's what I thought was needed.

Ingram: Right. Stew would write things about substance, but you were trying to get an organization.

A. Forsyth: I was trying to form a committee and to have some committee responsibility. I tried to have committee meetings apart from the chapter executive committee meetings. It never worked. The conservation committee was part of the report of the ex Com monthly. But it turned out to be a one-person show, and rather floored me. I was not at that time well enough informed on conservation matters to carry the responsibility of the committee of the club. I did the best I could with it, but--well, Stew continued to write on the Appalachian coal stripping. Somebody else did a lot of the contact work with the Adirondack Mountain Club about the Adirondack situation. Dave Sive was into everything, Storm King--but organizationally, it just didn't exist.

Ingram: Do you recall during this time any issues which grabbed the interest either of a number of members or the media, an issue like the Grand Canyon might have been at that time in another part of the country, but anything that was more prominent?

A. Forsyth: Well, not particularly. There was the Storm King issue, of course, locally. That was the principal issue that interested great numbers.

M. Forsyth: Long Island's problems, salinization of water in some areas, little things like that, not national.

A. Forsyth: I don't recall any popular issue like that.

Ingram: That's what I was thinking about. These would be issues which would stir up local interest, I don't mean any big national issues. What I meant was the Grand Canyon was sort of a national issue. But were there issues which people were interested in that served to stimulate interest? You mentioned the Sleepy Hollow issue; I would think that would be one that got into the New York Times.

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Were there others at this time that you recollect, either one of you?

The Adirondack National Park Proposal

A. Forsyth: Back about 1967 the state Constitutional Convention was held in Albany, and Laurance Rockefeller sprung a proposal to make a national park in the Adirondacks. Now that was an issue that was with us for a number of years, and that was a hot issue statewide. Dave Sive was a delegate to that convention, I believe, or a counsel to a delegate, and he was in close contact with it.

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A. Forsyth: The plan for the national park was a peculiar thing. The proposal appeared with an official state seal cover on it. But it was Laurance Rockefeller's own plan, and it had state backing at the time. That issue occupied us for about three or four years and resulted in the governor's appointment of a temporary study commission on the Adirondacks of which many

A. Forsyth: Sierra Club members were members of an advisory council. I happened to be one of them, but there must have been about six or eight of us active in that. Out of that grew the Adirondack Park Agency, which is probably the first large state planning agency for wild country, in the land-use planning field.

Ingram: Were you just a group of figureheads?

A. Forsyth: Well, the advisory council must have numbered about thirty or forty people, but we were invited to many meetings of the temporary study commission. We met all over the state, some in Albany, some in New York City. I guess I must have attended about six or eight of those meetings; I attended all to which I was invited. You sat and listened, but every once in a while were called upon to comment on proposals. The study commission wasn't just a window-dressing thing, it did have considerable input. Some of the Adirondack Mountain Club people were very active in that, Dave--there again I can't remember the name. The Sierra Club and ADK worked very closely together on that.

Ingram: ADK?

A. Forsyth: The Adirondack Mountain Club, an older organization. The Sierra Club, when the Adirondack issues became hot, were johnny-come-latelys. The Adirondack Mountain Club had been in the Adirondacks for many, many years; they were well organized, and they thought that their expertise was indispensable. Who were these Sierra Club people who came out of California to tell New Yorkers what to do with the Adirondacks? And it took a bit of tact and close cooperation to overcome that at the beginning. Dave Sive and Stew Ogilvy and I all worked on that, and soon had very good cooperative working with ADK. I would attend their conservation committee meetings; they'd come to our executive committee meetings. It developed into a close association with mutual trust.

Ingram: Was ADK centered in New York City?

A. Forsyth: ADK was really centered upstate. Its membership was mostly upstate people, but with a large number from the New York City area. There was another organization more active in New York City than ADK, and that was the Appalachian Mountain Club. They were always standoffish with the Sierra Club. We never did achieve the close working cooperation that we had with ADK. They were more concerned with maintaining their trail huts and trails through the New England mountains. They never took up the conservation issues to the extent that ADK did, or the Sierra Club. I would say that generally, of those

A. Forsyth: three, the Sierra Club's interest in general conservation was a stimulant to the other two, and mainly to the ADK. At the time the Adirondack issue first arose, ADK was largely a chowder and marching club, with very little interest outside that. But with the Adirondack issue coming up and this fellow Dave (damn, I wish I could remember his name), he showed an interest in national issues as well and followed the Sierra Club's lead on many of those things.

Ingram: So this is an example of a harmonious working relationship between two organizations; we have enough of the other kind.

A. Forsyth: At the outset it threatened to be a confrontation, but with some very tactful work on Dave Sive's part it turned into a good working relationship.

Ingram: Since we've gotten into the Adirondack issue, tell me a little bit about your personal feeling. We had a dramatic proposal, and I remember John Oakes telling the story of how the Rockefeller brothers presented him, at a special meeting, with this plan, and how it was supposed to be a big deal, but obviously it didn't go anywhere as far as a national park was concerned. But I'm interested, as I say, in your personal opinion and the opinion of the other conservation members about the national park and the proposals which eventually resulted.

A. Forsyth: Jeff, my feeling was that the national park proposal was probably a pretty fair idea. At the time it was submitted, the Adirondack "park" was facing all the evils of overuse and overpopulation. It was a backward area economically; people were poor up there, they had to cut wood to make a living. And they resented any effort to preserve the natural areas of it, and they were suspicious of outsiders. It faced extinction if something wasn't done. The statement of Governor Rockefeller in appointing the Adirondack Temporary Study Commission is a very adequate statement of the conditions at that time. It looked as though the Adirondack "park" was just going to deteriorate to the point of becoming another Coney Island. And Laurance Rockefeller's proposal was an imaginative one; the only resentment of the thing was the way it was sprung on the constitutional convention, as though it were a slick tactic. And, of course, there was a good deal of suspicion among conservationists about the whole Rockefeller family. They were empire builders; they had personal axes to grind and personal fame to be won. Governor Rockefeller was regarded as an empire builder and justly so; many of his projects

A. Forsyth: were to be monuments to Nelson Rockefeller. But my own feeling about the park proposal was that it deserved study. Something had to be done, and this might be better than nothing. It really reduced the area of the park. It would have preserved the central parts of it, the high-peak areas, but it would have also taken away from the people of the state of New York management and direction of their park and put it in the hands of the federal park service. This was viewed with suspicion and distrust.

I remember I took about an eight-day backpack trip up through the Adirondacks either the summer that that was first proposed or the following year, I've forgotten which. And in the back country I talked to a number of the conservation commission's employees up there to get their views of it. They were unanimously against it. The local merchants were divided, but I would say mostly against the proposal. It came to naught, except that it did stimulate the governor to say something had to be done about it. He appointed this temporary study commission; he did a splendid job in selecting the members of that, and they did a tremendous job. Harold Gary, who is now head of the Adirondack Council, was the executive director of the study commission and a very able and stimulating administrator. He did a splendid job on it. He had a number of people from industry, Harold Hochschild of Amax, a splendid conservationist who was a very influential member of that. There were several other industrial and Time-Life people in there.

Ingram: Let me be a little parochial and bring this back, because this is an interesting question. Here was an issue which for conservationists of New York state was very important, maybe consuming. Here were Sierra Club members, prominent Sierra Club members, who were working on it. What would you say was the attitude of the Sierra Club Board of Directors, the San Francisco office? Did you try to get help from them, did you need help, did you get any reaction?

A. Forsyth: The Atlantic Chapter set up a committee to assess the park proposal and alternative proposals. I wish I could remember the names of all the people that were on that; there were some very prominent people--a state senator; Nancy Mathews was very active in that; Dave Sive, and I; and I believe that the U.S. Attorney at the time, I can't remember his name either--

Ingram: Was it before Morgenthau?

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Republican?

A. Forsyth: I believe so.

Ingram: Whitney?

A. Forsyth: Yes, Whitney North Seymour. He was on that committee, sat in several times. And we drew up a list of about fifteen policy recommendations to submit to the Sierra Club Board of Directors. I was delegated to attend the board of directors' meeting; it was held in northern California, at the lodge up there--

Ingram: Clair Tappaan.

A. Forsyth: Clair Tappaan Lodge. And the whole afternoon was taken up with debate and argument and rather heated discussion of the Brower situation. By the time that reports of other matters, including the Adirondack report that I had brought west, were called upon, the directors were all mulling around out on the outskirts of the benches and nobody seemed to be listening. And I took the microphone and made my report on the Adirondacks and these recommendations. It was a trying experience; you were talking into a microphone and the whole audience was mulling around the field. I didn't know whether anyone was listening or not. When I sat down, Jim Moorman, who was there from Washington (he was with the Bureau of Land Management at the time) said, "Gee, that was a great presentation; I wish I could talk like that!" And I thought, you're probably the only one who heard it! Well, anyway, the board of directors did adopt a resolution then and there approving the recommendations of the Atlantic Chapter, some fifteen of them, and delegating to the Atlantic Chapter the future policy of the Sierra Club on the Adirondacks, which was a very unusual thing for the board to do. That resolution, if it has not been revoked--the importance of it came up not long ago, on another Adirondack issue that arose after I came out to New Mexico--I think was used to take a position on an Adirondack issue without going to the board of directors. I didn't follow that; I don't know what the outcome of it was.

Ingram: I think you're answering my question by saying that, except for that board of directors meeting, you didn't really ask for a lot of help from the national office.

A. Forsyth: No.

Ingram: Let me go back to the substance a minute, again your personal opinion.

A. Forsyth: Mike [J. Michael] McCloskey did have a hand in that.

Ingram: He did?

A. Forsyth: Yes. Nancy Matthews--did you know Nancy?

Ingram: Yes.

A. Forsyth: She had been secretary to Mike McCloskey before she came back to New York; she was a New Yorker. And I think she was in contact with Mike on the Adirondack thing. I think she got a good deal of help from him.

Ingram: Good. All right, back to the substance of it. What was your opinion of what finally came out of this process, with the temporary study commission, and the recommendations, the legislation?

A. Forsyth: I don't know whether you've ever seen the documents that came out of that, several volumes on particular aspects of it.

Ingram: I've not read them.

You were talking about your feelings about the results of the Adirondack study.

A. Forsyth: It produced some very detailed and fine studies of a number of issues, legal and otherwise, and a plan for management of the Adirondack area, a state plan. There were two plans, I don't recall how they were described. But one is in very great detail as to what buildings can be erected, how far lakeside residents must be set back from the lake, and all sorts of zoning and planning details. From the beginning, planners realized that there would be a great deal of opposition from the natives of the area. The Adirondack Park Agency was set up so that the natives had the majority of places on the board, and outsiders as evenly balanced as possible but in the minority. The plan was vigorously attacked by the Adirondack people, particularly local politicians who were beholden to local chambers of commerce and local merchants. And it floundered along for a couple of years.

It probably would not have survived had it not had such damn good leadership, and a couple of people on there who were powerful enough to withstand this initial opposition and give the agency a chance to develop an educational program and an operating structure to cooperate with the local communities. And it's taken about five years now to come to the point where we're beginning to get good rapport with the local politicians and local communities. There's still a lot of opposition; there've been several attempts in the legislature to repeal the Adirondack Park Act.

Ingram: Let's see, it was Rockefeller, then [Malcolm] Wilson, then [Hugh L.] Carey?

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Did the governors support it?

A. Forsyth: Well, as far as they could politically without losing all the votes of the upper New York area. They've been somewhat less than strident in their support of it, but generally they've been sympathetic to it. It's one of the first large area planning agencies in the country. It's really a zoning plan, classifying the land areas into about six different categories, five or six, and for each category, setting limits on development, setting limits on noise and industrial use, and [establishing] agencies to try to enforce it. The APA, the Adirondack Park Agency, has been performing a permit-issuing function controlling this development. They have granted most applications; they've been under tremendous pressure. But with each application granted they have been gradually growing in control of the conditions of the permits. It's taken a great deal of tact. George Davis, who later became executive director of the Wilderness Society, was one of the public employees of the Adirondack Park Agency, and he did a splendid job there. He later got out of the Wilderness Society job under circumstances I don't know about. Apparently he wasn't cut out for that sort of work, but at the Adirondack Park Agency he was splendid.

Ingram: This was in part then a job of proselytizing among people who lived in the area?

A. Forsyth: A lot of that, yes, education, trying to convince the local people that the preservation of the natural beauty of the Adirondack Park was at the basis of their livelihood; not only tourism but the preservation of the woodworking industry up there, timber, and the preservation of clean water, wild and scenic rivers, and--

Ingram: Wildlife?

A. Forsyth: Wildlife, yes.

Ingram: Then really, what we're talking about is not so much a plan which settled things but a plan which set up a structure which will keep on working.

A. Forsyth: Quite right, yes.

Ingram: Did you find, or have you found since the agency was set up and working, that the Sierra Club as an organization got involved, either in supporting or opposing or doing anything with any of the work that the agency did?

A. Forsyth: Oh, yes, yes. I can't recall specific instances, but we were in constant touch with it. Two or three of the Adirondack Park Agency directors kept very close contact with us, [sent] copies of a lot of their position statements, and invited [us] to meetings; many of our club members went to those meetings and were outspoken. Yes, the Sierra Club continued to--

Ingram: Is there, or was there a development of a local Sierra Club chapter or group in that area, which focused on that?

A. Forsyth: No, it was mostly at the chapter level. We had a number of upstate Sierra Club members, members of our executive committee from the Albany area, Hanson and two or three others, and they kept very close watch on it.

A number of private property owners in the Adirondacks, wealthy people from, oh, New York, Philadelphia, outlying cities, were concerned about the local opposition to the Adirondack Park Agency plan. They realized that it [the plan] was a necessary thing, and a good thing, deserved support, but recognized that local politics being what they are, with Chambers of Commerce pressures, and so forth, that it was vulnerable. And one gentleman from Philadelphia, a banker there, called me--he had my name as a chapter chairman I think at the time--and he wanted to come over to New York. We met in the Rockefeller brothers' offices, and out of that grew what's called the Adirondack Council. It started off as only these wealthy property owners' protective association, but went beyond that and is now a pretty viable organization with mostly upstate support. Harold Jerry, who was executive director of the study commission, is now executive director of that. I still hear from him occasionally although I've taken no active part in it since I left.

Ingram: Which was about 1975?

A. Forsyth: Yes, I left there in May of '75.

Ingram: Perhaps you or Mary recall other local issues that you had some personal relationship to--that aroused intense interest in the area.

The Upper Pecos Association, New Mexico

M. Forsyth: By that time I was out in New Mexico most of the time organizing the Upper Pecos Association, a conservation group here.

Ingram: Tell me about that.

M. Forsyth: Well, back in the early seventies we learned that there was a road to be put through the Sangre de Christo Mountains from Las Vegas across to the Pecos Canyon called the Elk Mountain Road. There was a lot of campaigning going on, how many jobs would be provided, and since this was a so-called depressed area, it was a great concern to the native people in Las Vegas and in the town of Pecos. We thought that it was not honestly presented and proceeded to try to get some facts before the public.

We found that the plans for it--making a ski base up on Elk Mountain--were put down by the most eminent ski basin operator up in Taos as the second, sort of a B-grade ski area; it was not what New Mexico really needed. So that was thrown out. The job possibilities turned out to be about a third of what was promised. The local merchants in Pecos were told that this would be an advantage to them because their business would flourish with the tourism that was going to go on. But they had found out that most of the tourism, which was through trailers and that kind of vehicle, involved picking up a six-pack of beer and nothing else. So they were disillusioned.

We decided that the town needed a body to put the facts before the membership here, the summer residents who came in from Texas and outlying states, to let them know that they were being threatened, actually. And the membership was about evenly divided between natives and summer visitors, Anglo people who had places up and down the river. This was the gateway to the Pecos Wilderness. It was critical to keep it as wild and as lovely as it should be, and putting a road with gas stations and other concessions was not the way to do it. The case against the road was brought by the little Upper Pecos Association, and a very able lawyer from Santa Fe.

A. Forsyth: The Association which Mary founded.

M. Forsyth: Well, in collaboration.

Ingram: Don't be modest, but give me some names, if you can, the lawyer for instance, from Santa Fe.

M. Forsyth: The lawyer was James B. Alley, Jr., who is an environmentalist, too.

Ingram: I thought he was from New York.

A. Forsyth: Yes, his father shared an office suite with me in New York.

M. Forsyth: He did a very good job. The case went through the district court, the circuit court and was on the steps of the Supreme Court when Governor [Jerry] Apodaca came into--

Ingram: Well, now, how did it get to be a court case? I gather this was a proposal--the Highway Commission or something like that?

M. Forsyth: This was a proposal. It came through the North Central New Mexico Development Corporation which had gotten funds from the EDA [Economic Development Administration]. The point of the case pivoted on the fact that there had been no environmental impact statement.

A. Forsyth: It was a NEPA case.

M. Forsyth: Yes. They, incidentally, did get one [an environmental impact statement] out, sort of halfway through the thing, but not in time.

A. Forsyth: It was in time enough for--I think the Supreme Court did declare the case moot.

M. Forsyth: It did declare it moot at that point, yes.

A. Forsyth: Because the environmental statement hadn't been prepared, and [the Supreme Court] sent it back to the Tenth Circuit Court where I believe it was dismissed. Jim Alley did a hell of a job on that; he worked hard on it and wrote some beautiful briefs. We lost every step of the way in court, and then finally Governor Apodaca said this was an open-ended Bingo, to use his words, and killed the whole plan. It could be revived under another governor, yes.

Ingram: But, let's go back a little bit to the Upper Pecos Association. How did it come about? Was it a matter of a petition drive or what sort of things led to its existence?

M. Forsyth: It started in a delightful rendezvous beside the Pecos River with two or three property owners. The owner of a café in Pecos Village, Robert Roybal, who is a delightful Spanish gentleman, was very concerned. There were about five of us, I guess, and we all of a sudden decided that there was no voice for this area; everything that would be done would be coming in from the state or federally or something.

A. Forsyth: I had nothing to do with this; I was back in New York when Mary did all this.

M. Forsyth: So we just shook hands over it, and everyone went out and spread the word, and the membership came in, and it was really quite exciting.

Ingram: Was there a counter organization started in the area?

M. Forsyth: No.

Ingram: In other words, it really sort of held the sway of opinion.

M. Forsyth: The only counter organization, if you can call it that, was the already existing North Central New Mexico Development Corporation. And I don't think they believed it. We heard grumblings and mutterings, and I don't think they thought there was anything going to be truly a threat to them.

Ingram: So this was really a genuine--

M. Forsyth: It was a grass roots thing, yes. And we were very interested to find some of the local people, who by tradition have not been able to have very much to say--these mountains are filled with the early, early Spanish settlers, and they just live quietly and take what comes. And some of the younger ones who were in the Vietnamese war or who had had college educations were writing letters to the local newspapers saying what was happening in this area. And they became members and, in turn, went out and got their neighbors and other Spanish people.

Ingram: So this was in no sense just an Anglo organization?

M. Forsyth: No, it wasn't. It [the road proposal] was picked up in Las Vegas because Las Vegas was really the most enthusiastic sector that could push--

A. Forsyth: They had the most dollars coming to them from this project.

M. Forsyth: There were open meetings, public meetings, held on this, and people we met in Las Vegas were mostly people who had gas stations who stood to gain a great deal by a road going over this mountain. And we were challenged by a few of the Spanish-speaking students at Highland University saying "Is this going to be an Anglo thing; it is only to protect your property?" And we were able to convince them that it was not, that it was a genuine collaboration of locals and outsiders who wanted to protect this area principally because it is the entry to a wilderness, and, if it goes--

Ingram: Did you, on that basis, get support and help from the Sierra Club and outside organizations?

M. Forsyth: Well--

Ingram: I don't mean to call them outside.

M. Forsyth: Not the Sierra Club, no, this was entirely local.

A. Forsyth: Jim was active in the Sierra Club.

M. Forsyth: Yes, he was.

Ingram: It wasn't something which was taken up by the chapter?

M. Forsyth: Yes, Brant Calkin was very helpful, and our funding had to go through a channel that would give it a non-profit basis.

A. Forsyth: Tax deductibility.

M. Forsyth: Yes. So the Frontera del Norte Fund was to be deposited to that--

Ingram: You raised money locally?

M. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: And this, I suppose, was largely for court costs?

M. Forsyth: Yes. And I must say that Jim Alley was a prince, because he did it for very little; there isn't very much money in Pecos.

Ingram: Was the organization continued; is it a live one?

M. Forsyth: Yes, it's continued I guess as well as any organization can that was developed for this purpose, to be watchdogs and vigilantes on what was happening in the canyon. We haven't had

M. Forsyth: as big an issue to get together on, so we've had sort of social gatherings, and we show conservation movies and that kind of thing. Al is now the president.

A. Forsyth: We had a meeting night before last here in Pecos on four issues: RARE II, the campgrounds of the State Game and Fish Commission up the canyon, the Forest Service planning function, and one other issue, mining in the Pecos area. The meeting was poorly attended; I don't think there were more than about sixteen or seventeen people there. But it was a very active evening, with reports from Conoco's representative--

Ingram: What were they looking for?

A. Forsyth: They're looking for scarce minerals, lead, zinc, copper, gold, silver, and they found some very rich sulfide deposits up there near the old Herrero mine, across the canyon from it. And it looks like an 80 percent chance of a mine being opened up there. But they're doing a pretty good job, under very careful scrutiny by the Forest Service, the people here. It's being handled pretty well so far. We're trying to keep an eye on it and it doesn't look too bad at the moment. There is another uranium mine up the canyon. It was an old mica mine, the tunnel and shaft of the mine. And they've opened that up with a bulldozer at the bottom of the shaft looking for uranium or thorium. The latest word we have is that the geologists think there's nothing there, and I don't think that much is going to come of it, but it's possible.

M. Forsyth: The Forest Service has been very diligent in keeping in touch with the Upper Pecos Association. Anything that's happening, we get notices.

A. Forsyth: Until you get an issue that stirs local people, their emotions, you don't get very much membership or support.

M. Forsyth: We had a little thing happen a couple of years ago when Trout Unlimited became concerned with the river's condition up the canyon. We joined forces and asked the Game and Fish Department if they would designate one section of the river a fly-fishing-only area. They did, a mile, because fly fishermen don't leave as many beer cans.

A. Forsyth: The Sierra Club was active in that too--Phil Nelson. It was proposed by three organizations, Trout Unlimited, UPA [Upper Pecos Association] as the leader, and the Sierra Club.

Ingram: Do you have a rough idea how many people were involved actively in the organization when the issue was most--

M. Forsyth: Over a hundred, which is pretty good for a small area.

Ingram: When Governor Apodaca put a stop to it, had it become a campaign issue, was it an issue in the campaign?

M. Forsyth: I don't recall him actually saying very much about it. There was a lot of paper work, newspaper publicity [against the road proposal], mostly through the ski people up in Taos interestingly enough. Also, [there was opposition because of] the fact that that road would go within seven-tenths of a mile of the wilderness, which was deemed much too close--

A. Forsyth: --down-hill drainage--

M. Forsyth: ORVs could rush in and rush out and nobody would ever know till too late. So all of the wilderness people, Sierra Club, and outdoor groups like the ski people, were very concerned.

The Sierra Club New York Office and Publications Program

Ingram: I want to go back to New York again. I guess you'd say the reason, that Dave Brower came to New York was the publication program, and the books that were printed there.

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Did either of you have any connection with that end of the Sierra Club activities? Know any people that were involved?

A. Forsyth: In founding the New York office?

Ingram: Well, that's a good point, we should ask about that too, but I was thinking just about the publication of the books.

A. Forsyth: No.

Ingram: What about the founding of the New York office? I was going to ask about this, Mary, when you were talking about being head of the group. Where did the New York office come from, and what sort of an operation was it?

M. Forsyth: That was before my time.

A. Forsyth: It was mostly Dave Brower's idea, wasn't it?

M. Forsyth: Yes it was, yes it was. But it was operating before I came in; it was operating during Dave Sive's tenure.

Ingram: I see.

A. Forsyth: My first meeting with Dave Brower was when he came to open the office, a little dedication ceremony there, tea or something.

Ingram: Where was it?

A. Forsyth: It [the office] was in the Biltmore Hotel; [the club] had a room or two rented there, stayed for about three or four years, before it moved out of there to larger quarters.

Ingram: Was it of any use, any help, to the chapter in New York?

A. Forsyth: Yes, we often held our executive committee meetings there. It was very small quarters, it wasn't very accommodating to group activities, but we did hold our meetings there for some time. Executive committee meetings at that time were always preceded by dinner at Schrafft's for a number of years, and then when we moved the office uptown, we held it at a little Irish restaurant on 55th Street, 53rd or 55th, I've forgotten. And that custom continued until one evening--well, everyone was supposed to put on the table their three dollars or whatever the meal cost, and the waiter would collect it and then we'd all march out and hold our meetings at the Sierra Club office. There was one night when about two-thirds of the dinner participants forgot to put down their money, and Will Squire and I had to pick up the balance. And I think it cost me something like thirty-six dollars. Will Squire couldn't afford it either; it cost him a lot. So we decided that henceforth our meetings were going to be business meetings.

Ingram: What other functions did the New York office serve? Was it able to attract membership?

A. Forsyth: Yes, but I don't know that it <u>did</u> very much. A lot of the membership in the New York area came right out of those Exhibit Format books, people who were impressed by the class of the effort they [would] find, people who were writing in with pictures and issues. It was the inspiration of Dave Brower, in my mind. As Mary pointed out earlier, the membership of the New York group jumped about a thousand at the time of the Brower-Sierra Club confrontation. Our sympathies there were wholly Brower.

Ingram: Since it's come up two or three times, I think we ought to talk about it. I must admit, as I reviewed this, driving over here, as always I end up with mixed feelings one way or the other, which is not here nor there, because this is your discussion and not mine, but we are talking about something which predated

Ingram: all of us. It went back to the time, I think, probably [when] Dave was first executive director. Certainly when I started to work for the club in 1966 there were probably things hanging over from the past, and I know that in that year things started --which continued, the Diablo Canyon case as well as the financial questions that were raised. It continued up until the time I left, which was '69.

So we're talking about a fairly long period of time, and I'm not quite sure how to organize it. I think maybe if you would just sort of start out with some general impressions about how you, as non-Californians, saw a fight which was bitterly contested by people primarily in California, how you saw it and the effect on you, your impressions.

The Sierra Club: California or National/International Organization?

A. Forsyth: I wish my memory were clearer on this, but there's been a feeling, not often expressed, but certainly it was there at the time, that California felt that they owned the Sierra Club. We felt that we were a legitimate part of a national organization, an organization for the preservation of natural beauty and harmony all over the country if not the world, that this was not simply a California issue.

I'm not imagining the jealousy between Californians and New Yorkers in the Sierra Club. About 1970 or '71, I've forgotten the date, I was elected as fifth member of the Sierra Club Council. There was another man from Wisconsin, I can't remember his name at the moment, who was elected at the same time. The two of us represented the first time that anyone from outside California was ever a member of the officials of the council. And the following year, when new elections were to take place, the evening before it, there was a meeting in the hotel in San Francisco and a very gracious elderly gray-haired lady got up and made a nice little speech about the council and concluded by saying, "I hope that as long as I live there will never again be a council officer from outside the state of California."

This happened, and she was looking right at me, but I couldn't take exception to that. The Sierra Club was a California organization; it was born and raised there; and it was formulated there. We wouldn't have a Sierra Club if it hadn't been for the Californians. And I've always felt that they do have the right to dominate policy of the club.

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A. Forsyth: But at the same time, in New York, there was the desire to form an active organization, an effective conservation organization particularly, and our sympathies were with the aggressiveness of the Sierra Club. We were not concerned with the preservation of the Colby Library. Very few people had ever seen it or had any use of it. And to put money into that when we were crying for money for the Grand Canyon or for some Alaskan issue or something--we felt that California was holding us back. I think this feeling was shared by most of our active members there, and we worked to establish an active and effective Sierra Club organization in New York.

Ingram: One that would be part of a national organization.

A. Forsyth: Yes. We saw the Sierra Club as a national asset rather than a California group. And many of the local California issues that got funding--we felt, "Why can't we have some of that help?" Dave Brower and Mike McCloskey were particularly helpful in fostering the interest in New York. I think Dave, particularly, felt that New York is the center of the publishing business in this country, that New York was an important part of the Sierra Club work.

Ingram: He certainly was the primary spokesman (of course, because of his position, but certainly because of his convictions) for the Sierra Club as a national group.

A. Forsyth: Dave Brower had a very strong appeal to young people. I guess he still does. Many of our members then, the active ones, were mostly young people. When I first came into it, as I said, it was largely a social organization devoted to hiking and exploring and so forth. But not long after that the conservation issues became more attractive and consuming and attracted more of the younger people. Nancy Matthews particularly was helpful in stimulating that among her younger friends. I recall that Bob Waldrop was one of the visitors that had a lot to do with local things for a year or two there.

Ingram: He worked in the Washington office.

Forsyth: Yes. He's in Alaska now, I understand.

Ingram: So I understand, yes.

Forsyth: He was here once in a while. But to these younger people, Brower was an inspirational leader. He was campaigning for Sierra Club money to put into <u>New York Times</u> ads, even if they killed our tax benefits. He was right, he was to be supported.

The Brower Controversy

A. Forsyth: I do recall that at the time the Brower controversy arose back there and was getting hot, just before the meeting at which he resigned as executive director, there were two or three older Sierra Club people that I had to contact to see how they stood, and I found them just as vociferous against Brower as the younger people were vociferous in his favor. I can't remember the name of the man that I spoke to on the phone, but he gave me a chewing out that I'll never forget, that here was a man, Brower, who was going to wreck the Sierra Club with his reckless fiscal policies and so forth.

That didn't impress us very much in New York. We felt that if there was a job to be done, it had to be done whether it cost more than we could afford or not. If we did the job, we'd get the support; this was the general attitude of our people, not that we espoused fiscal irresponsibility, as the older anti-Brower group kept harping, but that the issues that Brower was espousing and leading the fight on were important things. They were more important than dollars. We didn't think of it, really, as wrecking the Sierra Club. We thought of it as founding an expansion of the Sierra Club. And every time Brower sounded off publicly at our membership role, people were attracted to this kind of aggressive leather-lunged hollering.

Ingram: What about your personal relations with Dave; that is, in the sense of watching him at work, the way he would deal with you as a person, or people you knew? What sort of a person do you view him as?

Forsyth: I simply admired him. I think he's a splendid person. When he split off from the Sierra Club, he founded Friends of the Earth [FOE], and I was one of the first members of the board there at Dave's side when they incorporated. I was working very closely with Dave at the time. I became treasurer of the organization at its first meeting, and shortly after that memberships began coming in, and there were coming in three and four hundred checks a day, and I didn't have any time in my law office to keep track of the deposits. I had to get my secretary to list the checks and write down the names [chuckles], and that was the first membership list. It soon became too much, and I traded jobs with another fellow, and be became treasurer, and I became secretary of FOE.

But we worked monthly meetings with Dave--he'd come east for those--and I got to know him quite well through that. A number of our board of directors of FOE were fiscally responsible

A. Forsyth: citizens who opposed Dave and tried to control him and tried to institute resolutions that so many signatures had to be on a check, or a committee had to approve the expenditures of the funds. I took the other position, that Dave had founded this organization, it was his baby, and if he wanted it to go bankrupt it was his business not mine. And I never felt that spending money on things that Dave was concerned about was an unwise expenditure.

We did run, oh, $400,000 in the red. We had creditors who could have turned us into bankruptcy at any moment, but they didn't; they had faith in Dave Brower. And even in the shocking financial condition, he was able to negotiate bank loans at favorable rates of interest or no interest at all. He was a man with an idea and a spirit that carried other people along with him. He certainly did me.

M. Forsyth: He was a real visionary and people appreciated that, and at the same time [he] was modest, was a man you could talk to very easily, and was very genuine. He just drew people.

Ingram: You've maintained, obviously, not just membership but <u>active</u> participation in both organizations, both the Sierra Club and the Friends of the Earth.

A. Forsyth: I did until I retired here. I retired from the board when I left New York. I'm now just a member of that amorphous group called an advisory committee or council.

Ingram: Do a little evaluation, if you will, as to the effects of the Brower resignation from the Sierra Club and his founding of another organization, as good, bad--what happened? How do you feel about it?

A. Forsyth: Well, I think, on balance, it's been very good. Certainly, FOE has been a stimulating influence in the environmental picture that wouldn't have been there if it hadn't been for that bust-up. The Sierra Club has changed mightily since Brower left.

Environmental Hazards of Nuclear Generation

A. Forsyth: One of the early issues that I tried to get before the Sierra Club board was the environmental hazards of the nuclear age, the nuclear generation of electricity. One of our leading lawyers back in New York had to challenge the building of a nuclear power plant at Shoreham, Long Island. What was his name? [pauses to think] I wish I could remember names.

Ingram: That's the one that the Environmental Defense Fund did legal work on?

A. Forsyth: They did later. But at the beginning it was a lady and her husband who devoted most of their livelihood to fighting this Shoreham plant. Again, I can't remember a name. The lawyer devoted full time to it for over a year at the cost of his own practice. He prepared a volume of requests for findings of fact at the end of the AEC committee hearing, and he wanted to raise a little money through the Sierra Club for publication of a number of copies of this requests for findings of fact. It came out in an offset printing volume about the size of the New York telephone directory, of some 400 pages of these things, and it was an eye-opener on the safety issues of nuclear energy. Up to that point, the AEC had been keeping all the unfavorable material in tight files. He opened up a lot of that and displayed information that the public needed.

As chapter chairman, I undertook to devote $450 of our money. We had it in the bank, but I didn't ask our executive committee for approval of it. I simply said, "Go ahead. I'll see that you get paid for it," and we did. The ex com, when they saw the volume and a couple of them began reading it, became enthusiastic that we should certainly join this fight.

I got copies of that for the board of directors meeting that was held in Washington, D.C., around 1973, I guess--'72 or '73. I put one volume on each director's desk. Over a year later, in California, somebody mentioned this to me, that he had just read it over a year later, and that this was all news to him. He didn't realize that there were these safety questions or these hazards to the environment. Dick [Richard M.] Leonard was one who said he was mightily impressed with this thing.

Up to that point, the board of directors of the Sierra Club had treated nuclear as something entirely foreign to the environmental interests of the club; it had nothing to do with green trees or beautiful waters or anything. And they had one or two directors there who had an outside professional interest in the nuclear age. Dick Leonard was one. I can't think of the others.

But, I think, partly as a result of that, there was a change in the attitude of the board, and it's now quite concerned about nuclear power and has a nuclear subcommittee of the energy committee, under Marvin Resnikov in Buffalo, really throwing its weight around. Brower was similarly impressed. He had a copy of this report. I think that must have had some

A. Forsyth: effect; I don't know how much. But anybody who read that would have been shocked. I know I was. When I saw it, I said, "I'll put my own $450 up for this if necessary." And that, I think, was partly a turning point in the attitude of the club toward nuclear energy. All I did was to send it along to other people.

Ingram: Yes. That's often a key thing, just to alert somebody to something they didn't know existed.

You mentioned changes in the Sierra Club after Brower had left. I know you were regional vice president for a while, which was one of the innovations. Can you talk a little bit more about some of the other things that may have made it a more effective organization?

A. Forsyth: Well, I don't know. There were some very effective people working on environmental things, particularly Dave Sive, and Nancy Matthews was a sparkplug. Stewart Ogilvy largely bowed out of the Sierra Club after the Brower thing and devoted his energies to FOE. Brower was a god, and although Stewart has from time to time been critical of Brower and had his differences with him, he still idolizes the man, I'm sure.

There were a number of other issues that expanded out of the New York City area. There was dumping in Long Island Sound that interested the people up in Connecticut (Stamford), and we brought the case of Sierra Club against Mason up there. There had been twenty or thirty environmental organizations all around the borders of the Sound, but they didn't speak to each other, and the Sierra Club had a group on Long Island that from time to time was active and from time to time was dormant. We couldn't get very much help from them to pull together some of the organization, the work that was needed to preserve Long Island Sound.

We were mostly impressed with what had happened with San Francisco Bay, with the Sierra Club offices in Mills Tower right next to San Francisco Bay and the whole thing going down the drain without anything being done about it for many years. When finally things were done about it, we conceived the idea that the Sierra Club might have a function in saving Long Island Sound too.

Long Island Sound Task Force

A. Forsyth: So, we tried to get groups together to common meetings and try to form a coalition of groups, or a federation of groups. It didn't work. Our first executive director of what was called the

A. Forsyth: Long Island Sound Task Force was also the executive director of one of these other groups, and she practically put it in her pocket, devoted her own group's efforts to it but paid no attention. It took about a year to catch on to what was happening. [chuckles] We finally reorganized and incorporated the Long Island Sound Task Force, and it's still going on.

M. Forsyth: Was that group this one in Patchogue?

A. Forsyth: No, no. It was Long Island City, I think. Anyway, the Long Island Sound Task Force was created by the Sierra Club, but as a separate organization. We had, at the beginning, a majority of the members of the board of it from the Sierra Club and provisions for carrying that through for several years until it got going. I don't know what happened after I left New York. Ann Howe was its executive director, and she was on the chapter board.

It was finally hooked up with the Oceanic Society and, I think, got kind of swallowed up by that. But it's still operating there, and it's still serving as a central intelligence agency for the many groups around the Sound. We had some fine people working on that for a couple of years, but never enough financial help to organize it as it should have been.

Ingram: How about on the national level--as far as changes in the Sierra Club orientation, how it operates--after Brown left?

A. Forsyth: I don't know that I understand your question.

Ingram: Brower was executive director for fourteen or fifteen years. I'm just wondering whether or not there were changes that you saw in the organization and changes in the way it was run that had any effect on you. You were a regional vice-president for a while. Was that a real change, or was that window-dressing?

Regional Vice-President

A. Forsyth: [chuckles] That was a kind of a window-dressing job, I guess. As I recall, the only thing I ever did as regional vice-president was substitute for Ray Sherwin at the Republican governors' convention in Indiana, and I had to serve on a panel of land-use planners there. That had an interesting effect too. I was representing the environmental point of view in land-use planning, and there were some other representatives, one from California on community-development building, and one from New York. I

A. Forsyth: can't remember the name of the organization, but it was a state organization to develop cooperative apartments and that sort of thing. The other two members of the panel were pro-development and anti-conservation, really.

At the conclusion of the panel's discussion, Governor Reagan said, "I'd like to ask a question of Mr. Forsyth of the Sierra Club." And he said, "Before I ask the question, I'm going to state the problem." And I thought, "This is the first man I've ever had to answer on a panel program that gave me a chance to answer something." Usually they make a ten-minute statement and then ask you, "How about that?" and you wonder what the devil the question was.

But Reagan said, "I'm the governor of a state, and I have to decide whether a refinery can go here or there, or how a port shall be handled, and so forth. And all the Sierra Club does is tell me what I can't do. Why is that?" He said, "That's my question."

So, I tried to answer that rationally. I said, "We are not in the position of decision-makers. We are advocates for a point of view. We realize that the opposite point of view is well represented by able advocates, and it's a two-sided thing. We present our side, and let them present their side, and you make the decision."

He thanked me for it, and then later I heard that Ray Sherwin was invited to lunch with the governor about a week after that, and they had a very pleasant meeting. So, I don't know that I advanced the Sierra Club at all by that [chuckles], but at least I didn't kill it.

Ingram: Well, of course, that is a position which is often misunderstood, that because you stand out stating a position which turns out to be against what somebody wants to do, you must be the person who is against it and is stopping it. But, in fact, when a person (like Reagan) asks a question like that, what he is really saying is, "Why do you make it difficult for me to do my job, which is make the decision?" It is much easier if there's only one side; then there's no choice.

A. Forsyth: [laughter] Well, your question about the changes in the Sierra Club after the Brower thing--up to about the point of time that I'm talking about of the question of Governor Reagan, the Sierra Club's interest in, oh, things like Diablo Canyon was all one-sided. There has been a change that I've noticed of trying to present alternatives and not simply be against something but trying to formulate public opinion in favor of

A. Forsyth: an alternative. There's been more emphasis on that, more emphasis on thoroughly researching both sides of the question and seeing what trade-offs were possible.

The word "trade-off," about the time of the Brower thing, was a dirty word; this was yielding to the enemy. Today, a trade-off is regarded frequently as a way to accomplish an objective, to make some progress--maybe not all we wanted, but better than we had. And there has been that change in both the board of directors' policy discussions and also the policy of the club staff.

Ingram: During this 1966 to '69 period, the debate about whether the Sierra Club is a national organization went into the question of whether the Sierra Club should be an international organization as well. Again, since Brower, how has the Sierra Club developed?

International Activities in Conservation

Forsyth: I was given a hand in that. I don't recall dates. But the Pacific Northwest Chapter in Oregon and Washington had a number of Canadians from British Columbia, and they wanted to separately organize. The idea that we assumed was that they could become a British Columbia group of that chapter. They found that in order to participate in public hearings and public debates up there, they had to be incorporated in Canada. So, they went ahead without asking any approval of the national Sierra Club and incorporated the Sierra Club of British Columbia.

This immediately raised eyebrows and blood pressures that the Sierra Club's fine name might be taken by unfriendly groups anywhere in the world, and what could we do about it? Phil Berry was particularly concerned about this as a legal possibility.

Ingram: Was he president at that time? Do you know?

A. Forsyth: I think he was. But he asked me, as a member of the legal committee, to form a committee to study this question: what risks we actually ran and what we could do about it if it happened. Terry Simmons from the British Columbia chapter worked on this with me and a fellow from Hawaii and one or two others. Gene Coan, I remember, sat in on many or several of our discussions. We had about three or four meetings on it, and the group asked me to write the report, which I did, and submitted it.

A. Forsyth: My conclusion was, after all the study of it, that we really had very little to fear from an opponent organization assuming our name; that if the British Columbia group differed with the American group on their own interests and it became a confrontation between Canadian and American Sierra Club interests, the natural thing for them to do was to drop the Sierra Club name because it would be a liability to them rather than an asset.

It was about the same time that a group wanted to form a Sierra Club in Ontario. I was in favor of international expansion, particularly on this continent, and after visiting Toronto over a weekend and meeting their leaders on a hike and dinner afterwards, I was very much impressed with the high caliber of the people up there. They were mostly University of Toronto faculty. They were educated and able people, and they had a very fine degree of concern about what was happening in Canada, particularly what American was causing to happen in Canada. I favored their formation and helped them to organize.

When I submitted this report, the general conclusion of it was that we should welcome and encourage the expansion of the Sierra Club overseas or elsewhere on the continent and not worry too much about our fine name being misappropriated. I think the report was generally accepted. I never heard much about it after that, but the international office of the Sierra Club was formed at about that time. And although it raised its own money at the beginning without much help from the club, it has become a very active arm of the club. Patricia Rambach--that was her name at the time; she has since assumed another name [Scharlin]--has done very fine work in organizing international (particularly United Nations) organizational efforts in international conservation. And the Sierra Club's name has certainly been outstanding in the international scene since then. I've felt that the conservation of natural resources is a world problem, and you can't have one country polluting the ocean without the other one feeling it.

Ingram: Particularly for a country like the United States whose use of resources is world wide.

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: For us, perhaps, the responsibility is even larger than for a smaller country.

A. Forsyth: I've had very, very little to do with that. I did serve on the International Conservation Committee under Nicholas Robinson. He's done a tremendous job of organizing that committee. Ray Sherwin has served on it, and Mrs. Sherwin was secretary of it for quite a while, and they held some two-day meetings in New

A. Forsyth: York with a very full agenda, and then, of course, [they] sponsored the International Wilderness meeting [Earthcare: Global Protection of National Areas, 1975] two years ago.

[I was asked to testify for the club at] public hearings. Oh, it might be a highway project or it might be a power plant siting project or whatever. Every time that my turn to speak came, I'd be in the audience and have to come down to the front of the hall to the microphone. Every time I was announced--"Mr. Forsyth will speak for the Sierra Club"--there was applause, and it was the only organization that got that, and it really impressed me, the public feeling for the Sierra Club--the aggresor, the aggressive organization that wanted to do something, not just talk. This certainly stimulated me to work for the Sierra Club. I don't know that I can describe the thrill of that.

Ingram: That raises an interesting point, because one of the charges during the Brower controversy was, "If Brower doesn't get charge of the organization, then the Sierra Club will become passive." It seems to me what you're saying is that the result of that has been the creation of two aggressive organizations.

A. Forsyth: Yes, yes. I think it did help.

Ingram: The Sierra Club did not lose the aggressiveness.

A. Forsyth: Right.

Ingram: You were talking about the international aspects, and I wanted to ask you to talk a little bit about Friends of the Earth as an international organization, when you were on the board and so on.

A. Forsyth: The Sierra Club at the time was concerned about, as I said, hostile organizations usurping our name or working against our objectives in our name. Friends of the Earth never had that fear. Brower had the attitude that conservation was an international concern, and the more who joined it, as long as we're all running on the same tracks, the more the merrier. Organizations sprang up, in Great Britain first. [Amory] Lovins and [Walter] Patterson and a few others organized that and worked hard on it. Then Les Amis de la Terre in France, with our Director [Edwin] Matthews at the head of that. He was an American banker in Paris. And the Freunde der Erde in Germany. And it spread to Australia, and there are a number of others. I think there are something like nine foreign organizations using the Friends of the Earth name. They have no legal connection at all with Friends of the Earth in the United States.

Ingram: Oh, they don't?

A. Forsyth: No, there is no control. We don't try to dictate their policies. Brower's attitude is, "We're all working with a common cause, and the more the merrier." They've been, I think, pretty influential in their countries, and the Friends of the Earth name has helped them. We've never tried to control those organizations or dictate their polices or limit their membership qualifications or anything like that. They have a very loose organization.

Ingram: Has Friends of the Earth itself (and you were a board member)--has it cooperated with these organizations?

A. Forsyth: Oh, yes.

Ingram: I mean, formed alliances or something like that on issues which crossed boundaries?

A. Forsyth: Yes, yes. Supplying expertise and information, mostly, but encouraging--they held a number of foreign meetings attended by five or six of these organizations. It was sort of an international congress. Brower has always been very anxious to further that. They held two or three very good meetings.

Ingram: Topical meetings, or just--?

A. Forsyth: Yes, topical meetings. Amory Lovins has, as you know, been very active in this country in the nuclear field and has done some very good writing. One of the best books, I think, on the whole energy situation is his Soft Energy Paths. I've been trying to get Brower and Amory Lovins to come to Santa Fe to debate anyone that the pro-nuclear forces of Los Alamos or Sandia want to put up against him. When I mentioned this on the phone not long ago to Brower, I said, "I've met Lovins several times at your meetings in New York, and he's a very low-keyed, very quiet sort of person, one who inspires you with his great knowledge of the thing. He's a brilliant man. But would he make a good debater?" I didn't know that he had debated people like Hans Bethe and others in public. And Brower just laughed. [chuckles] He said, "He'd blow them out of the water."

So, I'm still looking forward to that, and recently Sally Rodgers, who is the executive director of a clearinghouse here, Harvey Mudd's baby--she's become the Friends of the Earth representative for the Southwest. We have a little office in Santa Fe now.

Ingram: Of course, Brant Calkin is the Southwest representative of the Sierra Club there.

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Santa Fe is concentrating--

A. Forsyth: Everything except money.

Ingram: Have you been active in that local effort over the years when there was cooperative activity? I suppose there still is, and the clearinghouse people are still active.

Forsyth: No, I haven't. I've tried to keep outside of it, just keep in touch with it, but not take an active part in it. I'm retired and there's enough else to do here, and Mary doesn't like to see me getting dragged into all these organizations.

M. Forsyth: Well, we're both retired. I just like to see you now and then. [laughter]

Ingram: I think that's important. The whole point about being retired seems to be to do things you want to do and not that people pressure you into doing just because you've been used to doing them.

A. Forsyth: I've attended a lot of the executive committee meetings of the Rio Grande Chapter. They asked me if I'd run for office then, and I said no. I thought the younger people here ought to have the positions. But I'm still called legal counsel to the group. I don't know what I'm supposed to do with that, but, yes, I keep in touch with them. I'm serving at the moment as local New Mexico counsel to NRDC [National Resources Defense Council] in that uranium law case that's still pending; all I did with that was sign the complaint because the court rule required that a local member of the bar sign a complaint, but all the work has been done by others.

Ingram: In Los Angeles. One question occurs to me about the international question: Do you see, then, a difference in style and/or effectiveness between Friends of the Earth and the Sierra Club, now gone international?

A. Forsyth: They do operate considerably differently. The Sierra Club's effort is more highly organized with the United Nations bodies, and Friends of the Earth is more diverse with its local sister organizations as they call them--I know that Brower has been quite active over the years in the United Nations Environmental Office. He's been in close touch with them. I don't think the Sierra Club or Friends of the Earth, otherwise than Brower's personal contact, have been very active.

Delegate to the Sierra Club Council

Ingram: I want to go back again to the Sierra Club a little earlier--and to organizational matters again, because you were a delegate to the council--

A. Forsyth: For a few years.

Ingram: --and of course were a delegate--I forget exactly what the term was--but you used to come to the [board of directors'] meetings.

A. Forsyth: Yes, I was the chapter delegate for a couple of years.

Ingram: What I'd like you to do is talk a little bit about your views of the Sierra Club Council as an organization. At that time, of course, it was attempting to be quite an important force.

A. Forsyth: When I first attended council meetings, I was unfavorably impressed with it as a club executor or part of its organization. It always seemed to me in those early meetings that the council--the way I used to describe it was the council were the board of directors junior grade. They were critical of the board; they tried to take the place of the board; it seemed to me that they really didn't serve a function that the board wasn't serving; they weren't helping the board very much.

But the more I saw of the council work, the more I realized that the council was the connection between national Sierra Club direction and local chapter or group activities. Just to get together in interminable yakking served a purpose. Bob Irwin of the Great Lakes region was a very steadying influence on the chapter delegates. Frequently you'd have a council meeting where some local person would get up and shout that the Sierra Club was shortchanging his group, and it ought to be done this way and it ought to be done that way. Nothing ever seemed to come of it.

I felt many times that the money spent on council meetings could be better spent on expanding the staff of the Sierra Club, and paying staff members a little better. I tried many times to find out what a council meeting cost the Sierra Club; I never did get closer than about ten thousand dollars per meeting at one point. That seemed to me shocking, that that much money was devoted to allowing people to just sound off to very little purpose.

But the personnel of the council changes. I attended council meetings that were practically anti-board of directors. Other ones with a different cast of characters were trying hard to help the Sierra Club; the internal organization committee did a lot of good work. It wasn't always the same.

Ingram: As fifth member, you were on the executive committee of the council for one year?

A. Forsyth: One year, yes.

Ingram: What did you do? What was the purpose of the executive committee?

A. Forsyth: [laughs] I made fun of the other four, I think. Well, I don't recall quite what the issue was, but I remember that I was a minority of one in the council executive committee, and I got up and said, "This whole damn thing is a tempest in a teapot!" and the meeting broke up at that point. And that's what it turned out to be. The executive committee members later came around to decide that there really wasn't much of a problem. No, I was distinctly in a minority in that.

Ingram: Do you think, in part, just because of your views, or also because of the fact that you were not from California?

A. Forsyth: I don't know. I'm hard put to say what the attitude was. I can't think who all the other members of it were. Sandy [Tepfer] --there goes my memory for names again--he was from Oregon; there were a couple from California. Their concern was to my mind misdirected. They were second-guessing the board of directors so much of the time rather than paying attention to council organization and liaison between chapters and headquarters.

Ingram: Do you feel, as far as the Atlantic Chapter was concerned, there was any benefit or disadvantage from the existence of the council?

A. Forsyth: It was one of the organs through which we could be heard.

Ingram: Did you ever use it?

A. Forsyth: Yes. Nancy Matthews was a delegate to several of those; and Nancy is not a person to softpeddle her views. She speaks right out. I think she made the council feel that there is an organization back in New York that has to be listened to once in a while. It was through some political tactical maneuvers that she got me elected to the council board. I wasn't at that meeting, but it went on to about two or three in the morning.

Ingram: But I don't get the sense that, for you, the Sierra Club Council was a place where you felt your contribution was going to be made.

A. Forsyth: I had my difficulties with the council. When I was bringing to San Francisco, to one of their meetings, some issue about New York's interest, they were three hours later than New York, and

A. Forsyth: by the time I arrived there at the meeting at eight o'clock, it was eleven o'clock, and that was damn near bedtime for me. And they would debate for three or four hours, adjourning at twelve or one o'clock San Francisco time; it was three or four o'clock in the morning for me before my issue was reached. By that time, I was so completely fagged that I didn't feel I could give it very much energy--

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A. Forsyth: And this happened so frequently that I began to resent it. I tried to get New York issues for the council on earlier in the evening. The council chairman was very considerate, very sympathetic to this problem, but there were other council members who were not. I can't get over the feeling that they did it purposely. It used to cause a great deal of resentment.

Ingram: You're not alone in feeling that some of those things were done purposely. Whether they were or not, the results seemed to be the same. After you finished that one year on the executive committee, did you have any involvement with the council?

A. Forsyth: I went to some of their meetings as the Atlantic Chapter delegate. I continued for about two years after that.

Ingram: Did you serve on any of the committees that did special studies or anything like that for the council?

A. Forsyth: No, not that I recall.

Ingram: [getting list of names] Let me pull these out; these are names--some of which I don't know--but which are names of those who were active in the New York group. I think we ought to put them on the tape, and if either one of you has any comments-- We've talked about Stew Ogilvy quite a bit. I'd like to save David Sive for a little bit, because I want to talk about Storm King, and I think that's a natural place to talk about Dave. But any of the other people that you think we ought to put on tape, and any comments about what their roles were.

Atlantic Chapter Leadership and Organization

A. Forsyth: These were early leaders of the Atlantic chapter, really serving before its expansion after the Brower crisis. Harry Neece had been chairman of the chapter for some time.

Ingram: He'd been chairman. What happened to him? Did he retire, or did he get elbowed aside, or--?

A. Forsyth: He was retired. He was not a youngster; I think he retired at about age seventy, and continued his activities in hiking, but wanted to turn over the duties of Sierra Club work to younger people.

M. Forsyth: He had a beautiful home in the country, and he stayed there.

A. Forsyth: He just sort of disappeared. Murray Chisholm and Ed Little had been active. I know that Ed Little was a delegate to the council for a number of times, and the two of them were ardent hikers. They used to come out here to the Gila Wilderness and climb. Bill Delmhorst--I don't know what his position was, but he was diligent in attending all meetings and did a lot of writing of letters to the New York Times and things like that, stimulated a good deal of Sierra Club interest over in New Jersey where he lived. I don't know that he had any connection with the national organization; he may have, but I wouldn't know about it.

Ingram: We've talked a lot about Stew Ogilvy as being very important in keeping the chapter going--

A. Forsyth: He certainly was.

Ingram: --more in the early years, and of course as editor of the Argonaut.

A. Forsyth: Both he and his wife, Avis. Avis continued with the activities of the Atlantic chapter some years after Stewart dropped interest and went over to FOE. Avis is now very active in FOE, and as far as I know, has no further activity with the Sierra Club.

Ingram: Was there anybody else like Stew in the chapter after that, anybody who so permeated the whole organization that everybody referred everything to him?

A. Forsyth: Mostly Dave Sive.

M. Fosyth: Yes.

A. Forsyth: Dave was the Sierra Club in the East for a lot of the time.

M. Forsyth: Stewart was in a marvelous position to be a host to anything that happened in New York because of the Time-Life affiliation and the Time-Life Building quarters that could be used for receptions or getting together with people who were visiting.

Ingram: You mentioned a reception. Did he organize one for Dave Brower? Do you recall any more about that, or any other activities like it?

A. Forsyth: Was this the opening of the office that you were talking about?

M. Forsyth: Yes.

A. Forsyth: I didn't know he organized that.

M. Forsyth: It was tremendously well attended.

Ingram: I remember a--it was a reception, I'm sure--I think it must have been the Grand Canyon photographs. I don't recall if he organized it or not. It was in New York some time around '66 or '67.

M. Forsyth: It was around that time. Every meeting there were pictures all over, beautiful ones.

Ingram: The Atlantic Chapter, when you came into it, covered the whole seaboard. Today--I don't know--is there an Atlantic Chapter today?

A. Forsyth: Yes. I guess I presided over the disruption and division of the Atlantic Chapter. It just happened to occur at that time. I was either chairman or vice chairman of the chapter. We had had quite a little interest in the Atlantic Chapter from a fellow named Bake, Bill Bake, in Georgia, and someone in Florida, and some one or other around the Carolinas; there was an active interest in the New England area. It occurred at the time that these organizations, groups, of the Atlantic Chapter, if they had been, wanted to become active chapters. Eastern Pennsylvania split off first; then the New Jersey Chapter; ultimately, by the time I was out of the office, the Atlantic Chapter was reduced to the state of New York only.

Ingram: Was it still called the Atlantic Chapter?

A. Forsyth: Yes, it was still called the Atlantic Chapter. But the New England Chapter took off Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut--six states there. Pennsylvania has either one or two chapters now; I think it's only one, but it started out of eastern Pennsylvania--just up through Harrisburg. North and South Carolina both--I don't know about Virginia, but in the District of Columbia area, they have a chapter; and Florida has a chapter; Georgia--they all split off during the time I was there.

Ingram: This was something you encouraged, or your role was passive?

A. Forsyth: Oh, no, we encouraged it. As a matter of fact, I had an ex-Navy man--I think he was an admiral (I can't remember his name either) --I simply told him to take over splitting off and organizing

A. Forsyth: chapters, and he did a whale of a job at it. I don't know how he operated, but hardly a month passed by before we had another chapter forming. He did a great job.

Ingram: Had there been groups organized before the chapters grew up, or were--

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: So it was already an organization.

A. Forsyth: But they felt so far away from it, because the chapter was in New York. We did have on the executive committee a very regular attendance from Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, a fine gentleman. And Roger Marshall from the Boston area. We had pretty good attendance from the outlying sections, but places like Florida and North Carolina just felt they were in a different country than New York, and they didn't either contribute much to it or present much of a problem.

As conservation chairman, which was my first job that I took over without any committees, as I told you before, I did have correspondence with a number of people down there, and kept in touch with them and kept their problems before the chapter board. But they were few, and we felt that if they became their own chapters they'd have a much greater impact on conservation work along the coast than if they were just outlying subsidiaries of the New York group.

[to Mrs. Forsyth] Mary, you did a lot of work during your time as New York group chairman in setting up the subgroups that are now groups of the Atlantic Chapter--Syracuse, they have a pretty active group there, Albany.

Ingram: Did you find it was difficult in getting people?

M. Forsyth: No, they welcomed it, because it was impossible for all these people to come to any meetings in Manhattan. There was usually a little core of active people who were willing to organize and get members in their area. I wish I'd been with it longer. There was enthusiasm, particularly in Poughkeepsie.

Ingram: Do you suppose that was because of Vassar or what?

M. Forsyth: There just happened to be some people who were up there, but who had been in New York, in the Manhattan area.

A. Forsyth: A lot of the outings in that area were in the Catskills. There was mountain climbing and hiking and so forth and it was a good jumping-off place for a lot of them interested in the outdoor activities.

A. Forsyth: When I was in the Sierra Club in New York, it always seemed to me that there are really two Sierra Clubs: one is a bunch of dedicated conservationists and one's a bunch of weekend hikers only. The only liaison that I saw between the two groups was what Stewart Ogilvy used to do on his weekend outings. At the luncheon break he'd give a ten- or fifteen-minute, maybe a half-hour, spiel about some [problem]. He'd organize a hike up around Storm King, and he'd tell the hikers about the Storm King fight. By the time they'd finished their sandwiches and beer, or whatever they were having, and listened to Stewart for a little while, they were all asleep. [laughter]

I'm exaggerating, of course. But there were two different Sierra Clubs there: the hikers and the conservationists.

M. Forsyth: Stewart was very astute in seeing that it was necessary for liaison--this kind of rapport.

Ingram: You were chairman for one year? Two years?

A. Forsyth: I think two. Might have been three. It seems like three. [laughs]

Ingram: This was an annual election?

Forsyth: No.

Ingram: You talked about the break-up of a chapter. What else was important for a chapter chairman?

A. Forsyth: Everything.

Ingram: Who was handling conservation at that time? Were you still trying to do that, combine the jobs?

A. Forsyth: I was for a lot of the time; in the latter part we had a very excellent conservation chairman named Ted Heller. He was from state university in Buffalo, I believe. He's more recently been employed by the state department of environmental conservation. He's a Ph.D., a brilliant man, and has really dedicated himself. An active worker, Ted did great work on that.

But for most of the time, the conservation chairman was the whole committee. If I didn't have a secretary who didn't mind taking all the work, I never would have gotten anywhere with it. It was largely a correspondence course.

Ingram: You were given the Colby Award in 1974?

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Describe a little bit of the basis.

A. Forsyth: I really don't know it, Jeff. What's Robinson's name?

M. Forsyth: Nicholas?

A. Forsyth: Nicholas Robinson. Nick called me one afternoon and said, "Are you coming to the Sierra Club annual dinner?" I said, "I hadn't planned to. It's in California and I'm pretty busy." He said, "I think you ought to. You're going to get the second highest award in the club." So I had to go. That was the first I knew about it.

The citation of the award is for leadership in expanding the Sierra Club in the East and in Canada. And it was that latter part that pleased me so much, because as a result of this study about the use of the Sierra Club's name abroad, the formation of the Ontario Chapter occurred. I don't know that I accomplished anything, but I was certainly for it all the way down the line, and I think that it helped a little bit to have it accepted. They have an Ontario Sierra Club Foundation too, a fund-raising organization.

Ingram: The Colby Award is given for activities within the club--

A. Forsyth: I take it so.

Ingram: Rather than conservation. There's the John Muir Award [for conservation].

A. Forsyth: The John Muir Award went to John Oakes that year. He wasn't there to receive it.

Ingram: That's a whole new question. Here we have the editorial [page] editor of the New York Times, who was, of course, on the board of directors of the Sierra Club at the time, which probably is a conflict of interest, though I'm not really sure. Powerful media position. When you were conservation chairman, your activity generally in the Sierra Club in these seven or eight years that we are talking about--what were your relationships with people who were writing in magazines, newspapers, television media, and that area?

Forsyth: Well, I didn't have much to do with that. I met John Oakes once or twice. He was a very busy man, and he didn't attend the executive committee meetings. We knew of him and heard from him frequently. He suffered food poisoning by eating some contaminated

A. Forsyth: mussels out at Newark Bay. I remember we adopted a resolution wishing him well and a quick recovery. His response I don't recall, but I remember it was very cordial.

Stewart Ogilvy handled most of the contacts with the media. He was in Time-Life for a while, and then he shifted from that to a couple of population organizations; he's working in the population field now.

M. Forsyth: John Oakes must have had a very sharp ear. He picked up an awful lot of things, because constantly his editorials were conservation inspired, or pushing, or something.

Ingram: It's hard to imagine that without that sort of personal interest that that sort of issue would get the kind of attention that it did.

A. Forsyth: Many of the New York Times people--James Reston, and one or two other of the "op ed" editors--are ardent conservationists. Reston has to write mostly on politics, but every once in a while he'll get a dig in there for conservation of this or that. They supported the club's position on the Hudson River Expressway, which was one of the issues we haven't come to. We got very firm support on that from the New York Times. Do you want me to talk a little bit about that?

Ingram: Not the Hudson River just yet, but I'd like to explore a little bit the question about the media. Do you ever feel that the club and any of the media got at cross purposes? That is, do you recall any instances where you felt that the club was being unfairly either reported upon or editorialized upon?

A. Forsyth: Not by the Times.

Ingram: Well, by anybody as far as that area is concerned.

A. Forsyth: Some of the other papers took digs at the Sierra Club, as a do-gooder organization--that sort of comment.

Ingram: But nothing on any particular issue that you recall?

A. Forsyth: Not that I recall, no.

Ingram: That caused you trouble, fear and trembling?

A. Forsyth: No. We had pretty good relations with the broadcast media. I was invited once or twice to appear on interviews, a television interview once and a couple of radio interviews. The club always came off pretty well on those. The club was pretty well received in the media there. It would almost always be described as a California-based organization, I remember that.

Ingram: Was there ever any feeling--I don't mean on your part necessarily --that maybe the thing to do was to form a separate, another, eastern organization? Did the feeling ever get very intense in that way?

A. Forsyth: No. There was a little talk about that, but it never amounted to anything.

Ingram: Like New York City talking about seceding from New York state.

A. Forsyth: Something like that, yes. There were some of our younger, hotheaded members who felt that California wasn't giving us a fair shake in the Sierra Club, and that we ought to form a new Sierra Club or something in New York, but it never amounted to anything.

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Ingram: I suppose the point was that in the East there are a great many organizations anyway. If you want to join another one, there are lots to join.

A. Forsyth: Well, there were none like the Sierra Club.

Ingram: Do you mean that in the sense of being militant?

A. Forsyth: Militant, and with a scope of interests. Nearly all the other organizations were like the ADK that I mentioned; the Adirondack Mountain Club's sole interest at that time was the Adirondack area. And the Appalachian Mountain Club, whose sole interest was the hiking trails and the huts, and so forth, in the northern part of the country. There was an organization of Long Island that was strictly Long Island. The Audubon Society at the time was not into conservation work to any extent. It was the national organization of ornithologists and bird lovers. It became very active during that time. There were some mighty fine people, Charles Callison--

M. Forsyth: Baker was the head, president emeritus while we were there. Elvis Stahr--

Ingram: Now he's retired.

M. Forsyth: Is he?

Ingram: That raises another question. We've talked about the relationship with ADK over the Adirondack issue, which turned out to be very useful. Can you recall any other instances when cooperation with other organizations was an important part of some activity?

A. Forsyth: Yes. We had a committee of the Atlantic Chapter on wildlife. It was headed by a doctor, a medical doctor. He was given to sounding off very vehemently about hunters. He called hunting a macho thing, that killing an animal was a way of proving one's manhood and this sort of thing. He published a newsletter, largely at his own expense, I think--I don't recall the chapter being called upon to pay for it--and he was so vociferous about what rascals these hunters were that I had to call him on it. I opposed his publication of this kind of rabid material. I said, "Tone it down. You can protect wildlife without condemning all individuals who like to hunt." Ray Sherwin was president of the club at the time, and he liked to go duck hunting. When he heard about this, he became much concerned about it. The doctor telephoned Ray and put in his ear that I was trying to stop the wildlife movement and so forth. Ray simply replaced him with a man from Trenton, New Jersey, an Atlantic Chapter member who is still the head of the wildlife committee and a very fine wildlife enthusiast.

But the point was at that time we were trying to organize support for the Adirondack Park Agency and the plan which the temporary study commission had come up with. One of our allies in this, one without which we could have made no progress at all, was the Conservation Council of New York. I think that's the name that was used. They had a membership of about a hundred thousand against our Sierra Club chapter membership of about eight thousand. We had to have their support. But they were all hunters. This was the old field-and-stream type of conservation organization. In order to keep good relations with them, I simply had to stop this kind of publication that the doctor was putting out. And we got their support. Met with their officers a number of times, on the council.

M. Forsyth: It was about that time that the club was interested in listing endangered species. Gary Soucie and his wife were listing these things. This was always brought up at meetings. So I think your doctor--this was an offshoot of that activity somewhat, wasn't it?

A. Forsyth: Yes, it was a continuation of that. He rather took it over and formed his own group. He didn't report to the chapter ex com at all; he was running his own show. He was a great enthusiast, very effective and very articulate. And he was threatening our political support for the Adirondacks. But we did have that support from those other organizations.

Ingram: You were in a special position in the Atlantic Chapter in the sense that you had, in your city, a paid member of the staff. The question of volunteer-staff relations in the sixties--maybe

Ingram: still--was a very vexing one. So maybe you could talk a little bit about your relations with Gary Soucie, who was the eastern representative at that time, how he did his work and how he worked with the chapter and so on?

A. Forsyth: Gary spent about seventeen hours a day working on this; he was a very hard-working guy. Very effective, he was well liked by everybody; I don't know a single enemy that Gary had. He could get along with everybody. He was excellent with press relations and a very effective representative. He split off from the Sierra Club and became the FOE representative in New York. And then later, after another couple of years of seventeen-hour days and no private life, he got out of that and went into free-lance writing. He lives up in Connecticut now. Gary was a tower of strength there. We did have other representatives, but he is the only one that I can remember.

Ingram: The person who followed him--

A. Forsyth: Oh, yes. Peter Borrelli. He was a very effective worker and handled the press very well. But he wasn't the stimulating type: he didn't have the bounce that Gary had. He was a more methodical worker, a very good writer. He left the Sierra Club and went to the Catskill Development Conservation Association that Garrett Chase organized up in the Catskills there. Now I think he's off with the state department of conservation. I believe that's temporary. I think when he left here, he said he'd be back with the Catskill group.

Ingram: When Gary was working those first years as eastern representative, he was essentially developing the office. Did he work through the volunteer organization on conservation matters or did he replace them?

A. Forsyth: He led us by the hand. He did a lot of stimulating work with the volunteers and spent an awful lot of his time just instructing them and informing them and stimulating them. Gary nearly always attended the chapter ex com meetings. Peter sometimes did and sometimes didn't, but Gary was almost always there. You remember his bounce and his enthusiasm and his picturesque speech. Gary was a real fireball.

Ingram: Did he dominate? Was everybody waiting for whatever he had to say?

A. Forsyth: No, I don't think so. He had the right duties to the San Francisco office that he always put first, but he could have very easily said "I'm the staff representative, and this is your organization. Keep me out of it." He never did that. He tried to stimulate the group to work with him as much as possible. He was great.

A. Forsyth: Let me tell you a story about the Sierra Club in New York City as I knew it. I mentioned the conservation committee that the Bar Association created. Dave Sive was the first chairman. We held a joint meeting with the public utilities committee of the Bar Association. This was at a time when the power plant siting act was before the legislature--the one-shot siting procedure. There were a number of issues on which the conservation committee of the bar was at odds with the public utilities commission. They had a joint meeting one night, and I remember one of the utility lawyers--hell of a nice guy, big cordial, friendly guy, but entirely pro-utility. That was his job, and he did it well. He got up and complained that the public utilities were being unfairly attacked by conservationists. They were at such a disadvantage to have to face these organizations with unlimited financial resources like the Sierra Club. [laughs] Dave Sive and I looked at each other and tried to suppress laughter.

That was a not uncommon view of the Sierra Club, that it was a big, monolithic, highly financed organization--powerful and so forth. That was at the time when we were contemplating reorganization and bankruptcy or something--financial crises that would continually arise. But the public image of the Sierra Club at that time was that it was a very powerful organization.

Ingram: Well, of course, in a sense it was.

A. Forsyth: It was certainly powerful far beyond its resources.

Ingram: That's right. I think that's maybe what fooled people, thinking there was a direct connection between dollars spent and results. In this case, there isn't. Fortunately.

I wanted to cover a question that has to do with New York as a kind of melting-pot. There have been in the club's history incidents of one sort or another that have to do with minorities and of course it is generally considered to be an upper-middle-class white, etc., organization. Can you describe any of the efforts during your time, successful or otherwise, that have to do with minorities and with the involvement of women in the chapter?

A. Forsyth: Yes. At about the time of the Watts fracas in Los Angeles, there was a good deal of interest in trying to interest minorities, particularly the blacks and Puerto Ricans in the New York area in conservation issues--urban conservation was one thing, and efforts were made to organize hikes, Sierra Club-sponsored hikes, for ghetto members. There was a black member of congress who was interested in it, and we had some contact with him.

Ingram: Was he a member of the national Congress?

A. Forsyth: National Congress. There was interest shown, but nothing ever came of it. I think there were one or two hikes organized, but there were problems of club insurance which got in the way of this. We had to bus them out of New York City to an area out in Westchester County, near Rockland, or somewhere. The arrangements were difficult to make. I think the whole project just sort of died a natural death. We never did organize that. We tried, but the receptivity on the other side was doubtful.

Ingram: What about as far as the question of women's participation in club affairs? I don't recall that ever being an issue--

A. Forsyth: No. I would say that more than a majority of our active workers in the Atlantic Chapter were women.

Ingram: Did you ever feel that there was any problem, Mary, as far as women having a voice?

M. Forsyth: None at all.

A. Forsyth: Some of our best workers and certainly leaders [were women].

New York Conservation Issues: Central Park, Staten Island Expressway, New York-Westchester Walkway, Storm King

Ingram: We mentioned urban conservation; just about these years, '67 or something like that, the club brought out the book on Central Park. Was Central Park a club issue? Was there anything that was current at that time?

A. Forsyth: Central Park was always a concern of the New York people. There was a project for replacing police stables from an area just outside the park to putting an underground stables in the park. Many of our members who were bird lovers particularly, who spent much time in the park in recreational pursuits, took this on as an issue and were very vociferous about it. Rick Harris, the cartographer, led that fight. Sierra Club was in the newspapers frequently on that park-stables issue.

And about that time, I received a call in my office one afternoon from a newspaper reporter, I don't recall his name, but he said he was from the New York Times, and would I comment on the proposal to build a new wing on the Metropolitan Museum. This was to go in the park and take up some more park land. I

A. Forsyth: rather resented the call because I tried to tell him that I was busy, I had a client with me, and could I call him back. He kept on insisting, and I finally exploded, said something about, "that damn museum never belonged in the park in the first place!" Next day I was quoted in the New York Times: chairman of the Atlantic Chapter remarked that "that damn museum!"--I had a lot of flak about that from museum lovers in the Sierra Club. I finally convinced them that I was justified in sounding off under the circumstances.

We had a number of park problems that the club was active in. The land for the sheep meadow, and the police stables, and the museum, and the subway going into a corner of it and tearing it up there on the southwest corner of the park. But we had a lot of support from city park department people. Who was that chap that was later director of the Metropolitan Museum?

Ingram: [Thomas] Hoving.

A. Forsyth: Yes. He was very sympathetic to us, appeared on a Sierra Club meeting panel with Dave Brower and Dave Sive and a few others. He was a good supporter of conservation.

Ingram: Was this the kind of issue on which other identified organizations joined with the Sierra Club?

A. Forsyth: Joined with isn't quite the word for it. Whenever local organizations had a big issue like that, they sought the support of the Sierra Club. It was regarded as a big national organization, aggressive, and effective, and so forth. Rather, we had to be chary about joining other organizations because they would use us. The Sierra Club Council, as you know, adopted some regulations about local chapters joining other organizations and cooperating with coalitions and so forth. You always had to get approval from the Sierra Club Council before you could take out a membership or make a contribution in support of some other organization. They tended to use us.

Ingram: Do you recall any other issues which you could call urban, New York City, issues in the chapter? I seem to remember something about an expressway on Staten Island. There was a walk--

A. Forsyth: Oh, yes. Brower was there for that, and John Mitchell, and I walked on that. That was a proposal of Robert Moses, the great developer of the highways on Long Island. He wanted to put this Staten Island Expressway right through about the only green belt on the island. That didn't last very long; I don't think it occupied more than six or eight months, interest.

Ingram: Of course, that was a Lindsay administration--

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: --which was much more anti-Moses.

M. Forsyth: There was another little activity up in Westchester County, where the Sierra Club, a local Audubon group, and Dave Brower and Justice Douglas walked the road-bed of the old Putnam division of the New York Central, because that was a proposed walkway out of New York City, Westchester and New York County, a hiking area. We worked very hard on it, and the whole thing went to the highway department.

Ingram: Oh, really? That was not a success?

M. Forsyth: That was not a success.

A. Forsyth: That was a disappointment. The Sierra Club took a very active interest in trying to get this old road-bed of Putnam division of the New York Central dedicated for hiking and bicycling, and for an investment of around $75,000, which is peanuts in New York, the state could have provided a walk-and-bicycle way from the center of New York City sixty miles north through beautiful country. The road-bed was there; it was cinder road-bed, and it was being held by the transportation department for the construction of another road that's never been constructed. The road-bed is still there, but deteriorating through erosion and all. We worked hard on it, organized a number of local groups to support it. We set up a field day one Sunday, invited all the bicycling organizations to come out in force from White Plains, and New York City, and so forth. About seven people showed up. This killed the enthusiasm for the whole thing. There just wasn't the other organizations' support. It was a wonderful opportunity that we just let slip. Disappointing!

M. Forsyth: --which unfortunately is probably gone, because the right of way in these areas is handled by counties, and spurs, side roads are--

A. Forsyth: I remember walking it one rainy day with George Alderson, Bob Waldrop, Nancy Matthews, and you [Mary Forsyth] and I, Avis, Stewart, and maybe some others. Where we found stakes--maybe I oughtn't to tape this, but I think the statute of limitations is passed on it--where we found the surveyors' stakes we ripped them up and threw them up in the woods. We bundled up the surveyor's tape, disposed of that. It was an emotional issue.

M. Forsyth: It had its very own bridge crossing the Croton Reservoir.

A. Forsyth: It could have been a horseback riding trail, too. Although efforts to get the County Parks Commissioner to back it--when he heard we were contemplating allowing horseback riding on it, he said, "Oh, you can't have that with the hikers. There'd be horse litter all over the place and people would be stepping in it." Nancy exploded at that point and said, "We're not talking about blind hikers!" [laughter]

Ingram: Well, as a hiker in the Grand Canyon, where you do have to careful about the mules, I'm afraid I'm also not very impressed. New Jersey meadowlands was another issue. I seem to remember it didn't cause much stir.

A. Forsyth: Not in the Atlantic Chapter, it didn't, but in the New Jersey Chapter that had been formed by the time that it was enacted.

Ingram: I'd like to talk now about two large issues: the Storm King case and the Hudson River Expressway. It seems to me that the best thing is just to let you tell the story or the events, or the things that you consider important.

A. Forsyth: On Storm King, Jeff, the full story of that should be gotten from Dave Sive, not from me. I came in sort of in the middle. The Storm King controversy was over the building of a proposed pump storage plant by Con Edison, taking its water from the Hudson River, pumping it up to the impoundment to be built in the hills behind it, and then flushed down again to the generators and evacuated to the Hudson River. The area where the pump storage upper pool would be was in the middle of an area used by a lot of hikers through their hiking organizations. And it was their opposition, at the beginning, that brought on the Storm King controversy. It led to litigation. They sought the aid of the Sierra Club, and the Sierra Club under Dave Sive took a leading part in opposing the project at the level of the Federal Power Commission hearing.

As I understand it, the Federal Power Commission at one point approved the whole project, and then on a petition to open and take further evidence, held another series of hearings. And it was about at that second go-around that I first became involved with it at all. I had heard a lot about it, but wasn't active in it.

It was a large project, and after the first approval, the case was taken to the circuit court of appeals, which wrote an opinion that is still of great interest to conservation law. The court, in its opinion, declared that the duty of the Federal Power Commission, a government agency, was not simply to, quote "call balls and strikes, like an umpire, but to investigate such

A. Forsyth: projects on its own." That's a kind of a milestone decision. Not only the Federal Power Commission but almost all the other commissions did that sort of thing. They simply listened to the arguments of whoever was before it, decided for or against, and did very little of their own research and evaluation.

The Federal Power Commission on the second go-around held very extensive hearings. There was a good deal of testimony about the effects on the fish nurseries of the Hudson River at that point, what it would do the eggs sucked up into the works and spewed out into the river. As usual, with experts on both sides--it was rather inconclusive. Finally the Federal Power Commission approved the project again, and then I believe it was largely through financial stringency on Con Ed's part that work was halted for a long time. I don't know since I left New York what's become of that project, but I believe it's still on ice.

Ingram: Why don't you, if you can, describe in more detail what you particularly did as far as legal work?

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A. Forsyth: I did very little legal work. I did attend one or two of the hearings with Dave Sive and assisted as I could with suggestions. He really didn't need very much. He had the thing well in hand. My part in it was very small.

Ingram: Did you find as you got involved in the case, as the case was being worked on--to go back to something we discussed earlier--did you find the case itself as something that was changing the opinion of lawyers about environmental matters? Was this something that among lawyers was an important case, as it certainly was among conservation people?

A. Forsyth: I really can't say, Jeff; I don't know that. Certainly the circuit court's opinion on this calling balls and strikes or doing its own research was a milestone, and lawyers generally were quite interested in the matter. It was the subject of some of the debates of the Bar Association's Environmental Law Committee. I don't know that it had any profound effects, but it certainly established a new principle for government agencies.

Battle over the Hudson River Expressway

A. Forsyth: The effect of that decision echoed in the Hudson River Expressway case, where at the early stages of our participation opposing this expressway building we were in direct confrontation with the

A. Forsyth: Corps of Engineers in New York. The Corps was not inclined to listen very much to public opinion. They were a law unto themselves. They took the position that they were the god that was going to decide what was going to happen to the earth, and they were very unwilling to cooperate. But I think the circuit court's opinion in the Storm King case gave them second thoughts about this. And when we came to them in the Hudson River Expressway case, after a few skirmishes in which they came out kind of smirched, they changed their attitude and became a great deal more cooperative.

Ingram: You should describe the Hudson River Expressway.

A. Forsyth: This was a proposal to build an express auto highway from New York City from about the Henry Hudson Bridge area, along the river and partly on fill in the river, up to Ossining, New York. It was a very expensive project; it was a very large imaginative project, and one that was strongly backed by Governor Rockefeller. It so happened that part of the Rockefeller estate at Picantico Hills would have been the logical route for a north-south highway at that point. But the Rockefeller interests were instrumental in relocating it down to the riverside. And of course, there was a lot of talk at the time that it wouldn't have gone to the Hudson River if Rockefeller hadn't owned the Picantico Hills estate, that he was just keeping it off his place.

But it was a project that Governor Rockefeller strongly pushed. It was one of the examples of his tendency to build monuments to himself. It was to be called the Rockefeller Expressway at one point.

Ingram: Surely it must have been mostly federally financed.

A. Forsyth: Yes it was, ninety percent, I believe. There were other projects, like the Cross-the-Sound bridge that Rockefeller proposed. That was going to be another monument to the man of great works. The Albany Mall, which, of course, had been built; that's a monument to Rockefeller's grandiose thinking.

But the Hudson River Expressway was definitely one of those projects that he personally proposed, a great work for the public. Well, the conservationists said it was just the wrong place to build a highway. You couldn't take a river like the Hudson River and put millions of yards of fill in there without damage to the fisheries. The area just south of Ossining was a nursery ground for striped bass. It would have been not only an eyesore, but it would have introduced a volume of traffic that the area could not well stand and do damage to the river. All these things made it an item that the Sierra Club was determined to stop if it could.

Ingram: It was to some degree parallel to some parts of the New York State Thruway. Why did they feel the need for another expressway? Just the same old, "We have more traffic" sort of argument?

A. Forsyth: It didn't exactly parallel the thruway, although the thruway ran the same direction a couple of miles inland, and then crossed over the Tappan Zee Bridge. This would have gone under the Tappan Zee Bridge and on up to Ossining on that side and connect with another superhighway to be built from the north down. There was a good deal of traffic congestion there. Predictions of traffic increase justified some additional road building. We never thought it justified quite as large a highway as they were talking about. But there was some justification for it.

Ingram: How big would it have been? Six lanes? Eight?

A. Forsyth: It would have been six lanes, each way. A big highway.

Ingram: And you can say a good deal of it would have been on fill, actually.

A. Forsyth: Yes. There were two or three places where it had to be on fill. There was no room on the shore. It would have paralleled the New York Central tracks going up there, but it would have been out on the river side of the tracks most of the way.

It was a project of the Corps of Engineers in the sense that they had to grant the permit for river fill under the Rivers and Harbors Act.

Ingram: At what point was there a big public announcement that they were about to do this, or was it one of those projects that was being quietly worked on and people began to get worried?

A. Forsyth: Oh, no, there was a great deal of publicity about it. Several different routes had been considered over a period of years, finally culminating in the location of it along the riverside there. The first New York Department of Transportation plans would have run it through the Rockefeller Picantico Hills estate, and very close to one or two of the fine residences on that estate. Then Rockefeller persuaded the department to put it somewhere else, "not in my back yard." Of course, that was a rallying point for the opponents; this was to save the sacred Picantico Hills family estate.

Ingram: When the controversy developed--this is often something that comes up; this question about alternatives--was there a third route which was being pushed by people who didn't want it in the river?

A. Forsyth: There were something like six different routes--alternatives. There were maps all over the place showing where these were, and there were debates on this one against the next one. Most of the conservationists felt that any road was excessive, that we didn't need any additional highway up there. What we needed was a little better control of the New York Thruway and improvements in that. I think probably the controversy over its location must have occupied at least two to three years before it actually got settled on the river route.

Ingram: Was this an issue in which there was a lot of local feeling? Local feeling which was for the road?

A. Forsyth: Yes, there was feeling both sides. Pretty well organized pro and con. The principal opponents of it were the people of Tarrytown, a little village just south of Ossining. It would have gone along the riverfront there and cut the river off from the town. It would have introduced traffic volume that the people didn't want, thought they couldn't afford. The trustees of the town of Tarrytown and the citizens' organization of Tarrytown led the attack on it and turned to the Sierra Club for legal guidance on it. This was before the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund was in existence.

Ingram: Let me ask about the date of this. Do you remember which year off-hand? Was it while you were chairman?

A. Forsyth: No, I think Dave Sive was chairman of the chapter at that time. I was conservation chairman, committee chairman. We and a number of others worked very actively on that. It seemed to me, as I recall it, that there was a meeting about once a week that we had to attend, and public indignation hearings. I remember every time I appeared at one of those and said "Sierra Club" I was welcomed as a hero. No matter what I said, it was well received. It was at one of those hearings that the man quoted in his testimony that brief that I talked about on the Sleepy Hollow road building.

Those citizens' organizations turned up a statute in the Rivers and Harbors Act that appeared to apply to this, and that required--or rather, it would have prohibited the granting of the river fill permit. We went to court on that in the federal court--

Ingram: Before that, I gather that somebody must have applied to the Army Corps of Engineers for a permit.

A. Forsyth: They not only applied, it had been granted.

Ingram: The state did that?

A. Forsyth: Yes, the state transportation department.

Ingram: So the corps had granted it then.

A. Forsyth: The federal Department of Transportation was a party to that.

Ingram: Had there been any public hearings? Or had the corps sort of routinely granted it?

A. Forsyth: They had, without public hearings. There had been a number of meetings between the state transportation, the federal transportation and the corps of engineers and Governor Rockefeller personally. Through discovery proceedings we turned up a good deal of that background, which showed a disregard of public feeling, and a determination to push this thing through. For instance, one of the papers that we turned up was a memorandum of a meeting the governor--I don't know whether it was in his office, but he attended it--and this memorandum was passed down to a subordinate official with the pencil-written comment on the side to "grease the skids." When that was produced in court, it produced a little sensation. But it was a power play, and there was no public participation at that point, even though there had been a great deal of public discussion of it. The New York Times was opposed to it, and editorialized a number of times on it.

Ingram: This was all pre-NEPA.

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: And this was also before the time of the decision on Storm King?

A. Forsyth: Yes. Well, it was after the circuit court had given its opinion on it, but it was before the final decision.

Ingram: So we have the Army Corps of Engineers having granted the permit. And at some point people have decided that they want to go to court. How was that decision arrived at? Do you recall who participated, what sort of groups were interested, and how they reached a conclusion?

A. Forsyth: We had a Saturday meeting at the monastery in Tarrytown--St. Paul, or De Paul, or something, monastery. There were representatives there from all the citizen organizations, plus a few others. A discussion of whether or not to go to court was held. It took all morning. They finally decided that we must go to court; there was no alternative. The thing was going to be built in a few months; work was going to start imminently.

Ingram: Would this group have included any local governments, like the Tarrytown--?

A. Forsyth: The Board of Trustees of Tarrytown, yes. They had representatives there.

Ingram: Do you recall who called the meeting? Who organized it? Again, I don't mean personally, necessarily, but who was the initiator?

A. Forsyth: I remember the person but I forget his name. He was one of the most vociferous opponents of it, and he organized a lot of the opposition to it. He called that meeting, between the corps--I think there were two meetings that finally were held. The second one was a serious discussion of how to handle the litigation; how to finance it and who would represent us in court was debated. Sive left the meeting and during his absence they all decided that Dave Sive was the only logical person to represent them.

Ingram: This, of course, was to be as a hired counsel?

A. Forsyth: Yes. But the plaintiff for whom he would be acting would be the Sierra Club.

Ingram: It was.

A. Forsyth: The Sierra Club's name did not appear first in the list of plaintiffs. It was the--some Citizens of Tarrytown, or something like that, not the Sierra Club's name. But the Sierra Club was the mover and provided all the litigation help.

Ingram: Was money raised broadly? I mean, among all the groups? Or was it assumed that the Sierra Club had to come up with all the financing?

A. Forsyth: The Sierra Club itself funded a large part of that. The other groups did raise quite a bit of money for it, but most of the legal work was done pro bono, and for a very little fee. Most of the things were expenses--out of pocket disbursement for the case, witness fees and things like that. It wasn't an expensive litigation. No great sum was actually needed.

Ingram: Did you attend both of those original meetings?

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: And you found in those two meetings the definite feeling that this was the only way, that the suit was the only way to go.

A. Forsyth: We either had to go to court or forget it.

Ingram: Yes. I guess the interesting thing to me about this is, as I say, the courts were not an avenue sixteen years ago.

A. Forsyth: The Hudson River Expressway case is best known for the decision on the question of a standing before the courts of an environmental organization. Up to that point, there had been no decision on this, and there was a lot of legal theory against anybody being a party plaintiff and starting a litigation unless they were affected directly in their own pocketbooks. You had to have a financial interest in something, a property interest, to go to court. We did have, as plaintiffs in that, people who owned property that would be directly affected by the road, so there was no question about the standing of some of the plaintiffs. But there was a distinct question about the standing of the Sierra Club. This was practically the first decision in the country that granted the Sierra Club standing to be a party plaintiff in a litigative matter.

Ingram: Let me go back to the Storm King. The organization pushing that was an ad hoc scenic preservation--

A. Forsyth: Scenic Hudson Preservation Conference.

Ingram: Who was the plaintiff?

A. Forsyth: Scenic Hudson--

Ingram: But it was on a different issue, is that the distinction?

A. Forsyth: Yes. They didn't bring a lawsuit, they participated in the Federal Power Commission hearings, and then, disagreeing with one of its findings, they petitioned for review before the circuit court on the Federal Power Act.

Ingram: This was part of a procedure under the Federal Power Act, I understand, as a party to the procedure. So there's no question on it--

A. Forsyth: Standing wasn't challenged there, but it was challenged directly in the Hudson River Expressway case.

Ingram: Before we get to that--in the Expressway case, what you're doing is going to court and asking for an injunction--

A. Forsyth: Right.

Ingram: Against what? Against the highway, or against the permit being effective, or what?

A. Forsyth: We asked not only for an injunction against any building, construction of the highway, but we also asked for eradication of the permit. The declaration of it was illegal. We got both of them.

Ingram: Describe a little bit, if you can, the legal procedure as well as the substantive arguments.

A. Forsyth: This trial took twenty-nine days before Judge Murphy. It was in the federal district court in New York. At the outset of it, none of us had any idea where Judge Murphy stood as a conservationist--whether he was a highway builder by nature or a conservationist.

Ingram: Let me just interrupt a minute. Do you know about his background; who appointed him or--?

A. Forsyth: We knew practically nothing about him. He was a large man; he'd stand about six feet five, and proportionally built, and when he'd sweep in from his chambers and mount the judge's bench, you never could see him come in there with his robes flying behind him but you thought "Here come de judge!" [laughter] Fortunately, he was a confirmed cigarette smoker, so he called recesses during the trial about every half to three quarters of an hour, which was a tactical advantage to us, because going into that trial we'd only had a few weeks for discovery of evidence, and the organization of our evidence was somewhat lacking in precision. So those little cigarette breaks gave Dave and me a chance to sort of put things together, what had happened so far this morning, how we'd go about it from here on, looking over the exhibits, arranging them, and so forth. Had we been before a judge who would go for three hours without a break we would have been handicapped. I was glad he was a cigarette smoker. [chuckles]

We also found when we put a witness on the stand to describe what this road fill in the Hudson River would do to the striped bass population, that Judge Murphy said, "Striped bass?" Later we discovered that one of his hobbies--he lived on an island out on the Sound somewhere--one of his hobbies was striped bass surfcasting. When we found that out, we played the issue of fish populations as far as we could. He was impartial; he was a good judge.

The trial itself was an eye-opener to me. Most of the witnesses that we depended on were hostile witnesses. They were from government agencies: the Department of Transportation, Department of the Interior, State Highway Department--we had to call those, knowing that they were under pressures not to help us. Each of those witnesses was so reluctant to come out with an honest, candid answer to a simple question, it was as though they feared for their lives to give the game away, that they would disclose some secret. It was a funny trial.

A. Forsyth: David Sive, who was a very skillful trial attorney, very dogged and resourceful, would question a government witness for maybe half an hour, and find that he was getting up against a brick wall, there was no cooperation. He could see that the man had something to say, but he didn't quite know what it was. And to try to bring that out of him took the skill of a highly skilled lawyer. Dave repeatedly would come back from another angle and get what he wanted. It was a revelation to me; it was one hell of a job that he did on trial work on that. We only had about three witnesses of our own for the entire case. All the rest were witnesses for the hostile government.

Ingram: You were speaking of discovery of material. Were you looking for materials which would show procedural mistakes or problems, or were you looking for substance?

A. Forsyth: Yes, anything we could find as to the history of this, because we were reasonably certain that the Corps of Engineers had completely ignored the provisions of the old Rivers and Harbors Act. I think that was something like 1890 or 1892, and it was a sort of a dead-letter law for many years until it was discovered in this Hudson River Expressway case. It was brought alive, and it's still alive.

Ingram: That's the one that requires--you can't give a permit--well, maybe you'd better explain--

A. Forsyth: I don't recall it well enough at the moment. It had been amended so that the Department of Transportation had some jurisdiction. Formerly, it had all been in the hands of the army department. I don't recall just what the particulars of that were, or how they affected the case. There was a long legal argument in that as to what was a causeway. A causeway could be built. Was this landfill a causeway? It took about three days of testimony on that one point.

Ingram: The point being that if it weren't a causeway--

A. Forsyth: It couldn't be granted a permit. I think that's the way it worked. All that's pretty vague in my mind at this time.

My part in it was just to assist Dave as a trial assistant. I didn't take any part in questioning the witnesses then. I'm not a courtroom lawyer. I kept track of all the exhibits. There were something like six hundred exhibits there--listing those, and being able to put your hand on them when called for--it required some assistance. That's mostly what I did. Each day at luncheon break, I would sort of act as a sounding board for Dave's plans for the afternoon testimony. I guess it was useful, although I always felt that I ought to be doing something more than I'm doing. Dave was one hell of a trial attorney.

Ingram: In recalling that trial--twenty-nine days, was this more or less consecutive working days?

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: It wasn't spread over several months?

A. Forsyth: Five days a week until we finished. I think we had one day that was recessed.

Ingram: Can you remember, or were there, points or a point where things seemed to change?

A. Forsyth: Well, certainly that point where we were discussing the striped bass changed our attitude toward it--gave us some hope. Here was somebody who was concerned about putting a road in the river. And it turned out to be true. He [Judge Murphy] did take a very dim view of this, and wrote an opinion that sounded like a conservationist talking.

Ingram: To me that's an interesting point, because we worry a great deal about bias and prejudice and self-interest, or connected interest or something like that, and yet really what we're talking about is whether or not a judge or a decision-maker has the background, not necessarily the sympathies, but just the background to understand something. When you go to somebody and you make an argument, it's not necessarily whether they agree, but whether they even know what you're talking about. [If they don't] it's almost hopeless.

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A. Forsyth: I'm sure that Judge Murphy had read something in the New York Times about the Hudson River Expressway before the case came before him in court. It had been in the papers a lot; it was a public issue; there was great feeling on both sides of it. He had a sense of humor that was not universal among judges. I recall the very first day of the trial we started off about one o'clock in the afternoon. Dave was putting on some witness or making some statement, and the attorney for the New York State Department of Transportation--a rather stout fellow with two eyes that didn't quite look the same way--jumped up, "I object, your honor, I object to this testimony!" The judge just turned on him, and he said, "Mr So-and-so, you can object, but don't bleed all over my court!" [laughter] He several times dressed this fellow down in similar language.

Ingram: Why don't you talk about the issue of standing, what the court said, and--

A. Forsyth: The state sought to dismiss the action before we ever got to trial on two grounds: one, that the Sierra Club had no standing. They didn't argue that too much, because, as I say, there were other plaintiffs there who definitely had standing. Their properties were affected. But they tried to get the Sierra Club out of it as best they could. The other defense was the sovereignty issue, that you couldn't sue the state without its consent. They were ruled against on both those points, and the trial went on.

Ingram: Aside from the mere fact that the judge ruled that way, was there anything in the rulings, the decisions, the writings, that was particularly notable? Did somebody go back to this as a source for language?

A. Forsyth: The motions on that, the preliminary motions, were denied from the bench without any written opinion. There was nothing stated at that time that would send the case down for hearing. It was only in the judge's opinion, after trial, that the question of standing was addressed and established that any organization whose members were personally affected by such a thing would have standing to come into court.

This was while the Mineral King case was before the courts in California, where eventually the Sierra Club's standing was denied but under an opinion that simply said if you had done thus and so you had standing, so we did it and had it. But the Hudson River case was the first federal case to grant standing to the Sierra Club. We had not had an organization of that sort.

The testimony on which this was based was that some of our people hiked along the banks of the Hudson River. Others sail boats there. And if the road were built, they'd be facing the headlights of trucks at night, and exhaust gases during the day, and so forth. The judge was definitely favorable to allowing an organization like the Sierra Club to bring a case to court. There were certain Supreme Court cases on which the decision rested that emphasized if there is an actual issue to be tried, and if the plaintiff is one who can give it a good trial, can capably handle it, then they have standing.

Ingram: So it was simply that this right had never been asserted before that made it novel?

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Not that there was any series of decisions that had to be overturned?

A. Forsyth: There's an interesting corollary to that that came on a couple of years later. In the Mineral King decision, Justice [William O.] Douglas, as you recall, wrote a very powerful opinion that trees and stones and rivers should have standing. After that decision, the local Sierra Club group took the case of Mianas River in Connecticut, a small stream that flows into the Long Island Sound at Port Chester [New York], that had been contaminated for years by Port Chester's sewage. In taking the Port Chester officials to court, our attorney labeled the case the Mianas River versus the City of Port Chester. But he had a couple of other plaintiffs that definitely had standing, so it was never challenged. Nobody moved to dismiss the Mianas River, and the case is still under that title: the Mianas River.

Ingram: The case that the Legal Defense Fund is bringing on the Colorado River issue in Grand Canyon, of course has the Grand Canyon National Park as the plaintiff. Again, not the only one, but--

A. Forsyth: I had some discussion with Tony Ruckel about that, and made a few suggestions. I don't recall whether they were taken or not.

Ingram: It is, of course, an interesting thing to have the national park sue the National Park Service, entirely justified in this case--I probably shouldn't comment because it's not decided, but to me, there's no irony.

I had a question about Dave Sive's examination of the experts, where he would come at them in various ways. What you're saying is he was able to bring out information--in other words, he was successful in his various ploys.

A. Forsyth: It was like pulling teeth to get candid answers from any of the witnesses. They were all quibbling, and begging the question, asking for clarification at all times. Dave would ask a very simple question: "Were you at a certain place at a certain time?" And there would be fifteen minutes of fencing back and forth before he'd say, "Yes." They all seemed to be frightened. It was as though they were all going to lose their jobs if we won the case. It was an eye-opener to me. I never knew that government witnesses could be so obtuse. They all were.

Ingram: Yes, and of course unnecessarily so. If they had no particular personal interest one way or the other, why wouldn't they answer. That raises--we were talking about the judges--

A. Forsyth: That memorandum with the "grease the skids" loosened them up a little bit.

Ingram: Did it?

A. Forsyth: [chuckling] Yes.

Ingram: I don't know. That is something we face every time we deal with a government agency, and that is, the people in the agency are people, and they get committed personally to something which they ought to be "objective" about.

A. Forsyth: I think there's still a good deal of hostility among government agency witnesses in litigation today, but it's nothing like what it was then. Agencies are much more open. The Freedom of Information Act has shaken them up a lot, and the changes in policies. I think the change in Carter's administration has shaken down to lower levels and changed their attitude a good deal.

Ingram: You didn't have the Freedom of Information Act, either.

A. Forsyth: No. The Administrative Procedure Act was one of our legal points of reliance. We established a new law there, but I'm not clear enough on it to discuss it now.

Ingram: So the judge essentially came out and said the permit should not have been issued?

A. Forsyth: Yes. It was illegal.

Ingram: --illegally issued and therefore revoked?

A. Forsyth: Yes.

Ingram: Did he then say go back and do something, or did he say that's the end of it?

A. Forsyth: No, it was left at his decision that they would have to start over again, get a permit. It was pretty apparent that the permit couldn't be legally issued because if you fill in the river, it's against that 1890 law.

Ingram: Did the judge say that in his decision, or did he not go that far?

A. Forsyth: I don't recall.

Ingram: So what happened after that?

A. Forsyth: They went back to their drawing boards, and about a year passed when Governor Rockefeller called a series of meetings up in Westchester County at which the Sierra Club was particularly invited to take part.

Ingram: Let me just interrupt you a second. In that year, was there any attack or condemnation from Governor Rockefeller? Did Rockefeller speak out against the Sierra Club, or did you feel the brunt of any displeasure, official or otherwise?

A. Forsyth: Yes. Assuming that his position on the highway was the wishes of the populace, he passed a few remarks about the obstructionist tactics of the Sierra Club. He didn't make much of a point of it. About a year passed before they presented an alternative plan that would avoid the fill in the river, and which instead would have affected part of the Rockefeller estate.

Ingram: Oh, it did?

A. Forsyth: He presented that plan, and I think four alternatives to it at a meeting held in Tarrytown, I believe. It was a sort of a high-level meeting with silver teapots serving tea to the people, and put on with great éclat. And as a result of that meeting, the public reaction was unfavorable to all the alternatives, at which point Governor Rockefeller conceded defeat. His project was not what the people wanted. He was an obstinate son-of-a-gun.

He did something very like this on the Across-the Sound-Bridge, the Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge.

Ingram: To go back to that one meeting. Was he personally present?

A. Forsyth: I don't recall his being there.

Ingram: I can see he wouldn't be actually--too much exposure. Okay. So this was something where people were invited to hear something, but not to react at that point, is that--?

A. Forsyth: Well, to consider it and react, yes. The reaction was negative.

Ingram: Right away people knew that this wasn't what they wanted?

A. Forsyth: Within a day or two, public opinion was formed.

Ingram: I think it's remarkable, in a way, that that was the end of it.

A. Forsyth: It was a big project. I don't remember how many millions of dollars--something like forty million dollars just to put the fill in the river.

Ingram: I guess the thing that impresses me is that on all those kinds of projects, usually, there is a lobby which is well built up and vociferous in favor of it. The fact that a project would just disappear--

A. Forsyth: Well, it's empire building to the various agencies that are involved in it. The head of the New York State Department of Transportation, a fellow named Birch McMoran, was an empire builder. He did some very fine highway building in New York state. But he was also very obstinate, and in order to push this thing through, he tried every which way to get it around the Sierra Club. He had to go to court to stop it.

Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge Controversy

Ingram: You mentioned the Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge, and of course, that was also the project not only of Rockefeller, but of another master builder, Robert Moses. Did you have a personal part there, or was it the club?

A. Forsyth: I had a small personal part. But the way it happened was interesting. There had been a good deal of publicity pro and con in the papers and media. This was after the Hudson River Expressway case. It had been proposed and discussed for a number of years before it came to this point, but the opposition to it kept building. There were labor organizations that were opposed to it. This was unusual, and it forced Governor Rockefeller to look at it a little more dispassionately than one of his pet projects. He finally called a meeting with a number of conservation organizations, particularly with the Sierra Club. There were three of us there: Sive and I and one other, I've forgotten who it was, and about a dozen other people. Governor Rockefeller sat at the end of the table and started on his right, asking each person present to make a statement about the Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge, why they opposed it (these were all opponents). I think Sive led off and I was the last one to speak.

Ingram: This was in Rockefeller's offices in New York?

A. Forsyth: It was in Rockefeller's New York City executive office.

Ingram: That's a little bit of personal pressure there.

A. Forsyth: He was giving everybody a chance to speak, and we got the impression that he was ready to cancel the project, but wanted some support; wanted some good reasons for it. After it went around about fifteen people, there was damn little left to say about it, and I wondered, what in the world am I going to say about it when my turn comes? Do you know Zane Spiegel here in Santa Fe?

Ingram: No, I guess I don't.

A. Forsyth: Well, he's a nationwide famous hydrologist. He had sent me, just a couple of weeks before, for no particular reason, a paper that he had written on the recharge of the groundwater of Long Island. He was consultant to the town of Southampton, and had studied Long Island. He's an Easterner, but now lives in Santa Fe, has for some years.

I used his findings to comment on what might happen if increased population on the Long Island side occurred as a result of the building of this bridge. Zane took five or six hydrological studies that had been published, analyzed them, and pointed out in each one a mistake; there were different mistakes in different papers. Correcting for those mistakes, he found that seventeen inches was the approximate rate of ground-water recharge. I had just read it a day or two before, so I still had a good deal of it in mind. I discussed this with Governor Rockefeller and told him about the study and what the results were. And where he had listened to all the other complaints with a kind of a ho-hum expression on his face, he was staring at me and writing down notes. I didn't know which way--whether he was going to sue me or what. But a day later he announced that the plans for the Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge were being withdrawn. And in that [announcement], he mentioned the effect on the level of groundwater on the Long Island side. So apparently, he was listening and impressed by Zane's study. But it was just a coincidence that Zane had sent me that without any relevance to the Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge thing. It was just something he wanted me to know about.

The Rockefellers, John Lindsay, Thomas Hoving

Ingram: I suppose for a New Yorker in the 1960s and early 1970s, you can't really get away from the Rockefellers, particularly the governor. I just wonder if you have some--almost anything--either overall impressions, on one hand, or specific anecdotes, or just other comments, because here I think is an important figure not just in American political history, but in American conservation history: Laurance, and Nelson, as well as the family as a whole.

A. Forsyth: They were on stage at a turning point in our history. They were on stage when the conservation issues were first being brought up. They were representatives of the old, expansionist capitalist society--the great projects, the forever growth. They hadn't been brought up to think about the alternatives.

A. Forsyth: Nelson Rockefeller was an ambitious man; he wanted to leave monuments to himself. I've mentioned this monument building, and it was certainly typical of him in many things. And yet he was an astute man, and when he saw a valid point he usually recognized it; he didn't equivocate. I had a great deal of respect for Nelson Rockefeller. We were fighting him all the way, but it wasn't a personal enmity against the conservation movement; it was just that he felt the other side of the coin was the right one, that American's destiny was to do big things, and that expansion and energy crises were mere shadows and no substance to them. He was simply convinced that his way was right. He was a forceful man.

Ingram: He was not what you'd call a bitter opponent, the kind of hang-dog onto the last--

A. Forsyth: No, the fact [is] that when he was faced with a change in public opinion on the route expressway, he gracefully withdrew it, and when the Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge thing was shown to him to be an environmental disaster--besides being something we couldn't finance--he gracefully withdrew from that, too. He wasn't simply a nasty opponent. I thought he was a good man.

Ingram: You've talked about the Adirondacks Park, and I suspect in a way, either as a catalyst or some other way, the Rockefellers were a force for further benefit. Can you think of other situations during your time there that the Rockefellers were helpful, pro-conservation?

A. Forsyth: I think on the Tocks Island Dam he probably had a leading part to play in slowing down the decision on that. He listened to a number of upstate New Yorkers who would be affected by it, and he refused, at least publicly, to back the thing. I suspect he killed it, myself.

But Governor Rockefeller's handling of that Adirondack contre temps with Laurance Rockefeller's plan for a national park--it was embarrassing to the family when it turned out that it had been sort of sneaked before the legislature under an official seal without authority. I thought his handling of it was very astute, to appoint an outstanding group to study the future of the Adirondacks. It was a statesmanlike move. He appointed damn good people; he saw to it that the legislature financed the commission generously. And they did a landmark piece of work in studying it.

Ingram: Another political figure at that time who was involved in changing ideas, changing feelings about things was certainly Mayor [John V.] Lindsay of New York City. Again, do you recall that he had any direct participation, one way or the other, in any of the things that you--?

A. Forsyth: No, I don't. I didn't run into Lindsay in any of these things. I think once or twice in connection with Central Park he listened to his park superintendent, [Thomas] Hoving.

Conservation Allies in Congress and Growth of the Atlantic Chapter

Ingram: Yes, I suppose he would have been the more prominent, obvious, person. How about anybody else in this period? Anyone else that you can think of as particular allies or particular opponents--or agencies, for that matter.

A. Forsyth: We had a few friends in Congress. We had a congressman from Pennsylvania--can't remember his name.

Ingram: John Saylor.

A. Forsyth: Saylor. He was a pillar of strength for us. And, of course, two or three who are still on the scene, including Stewart Udall.

Ingram: Richard Ottinger was congressman from New York.

A. Forsyth: Yes. he came in a bit after the movement had started. He was a very great help to us. Nancy Matthews is his legislative aide, and she sees to it that he gets a hundred percent rating on the conservation voters' list.

Ingram: I'm curious whether or not there was much understanding of the importance of the political process, or was this a developing awareness at the time? That is, influencing legislators, making friends, and so on.

A. Forsyth: When I first got in, there was very little encouragement to find friends in Congress. They just didn't exist. Certainly the local politicians were no help to us.

Ingram: This is leading me into thoughts about other people. If there are any people that you've come in contact with that would be relevant to this period that we're talking about I don't want to forget them. You've mentioned political figures, any other Sierra Club figures? You've mentioned Mike McCloskey, of course, and that his interests were at times helpful to you because he too had a national viewpoint.

A. Forsyth: Ed Wayburn took a considerable interest in the development of the Atlantic Chapter. He visited a number of times, he and Peggy. I always felt that Ed was a particular friend of the

A. Forsyth: Atlantic Chapter. Strictly a Californian, but I think he realized that there was a large potential for growth in the Sierra Club in the New York region. And there was at that time. I tried several times to get membership drives financed or helped or something; it didn't amount to a whole lot, but our chapter kept on growing at a greater rate than most of the other chapters. Where we at one time had something like 35,000 members of the Atlantic Chapter, I always felt that that was not a third of what we should have.

Ingram: Of course, it's interesting that when you and I joined the Sierra Club in the mid-sixties, 35,000 was the total number in the club.

A. Forsyth: We were about 4,000 at that time, true, but I think we have about fifty-five now. I may be way off in that; I wouldn't want to be quoted as to membership.

Ingram: The point is that it was an area of fertile growth. Overall, would you say that you felt you were part of a nationwide organization?

A. Forsyth: We were part of the Sierra Club and we were getting a great deal of help from it. We did feel far off in the decision-making and felt that we didn't have too much to say about club policy; we wished we had more, but we never felt that we were disregarded, or treated as a poor cousin or anything. We got good cooperation from the national club, and we had friends on the board of directors at all times.

One of the points that we made, and I think it's a valid point, is that the Sierra Club's interests required a cultivation of the New York area, particularly for its effect on congressional voting. New York's congressional delegation was about the same size as California's. If we could have an active Sierra Club presence in New York, we had the opportunity to influence congressional action. Pennsylvania and New York were both parts of the Atlantic Chapter at the time. I think this was one of the reasons the California group did want to cultivate New York. Their political leverage was recognized.

Saylor made that point when he addressed one of our annual dinners.

Ingram: Of course, he too in a way would have been fighting a lonely battle as an eastern member of the interior committee. I can well see why he would have been very concerned in developing more of a constituency for these issues.

A. Forsyth: I don't know how many congressmen the Sierra Club influenced in New York; we've still got an awful lot of reactionaries there.

Conservation Problems in New Mexico

Ingram: This is perhaps a little aside from the point, but we were talking earlier about Governor Apodaca and his decision on the Elk Mountain road. How have things been in New Mexico? Are you keeping in touch with the present government?

A. Forsyth: I've had very little to do with Governor Apodaca. He did appoint me to a small federal lands action group, as it's called, a study group to try to find ways for the state to get a better degree of control over the handling of public lands, public domain in New Mexico, where it affects our resources. The Mining Act of 1872 has been the focus of most of our discussion so far.

I don't feel that there's very much environmental awareness in the state of New Mexico. I think it's somewhere down with New Mexico's rating on personal income, which I think is at the bottom of the states.

Ingram: You almost could say there is a correlation.

A. Forsyth: There are a lot of intelligent people who are interested in it--the movement doesn't lack for friends, but the general populace couldn't care less about the environment. Jobs are the issue here.

We had a series of pipe breaks at the Molycor plant up in Cueste. They run their slurry pipeline down about eight miles to a slurry deposit on the other side of the town of Cueste. Those pipes corrode, erode, and abrasion causes holes in them, and they dump right into the Red River there. The Sierra Club was up in arms about that, and [there was] a discharge permit hearing--we participated in two or three days of hearings there. I represented the Sierra Club as legal counsel in that. The Molycor plant was doing a terrible job. Its pipes were not well designed or laid, and there were consequent breakings. It was through pressure from people like the Sierra Club that they turned around and started doing a better job. Now they're owned by Union Oil, I think, and they're doing a much better job.

But when we first got into that, Molycor would take the position, "If we're forced to make those improvements, we'll have to close down the plant and there will go six hundred jobs."

A. Forsyth: If you're talking in New Mexico about six hundred jobs, you're talking about bread and butter issues that everybody understands, and they're on that side. Jobs are scarce here; it's a rather poor state. It's hard to put up environmental beauty and preservation against the loss of livelihood and local work.

Ingram: Certainly that's an issue whether in New Mexico or anywhere else that will continue to vex the country, as well as individual conservationists for a long time to come.

A. Forsyth: Typical of New Mexico is the hearing we had last night here in Pecos with the water service planning unit. They separated us into three groups and asked five questions. One was what use of the national forest is the most important to you. Each group came up with grazing, because there were five grazers on each group. The environmental aspects of the national forests rank very low on their score sheet.

Sierra Club: East and West Coasts

A. Forsyth: The relationship between the California interest in the Sierra Club and the people on the east coast is a very interesting one. I set out trying to improve relations, but being a sort of middle-of-the-roader, I did get a hearing out there that many of our eastern delegates didn't get. Talking to a person like Dick Leonard, who was a strong anti-Brower person--he knew I was a strong pro-Brower person, but Dick always respected me as a reasonable person, not a wild-eyed hollerer for help in the New York area and so forth. I got along very well with those people, had a great respect for most of them. I had a little trouble with Dick Sill at one time or another; he seemed to be a hard nut to crack. And Ansel Adams, he couldn't care less about New York. But people like [Edgar] Wayburn and George Marshall and Dick Leonard and two or three others were very helpful.

I ran for election on the board two years in a row. With my background prominently featuring my work with Friends of the Earth, I never made the board. [chuckles] Still, I think my continued interest in the Sierra Club after the split was helpful at least in the New York area of the Sierra Club. They worked well together back there.

Ingram: It seems to me that one of the key lessons of all of this is that if you focus on what the whole thing is about, that is, conservation and particular issues that we have to deal with, many of

Ingram: those problems which you call personality problems and conflicts tend, if not to disappear, then to be dropped in the midst of fighting the common enemy.

A. Forsyth: As I say, we're all running in the same tracks, we shouldn't fight among ourselves.

Ingram: Well, in an ideal world--I'm sure the history committee will thank you. I've certainly had a good time this afternoon.

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TAPE GUIDE -- Alfred Forsyth

Date of Interview: 2 August 1978

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

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Grant McConnell

CONSERVATION AND POLITICS IN THE NORTH CASCADES

With an Introduction by
Polly Dyer

An Interview Conducted by
Rod Holmgren

Underwritten by
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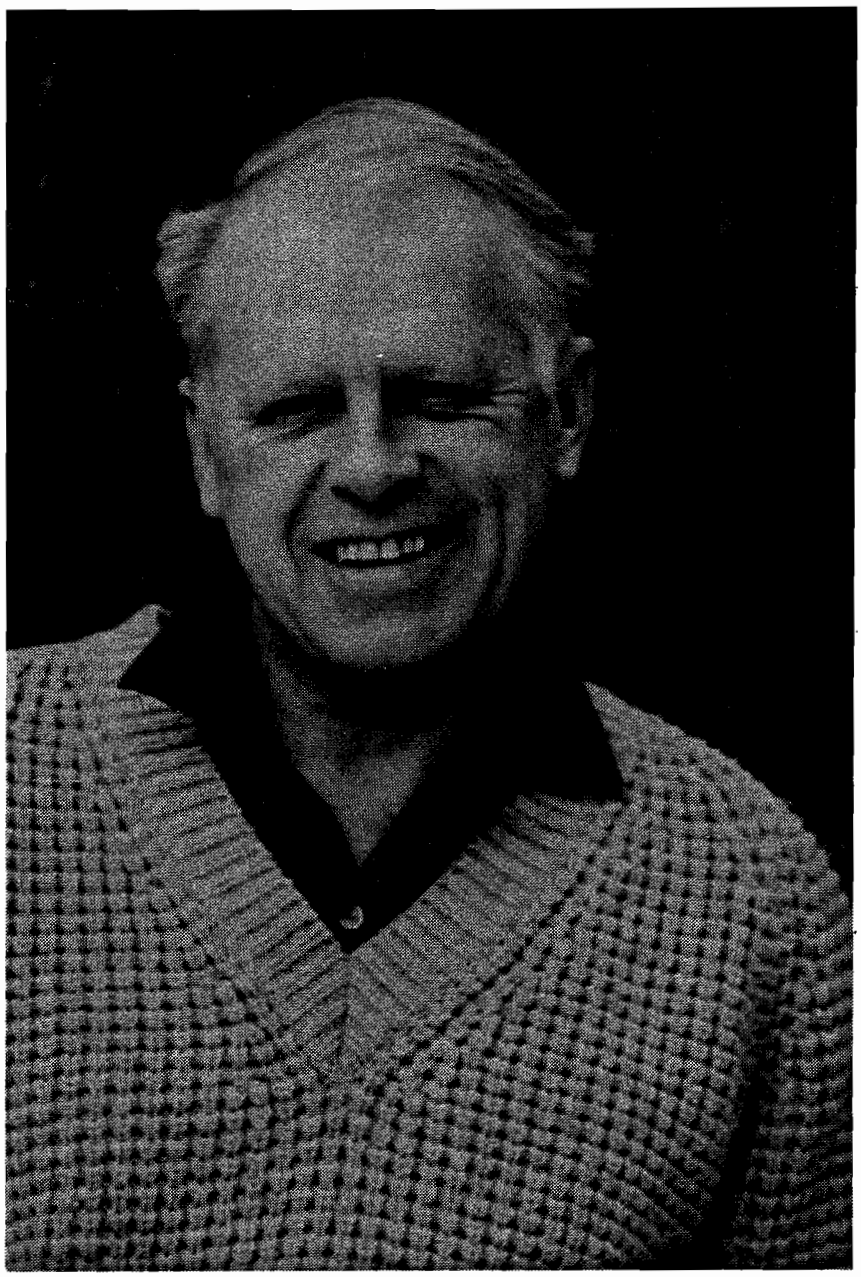

GRANT McCONNELL

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INTRODUCTION

The North Cascades National Park Complex, signed into law in 1968, really had its beginning in 1955 on a hot summer day at the head of Lake Chelan. Searching out the owners of three ice axes, and finding they were not mountain climbers but, instead, some people getting a firsthand feel for the forested valleys threatened by logging and for alpine meadows under assault by miners to the east and north of Glacier Peak, Jane McConnell exclaimed: "You have to meet Grant! He's trying to stop logging in the Agnes and Stehekin Valleys." We couldn't meet Grant McConnell that day--he was seven miles up the Stehekin, and Phil and Laura Zalesky of The Mountaineers and I of both the Sierra Club and Mountaineers were on our way downlake.

It does seem that the wilderness "gods" saw to it that this first contact was made between some conservationists from west of the Cascades and the-then-virtually-only conservationist east of the Cascades, so they could soon join forces.

Without Grant McConnell, I am firmly convinced that there would not have been a North Cascades National Park and associated Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas--or at least not so soon--"soon" being thirteen years later.

As Grant related in his keynote address to a Northwest Wilderness Conference, and as published in Congress and the Environment (Eds. R. Cooley & G. Wandesforde-Smith; University of Washington Press, 1966), "...it became apparent that the North Cascades were marked for the sort of 'intensive management' by the Forest Service that could only spell destruction of the unique values of wilderness and beauty. A handful of people met in a living room in Auburn, Washington, to discuss the problem; it was a very glum occasion." But--in that and many other meetings, in California and Washington State, Grant's counsel was central. From his extensive knowledge and expertise as a political scientist--analyzing what routes to take, what kinds of organizations might be most effective--he supplied the key to how to fight for and secure protection of as much of the natural beauty and wilderness as might be possible at the time.

It was Grant who well knew how effective single-purpose groups could be. (See his Private Power and American Democracy, Knopf, 1966.) It was Grant who proposed putting together an organization explicitly to work for wilderness protection in the North Cascades. Its strength was to be--and was--in the citizens from throughout the country who shared the same goal, not for financial or personal gain, but for passing onto future generations

an intact, or virtually intact, wilderness entity, with its primeval forests, its flowers, its wildlife and wild fish and their habitat, to be assured of the perpetual continuation of their roles and their universe in the natural ecological systems of the North Cascades.

From Grant McConnell's vision, in 1957, The Mountaineers, the Sierra Club, and other Northwest member organizations of the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs joined together and founded the North Cascades Conservation Council. Drawing its leadership from these groups and from other dedicated people, then building a strong membership from individuals all over, the North Cascades Conservation Council achieved a large measure of its goals. Grant McConnell, not only the true "founder" but a founding and continuing member of the board of directors of NCCC, sharing his experience and his knowledge and his advice, will forever belong in the annals of the political forces giving the nation the North Cascades National Park Complex.

On behalf of all of his friends, colleagues, and those who came later and may never know his role, I just want to say "Thanks, Grant; you probably never have really known how deeply grateful we all are to you."

Polly Dyer

Seattle, Washington
April 1983

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Grant McConnell, prominent professor emeritus of political science at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is well qualified to tell the tale from its beginning of the preservation of the North Cascades. Having lived, full or part time, since 1945 in the isolated Stehekin Valley in the North Cascades, McConnell knows and loves the country intimately and was one of the first to become aware of the threats to its pristine quality.

His interview chronicles his transition from wilderness appreciator to conservationist. It outlines his role as catalyst in the formation of the North Cascades Conservation Council, in involving the Sierra Club in the region, and in the lengthy campaign culminating in 1968 with the establishment of the North Cascades National Park.

He marvels at how what began with just "a handful of people" grew to a forceful movement which took on the power of the timber and mining industries and the United States Forest Service and emerged victorious. From these experiences he gained insights into the nature of American politics which have shaped his theoretical orientation in his professional work.

McConnell was interviewed on October 5, 1982, at his home in Santa Cruz. His interviewer was Rod Holmgren, a retired professor of journalism from Carmel, Sierra Club activist, and delegate from his chapter to the Sierra Club Council. He set aside time in the midst of preparations for a year of teaching in China to conduct the interview. His professional interviewing skills, volunteered for this joint History Committee--Council project are greatly appreciated.

Ann Lage, Co-chair
Sierra Club History Committee

Oakland California
April 4, 1983

I BEGINNINGS OF A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO THE NORTH CASCADES

[Interview 1: October 5, 1982]##

Youthful Climbs

Holmgren: Let's start with your birthplace and childhood. You were born in Portland.

McConnell: Portland, Oregon, in 1915. I lived there until I graduated from Reed College.

Holmgren: Let's not jump all the way from your birth to your graduation from college. How about your youth and young manhood?

McConnell: The most important thing, looking back on it, was getting into the mountains. I made my first mountain climb at the age of fifteen. That was with my father, up Mount Hood. I never recovered from it.

From there on I had to keep going to the mountains, first of all climbing. (This meant volcanos.) I pretty soon exhausted those, thanks to the help of the Mazamas, which I joined. I graduated from that to Wyeast Climbers, which was a very small and (for that time) very competent group of young climbers in Portland. I think there were about twelve of us mountain fanatics who sought out all the lesser peaks of the Cascades. Of course, these are mostly volcanos, and when it came to rock it was wretched rock, so I never learned any confidence on that score. But I think we became pretty good ice climbers.

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 37.

McConnell: As I entered college, I looked around the map for more mountains. The Cascades divide into really two parts, the Oregon Cascades and the California Cascades--Lassen and Shasta--and the Washington Cascades up through Mount Rainier, with a slight extension over to Glacier Peak and Baker.

They're all volcanos, and they're scattered. But up in the north there was a blank spot on the map, with virtually no roads or place names. And such place names as there were, I've since learned, were, in reality, non-existent on the land. So I kept trying to get some of my friends to go up and see what was there. Finally, I succeeded in interesting Everett Darr, a good friend of mine in the Wyeast Climbers. He went and came back ecstatic. There was a huge mountain called Bonanza Peak up there that he wanted to climb. He set forth with his wife and a couple of other fellows. I couldn't get away because I was going to college.

He campaigned and searched out for a route up Bonanza. Finally he decided he'd found it. The party was put together. I could only tag along because they'd made their plans at the very last moment. I went up there in 1937, went up Lake Chelan, and here I found what I'd been looking for. They're [the North Cascades] still my favorite mountains, but then I've got a lot of favorite mountains.

Holmgren: Don't we all.

McConnell: In 1940 I came back. I was a graduate student at Harvard, and I had married and interested my wife, Jane, in the venture. We went in with Abby and Stuart Avery, Ken Henderson and Henry Hall of the American Alpine Club, and the Darrs, and a college friend of mine, Paul Parker. We managed to get a first ascent on a nice little peak. (The mountains up there are mostly under nine thousand; a few over. But they rise from an elevation of eleven hundred feet, so they're not so small as they appear in statistics.) So we climbed a nice mountain called Devore Peak.

It turned out to be a first ascent. We made a traverse of Buckner Mountain, which is a magnificent mountain, one of the highest of the region. I think it's been done since, but it certainly had not been done before. It was a twenty-two hour venture.

Wartime Discovery of Stehekin

McConnell: Then came the war. I found myself literally adrift at sea, first of all here off this coast. The reason you're sitting here safely is that I patrolled it in a Monterey purse seiner that had been

McConnell: converted by the navy. Then I was on a destroyer out in the western Pacific, and I wrote home to Jane, who was also working in the war effort at that time, "Look. We have no home anymore. Our goods are in storage. We can capitalize on this and live wherever we choose. Now where, in all of the United States, might we want to go?" Well, it would be the mountains.

We played this daydream back and forth while I was at sea. We came up with three places: Jackson Hole, which we had known when it was much nicer than it is now.

Holmgren: It's still pretty nice.

McConnell: It's spoiled, irretrievably spoiled. The east side of the Sierra; I think I had in mind Bridgeport, somewhere around there. I was vague on that. The other was Stehekin.

We began by ruling out first one and then the other. We wound up with Stehekin, this valley which is isolated from roads. (Still there is no road into it, no road out of it.) The typical approach is fifty miles riding on a boat. It was a nice game. We even drew little sketches of the ideal cabin.

Holmgren: You're talking now about the middle forties or the early forties.

McConnell: This was through the years 1941 up until May, 1945.

May 2nd two things happened. My ship went down off Okinawa, a kamikaze attack, and my wife, who was traveling for the U.S. Public Health Service, managed to sneak in a little trip up to Stehekin where, as it turned out, she found out that there was very little property, and nobody wanted to sell. She came back very discouraged. (This actually happened before May 2nd.)

On May 2nd she arrived up in Stehekin again, having received a letter from one of the few settlers up there, that he had to have an operation, and he would sell her ten acres down on the bend of the river where the big cedars are. She received that letter in North Carolina, where the mail finally caught up with her. She sent back three hundred dollars and heard nothing, and then finally went up on May 2nd, the day my ship went down, to look at her property.

It was a very poorly selected piece of property. The river, very likely, could cut right through it. (The Stehekin is a savage river, wonderful and savage.) But in the next couple of days she concluded a swap of that property for another at the end of the road on the same side of the river, and that has proved to be our real home ever since then. Our children were conceived there, and

McConnell: we now regularly return, after having abducted our grandaughter from her mother. This made an ultimate commitment to the region that has been almost central to my life.

Holmgren: You spend about five or six months of the year there, don't you?

McConnell: We do now, yes. But when my ship went down I ultimately was given survivor's leave, thirty days. In June we went up there and lived for a month. Then, when the war ended, we immediately made plans to go up there. We went up there in December, in a blizzard, and stayed three years.

Holmgren: How marvelous!

McConnell: Since then, I'm afraid, we have to be regarded as seasonals, but it's still our home. So this is the origin, in a very personal way, of my interest in the North Cascades.

Holmgren: Right. Now let's come back a little bit. In this period when you were hiking and climbing in the mountains, was your interest in this whole matter entirely that of outings interest?

McConnell: Oh, surely. And living in it we were learning all the time. I had to be given a lesson how to split wood. I became engaged in the process of life in that isolated mountain community.

We had marvelous neighbors who were living a subsistence life, an elderly couple by the name of Courtney, Hugh and Mamie Courtney. They had three sons whom we got to know. There were other children but these were the three we knew. There was Curt, there was Laurence, and there was Ray.

I shall never forget coming up there in December and confronting the wood problem. With fifteen inches of snow on the ground, and more coming very, very rapidly, Curt said to me, "Well, Grant, I notice you don't have your wood in yet, of course, and we don't either. Why don't we work together." I thought this was a fine idea. We went out and felled a tree, a big one, and he said, "It's time we went home." Came back the next day, couldn't find the tree for the snow. (This was a tree about four or five feet in diameter, too, I might add. It happens like that up there.)

Well, we finally cut it up, but I remember, after it was sawed into lengths, into blocks, Curt said, "Well, Grant, you want to take first turn?" So I lay the ax into it, and, of course, nothing happened. I exhausted myself, or nearly did, trying and getting nowhere. Curt said, "Well, don't you really find it's easier, it goes better when you start at the edge?"

McConnell: I said, "Oh, no," put it into the center of the block again, and finally it occurred to me I was being taught a lesson. That was the way it went. I kept learning things on that score, and it was a wonderful experience. It was a combination of experience of a different way of life and, of course, the sheer exuberant joy of being in the mountains all the time.

Holmgren: Did you gradually become interested in conservation, or the conservation movement?

McConnell: That happened later. Living in that place, it seemed that the mountains went on forever. It was all wild country, a lot of it, I think, almost unexplored, untouched. The forces that were loose there--avalanches, fire, and so on--were so strong that it just seemed that nothing could ever happen to that country. Anything that man could do was so insignificant that what you're suggesting of conservation was simply insignificant.

I learned better as the years went on. There was some abortive mining activity that was going on up there. It's an area that's very severely faulted, and there is quite a bit of nice red rock showing minerals--copper, silver, etc.--that is, if you pick at it very carefully. Incidentally, that was part of the fun. Everybody had some kind of mine up there, so called, and never took it very seriously. Big mining companies, Guggenheim and others, had been up there and given up.

There was one mine, the Howe Sound Company Mine up Railroad Creek, within two or three days walking distance of where we were living. The company went in in 1937 (the year I first went in) and started a mine. It lasted for just twenty years. It was a pretty big operation, high volume, low quality copper. There were bits of silver and tiny bits of gold, which was a matter of great secrecy on the part of the mine.

And there had been a series of little tiny sawmills in the area, most notably one run by our friends the Courtneys, next door neighbors a quarter of a mile away. I even once helped with that mill and, in 1947, I think it was, helped put pressure, in the form of a literate letter twisting the arm of the Forest Service to sell timber, small scale stuff, one hundred thousand board feet. We succeeded at that, but the mill went bust. It was bound to.

So, I was oblivious to the whole set of problems involved. I don't know. I like to think of Dave Brower's story of how he used to campaign for a ski lift up Mount Hoffman, till he was taken aside by an older member of the Sierra Club and set straight. Well, one does change. I'll also say in my defense that John Muir once worked in a sawmill in Yosemite Valley.

Holmgren: Correct, correct. Then your membership in the Sierra Club, which started in '41, was only for a very short time at the beginning.

McConnell: Well, it was aborted by the war.

Holmgren: I see.

McConnell: And then by our poverty-stricken way of life in Stehekin. We were living on thirty-five dollars a month, cash.

Scholarly Interest in Conservation

Holmgren: Somewhere toward the end of the forties you decided to go back to graduate school.

McConnell: Yes. I finally discovered that I wasn't going to be able to support two children and a wife up there in any manner that was fair to them. So I decided to come back to graduate school. I'd started first of all at Harvard, then at Oxford. That was cut short by the war. I decided I wanted to come back but stay in the West, so it was the University of California at Berkeley.

At the University of California at Berkeley I wrote a thesis on agricultural policy and politics. It was, ultimately, published, and as a consequence I was taken on as a lecturer at Berkeley, and ultimately went on to get onto the ladder as an assistant professor.

After that book was published I felt I had to do something else, pick up some other topic. I looked around and, well, I'd been interested in the out-of-doors, and here there was beginning to be quite a bit of noise I was hearing, seeing in the newspaper about Echo Park [in Dinosaur National Monument]. So I decided to examine the set of ideas that were at issue here.

I wrote a scholarly article, presumably scholarly (it has been reprinted quite a bit), on the conservation movement past and present. This appeared in the Western Political Quarterly.* In the course of it I decided I could do part of it very well by interviewing some of the people that I knew in the Sierra Club.

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*"The Conservation Movement--Past and Present," WPQ, vol. VII, no. 3, September, 1954, pp. 463-478.

McConnell: As you say, I had joined in 1941 when I was briefly living in San Francisco. The Sierra Club at that time was a very small, intimate group. One of the nice occasions as a consequence of that was a trip made on the spur of the moment with several other Sierra Clubbers, one of whom was Doris Leonard, to drive down to meet the party from the club coming out of the Sierra at Mineral King. I felt I knew the Leonards--it was an opening--and down there I met a very dashing young fellow by the name of Dave Brower, who was very engaging.

With that in mind, and with this undertaking to discover what conservation meant--it seemed very confused--I got into Gifford Pinchot and John Muir, and various other people, and it very quickly became apparent that there was a great ambivalence and ambiguity in the meaning of the term, and this was a theme that I developed in that article. (I think that that piece has been accepted. It's now fairly well taken for granted, but at that point it wasn't.)

The other interpretation of the conservation movement at that time was that by Samuel Hays, the "gospel of efficiency." He and I are frequently put as opponents, different views. We're not. They treat different aspects, but I think my point was more important.

In the course of this, among the people I interviewed were Dick and Doris Leonard, at their house up near Grizzly Peak, not very far from where we lived down on Scenic. So it was a very economical article to write and get points for the scholarly world.

Opposing a Forest Service Timber Sale at Stehekin

McConnell: I had no more completed my scholarly undertaking and gotten things off for publication than I discovered that I was involved. That piece was published, I think in 1954, and the following year I got word from Stehekin, from a friend of mine who lived down at the foot of the lake. He was worried that the Forest Service, he heard, was going to institute the first of a series of big timber sales, big for that area. This was along toward the first of June, as I recall, 1955. He said he didn't have the papers on it, the announcement, but he'd heard about it and couldn't something be done.

Well, this was my first bout of activism. I loaded the family into the old wreck of a Buick we had, hoped it would get us up there, and went to Seattle. I didn't know what on earth I could do, but I thought I had a few connections that might give me advice.

McConnell: [I] went first to my aunt, who had been a high school teacher at Queen Anne High in Seattle and on retiring at age sixty-five had married a retired rear admiral, who was also a political figure, Luther Gregory. He'd been head of the state liquor control comission and was fairly prominent.

I started to tell him. He said, "I don't need to know about it. Look. Anything you want me to do, I can get in touch with the big politicos, and I'll do it," just because I was a sort of shirt-tail relative by then. Well, I'd gotten something lined up. Then I got in touch with Hugh Bone, who was chairman of the political science department at U[niversity] of W[ashington], and [whom] I knew slightly. He said he'd lend a hand, again not because he had any interest, but just out of sheer friendliness and because it sounded like a good idea.

Then I'd gotten ahold of a woman whom I'd heard of and whom my wife had met in some hiking through the area. Her name was Polly Dyer. We phoned from Seattle. (She and Johnny, her husband, were living in Auburn.) "Would it be possible to get in touch with some other people about this threat?" She said, "Well, come on down, and I'll try and get a few people together." So there was a little meeting.

Rod, this is something that so impresses me, how thin our group was at the start. It was a handful of people. I think it's a very essential part. You find this story in Echo Park. It was just a handful of people.

Holmgren: It's frequently the case.

McConnell: And if you come in at the right moment, early enough, it's surprising what can follow.

Well, at Polly's, we had our two little kids with us. We drove down there. We were really quite poor. She invited us to spend the night after this meeting took place. Very, very kind. We came to be terribly fond [of them], and they've remained good, good friends ever since.

At the meeting there were, I think, twelve people, not including my kids. There was the president of the Mountaineers, Chet [Chester] Powell; a nice young couple, high school teachers from Everett, the [Philip] Zaleskys. Pat Goldsworthy was a research Ph.D. at the University of Washington, in natural science. I made a pitch which, I'm afraid, got rather passionate and rather shrill. I came at them saying--oh, I had grandiose ideas!--"What we need to do is form a specialized group to protect the North Cascades. There is this threat of industrialization, logging, which could destroy it very quickly." I now saw the light.

McConnell: The response was--people sat there very quietly. I could see I was falling flat on my face. Finally, one of them spoke up: "Well, we have the Mountaineers." I said, "Are the Mountaineers willing to do something?" "Well, the Mountaineers are primarily an outing club. There is a conservation group, you see most of it right here, but there are too many things to fight."

I felt pretty flattened. But a couple of individuals, Chet, the president of the Mountaineers, said, "We'd like to help, really." I said, "Well, there's a problem. I just got this only on a good telephone report, but I have not got any documentation that this is actually taking place. So, hold off. Don't do anything yet." (I had to tell this to various other people in Seattle.) "Don't do anything yet, but stand ready."

Actually, what I had lined up was a pretty good pile of bricks ready to pull and topple over onto the Forest Service. But I couldn't go off half-cocked. So, the next thing to do was to dash over to the headquarters of the Wenatchee National Forest, which had jurisdiction over that area in particular. I went in, cold, to the headquarters of the Wenatchee National Forest and asked to see the supervisor. The receptionist, very deadpan, said, "He's not here. Who are you?" I said, "Isn't there somebody else I can see?" "Well, let me see. You can see Mr. Faceless (that's not his name). And I said, "Okay, I'll talk to Mr. Faceless," and went in to see Mr. Faceless, and I said, "Mr. Faceless, I understand that there is to be a timber sale in Stehekin. Is that so?" "Umm. I don't know. Stehekin, you say? No, I really don't think so. You should really talk to the supervisor." I saw another faceless there, got the same funny look and funny response.

So all I could do was to go up to Stehekin. At Stehekin Ray Courtney, who figures in this story quite a bit later, said he'd actually seen a dittoed announcement of the appeal for bids, yet he didn't have a copy. So here I was, with my load of bricks piled and the mortar wasn't going to be good much longer, but I had a date at least. The thing was scheduled for July 19, and here I was in Stehekin about June 24 or so, maybe a bit earlier. What to do? I was sure this was on; I was sure I was getting funny treatment from the Forest Service. But I couldn't really expose my friends, who were willing to do these things on the basis of friendship and relationship, without some hard data.

So I cooked up an idea. I wrote a letter addressed to Chet, president of the Mountaineers, which went roughly like this. "Dear Chet. That timber sale, which we heard about in Stehekin and which would be such a disaster, I am assured by officials of the Wenatchee National Forest is not something that is going to happen. In fact, it's a false rumor, I gather. But I've been advised to

McConnell: get in touch with the supervisor of the forest and have been unable to do so. I am sending a copy of this letter to him, and I am sure that if my statement, that this is not taking place, is incorrect, he will inform me."

I sent a carbon copy to the forest supervisor, Ken Blair, whom I later got to know very well indeed on a basis of general jovial mutual hostility.

Nothing happened. Several weeks went by and--

Holmgren: You're getting close to July 19.

McConnell: It was close to July 19. One of the local Forest Service staff came up to the lake from Chelan and spoke to Curt Courtney and said, "Curt" (and then an aside), "That timber sale has been called off; it's been held up." But still I had no data or nothing but that to go on until, I think it was about July 17, I received a letter from the forest supervisor, Ken Blair, saying, "Dear Mr. McConnell. Thank you for sending me your copy of your letter to Mr. So-and-so of the Mountaineers. I want to reassure you that, of course, there was never any plan for such a sale; there will not be one."

Well, it later turned out that that little flimsy carbon copy had made quite a stir at the office there. That was the beginning of my involvement as an activist with conservation. Of course, the fact was that the sale was not called off; it was postponed, and there was great pressure from the mill owner at the foot of Lake Chelan, at Manson--a man by the name of Harry Wall, who was concurrently a state senator in Olympia, a man of considerable wealth and of great political clout--continual pressure to open up that whole watershed. He could have devastated it in just a couple of years, even with his small mill. So I realized that something much more was necessary than just that temporizing delay, and that we were going to need big help.

II ORGANIZING FOR NORTH CASCADES PRESERVATION

Gaining Sierra Club Cooperation

McConnell: Back at Berkeley in the fall--I had not yet rejoined the Sierra Club--I decided I needed help.

Holmgren: You're talking about the fall of '55 now?

McConnell: Yes. I got the bright idea of teaching a course on interest groups, in the Political Science Department at Berkeley. It was a graduate group, and they met at my home (it's not very far from the university campus).

The students were of course quite naive, and I said, "Look, don't get the idea that all lobbyists are evil. You can't just analyze it in good and evil terms. Some of them really don't have horns. How would you like it if I got a real lobbyist in the flesh?" And they said, "Great." So I phoned up Dave Brower. [laughter] I said, "Dave, remember me? I've got a group of students here, a class at the university. Would you come and appear and show that all lobbyists don't have horns?" And he said, "Sure."

He handled them very nicely, and I shoved the students out. As Dave got up to go I said, "Dave, can you stick around a little bit longer? I've got some pictures I'd like to show you." He was willing, and I hauled out some slides of Stehekin. It worked. He said, "The first thing for you to do is to rejoin the club." I said, "All right." I rejoined the club and was very promptly put on what was then the conservation committee of the club.

Holmgren: This is in Berkeley, or nationally?

McConnell: The Sierra Club--

Holmgren: Conservation Committee, right. This was a board appointed committee?

McConnell: Oh, yes. It covered the nation, covered all sorts of things. It was a wonderful group of people. One of the most impressive, of course, was Russell Varian.

Now, by way of documenting the changes that take place in points of view, a major item of our concerns, of course, was related to the Upper Colorado Project, and dams in general. I very distinctly remember listening to Russell explaining that dams didn't make any sense for hydroelectric production because within a limited number of years nuclear power was going to come in and make it all pointless. We were all persuaded, Dave Brower included. Myself included. [chuckles]

But along the way, with Dave's help, I was able to gain the cooperation of the Sierra Club in the fight for the North Cascades.* There was, of course, also activity up in the Northwest.

Holmgren: Was there a chapter in that area?

McConnell: No. There were a few key people. There was a Northwest Chapter, as I recall, but not a Cascades Chapter.

Holmgren: Where was it headquartered? Seattle?

McConnell: It was probably Seattle. I'm sure it was. It wasn't very active.

Formation of the North Cascades Conservation Council

McConnell: But I was really quite astonished the following year, I think it was 1956, along in the spring, thinking back on that pitch I had made to that group of twelve people in Auburn, about the need for a specialized group to concentrate on the North Cascades. Something called the North Cascades Conservation Council was formed. The president was, and still is, Patrick Goldsworthy. I was one of the original directors, and I'm still on the board.

Holmgren: Let me interrupt. What were the organizations that were involved in that council from the beginning?

McConnell: Individual membership.

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*See Grant McConnell, "The Cascades Wilderness," Sierra Club Bulletin, December, 1956, pp. 24-31.

Holmgren: It was entirely individuals?

McConnell: Yes. Of course, what quickly happened was that the Mountaineers were very glad to dump this obligation on N3C, as we call it, North Cascades Conservation Council. And other groups deferred to us on matters relating to the North Cascades.

This proved to be one of the most extraordinary groups I have ever come into contact with; never very large, but always clear headed, well put together, cooperative. I have been to few meetings anywhere--I think none, probably, and I've been to lots of meetings--

Holmgren: Haven't we all! [chuckles]

McConell: --where it was possible to change one's mind and to change the minds of others, which happened very frequently.

The N3C was up against a dilemma. We wanted to keep it wild, but how do we do it with the existing administrative arrangements? So there was the division between those who wanted to go for a park for part of it, and those who hated the Park Service, almost as much as we all hated the Forest Service.

Early on, I think it was 1956 (I'm a little unsure of that date, but that's probably right), Dave Brower talked the outings committee of the Sierra Club into putting a trip up there, into the North Cascades, not in the Stehekin area. But it was a partial success, partial in the sense that they were in the glorious country, but they didn't know much about it yet. But club outings committee was marvelously cooperative. There were also a lot of discussions as to what should be done, first related to the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area proposal.

Glacier Peak Wilderness and the Forest Service

McConnell: Here I have to interpolate what the administrative situation was. Back in the late days of the New Deal, 1937-39, Bob Marshall was pushing the idea of wilderness areas. (Wilderness area was the term that he was using.) One of the first that he proposed was for the North Cascades. Under his guidance some straight surveyer's lines, by and large, were laid out that included a lot of the best, but generally speaking the boundaries were founded on ignorance and not all together rational. They left out some very important areas.

McConnell: This was also the time when [Ferdinand] Silcox was head of the Forest Service, and there was an effort by Harold Ickes to bring the Forest Service into Interior, the department of conservation. My reading of the story of this bit of history is that Silcox and Marshall were pushed forward as a ploy against Ickes. But when Dr. "Win-the-War" entered the personality of Franklin D. Roosevelt, all of this was shoved aside by the Forest Service.

But in this context the Forest Service, acting on the direction of the head of Region Six, in Portland, declared the Glacier Peak Limited Area surrounding that mountain and extending east toward Lake Chelan. It also went north--

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McConnell: --to the Skagit River from the head of Lake Chelan. It was a rather irregular area. It left out completely the Pickets and all the area north of the Skagit to the Canadian boundary. As Ed Wayburn later described it, this was the "Stop, Look and listen" delaying classification for the area. It was only under the authority of Region Six, was administratively declared, and was temporary, while, presumably, the Forest Service decided what its ultimate fate would be.

In the meantime, of course, after the war the threat from the Department of the Interior and Harold Ickes had passed, and the head of the Forest Service was at that time declaring that, "We're no longer a custodial agency; we're going to have 'active management,'" which meant logging lots of trees.

Holmgren: Multi-use.

McConnell: The use of multiple trees.*

Holmgren: Right.

McConnell: As Dave Brower once said, the idea of selective logging was you select a forest and you log it. [laughter] That was the attitude up there.

Well, the group in Seattle, first of all, was interested in getting a Glacier Peak Wilderness Area of decent design. This is where we in the Sierra Club and the N3C had to cooperate. First of all you fight for the wilderness area. All of the proposals excluded the area on the eastern side between Cascade Pass and

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*See Grant McConnell, "The Multiple-Use Concept in Forest Service Policy," Sierra Club Bulletin, October, 1959, pp. 14-28.

McConnell: Washington Pass. All of this was part of the climax of the entire range. So we were fighting for part of the area, and we knew that this was only part of it. It made no sense just to settle for that.

The Forest Service was being wholly antagonistic and, in fact, came up with the first proposal for a Glacier Peak Wilderness Area that was characterized by Dave Simons (about whom I want to talk a bit later) as "wilderness on the rocks." It was a huge octopus-like design on the map, excluding all the valleys. Roads everywhere that could easily be pinched off in the area around Suiattle Pass. Region Six [which prepared the proposal] was headed by a man by the name of Herb Stone, a real Neanderthal (a mean fellow completely in the hands of the industry). The proposal was a horror, and it was so blatantly offensive it caused outrage even in Washington, D.C.

Of course, what had happened along the way here was that to everyone's surprise, against all the rules and expectations, it looked as though conservationists had won on Dinosaur. (It wasn't until later that everyone realized what we lost in Glen Canyon.) But what had happened was just utterly astounding, and the Forest Service was nervous. So Washington, D.C., kicked this proposal for the Glacier Peak Wilderness back to the Northwest with instructions to do a decent job, and not get them into so much trouble.

They ultimately came up with the proposal--this is leaping ahead a few years--for a quite decent Glacier Peak Wilderness Area.

Holmgren: This is the report of the study group?

McConnell: This was the proposal by the Forest Service's own people.

Holmgren: Oh, I see.

McConnell: And when they announced that they were going to make a re-study of it, they said to us who had already been talking about the necessity for doing something about what the Forest Service was then calling the Eldorado Peaks area, between Cascade Pass and Washington Pass, that after they completed their proposal for the Glacier Peak Wilderness they would make another study to see what should be done about that, perhaps another wilderness area. Unfortunately, what happened was that when they announced their decent proposal for the Glacier Peak Wilderness, they came out with the announcement there would be no possibility of another wilderness for the Eldorado Peaks area; that would fall under general management which, of course, would have been a catastrophy.

Holmgren: Do you happen to recall what year this was?

McConnell: I'm unsure. This was--

Holmgren: Probably the late fifties.

McConnell: The late fifties, early sixties.

Introducing Park Service Director Wirth to the North Cascades

McConnell: Well, several other things happened in this period. I got to know Ken Blair, supervisor of Wenatchee National Forest, very well. We were always sparring, and the climax to it came in, I think, 1962, at Stehekin. The council of the Wilderness Society (I was by now a member of various conservation organizations) met in Stehekin. Ed Wayburn and Dave Brower got together and cornered Connie Wirth, who had used the occasion of the council meeting of the Wilderness Society to come up to Stehekin. The Park Service had been forbidden even so much as to enter the area for a study. Connie Wirth, who was a fairly political character, was willing to use the excuse of that meeting to come up there.

Dave and Ed cornered Connie and the regional director, [Lawrence] Merriam, from San Francisco. (The West was just one region for the Park Service.) They told them they ought to go up and take a look at the area from the air. Also, the two of them conspired with the other people and with the program makers of the Wilderness Society for me to give a talk about the area, as the one person up there who knew anything about it.

I got up. Ken Blair, the forest supervisor, was sitting by the edge out under the trees. I lit into the Forest Service for all its policies--its treatment of the country around us. I'm afraid it wasn't a very tactful speech, but it got people's attention. I was told later by Sig Olson that, well, we'd lit a bonfire.

I was given the chore, a pleasant one, of guiding the local bush pilot (who was also a friend of ours) on a tour of the area, along with Connie Wirth and Merriam, giving a travelog as we went. We went up over the crest, which runs not north and south in that area but east and west. We went up to the top of it. I was still concentrating on the area around Stehekin and up as far as the Skagit and Diablo Lake. Connie looked off in that direction and said, "What's that up there?" pointing up toward the Pickets. I said, "Well, that's out of the area." He said, "No, no. If we were ever to have a park, we'd want that!"

McConnell: So, at that point, I think a decision was made that we should expand our vision. He was right. I think that's a moment when the big expansion took place. But, of course, the Forest Service, Ken Blair in particular, also Herb Stone, was furious, absolutely furious, and we had a battle on our hands from then on.

Meanwhile, the Sierra Club was doing great things by getting trips into the area every year, educating the local packers. And the people in the Seattle N3C were pushing a petition to Congress for a study of the park potential of the northern area.

Holmgren: Was Mike McCloskey on board then?

McConnell: I'll come to that.

Holmgren: Okay.

McConnell: Now, the N3C, in the years from about, I think it was started in '56 or '57 (you'd want to check that date), was doing fine, but the main fight was for the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area. We had to get that. But always there was this smoldering issue of a park.

Launching a Drive for a North Cascades National Park

McConnell: In the second Sierra Club trip (I think that would have been 1957), I remember walking along with Ed Wayburn and had a very funny conversation. (This was up in the hills.) What actually happened, I can't give you the quotation, was that each was sounding the other out on the idea of a park. We finally discovered what we were doing [and] had a good laugh. Then Ed said, "There's one person up here who we've got to convince." That was--and here I'm sorry; I can't remember the name--Ned [C. Edward Graves]. You can look it up easily; he was always known as Ned. He was western representative of the National Parks Association.

He was looking around at beautiful country, as spectacular as any in the nation. He was looking [with] a great stone face; you couldn't figure out where he stood. Ed said to me, "Let's walk along and see if we can work on him." So we got on either side of Ned (he was rather elderly): "Don't you like it? Isn't this beautiful? Doesn't this look like Yosemite?" So on and so on. Finally, after we had been beating around the bush, Ned said, "You know, this ought to be a national park." [laughter] (That was the Upper Stehekin Valley.)

McConnell: So, the campaign for the park actually started considerably before the Glacier Peak Wilderness issue was settled. Of course, once the Forest Service had gone back on its word about a second wilderness area, we really were left with no other hope for the rest of the area.

In the N3C there was some passionate opposition. This came from Phil Zalesky, who's a grand fellow. (I have enormous respect and liking for him.) He was opposing it. In the open, in an N3C board meeting, and we decided we had to fight this thing through and couldn't delay it--so, in a very brutal discussion Dave and I pushed this thing through. We were going to go for a national park, and we did it over the prostrate body of Phil Zalesky.

Holmgren: Do you remember the year of this now?

McConnell: No.

Holmgren: Okay.

McConnell: Dave might. This would be in the records of the N3C anyway.

Holmgren: Sure.

McConnell: And let me say, to his everlasting credit Phil Zalesky did not take it personally. He came around and became a very active supporter. But I came away from that meeting just feeling terrible. I don't know, maybe Dave did too. We bullied the whole group.

From then on the drive was for the national park, to complete the protection for the area. It was a tremendously difficult fight. The N3C collected twenty thousand signatures asking Congress to pass a resolution calling for a study of the park potential. The Forest Service, of course, fought it tooth and nail, and "Scoop" Jackson, senator from Washington, really began to become very uneasy about this controversy.

He finally decided to hold a hearing, not a hearing on any particular bill or proposal, but just a hearing. He said, "This is something utterly new; this is an innovation in governmental procedures," and tried to brag about it. But it was very plain that he was scared and didn't want to come down. He was a real mouse on this.

The hearing (I remember it took place in an old hotel ballroom in downtown Seattle), began what came to be a set pattern of a long, long series of hearings by different committees of Congress as time went on. What happened was that the room would be thronged with

McConnell: people, a large number of Forest Service people standing in the back and muttering among themselves. The meeting would begin with testimony from public officials, elected officials, all of whom were against the idea of a park. "We cannot have a park." Then there would come testimony from leading business folk, the ranchers' associations, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the organized stockmen and so on, all against. By this time it would be about ten-thirty; the reporters would rush out and write stories about the overwhelming opposition to the park. Right after that the public would come on. Here was an avalanche of testimony in favor of the idea of a park, some of it passionate, but almost all of it very, very well informed and much in contrast to the quality of the testimony given before. Jackson was obviously shaken. He said he would keep listening. I think that was about his message. Ultimately we got a bill.

David Simons: A Tower of Strength

McConnell: Here I have to go back to Dave Simons. I think I'm back in the year 1957. I had an office in the library at Berkeley, a little cubbyhole sort of space they give junior professors, and I had been asking various people around the campus, "Do you know any student who's interested in conservation?" Among the colleagues and students I knew nobody was interested. Students weren't interested in things like this in the mid-1950s.

There was kind of a scratching at my door. I said, "Come in," (I was busy writing something), and I heard a little murmur. I looked up and here was this owl-like creature standing there with round glasses and hair all over--not long, but all over. He made a mumble. All I could make out was the words "North Cascades." I said, "Come in."

His name was Dave Simons. He had been a winner of the Westinghouse Award for Science. He came from a little logging town; his father was a logger near Eugene--Springfield--and he liked the out-of-doors and had heard that I was looking for somebody who could work on the North Cascades. Well, he was a marvel! He was a good photographer. You've probably seen some of his pictures. The Sierra Club gave him a grant to take pictures, got him the use of a big view camera, an enormous package. The only person I've ever seen go out with like equipment is Ansel Adams who, of course, had a porter with him. Dave would pack it on his back and drive anybody who went with him utterly wild by his painstaking, slow, meticulous preparations for taking a picture, and putting his stuff back in the camera ultimately. But he got some good pictures.

McConnell: In the meantime he also studied the map, got a lot of material together--an amazing collection of stuff which the club, I hope, still has--and he drew up a map for what we should go for in the North Cascades. It's still what we should go for, and actually, we won quite a bit of it. Dave was a tower of strength, and I think quite a number of us--I know Dave Brower feels the same way as I do--have a feeling of enormous guilt for what happened.

Here was this brilliant kid, coming from an impoverished family, a very improbable background, made a fine record, became so absorbed in the struggle for the North Cascades [that] he let his studies slip, and he lost his scholarship at UC and was drafted into the army. He was in basic training somewhere on the East Coast--North Carolina--picked up hepatitis and died very quickly.

Holmgren: Oh, how terrible!

McConnell: Somehow, sometime, there has to be a plaque put up in a nice place in the North Cascades, because he contributed mightily.

Mike McCloskey Provides Professional Backup

McConnell: Well, you asked also about Mike McCloskey. In the late fifties, the N3C was doing splendidly, but were all a bunch of amateurs having to earn livings. I'm afraid Pat Goldsworthy put too much of himself in in that period. He did wonderfully, but there was just too much to do. We were fighting enormous forces: all the Forest Service lined up against us, the logging industry, local politicians. It became apparent to me that we were amateurs fighting on a part-time basis very professional full-time, round-the-clock, around-the-year opposition.

So I drew up a memo which went to the Sierra Club saying, in effect, what I've just said to you, that there needed to be professional backup to this. There needed to be an office, a conservation office, which would serve various conservation groups, be a clearinghouse, would have several full-time people who would do nothing else but keep track of what was going on. (Just knowing what was going on and acting in time was a big undertaking. We'd lost quite a few things along the way because of this.) I described the office and its function. (I suppose that memo is still around somewhere; I don't have a copy.) I sent it on to the club. Somewhere it got discussed.

As in many instances, Dave Brower was a key person throughout here. Dave phoned me and said, "I like the idea; other people like the idea, too. But where would we find such a person?" Well, by

McConnell: coincidence (I guess the word had gotten around to some of the other groups), I got a letter from a man I didn't know terribly well but whose brother I knew well, I climbed with in Oregon. His name was Karl Onthank, at the University of Oregon, on the faculty there. Karl said, "There's a next-door neighbor of mine here who is the dean of the law school, and he has a son who has just graduated from law school, who I think is very, very bright, who is interested in a job in conservation, if one could be found." [He] wrote quite a bit about him. This was the only person I'd ever heard of interested in that sort of thing there, so once again I got in touch with Dave Brower and made this suggestion, telling him about Karl Onthank and why I thought his judgment was good. "If they can ever have such an office in the Northwest such as I've described, this might be a good person."

Well, he got hired. This was Mike McCloskey.

Holmgren: Do you remember the year?

McConnell: I'd get it wrong.

Holmgren: This would be the early sixties, maybe?

McConnell: Yes.

Holmgren: Okay.

McConnell: The office was first set up in Eugene, where Mike was living, and then it was later moved to Seattle. Of course, this was a critical step. Unfortunately, Mike was so very good that he was snatched away and taken down to San Francisco. He was followed by a lawyer who was a total pessimist about our prospects, Rod Pegues. He was later replaced by Brock Evans.

Holmgren: Brock came from the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, right?

McConnell: Well, yes, but of course this was a fiction.

Holmgren: Yes.

McConnell: The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs was the name on the door, as it were. This allowed the Sierra Club to appear as one of many, but of course it was largely a Sierra Club operation which others acquiesced in.

Holmgren: I see.

McConnell: I think some people were a little miffed by club activism outside of its own territory. You know, when I first joined the Sierra Club it was the Sierra Club of California. On the whole, however, the other organizations were splendidly cooperative. Moreover, many of us were members of numerous organizations.

The Fight in Congress and Victory in 1968

McConnell: The Cascades fight had two points of success. First of all was the passage of the Wilderness Act--

Holmgren: In '64.

McConnell: --which created a pretty decent Glacier Peak Wilderness Area. The other climax was in the passage of the North Cascades Park Complex Act, which was passed at the same time as the bills that protected the Grand Canyon and created Redwoods [National Park].

Holmgren: This is '68?

McConnell: Sixty-eight.

Holmgren: Right.

McConnell: I have a very vivid memory of a telegram coming inviting me to the White House for the signing, which took place in the East Room of the White House on October 2, 1968.

This of course had been a tremendous fight because there was so much involved in it. It got down to a personal fight between [Wayne] Aspinall of Colorado, a staunch anti-conservationist, and "Scoop" Jackson. Aspinall was twisting Jackson's tail by talk about taking Columbia River water to the south. Of course, that was something that was absolutely anathema in the Northwest and to Jackson. But this was only a ploy. As it turned out, what Aspinall was really fighting for was the Central Arizona Project, which even then was a two billion dollar item and remains a total boondoggle.

The most conspicuous fights were those about Redwood Park, which has all the complexities I'm sure you're familiar with, and about the Colorado. They were proposing two dams, as you perhaps remember: so-called Bridge Canyon and Marble Canyon. Horrible. But North Cascades was part of it.

The bill was actually signed on October 2, but the fight climaxed in mid-September. In late August there was a meeting of conservation people up at our house in Stehekin which set the entire

McConnell: valley on its ear. It was always referred to as "that meeting." [laughter] I have to say that, as much as I love many of our good friends up there, they were almost all hostile. (I will say, parenthetically, that I think I got a major lesson in politics, about the nature of the federal system, about the policy content of different levels of political organization. I've written this up. It has had a great deal to do, incidentally, with my professional career. This was really where I learned the lessons that I put into a book on which my career was based, on politics in general.)

Holmgren: What was the name of that book?

McConnell: Private Power and American Democracy. It's still in print, Vintage [Books]. The fight that went on was very much a matter of local special interests against the national interest; this is the way it shaped up. We managed to get supporting articles and editorials in The New York Times, Sunset Magazine (Martin Litton was superb. His pushing on this had quite a bit to do with his ultimate departure from Sunset). We had supporting articles in National Geographic, LIFE magazine, and a good many others, but not in Seattle, not in Wenatchee, violent hostility the closer you got.

Holmgren: The Post-Intelligencer and other papers in Seattle openly opposed it?

McConnell: Both of them. They gradually changed; they became ambiguous. There were columnists, particularly in The Times, who came out fairly well. But it was always tinged with, "Well, there should be balance. This is too extreme, and besides, conservationists can never win." This was a major theme, a major line in the tactics, particularly of the Forest Service officals. They would say, "The conservationists will not win."

At the time of that meeting in August the people from the Wenatchee Forest were sending around good looking young district rangers. They were all Smokey Bears, hearty hail-fellow-well-met types, who would talk about how much they loved to get out in the great out-of-doors, but of course we have to log the whole thing. "We must be realistic, and the conservationists never win anyhow; they don't have a chance." The Forest Service people were genuinely astounded when it came down and our side won!

The meeting, the signing ceremony at the White House, was a very interesting experience, by the way. Lyndon Johnson had already announced that he would not run again. He'd been taking a beating. His policy on the Vietnam war had made him out as monster, and it hurt. I had seen him before when he was very much of a tough guy, and there really was nothing very much to like about him. But in

McConnell: the East Room on that morning he came up. The room was filled. The Supreme Court justices were all there--I think all of them were there. There were quite a few people from Congress, all the wheels, and they were sitting in the front rows, a handful of bureaucrats and a number of us who'd come from around the country by special invitation. We sat in the back.

LBJ got up and said something like this, his eyes misted over, and he spoke in a very soft voice: "In these days it's awfully nice to have something pleasant to deal with." He went on about that and you felt this was a very emotional occasion for him. He signed the bill, and the members of Congress got the extra pens; none of us got any. I remember being tremendously moved by it and, to my own disgrace, I remember very vividly walking along the receiving line meeting first the president, shaking his hand, being handed on--one smooth flowing gesture--and finding myself squeezing awfully hard the hand of Lady Bird Johnson. [laughter]

III FOSTERING OTHER EFFORTS IN CONSERVATION

Organizing the Sierra Club's Great Lakes Chapter

Holmgren: I'd like to break here to ask if by '68 you were at the University of Chicago, or were you still in Berkeley?

McConnell: By this time I was at the University of Chicago.

Holmgren: When did you go there?

McConnell: I left Berkeley in 1958. I was at the University of Chicago; I went from associate professor to professor. When I left there in 1969 I was chairman of the department, a full professor.

Holmgren: I see. Now, one of the records that I read indicated that you helped to organize the Great Lakes Chapter. Presumably that was while you were in Chicago.

McConnell: Yes, that was while I was at the University of Chicago. I don't think I can give you the right date. [1959]

Holmgren: The year that I have in my notes indicates that it was 1970, which by that time you would have left Chicago.

McConnell: No, that's wrong. It was the year before Dave Brower was knocked downstairs. I think it must have been around 1960 or so, close to there, because I came to Santa Cruz in 1969.

What happened was that Dave Brower came through, stopped off at our house, and asked me and Roger Hildebrand if we would take the lead in calling an organizational meeting to form a Great Lakes Chapter, and provided a pretty big handful of address cards. So Roger and I got together with a couple of other people. One was Ken Anglemire, the executive head of A. N. Marquis, the publisher of Who's Who. The other was Harry Kurshenbaum, the local leader of one of the major unions. These were people who had gone canoeing a lot and loved the out-of-doors.

McConnell: Roger and I called the first meeting and it was a pretty good turnout, probably fifty, seventy-five people. It was very quickly decided to form the organization.

Holmgren: Were these mostly Chicago people?

McConnell: Mostly, but there was Rich Gordon from Beloit, Wisconsin, for example, not too far away. Before long, as you know, subgroups were formed in Madison and in Michigan. It developed very quickly, and it was very successful. I can't claim very strong credit for much more than taking the initial steps since I soon left for a year in Africa.

Holmgren: So as far as the Great Lakes Chapter is concerned, your role was not one of an activist? You were not on the executive committee or anything of that sort?

McConnell: No. I think the reason I didn't play a more active part was, first of all, I was doing a great deal of writing at that point, and it was very intense. Also, there was a period when I went overseas.

Holmgren: Was that during a sabbatical?

McConnell: Yes.

Holmgren: And that was for at least a year, I'm sure.

McConnell: Yes, I spent somewhat over a year in Africa, in Uganda for six months, and then I was asked by the State Department--I have a bad habit of writing a lot of letters and memoranda, and I wrote a sharp letter to the State Department, saying that their program was wasteful and it lacked continuity, and what they ought to do was put something together so there would be continuity, and I outlined it. And it came back and said, "You and the University of Chicago do it." So I got stuck with being director of an exchange program over there [laughter], which also absorbed a lot of time and effort. But then, of course, over there I got involved in conservation of wildlife. [laughter]

Holmgren: Right. Was that a Fulbright program?

McConnell: Smith-Mundt, the same thing.

Establishing the Board of Environmental Studies at UC Santa Cruz

Holmgren: You came back to California in 1969. Now, while you were teaching at Santa Cruz, I take it that you went regularly to Stehekin for at least summer vacations.

McConnell: Yes. Well, I got involved in conservation here.

Holmgren: You did. Well, tell a little bit about that.

McConnell: The year 1969 was quite a critical period for the conservation movement. It was on the rise, and I was invited by the chancellor (Dean McHenry) to draw up a plan for an environmental program here. I was chairman of a committee that drew up a plan that, I think, has on the whole been fairly successful. I was given quite a bit of leeway by the chancellor. As it was originally designed, it was to have two prongs.

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McConnell: One was a program of courses that would involve as much of the entire campus as possible and not be a special, separate thing, which it has since become. Secondly, that it would provide a central clearinghouse of support for research on environmental problems, both locally and nationally. I was able at that time strongly to influence the choice of people to head it. One I wanted we got, [Richard] Dick Cooley, whom I'd met at the University of Washington when I'd been up teaching there for one quarter as a visitor. Dick Cooley came down and headed up the whole thing.

Holmgren: This is what's called the Environmental Studies Program?

McConnell: Yes. Well, it's the Board of Environmental Studies, and it's now been consolidated with a college, College Eight.

For the other part, I got hold of a young fellow. This makes a rather interesting tale. It goes back to the days of the fight for the North Cascades. While I was at the University of Chicago and writing my head off, mostly letters and articles, I got a very curious letter from an undergraduate at Oberlin. It said, "I've got a petition I'm trying to get different people to sign for protection of the North Cascades. Would you sign it?" It was sort of ridiculous [laughter], but it was sort of nice, too. I wrote back and asked him about himself. His name was Ben Shaine, and he asked me if there was any way he could get a job in conservation. I said, "Well, the best thing to do is to volunteer. Why don't you volunteer to help in the Seattle office of the Northwest conservation representative. (That's what Mike McCloskey's title was.) The person there at the time was Brock Evans.

He came out, and it turned out he was the son of a wealthy Michigan stockbroker and didn't need money, but he lived with Pat Goldsworthy. He was enormously effective in organizing testimony at all of the many hearings that took place on the North Cascades. Ultimately, that fight came to a conclusion--climax--so I brought him down here as sub-head, under Dave Cooley, of the research and information parts of the conservation program here.

McConnell: I was a member of the Board of Environmental Studies for a number of years, and I had to spend quite a bit of time, from time to time. It always seemed in need of rescuing for one reason or another. It has not been a total success, but then, it has achieved quite a bit.

Holmgren: That's my impression; I think it has been fine.

McConnell: Well, I would have liked some things to have gone differently, but it's alive and the present chancellor strongly favors it, and it's had quite an influence, particularly on Alaska. One of the most recent things, you've probably seen the report by Anne Harvey and Susan Georgette. [Local Influence and the National Interest, Ten Years of National Park Service Administration in the Stehekin Valley, Washington, Publication #4, Environmental Field Program, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1980]

Holmgren: No, I haven't.

McConnell: I'll give you a copy.

Trouble in Stehekin Valley

Holmgren: Let's come back to the North Cascades. During this period after the North Cascades National Park Act was passed, or the act which created the park was passed, it seems to me that there were some further activities toward putting some of these areas under either the park or under some kind of a permanent protection.

McConnell: Yes, well, it's still going on; I spent a large part of my summer on it, last summer. It's rather sad. The big issues have been settled. The act creating the park not only created the North Cascades National Park, but also two National Recreation Areas, NRAs, administered by the park; the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area and the Ross Lake National Recreation Area. The other parts, of course, were also important. It created the Pasayten Wilderness, a big one, which adjoins the park, and it added to the Glacier Peak Wilderness.

Holmgren: As I recall, that single act created protection for more than a million acres of land.

McConnell: Together with the Glacier Peak Wilderness, all told we now have under fair protection 1.67 million acres.

Holmgren: Yes, marvelous.

McConnell: And, of course, the protection has extended beyond because the Forest Service is scared silly that if they mismanage too badly they're going to lose it. It was a horrible shock to the Forest Service to have its empire torn apart. So in effect I would say there's something well in excess of two million acres under pretty good protection. Unfortunately, there is now a very serious issue in the Stehekin Valley. The Stehekin Valley, you've never seen it?

Holmgren: No.

McConnell: Well, you should. Come up and visit us.

Holmgren: I will, thank you.

McConnell: Just let us know. We're seven miles up the valley, and you need to let us know. Ed Wayburn said of it as we walked out (I think it was 1957), "This is another Yosemite." It's not another Yosemite; it's different, but it has some of the same geologic history and some of the same qualities. As a matter of fact, actually the scale, the magnitude, is greater in Stehekin, because of the enormous relief from thirteen hundred feet to 8,300 in a mile and a half, horizontal direction. It's very dramatic and, of course, lots of glaciers.

Well, what is now going on is that, as a consequence of a compromise reached when the act was being pushed through at that last tense period of August and September of 1968, the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area was torn away from the park itself and nobody, of course, knew what they meant by a National Recreation Area before that. I think it has to be very clear that the term, National Recreation Area, is used very loosely. It has different meanings depending on who creates it, and each one has to be regarded as strictly ad hoc.

The Lake Chelan National Recreation Area was part of a larger area that was including the upper two-thirds of Lake Chelan that Dave Simons proposed for the original North Cascades Park. But there were six or a few more homesteads in the lower part of the valley. (The lower part of the valley is what was once lake bottom but was drained. It is about nine miles long, one mile wide, roughly the same proportions, the same scale, as the Yosemite Valley.) It had about six homesteads. These had been broken up. (We own a corner of one of them, four and a half acres or so.) This private property supported, at the time of the passage of the act, a handful of people, perhaps forty. Everyone before 1945, say, was largely reliant on a subsistence pattern of life. When electricity came in, things began to change, and with the passage of the park act the land speculators entered in. This included some of the local people, too.

McConnell: The original compromise, and I'm very certain of this, was that the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area should be administered by the park as part of the park, except that hunting should prevail and that there should be no evictions of people. Land would be bought on a willing seller, willing buyer basis. Three million dollars I think was the amount of money given for the purchase of private land. Most of it went for extinguished mining claims, which is good, but Congress has since provided no more money. But the Park Service did acquire, the first three years it was in, roughly two-thirds of the seventeen hundred acres of private land in that valley. But there remain roughly six hundred acres in private hands.

The controversy that has existed since that time and that has peaked this year (I hope it has peaked), has been over a great deal of hysteria and misinformation, willful misinformation, on the part of the National Inholders' Association.

Holmgren: I know Mr. [Chuck] Cushman.

McConnell: Mr. Cushman has been up there. He has been recruiting inholders and threatening them with Park Service confiscation of their land, which is all totally false. But he has been able to capitalize on some of the John Birchite propensities of the people in the region. In the midst of this the Park Service has been completely pusillanimous. Far from threatening anybody, they have been screwing the national interest.

The critical part of the current issue is that there has been a terrible need for the Park Service to declare what is permissible use of private land and what is not. The critical language in the act of 1968 says that uses shall be compatible with the purpose of the act. So we have been pressing for a number of years to get a statement of compatibility. Finally the county, under the pressure of some of the locals, tried to assume total jurisdiction over the private land, of course strictly for the interest of land promoters. Disgraceful, utterly disgraceful.

Under pressure from us the Park Service finally this year (I think it was in August) issued some standards of compatibile uses. They're not nearly stringent enough, and they really should not be regarded as threatening in any way to private land owners, but there is near hysteria. The opposition, locally, was headed by our good old friend, Ray Courtney, whom we helped get into [the packing] business, whom we got the Sierra Club to hire as packer for North Cascades outings a number of times. He was a very charismatic individual, and he was able to appeal to a lot of the "Wild West" qualities, not quite John Waynism, but not altogether unlike him. Rather macho, and at the same time a delightful man.

McConnell: What happened this summer, alas, was that Ray was taking one of his parties up one of the trails, leading a string of pack horses, went up the side of a cliff, the horses tangled on the cliff, he went back to cut them apart, they spooked. Three of them went off, he went with them. He was killed. There was a vast outpouring of emotion. Something like five hundred people attended his funeral, from all over the country.

For the time being, I think some members of his family are maybe using all this emotionalism to try to promote greater freedom from the tyranny of the United States Park Service.

Crucial Role of the Sierra Club in the Cascades Battle

Holmgren: Can we come back to the campaign for the national park itself? I want to get clear the role that was played by the Sierra Club in the Northwest. As the campaign got underway in the early sixties, somewhere along about '61, '62 or '63, was the Sierra Club in an active position in relation to it? Did it do a lot of testifying and recruit people to come to hearings and write letters and that sort of thing?

McConnell: Yes. Well, you have to realize, anyone that was a member of the N3C or activists among the Mountaineers were also Sierra Clubbers--multiple membership.

Holmgren: Yes.

McConnell: The cutting edge in that fight was the N3C, but of course here were Pat Goldsworthy, who'd come from California, Polly Dyer, who'd come from California, who moved up there and were active Sierra Clubbers. Polly Dyer was at various times head of Olympic Associates, head of the Sierra Club up there. You know. The lines of distinction aren't that clear.

But let me be very clear on this at least. The role of the Sierra Club was absolutely fundamental to the success. The office of the Northwest Conservation Representative--first of all Mike McCloskey and later, Brock Evans--this was the work of the Sierra Club. It had the blessings of the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs. The Spokane Mountaineers and others lent a hand, but the real clout was the Sierra Club.

Holmgren: You've been active in the Sierra Club since 1956 at least; you were in there very briefly in '41. Do you have any comments to make about the way in which the Sierra Club functions, in terms of your own experience?

McConnell: Well, it's very different now than it was. I have a feeling, almost, of not being a member today. I live down here two-thirds of the year and the rest of the time up in Stehekin. This means that I'm not a member of any local chapter; I'm not part of it.

Holmgren: Well, on the books I think you're in the Santa Cruz group of the Ventana Chapter.

McConnell: But I'm not in touch.

Holmgren: Yes.

McConnell: I have been to two Sierra Club meetings: one at which I met you, and one when we first came here. I have addressed the Cascade Chapter once. I was asked when I was teaching up there to come to a meeting. But I'm not in touch. It's as though I'd lost my membership. There is not national membership; one only belongs to the Sierra Club.

Holmgren: That's right. At the very beginning, I was a national member, and then we formed a chapter on the Monterey Penninsula, and I've been active in that ever since.

McConnell: I feel I'm a stranger.

Dave Brower's Contributions

Holmgren: Well, you did say, though, that you had been involved in the fight around Dave Brower. Would you like to talk about that a little bit?

McConnell: I don't know. How much do you know about it? Do you want to ask questions?

Holmgren: Well, I'm just interested in what position you took and why you took that position, and then what you did.

McConnell: Well, as I think our previous conversation must make apparent, Dave Brower was involved in a lot of all this. One of the things that happened was the making of a movie called "The Wilderness Alps of Stehekin." Ever seen it?

Holmgren: No.

McConnell: Well I hope you do see it and see an uncut version, because it has been so emasculated that what one is most apt to see is a very sad pale reflection of what was originally there. The copies have been

McConnell: torn and badly patched. What the National Park Service has, I fear, has been edited deliberately to take out the appeals for conservation.

At a wilderness conference, I believe in 1956, my wife Jane and I saw a movie made by Charlie Eggert on Glen Canyon. (It was Glen Canyon before it was dammed.) Jane said what a marvelous thing it would be if we could get him to make a movie. We, of course, were rather poor, and we went to him in all innocence. He told us he would do it for eight thousand dollars. Of course if we went to anyone else it would have cost thirty thousand. That was the end of that little balloon, but we talked with Dave about it. Dave said, "Let's not give up. Let's start."

We got an appropriation for something like five hundred dollars from the club for film. We set it up for the first outing up in the Cascades, and the film was blown by somebody totally incompetent. Then Jane (who was simply unwilling to give up) had a college roommate at Yale Nursing School who happened to have some resources. I should have mentioned her before this--Abigail Avery. She and her husband Stuart did much for the North Cascades.

Holmgren: Oh, sure, I know her.

McConnell: We made an appeal to her. (We had sold our second cabin in Stehekin to Abby when we were going to Africa.) She was quite committed, and she came up with a grant of more money for a film. Dave said, "All right, this time I'm going to do it myself."

Dave came up to Stehekin. (It was one of those terrible years, rain all the time. You know, the Cascades vary a great deal, particularly on the east side.) I had to go down to Oregon while he was up there. I was on a research project. So Dave, and Jane, and our two kids, and Dave's boys went up to Cascade Pass, which is just an exquisite spot, with Ray Courtney. [He] was going to take pictures of the kids in the sun.

Cascade Pass can be pretty darn cold and mean, and it was on that trip. They stayed for about a week. Dave would get pictures of dripping drops from the leaves, cloud mists swirling around. It was a miserable occasion, and it was generally regarded as a failure.

I remember I was back from Oregon, and Dave said, "We'll make another try at it," and we went up to Park Creek Pass, which is even higher. We had a little spate of nice weather, got pictures of an avalanche on Booker Mountain and kids picking huckleberries.

McConnell: When we got back in the fall, Dave called me up and said, "You want to see the footage?" and I said, "Yes, I'll come up." I went up to his house, and he ran off five thousand feet of nothing; it looked like utter junk, just utter junk, and I said, "Dave, this is terrible! How can we ever face up to what we did with Abby Avery's money?" [He said,] "You just wait. I'm going to edit this." He did, and it came out beautiful, absolutely beautiful, and it played a very large part in the campaign.

Well, I'm a partisan of Dave's. I regard him as a very good friend, and I agonized all the way through his ordeal. In a way, I understand what happened. I saw how messy he was with his own travel records, his propensity for making large scale commitments that got the club into trouble. I remember the issue of his fight particularly over the Grand Canyon, and I shall always cherish a remark he made in his testimony before, I think, a Senate committee on the Grand Canyon. When they were talking about dams at "Marble Canyon" and "Bridge Canyon" he said, "Look, it's the Grand Canyon we're talking about!"

I think a lot of the people in the club, particularly the oldtimers, the more conservatives, were more disturbed about the danger to the club than to the Grand Canyon. I'm afraid that if I were ever persuaded it's a choice between the Sierra Club and the Grand Canyon, I'll take the Grand Canyon.

Holmgren: Well, let's hope there's never going to be that kind of a choice!

McConnell: Yes. But I think it seemed that way at the time. The club has survived it.

Dave is a very, very remarkable person. He, I think, has his own personal insecurities. He has a background of personal relationships going back to the 1940s, 1930s, with some of the people who ultimately went after him, I think with disgraceful intensity. There were personal dimensions all the way through this that I think not many people were aware of. I hope that at some point there'll be in this project that you're engaged in here a very extended interview with Anne Brower. She has a great deal to tell.

Holmgren: My impression is that there's been a great deal of healing of those old wounds on both sides, and that some of those who were his opposition in that long struggle have now reached out a hand, just as he has reached out a hand to them.

McConnell: Some of the hurts were awfully deep.

Holmgren: Yes, I know, I know.

Conservation and Lifestyle

Holmgren: I just would like to ask what kind of influence your involvement in these conservation matters, especially in the Cascades issue, what kind of effect that has had on your own life and your own lifestyle?

McConnell: To begin with, it's taken a lot of time; it's taken a lot of postage stamps. As I was saying earlier, it's had a lot to do with my whole theoretical orientation in my professional work. I think it's given me some very definite insights into the nature of American politics. Beyond that, it's been terribly preoccupying. At times I felt that I would like to escape it. (I think you must have.) And I have felt steadily, why have I spent so much time on the North Cascades and not on other issues as well? I have written a lot of letters, done various things on other conservation issues, but it always comes down to the matter that there are so few horses here and so few people who have the factual background in hand that, if it's to be done, frequently I have to do it.

I remember one time (we talked about Dave Brower quite a bit) bugging him early on in the Cascades, "Dave, won't you do this? Dave, won't you do that?" And he snapped back at me, "Well, Grant, sometimes when you're shaving you have to ask youself, 'Why don't you do it?', as you look in the mirror."

Holmgren: That's a question that we all ask ourselves all the time.

McConnell: Yes. I think that I would have, ideally, liked to have taken on issues on a broader scale, but there's always been some fire to put out.

Holmgren: Yes. What about the way in which your children were brought up? Do you think that your involvement had any impact?

McConnell: [laughter] Oh, they've been completely involved. Both my son and my daughter have played active parts. Just this last year, my son and his girl friend have been particularly active, from Portland, on the problem of the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. They've performed nobly. They've been involved.

Holmgren: Do they engage in outings?

McConnell: Well, they of course have always gone into the mountains. I don't think they've ever gone with the club though. I think part of our attitude, the family attitude, has been that we want to go in small groups. Something like a Sierra Club outing is apt to be a contradiction in terms.

Holmgren: Right. Do you feel that the involvement in the Sierra Club has had an influence on the way in which you live yourself, in terms of your own personal lifestyle?

McConnell: Oh, yes. Part of the same thing that got me involved in the Sierra Club has led us to spend a great deal of time in the mountains, of course, and all of us, the whole family, have been very much affected by this.

When Jane and I first went to Europe, our focus was the Alps. When we went to Africa, lived in Africa, our own personal focus was very much wildlife and, once again, the mountains there in east Africa.

I would not say that it's because of the Sierra Club, but the Sierra Club, activity with the Sierra Club, reflects the same involvement. Of course, I think you have to see this as a matter of feedback both ways. The more passionate one is about protecting the environment, the more one is going to be involved in the Sierra Club, and one is constantly being educated in return. It plays both ways.

Holmgren: Yes. Thank you very much.

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TAPE GUIDE -- Grant McConnell

Date of Interview: October 5, 1982

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Stewart M. Ogilvy

SIERRA CLUB EXPANSION AND EVOLUTION: THE ATLANTIC CHAPTER, 1957-1969

An Interview Conducted by
Jeri Nunn
Columbia University
Oral History Research Office
in 1978

Underwritten by
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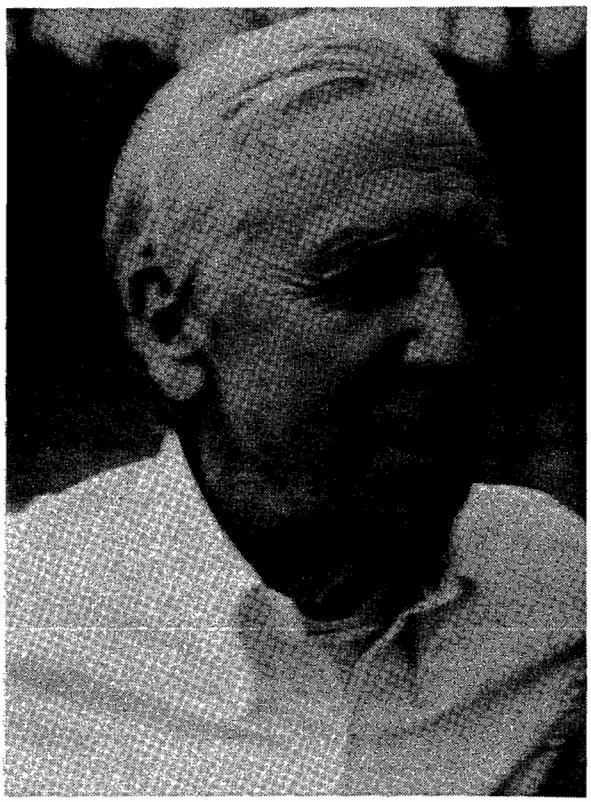
Sierra Club Oral History Project



STEWART OGILVY
1982

Avis Ogilvy, photographer

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INTRODUCTION by David Sive

To try to relate Stewart Ogilvy to the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club is much like relating leaves to trees, valleys to rivers, or rain to clouds. The two are so entwined that one cannot really delineate cause and effect. To me, as to so many other leaders and other members of the chapter, it was Stewart.

My wife, Mary, and I joined the club and chapter in the autumn of 1959. We had gone to a gathering of hikers and others, affiliated with a number of groups concerned with the effect of the Northway. It was slated to cross forest preserve lands ("forever wild") in Essex County in the Adirondacks. Building it required a constitutional amendment of New York's Article XIV. About forty people gathered near Elizabethtown that September or October weekend to discuss means of opposing the amendment and to walk on the lands that it would cross.

Environmentalists were not unanimous in opposing the amendment. It passed in November. The Northway was built. As far as I am concerned, its importance has been the beginning of Stewart's influencing and shaping my life--for the better. As so many others, I fell under the spell of his quiet doggedness, his utter selflessness, his humility, his eloquence of spirit, his dedication to what the Sierra Club struggles for.

The Atlantic Chapter's office then was his office in the Time & Life Building. I do not recall exactly what title he held. He led and directed, by the sheer force of his commitment and with the kindness and tact that must be taught in schools of foreign service, all of the chapter's activities and leaders. He was the worker, too; he did the envelope addressing as well as the meeting organization. He picked up when and if anyone else, including myself, faltered. He inspired a club generation of leaders--Harry Nees, Alfred Forsyth, Jesse Kitching, Bill Delmhorst, Ed Little, Bob Shell, Nancy Mathews, many others too numerous to name, and myself.

Whether it is true generally that "there is no history; there is only biography"* is arguable. In the case of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club it is as clear as summer sunlight in the Sierras, the Range of Light, that it would not be what it is were Stewart not its father.

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* Ralph Waldo Emerson

If this account, to serve as "an introduction to [Stewart's] oral history interview" is too personal, it is because the very qualities with which he served the club are those with which he serves close friends. He became and is as important and dear to Mary, myself, and our five children as to the club. For over twenty years he is one of our children's role models.

David Sive

September 28, 1982
New York City, New York

INTERVIEW HISTORY

In 1977, the Sierra Club History Committee, hoping to record the history of the club's Atlantic Chapter, asked Louis Starr of the Columbia University Oral History Research Office for assistance. Dr. Starr put us in touch with and provided supervision for Jeri Nunn, a student in his oral history class; the History Committee furnished background information on its suggested interviewee.

The hour-long interview on February 23, 1978, with Stewart Ogilvy, a prominent activist for the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth on the East Coast, was the result. In his remarks, Mr. Ogilvy describes the blend of outdoor recreation and conservation gospel that first got him involved in the Sierra Club in 1957, and which he later fostered on Atlantic Chapter outings. He discusses the growth and broadening of the club's concerns, with its attendant internal earthquakes, from the perspective of an involved East Coast member. And he reviews his work with Friends of the Earth and the Population Institute in the 1970s.

As the preface to the Columbia transcript noted in 1978, "Mr. Ogilvy has read the transcript, and has made only minor corrections and emendations. The reader is asked to bear in mind, therefore, that s/he is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than the written word." In 1982, Mr. Ogilvy and Ms. Nunn allowed the History Committee to retype the interview, furnishing it with titles and an index, and make it available in the present volume.

Ann Lage, Cochair
Sierra Club History Committee

March 8, 1982
Oakland, California

I THE SIERRA CLUB'S ATLANTIC CHAPTER, 1957-1969

[Date of Interview: 23 February 1978]##

Getting Hooked: Dave Brower and the Sierra Club High Trip

Nunn: Mr. Ogilvy, I understand that you have had a lot of experience and interest in conservation groups and you have worked with them for many years. Could you tell me how and when you got involved with them?

Ogilvy: Well, Miss Nunn, it's true that I've been involved for some number of years. My involvement I think has probably been exaggerated. I have never worked professionally with a conservation group except if a population organization is a conservation group. They are intimately related of course. You ask how I got involved.

I think it came about because I was interested in seeing something of the West, having had a small taste of it, and I signed on for a Sierra club trip in the High Sierra in 1957. To do that in those days one had to join the club, as I guess you still do. But then, one had to have a couple of sponsors, and to get sponsors at this long distance from San Francisco where the club had its headquarters and its chief organization I had to look up some people in New York. I found that there had been a group established in New York in about 1949, I think, the first chapter of the Sierra Club east of the Mississippi. It was called the Atlantic Chapter. Indeed it was the first one, I believe, and probably at the time I joined it, the only one outside California.

As I say there was a small chapter here, which I joined, or rather went out on some of their hikes--local hikes--looking for two sponsors. I found one in my own place of employment, Time Inc:

##This symbol indicates that a tape or segment of a tape has begun or ended.

Ogilvy: a chap named Gurney Brackenfeld who is now an editor of Fortune. He is someone who preceded me in the club and you might want to go over and talk to him. I also found Dr. Thomas Jukes who was leading the chapter at that time. Dr. Jukes was a chemist with, I believe, Lederle Laboratories, and has since had somewhat of a falling out with the club over their stand on pesticides; because he was a chemist deeply interested in food production, he perhaps naturally favored DDT and other pesticides, and the club was, under Dave Brower's leadership, coming out fairly heavily against them.

Anyway I think it was Jukes and Brackenfeld who became my sponsors in the club. I went West for a [club] trip (I've had nine or ten since then) and became hooked on that first trip. I remember that I met Dave Brower on that trip. I wonder if you've interviewed Dave.

Nunn: No. [Brower interview completed 1980.]

Ogilvy: If you have the chance you should because he is Mr. Conservation in the United States these days. Brower had been a member of the Sierra Club since boyhood, had become its first employed executive director in about, I think, 1952, and was already turning the club from what it had been--namely a sort of chowder and marching society, a hiking club, fairly socially prestigious, a group to a considerable extent oriented toward summer outings in the Sierra. Friends got together, people who were perhaps socially acceptable that had the two sponsors I've mentioned, and took what they called the "high trip" in the Sierra. They were already, under Dave's leadership, beginning to, by the time I got aboard, have trips other than in the Sierra--river trips, trips in the Cascades and so on. Brower had in a few short years re-emphasized what the club began with, namely a conservation ethic. John Muir had been one of the founders of the club and its first president, and he had been a crusading conservationist, as you doubtless know. Are you a member?

Nunn: No, I am not. I am interested in becoming one.

Ogilvy: Good. Well, you don't have to be sponsored now, but I urge you to join.

Brower had restored the heavy interest in conservation that the club had in the very earliest years, and was gradually turning it from simply a hiking club into a conservation organization. I remember he turned up near Bishop Pass while we were on that trip. He turned up not alone but with all his family. There was Dave and Anne and their four kids, the youngest of whom was five years old, and this little five-year old, Jonathan, had climbed over a 12,000 foot pass with a pack on his back. That really impressed me! [laughs] I thought what supermen and women this family were. Well, that's the way I met them, and I've been very fond of all the family since. I see Dave now and then, but I haven't seen the others for a long time.

Ogilvy: In any event, Brower's continued emphasis on conservation included conservation talks at the high trip campfire every night, and frequently a talk about some particular conservation problem.

And before I got through that trip I was hooked. I thought that conservation was certainly one of the foremost problems we had to face, and, inasmuch as years before--I was then working for Fortune magazine, but a number of years before I had been editor of World Government News, an organization that was then connected with the World Federalists--have you ever heard of them?

Nunn: No, I haven't.

Ogilvy: This is a group which proposed, back in the late thirties to mid-forties, that the only real avenue to peace was through a democratic federal world government. That is, to oversimplify it, a United States of the world. Instead we got the United Nations, which is a recreation of the League of Nations. The League of Nations failed; the United Nations is doomed to failure in its peacekeeping function. We were plugging for a genuine government where the individual is the unit, not the state. In any event, because of that organizational interest--perhaps I am a born "do-gooder" or something, but in any event it appealed to me to be working for conservation, so I plunged into it as a volunteer and have been a volunteer ever since. Gosh, I've come of age. That was twenty years ago. [laughter]

I continued in the Sierra Club, served in a number of offices in the Atlantic Chapter, putting out The Argonaut, which you mentioned earlier. I had had some editorial experience, so that was a natural.

Nunn: All of this was on a volunteer basis?

Ogilvy: Oh yes. It was a very modest publication. I don't think that you really will miss much if you don't find copies! It now has become the Sierra Atlantic, and it's now much more comprehensive in its coverage. The reason might interest you why it was called The Argonaut. It was that the chapter in the East had been formed in 1949 by a group of people who were expatriates from California. They came East to make their fortune in 1949. Do you remember what the people who went West, the Gold Rush in 1849, were called? They were called the Argonauts because they were searching for the Golden Fleece. [laughs] Well, so this reversal of roles 100 years later led Tom Jukes, who has a sense of humor, to name the publication The Argonaut.

An Elitist Organization?

Nunn: You said that you had to have two sponsors to be admitted.

Ogilvy: Yes.

Nunn: It seems to me that perhaps when you joined it it was sort of an elitist organization. Is that correct?

Ogilvy: To a degree, yes. Yes, and it's become much more democratic since. In a sense its very democracy has led it into some troubles, I am afraid. I am all for democracy, but the quarrel that you may have heard of that led to Dave Brower's resignation took place--to oversimplify--when Dave said, well, he'd put it up to a vote of the members, and unhappily the members were ill-informed, and indeed were misled, in my opinion--that's a partisan view, remember--by the other side who wanted Dave out and didn't elect him to the board, so he resigned his executive directorship. Well, that's really another story, and probably not what you wanted from me.

Nunn: Well, actually I would like to get into that, but I'd like to turn once more to your role within the club. Was the Atlantic Chapter itself kind of an elitist chapter as well when you joined it?

Ogilvy: Well, I never considered the Sierra Club or the Atlantic Chapter an elitist organization, but everything is relative, and certainly when you require two sponsors it's a little bit more elitist than when you don't. That was abandoned probably about 1959 or 1960, quite a while ago, and since then it's been easy to get in. Anyone who believes in what the club stands for is welcome to join.

Chapter Outings and Conservation interests

Nunn: Was the emphasis of the Atlantic Chapter on the wilderness trips or was it more on the political and conservationist stance that everyone thinks of the Sierra Club as having now?

Ogilvy: Well, because my own experience had been that of being attracted to a wilderness trip, I tried hard during my years as an officer of the club to knit the two together; that is, I thought that people would be better conservationists if they knew what they were trying to save. I thought that by getting out into the out-of-doors, if a person had some enthusiasm for that, they almost automatically would become conservationists in the sense of taking political action to that end. As I say, during my period in the Atlantic Chapter I strove as hard as I could to make the two inseparable.

Ogilvy: Now it has disappointed me that recently--I am still a member but not an active one--they have their trips, outings or hikes separate from the conservation activities of the club. For instance, the hikes are announced in the schedule that you have to subscribe to separately. You don't get that as part of your membership. In my day The Argonaut always published the hikes, and my recollection is that most of the good workers we got in the club during that period came about from first having met them on a hike. You'd get to talking perhaps about a highway invasion of park land--we always did it during my day. On a hike we'd have a luncheon stop, and at the luncheon stop somebody would be delegated to talk to the group about a conservation problem. Perhaps it was doing something about Black Rock Forest up here in the Hudson Gorge, or anything that happened to be current at the time. Very often after such a talk, as we resumed the hike, someone would come over and say, "That sounded pretty interesting. Is there anything I can do about it?" And pretty soon they'd be chairman of a committee to do this, that or the other. So it worked very well, and I regret very much that the local chapter seems to have abandoned that. But as I say I haven't been active, so maybe I am talking out of turn now.

Nunn: Did the Atlantic Chapter ever have any particular things that they wanted to save, like you mentioned the...

Ogilvy: Yes, of course we did, but I am afraid my memory is very poor, so I probably will be off base. I can't remember the years. We worked hard to save Black Rock Forest. It's owned by Harvard University, and there was some talk of Harvard University's giving it up. I think they were going to sell it for a housing development or something. The Atlantic Chapter was one of the leaders in the fight to save Storm King from power development. The chapter took part in, although it wasn't a leader, saving the Great Swamp in New Jersey from development as a fourth jetport for New York. We were somewhat active somewhat later in avoiding a fourth jetport at Stewart Field up behind Newburgh. The chapter now, I know, is involved in achieving and now is involved in laying a plan for the development of--or undevelopment of, I guess [laughs]--Gateway National Seashore. Back in my day we worked hard for preserving Cape Cod as a National Seashore, and Fire Island as a National Seashore. In neither case were we the absolute leaders of the fight, but we were strongly involved.

Nunn: How did the chapters work? Since Atlantic was basically the only one in this part of the country, did you work independently of San Francisco?

Ogilvy: In the beginning we considered our province of activity was everything east of the Mississippi. Gradually, as members began to join in various areas other than the New York area, they asked if they couldn't

Ogilvy: somehow have a group of their own. So there was developed under the then chairmanship I believe of a man named Robert Shull--then Atlantic Chapter chairman--a decentralization plan. He developed a decentralization plan whereby any group with twenty members perhaps--I forget--could petition to be a "group" of the Atlantic Chapter. That idea the club ultimately adopted, and each chapter began having regional groups close to it, but not right at the center of its operations.

Some of these regional groups--for instance one in Washington--very quickly became chapters on their own. They got more than twenty members. I think the Sierra Club charter or constitution calls for fifty members for a chapter, and twenty would expand quickly to fifty, and a new chapter would be born. I can't remember the dates, but chapters began to develop in various places. Now if you look at a map they are scattered all over the East.

The Power of Public Opinion: Role of the Argonaut

Nunn: How did the club work to try and fight for the undevelopment of some property, say like the Harvard property that they were trying to sell? How did you find out about it and what did the chapter do?

Ogilvy: Well, with any precision I can't remember in that particular case. I think, and I may be wrong, that there was a man named Rothschild, a lawyer, who was the conservation chairman of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. He seemed to know a lot about the undeveloped areas that might become state parks in the region, and developed a plan for about six, I think, areas that might be sort of a green belt (in nearby northern and western New York and New Jersey) of state parks. For instance I am sure his thinking probably sprang from the great Bear Mountain Harriman Park, which was a gift of Mrs. Harriman--at least the Harriman section was--and he thought that where there was other land undeveloped that should be preserved in a similar fashion for a parkland for this growing New York metropolis.

I rather guess that, in the case of Black Rock Forest, we learned about it through him, but I frankly don't remember. But the chief instrument that conservationists have to work with is the power of public opinion. We did everything we could to raise public opinion, and public opinion that had some political leverage--letters to the editors of newspapers, letters to our congressmen, to our assemblymen, you know.

I remember that one of Rothschild's particular aims was to have the area east of the Hudson, which is now known, I think, as the East Hudson State Park, but was then undeveloped, privately held land on Breakneck Ridge and Bull Hill. He wanted that made a state park, and ultimately--I don't know whether they had the idea already--the

Ogilvy: Rockefellers bought the property and gave it to the state.

Nunn: When you were editor of The Argonaut did you try and focus the attention of the members on different places that should be saved and did you try to get them to write letters and so on?

Ogilvy: Yes, we did, and as you may know the Sierra Club in 1966 lost its tax deductibility. This I believe, without the ability to pin it down, was really matter of political--I am searching for a word--well, it was tyranny.

Brower, as you may have heard, had published some ads in the New York Times and Washington Post to try to save the Grand Canyon from two power dams. In retribution for that, or in retaliation for that, I believe, the national administration set the IRS on him and the loss of deductibility was actually the result of that. But at that time, when the IRS was investigating the club they did a very thorough job one might say. I remember their coming into my office at Fortune, which was then the only office the chapter had, and going through my files of The Argonaut and pointing here and there. "See," the inspector would say, "you are asking for legislation--that's taboo." [laughter]

So I guess that, in addition to Brower's offensive adds, The Argonaut did its part too in bringing it about.

Nunn: Did the IRS come into your office before or after the ads?

Ogilvy: Afterwards.

Nunn: So they were trying to gather other information that...

Ogilvy: Well, of course I can't prove it, but I believe that this was political retaliation by the administration. You know, we recently after Watergate heard how Mr. Nixon used the IRS as a political tool. Well, I don't think that it was only Nixon who did that. The administration before him, President Johnson's administration, I think was responsible for the same kind of action--using the IRS in my view totally unethically and perhaps illegally to bring about something like this.

Nunn: Did the Atlantic Chapter of the club mainly focus its attention on projects in the East, or did it work with the San Francisco [headquarters] and California chapters for the Redwood National Park projects.

Ogilvy: Oh yes, we worked of course with the national organization as closely as we could. Of course, as members of the national club we received the Bulletin and very frequently mailings calling our attention to national issues, things in the Congress, but we also conceived that we had a degree of responsibility--special responsibility--for anything that took place within our own geographical area, and should initiate action on that; should, if the club wasn't already involved, call its attention to it so that they could give help. It was a two-way proposition.

Nunn: How did you get involved in the hierarchy of the club? Was it because no one else wanted to do it or you volunteered?

Ogilvy: Well, in anything like this you know the person who is willing to do a job gets stuck with it. You've been in organizations, you know how that works. I had done some editing, and somebody apparently knew this and said, "We desperately need somebody to edit The Argonaut. How about doing it?" So I did! I suppose because I'd done that and other things for the club I was naturally enough given a turn at the chairmanship. No, I didn't go out seeking it. On the other hand I didn't turn it down, so ...If someone is willing to do a job, they get it, usually, in a voluntary organization.

[pause]

Incidentally I should make quite clear that although you have come to me and have spoken very considerately about my editorship of The Argonaut, I was only one of a number of editors over the years. I can't remember how long I edited it, but probably not more than a couple of years. As soon as I possibly could, I got somebody else to take that off my hands. Jessie Kitching, who was an editor of Publishers' Weekly, was a pigeon very obviously, so we got her to take it very soon. There was a young woman at Life, then Alicia Hills--now Mrs. Moore--and I think the sequence was first Jessie Kitching after me, and then Alicia Hills. It may have been the other way around. But she was a researcher at Life. You don't even remember Life magazine, do you?

Nunn: Yes, I do. [laughter]

Ogilvy: So she was a natural as it were, and I expect that, when I ducked out from under, Jessie did the same a couple of years later for Alicia. Then there was young chap who was an editor for Houghton Mifflin I think, named Sarabrakian, who took over from whoever was then editor. It's been a succession of people who were not quick enough to say "No."

From Wilderness to Population, Nuclear Power, and International Conservation: Brower's Impact on the Sierra Club

Nunn: How do you see the change in the Sierra Club? Do you see that there is a pattern of change over the years from maybe an emphasis on wilderness to something else, or has it basically remained the same?

Ogilvy: Oh yes, there has been a very considerable change during the years that I've been in it, and to a very considerable extent that change, even though he is no longer directing the club, has been Dave Brower's doing. I told you earlier that Dave reversed the emphasis of the club from its hiking emphasis--although they certainly didn't give up hiking, but it was chiefly, when Dave came into it, so far as I can gather--I wasn't then a member myself--very largely a hiking club with some interest in conservation. In the five years that Dave was executive director before I became a member, he had already substantially changed the emphasis to that of a conservation club that also had an interest in hiking.

Thereafter Dave, probably about 1958 or 1959, interested the club in the population problem. I can recall that I already had some interest in population and had a close friend who was executive director of one of the population organizations, and I can recall having Dave and him at lunch and finding that Dave was already quite interested in the population problem as one that was sort of basic conservation.

Several years thereafter Brower persuaded Dr. Paul Ehrlich to write the book The Population Bomb. You know about this?

Nunn: Yes, I do.

Ogilvy: And here again he was taking the leadership in doing something about population, you see. That wasn't the club doing it as such, it was Dave Brower doing it, but ever since, practically, there has been a strong interest in population in the club. I was chairman of its local population committee, and they have a national population committee, have had for a number of years.

A very bright girl, Judith Kunofsky, who is now national president of ZPG [Zero Population Growth], is head of the club's population effort.

Brower, as I say, changed the club from hiking to conservation, back to where it had been under John Muir. He saw conservation as something much broader than just saving the wilderness, although that was certainly the chief emphasis. Brower himself is a great outdoorsman, a demon hiker, a mountain climber, a trainer of ski troops during the war

Ogilvy: and so on. But he saw conservation as something that wasn't just saving the redwoods or the wilderness, but was something that required an interest in population, and interest in the whole environment. It was improving the quality of life if you will.

Brower incidentally had been a world federalist way back when, so the three come together. Have you seen a book that Friends of the Earth has just published called Progress as if Survival Mattered? Somewhere it calls itself "a handbook for a conserver society." This gives pretty much the range of interests that Brower now has, all of which can come under the general heading of conservation, but they include the way to peace through world government, the overriding necessity for limiting, indeed reducing, the population of the world, and the urgent necessity of limiting the proliferation of nuclear power. It is dangerous in so many ways just from the safety standpoint, and in very many other ways, particularly the jeopardy in which it puts us of future nuclear war.

So Brower's view--I suppose it's developed over the years--was much wider than just saving the wilderness, and gradually he undertook to get the club into more and more of these fights. Things like population--he developed the club's interest in that.

Along about 1968, I guess, the Pacific Gas & Electric was going to put a nuclear reactor in Diablo Canyon. Have you run into this question?

Nunn: I was reading about it in the Sierra Club Bulletin.

Ogilvy: Well, Brower felt that this was highly dangerous, both from the point of view of its danger to humanity and also from the point of view that it was going to ruin one of the very lovely last vestiges of the California coastline. I remember that during that fight I was still active in the club, and I don't know whether I was up for election to the national board or something, but in any event I went out to California and saw the area that they were then going to damage. It was a totally wild, lovely ravine on the California coast, a magnificent place that they shouldn't have been allowed to damage, but now there is a large reactor complex--there are two reactors there--which has never been activated. The reason is that, after building it, they discovered that there was an earthquake fault just within a very short distance, and now the way they built it is not strong enough to withstand an earthquake if one came, and they are trying to decide now whether to spend the extra billion dollars or so to make it safe for a medium size earthquake!

Nunn: But then in the meantime they've destroyed the ravine.

Ogilvy: In the meantime they've destroyed the ravine, yes. They haven't yet destroyed the humanity around it, but...

Well, Brower got very interested in the nuclear battle and has been one of the very leaders in that. The Atlantic Chapter, I've rather lost sight of what they've been doing in this connection, but back in the days when Indian Point was a-building we were agin it--the place up the Hudson, you know, for Consolidated Edison's nuclear reactors. They too have discovered an earthquake fault fairly close.

I am reasonably confident personally that nuclear power is just going to disappear--I hope before a major accident takes place. I don't think it's economically viable, quite apart from its hazard to people.

Well, this was another facet--nuclear survival was another facet of Brower's interest in conservation.

Brower had been an editor at the University of California Press, and that led him to a series of books for the Sierra Club which you may have seen, very large format, beautiful books.

He ran into trouble there because the board of directors felt that he was tying up too much of the club's capital in those books. Of course beautiful books like that cost a lot to print. You have to print quite a few of them to make it pay, then they stand on your shelves and the money that you paid for printing them is not available for other purposes. So the board of directors objected to that.

Brower also felt that the battle for air pollution for instance, water pollution, the nuclear battle, none of them stop at national borders. Therefore conservation should be an international operation, and he started to do something about that, and the board of directors objected to that.

The 1969 Sierra Club Election: Perspective of a Brower Partisan

Nunn: In the election that you talked about earlier, when he was not elected to the board, in the months before I was reading the Bulletin, and the president at that time was saying that there were disagreements within the board and problems, but they never stated what they were. I think it was right after the Redwood National Park had passed and he was saying something like there were some people in the organization that want to go ahead in new directions

Nunn: and there are others who don't. But he never said who wanted to go forward and who didn't and what the problems were. Could you tell me something about that, because I wasn't able to find out.

Ogilvy: Well, it's all hazy in my mind, it's been so long ago. I used to have a lot of papers at home (you'd be welcome to them if you want) that might, if you have to pin this down, give you more of a background. Incidentally I was a partisan, heavily Brower's partisan in this fight, so anything I say you must discount with that knowledge. [laughter]

But, as nearly as I can remember and as I saw it, the board was comprised of a number of people who had been in the Sierra Club for many, many years. To my recollection there was no bylaw that prevented their constant reelection, so that there were names on the board of directors that occurred repeatedly over a number of years. I am only guessing at their motives, and that's not a good thing to do, but I suspect that several of those people, perhaps the majority of them, felt that this young whippersnapper--Brower was still a fairly young man--has come in and changed the direction of the club and is doing away with this nice thing that prevented us from having members that we didn't much like--taking away the sponsorships--is getting a rabble in to come on our nice, friendly hikes, and we just don't like it.

I remember particularly that there was one vote that came up regarding the matter of having chapters or branches of some sort overseas, and some lawyer on the board brought in a legal opinion that this was--oh gosh, he had a Latin name for it that I've now lost ["ultra vires"]. It was a bit of a joke on our side for a while--that this was completely impossible under the law according to him, and you couldn't go outside the United States.

Well, there were a number of things, you see. There was the publishing program, there was the matter of going outside the United States, there was the matter of the whole emphasis on nuclear problems. One of the precipitating matters was the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant.

Brower is a bit of a headstrong man. When he thinks he is right he goes ahead and does it and he doesn't always do the politic, diplomatic thing. In this particular case he projected an issue of the Sierra Club Bulletin that would be all about Diablo, pro and con. He and Hugh Nash--the man who edited this book for Friends of the Earth (points to Progress As If Survival Mattered)--wrote the pro side; that is, don't let them take Diablo for a power station. The people who were in favor of it were asked to supply material for the other side. They failed to do so by the time that the Bulletin should come out, so Brower printed half a Bulletin, leaving blank pages for the other side.

Ogilvy: Well, this really wasn't wise, because people who didn't know thought that he had not given those favoring the Diablo site a chance to state their side, and of course it infuriated the people whose side was minimized that way. It was an unwise move that I am sure Dave would concede at this point he should not have made. In any event the vote came shortly after that and there was a lot of bad feeling at the time. Fortunately, I think it's all knit up again because Brower is now and honorary vice president of the club. He was voted that about a year ago.

Nunn: You said you were very partisan of Brower. What did you do as a partisan of Brower? Did you campaign for him?

Ogilvy: Yes. I can't remember all the details, but I can remember spending a whale of a lot of time on it, getting out mailings, lobbying, various things like that. We called ourselves the ABC Committee, was it? Or maybe that was the other side. I can't even remember now. I guess it was "A Better Club" [ABC--Committee for an Active, Bold, Constructive Sierra Club]

Nunn: A Better Club?

Ogilvy: Maybe so, I am not sure. [laughter] In any event you asked a question earlier and I didn't quite answer it. You asked if the club had changed in its view of conservation. Yes, it has changed. The changes I believe were largely initiated by Dave Brower. They were all in the direction of a wider interest than just the wilderness, although he is still a wilderness fan and the club has done a great deal to save the wilderness. But the whole environment, the whole human environment has become his province, has become Friends of the Earth's province--this is the organization that he started when he failed of election to the club's board.

The club, after he left it, adopted one after another all the things that he stood for. They have an international division, they have continued his book publishing that he started. I am sure if you ask anyone now whether Diablo nukes are a good thing or not they'd curse them [laughter], so it's been a justification of what he was doing. Unfortunately he hasn't always done these things that were right in the right way, at least in a peacemaking way.

II FRIENDS OF THE EARTH AND THE POPULATION INSTITUTE, 1970's

FOE's Beginnings and Its Place in the Spectrum

Nunn: When he left the club how did that affect the Atlantic Chapter and your interest in the Sierra Club?

[pause]

Ogilvy: Well, my interest in the Sierra Club has continued, but shortly--

I think that vote was in April, when he lost, and by June or July he had decided that he didn't want to give up his efforts for all the things that he stood for in the club, and asked me and several others if we didn't think that another organization that stood for these things--because the club didn't at that time, you know, just having kicked Brower out for all these things they were very conservative. I say "kicked out". That didn't quite happen, but you see what I mean. Brower asked us if we didn't think that it was time to start another organization, and he had what he thought was a pretty good name, "Friends of the Earth," and we said yes, we got behind him, and started Friends of the Earth [FOE]. It had its headquarters in New York at first, and has only fairly recently moved to San Francisco, It was here for quite a while.

Nunn: What does it take to start a new organization like that?

Ogilvy: A lot of time, a little money and a lot of drive. [laughs]

Nunn: They are the same kind of people that are in the Sierra Club or are they people that are more internationally oriented?

Ogilvy: Well, I think that the attraction to Friends of the Earth has been entirely interest in the environment in all its aspects. They are interested in wilderness too, but, for instance, the local branch, the New York branch of Friends of the Earth is right now very deeply engrossed in fighting the Westway here in New York, you know, urban concerns. Their concern is over air pollution, chiefly, and water pollution, and destruction of the Hudson River, also in getting people in New York better transport, improving the subways. Members of Friends of the Earth are primarily interested in the environment. We have no hiking program, no outdoor program as such. Lots of outdoor people are among our members, but that isn't why they join; whereas the Sierra Club, I feel reasonably sure, still gets a very large percentage of its membership because they run hikes and they run outings. Are you familiar with the summer outing schedule of the Sierra Club?

Nunn: Yes.

Ogilvy: Have you ever taken any of those?

Nunn: I never have.

Ogilvy: You'd enjoy it.

Nunn: I think so!

Ogilvy: Yes. As I say I have been on ten or eleven, some I am sure since I formally left the club, and have enjoyed them all immensely, but I think that that program gets the Sierra Club a great many of its members if not all. In the case of Friends of the Earth most of the people are attracted to it because it's militant, because it's doing a good job, a forceful job in Washington, and to the degree it can locally.

Nunn: Does it have a nonprofit tax status?

Ogilvy: It does not have tax deductibility for contributors. But it has now, as the Sierra Club has, a parallel sister organization that does just educational work and does have tax deductibility.

Nunn: That's a foundation.

Ogilvy: Right. The Sierra Club Foundation, Friends of the Earth Foundation.

Nunn: So the effects of the Sierra Club/IRS battle have continued.

Ogilvy: Yes. As you may know, the Congress has liberalized within the last year the prohibition against lobbying by so-called 501(C)(3) organizations. Are you familiar with that?

Nunn: No, what does that mean?

Ogilvy: The tax law has sections in it that are numbered and lettered. An organization that has 501(C)(3) status is both tax exempt and tax deductible, that is to say it pays no taxes, and people who contribute to it don't have to pay tax on that contribution. A 501(C)(4) organization is itself tax exempt, but contributions to it are not deductible from income tax.

Well, now the Congress has passed a law that I am not wholly familiar with, but something to the extent of 20% of a 501(C)(3) organization's income may be devoted to lobbying, but under certain conditions. They have to report, make voluminous reports to the government and so on. In the case of both the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth, since we already have foundations that are wholly deductible to carry on our educational pursuits, we have...

Ogilvy: Oh, first you have to let the government know that you want this status, you see. We (Friends of the Earth) have decided not to say we want this status because we'd like to be a strong, uninhibited lobbying organization, and we'd also like to have our cake as well by being able to carry on educational pursuits under deductible status. We have both now, so there is not much sense in taking this new status.

Nunn: I think you belong to the Scenic Hudson Preservation Conference.

Ogilvy: Yes.

Nunn: And Zero Population Growth.

Ogilvy: Yes. You name it, almost everything.

Nunn: Almost everything.

Ogilvy: At one time or another, not all at once now. Can't afford them all.

Nunn: Don't all these organizations kind of have an overlap of energy now that the Sierra Club has taken over some of the changes that Brower wanted to make?

Ogilvy: Yes, to an extent that's true. However, I think that there is a very good defense for a multiplicity of organizations in any voluntary field. Look at the churches. Why don't all the churches get together? Well, the reason is of course because everybody has his own sort of private view of what his religion is, and to the degree that that is consistent with the views of some other people he goes along with them in a particular sect, but if they diverge very much from other people it makes for the different denominations. So in the environmental movement. Friends of the Earth now, to which I give my prior allegiance, is in my view the most militant of the environmental organizations.

Perhaps I am doing the Sierra Club an injustice because I simply haven't been in very close touch with them recently. I maintain my membership. I get their publications, but frankly I don't read them as closely as I read Friends of the Earth's. I am sure they are doing a good job and a necessary job, but to the degree that their emphasis is on hiking, the outdoors, things that I consider desirable but not essential, in the limited time I have to give to something I prefer to go with the organization that's focusing on the things that most interest me. But I think that goes for just about everybody. We all like to spend our time and our money on the things that most interest us, and if there is a slight difference between two organizations in the emphasis they put, you want to put your principal emphasis on the one that is most agreeable to you.

Ogilvy: There are a lot of advantages though. The man down in Congress who serves my district hears that there are--how many?--200,000 members of the Sierra Club, and there are only 20,000 members of Friends of the Earth, but he doesn't know that quite a few of those are the same people! He adds it up and gets 220,000, whereas it's probably only about 205,000. In other words we are fooling them a little bit by that, but I wouldn't put too much emphasis on that. [laughs]

Nunn: What is the focus of Friends of the Earth? Is it population? Is it nuclear power?

Ogilvy: Well, I wish I had another copy of this book [refers to Progress as if Survival Mattered] to give to you. It's too big for you to read anyway, you probably wouldn't. But in a sense this is the...well, the prospectus of Friends of the Earth, the thing that, as much as anything does, states the policy of the organization. We've been so busy that in the--how many?--nine years of our life we've never got out any coherent policy statement before this. But if you want to look down the subjects, the titles of the chapters, you may answer your own questions.

Nunn: Well, the first chapter is Population. The next one is Energy.

Amory Lovins and the Soft Energy Path

Ogilvy: Yes, yes. Energy is very much a focus of our efforts right now. Indeed, I've been, I guess, bragging a little bit about Brower, our president. One of the other people that is very important to Friends of the Earth and about whom I like to brag--because you are going to hear this name in the future--is Amory Lovins. Does the name mean anything to you?

Nunn: No.

Ogilvy: Well, he is an astonishing young man. I don't know how Brower came across him, but Brower has rather a penchant for finding talented young people and sort of giving them their heads and telling them to work hard and report back. In the case of Amory Lovins he discovered a young man who had graduated with a degree in, I think, nuclear physics from Harvard, and was in London where, I believe, he had a fellowship at Oxford, or at least was about to get one. Brower somehow persuaded him that right now the most important thing he could do would be to work with Friends of the Earth on the nuclear energy problem. Lovins gave up his fellowship at Oxford and...I forget what he called it, but I think it was also a fellowship at Harvard to which he was invited,

Ogilvy: and became a representative of Friends of the Earth in London. He is a brilliant young guy. He began writing on energy problems and nuclear matters and what he said was so cogent that a number of the experts picked him up and he has now, only a couple of years later, been all over the world consulting with governments on their energy problems; he was called down to Washington to meet the president a few weeks ago; he's briefed Secretary Schlesinger; he's done consultancy for the government of France, Norway and Sweden, the United Nations, you name it. He is, I think, twenty-seven years old, and he is a multifaceted chap. He is a musician; he is a magnificent writer, he speaks well, he has a great deal of wit; he's got a tremendously quick brain. He was asked to write an article for Foreign Affairs magazine, which he called "The Path not Taken: Soft Energy." And his thesis is that if we continue on the present "hard" path--that is big, centralized powerhouses, many of them nuclear, producing in large part electricity--we are going to run into tremendous trouble in the near future; safety, running out of fuel supplies (necessary uranium isn't limitless, and neither is coal). If we go to coal, for instance, we are going to run into air pollution problems; if we continue with nuclear, we are going to have problems that are severe in the matter of low level radiation, the safety problem of a gigantic explosion, practically a holocaust, the matter of security--how do you preserve nuclear materials from--well, Idi Amin or some blackmailers who would steal a little bit and then say that they are going to put off a bomb, and how do you tell that they haven't got one?

If we go that route, Lovins points out, we are going to have practically a police state that will require tremendous trampling on civil liberties. If we continue using electricity the way we have, we'll run out of fuel much sooner than we might otherwise, because electricity is a very inefficient form of energy for most end uses. You lose a great deal of the value of the fuel when you turn it into steam and when you use the steam to turn generators you lose more, when you transmit the electricity over wires you lose a great deal more. So you get perhaps thirty percent of the original input when you get it to the light bulb and then the light bulb loses another twenty percent. So electricity isn't a very good form of energy.

Lovins has developed this theme--the idea that this hard path, using electricity with centralized power plants, will cost a great deal of capital; more capital, if you project it, than is likely to be available for all our purposes in future years. If you continue that way, we are going to get into a terrible bind. If, instead, we try to decentralize to the degree we can, have such power plants as we need locally, have co-generation, which means generating electricity as a byproduct of steam that's used for industrial processing--for instance all chemical plants need steam, they could generate their own electricity just as a byproduct of that steam; instead they buy

Ogilvy: electricity from Con Edison and waste the steam. If we undertake to turn biomass--farm wastes, sawmill wastes, and that kind of thing--into methane and methanol, we can provide liquid fuel for automobiles for instance. All of this would be decentralized, much less damaging to the environment, much less damaging to civil rights and all the rest of it. Well, this is the soft energy path, and Lovins has been explaining this eloquently. He did so in the Foreign Affairs article I spoke of.

That caught hold and has been circulated around the world. [phone rings, interruption]

I am sorry, I seem to be lecturing you rather than answering your questions.

Nunn: You said you gave all your available energy to Friends of the Earth. What are you doing with them now?

Ogilvy: If I said that I probably misspoke, I am doing very little with them now, I've done more in the past. A great deal of my available energy is spent here at this desk for the Population Institute, because it too is one of my enthusiasms as well as my job. As regards Friends of the Earth now I am still a member of their national board of directors, but will not stand for re-election come next April I think, because I simply don't have the time to do anything useful for them as well as do what I need to do here. I am a vice president of Friends of the Earth Foundation and religiously go to their meetings, and tonight for instance will go down for a volunteer evening that my wife and I regularly hold every Thursday. But beyond that I am not doing very much.

The Population Issue and the Business Community

Nunn: I see. You were a writer and I think associate editor of Fortune?

Ogilvy: I was.

Nunn: Isn't that a business magazine?

Ogilvy: Yes.

Nunn: In a way it seems to me that the focus on overpopulation and conservation is in many ways opposed to businesses.

Ogilvy: No, I think that's wrong. I am a believer in the free enterprise system. I worked for Fortune because I believed that it was a

Ogilvy: good magazine doing a good job. Fortune is or was back when I was working on it--which is a long time ago--a much more liberal magazine than people I think generally gave it credit for. It was for a system of business where the public interest was served by business. I think that, from what I have seen of purely socialist states or communist states, the public interest frequently is not served; instead the political interest of a few power-hungry men is served. It's my philosphy that any very great concentration of power is dangerous, and basically the free enterprise system calls for a multiplicity of centers of power, decentralization. Adam Smith you remember spoke of the invisible hand that directed the economy to the most efficient use of its resources. Well, I don't think that we have the kind of market system that Adam Smith was talking about, but I do think that we are a lot closer to it than I would say Russia is.

While I was at Fortune there were two or three articles on population. They weren't perhaps as vehement as the one I wrote here about the necessity of reducing the population, but I think that there is a stereotype about business as being against population control for instance and so on that is somewhat unjustified. The Wall Street Journal some time ago--and I can give it to you if you are interested--printed an article called "The Economy Does Not Need More People." And actually it pointed out that, if sheer numbers of people were necessary for a prosperous economy, China and India would lead the world in prosperity. The fact is quite the reverse--that you need purchasing power to have a vigorous economy, and you can't get that from sheer numbers of people. In fact if we had about half the number of people that we have now in the world we would probably be able to sustain that population at a very much higher standard of living than it now has for the indefinite future. We could recycle our metals and things that are totally irreplaceable, we could... well, we could sustain a viable economy. But with growth or even with the continuance of the present population I see no hope for the industrialized world. I think that it's much in the interest of business to support reasonable population control, and indeed some businessmen see that too. I could name quite a few businessmen who are on my side in this. I think it's a stereotype that business is against population control.

Appropriate Steps Toward Population Control

Nunn: When you are talking about population control, what steps are you taking, like birth control methods, abortion? What is the main focus of say Friends of the Earth and the Population Institute?

Ogilvy: I don't want to speak for either organization. Well, I am an employee of the Population Institute and an officer of Friends of the Earth, so I suppose I have some authority to speak for them, but I don't want you to misunderstand.

Friends of the Earth has pretty much--this article states what it thinks is necessary, namely the goal of an ultimately reduced population on the earth. How we get there, it has taken no stand on. That is to say on the abortion question we are, as an organization, neutral. If you ask me what I think personally, I think it ought to be a woman's right of choice: if she wants an abortion she should be able to have it; it's something that is going to affect her life more than anyone else's except her child's, and she should have the power to say. I think that government money should be available for abortions for the poor who can't otherwise have them. This is my personal view. Birth control, certainly, I think that it's utterly necessary that any and all forms be available to the greatest degree possible. Otherwise we'll never get to the goal.

The Population Institute doesn't take a stand on any of those things. It is instead involved in trying to motivate people to the ethical, cultural change of thought that is necessary to have smaller families as the ideal. Right now I would like to see population reduction come about entirely voluntarily; that is, that people would be so high-minded that they would limit their child getting to such a degree that we'd have no trouble in reducing the population to maybe half its present (numbers). I'd love to see that.

The facts of life are otherwise, however. The vast majority of parents in the world want more than two children. They have to cut down below two to reduce the population, but two would keep us just about even where we are. Actually the vast majority of people want three or four or five or six. In the United States probably between two and three is the ideal. In India it's probably five. In many portions of Africa it's six or seven or eight, because there children are social security; they are help on the farm. And going to bed is also the only way that people can enjoy themselves--they don't have money to go to the movies, so...[laughter]. So for a lot of reasons they want more children, they are going to have more children. So I don't believe that the world is going to reach the desirable reduction by voluntary means. This is not to say that I want any sort of coercion, but I believe that we are going to come to the necessity of, first, incentives from government to people to have fewer children, and probably in many parts of the world, coercion by governments to require that they have fewer children.

Nunn: Do you think we are going to need coercion here in the United States?

Ogilvy: Well, we've been reasonably successful so far. Our birth rate until very recently has been going down. It's going up again now you know.

Nunn: No, I didn't know.

Ogilvy: It is, but that's probably merely sort of an echo of the postwar baby boom. It's gone up again a little bit for the past year. I think it will take a dive again, and that's good, but the problem is here; we, with the most affluent society that the world has ever known, are using up the world's resources, and we are polluting the world more than any other nation in the world. One baby born in the United States is, it's been estimated, likely to use up the resources that fifty babies in India might use during a lifetime. So, in that sense, you can say that the United States is the most overpopulated country in the world, and that it's more important that our population go down than that anyone else's does.

If the government were to look at it in those terms they'd have to coerce mightily. I don't think they will. I think it is within the realm of possibility that laws will be passed that provide some incentive for smaller families. For instance the tax laws now give a rakeoff for every extra child you have up to a certain number. That should be reversed. When you go to the movies if you are under twelve you get a lower price. It shouldn't be.

Nunn: They should charge you more! [laughter]

Ogilvy: Right. Things like that could make a difference, and that, can you call it coercion or is it just incentive? [laughs] There ought to be a lot of that done. First of all we ought to get a president who is much more straightforward about population than Mr. Carter is, or we ought to persuade him. And we ought to get a secretary of HEW who is more enlightened than Mr. Califano. We ought to get more people in Congress to recognize the problem and who are going to do something about it. We should have a commission, or rather we had a commission, but we should do the things that they recommended. For instance have Congress state that it is the policy of the United States to stabilize, or perhaps reduce, its population. If there were merely a congressional statement to that effect, it would make a great deal of difference.

Nunn: Are you working for that kind of statement here?

Ogilvy: The Population Institute is tax deductible and cannot lobby. However, speaking as an individual I certainly am working for it. I bug my congressman on it every so often.

Nunn: Friends of the Earth can too.

Ogilvy: Friends of the Earth can and does.

Nunn: Is there any final word you have to say?

Ogilvy: Well, I guess I got off the track of history and have been lecturing you and I apologize for it.

Transcription arranged by Columbia University Oral History Research Office.

Final typist: Stacey Cook, Berkeley, California

APPENDIX--Additions and Corrections to the Oral History

7933 Willow Street
New Orleans, LA 70118

May 2, 1983

Mrs. Ann Lage
5768 Mendocino St.
Oakland, CA 94618

Dear Ann:

Tardy thanks for sending me a copy of the Sierra Club Oral History volume containing interviews with Al Forsyth and me. You have done a fine job in preserving information about the club that might otherwise be lost. I am highly complimented to be among those chosen to be interviewed.

But I am a bit unhappy that, when I was interviewed, I failed to realize the purpose or scope of your project. If I had, I think I should have been more painstaking in recalling the contributions to the Atlantic Chapter's growth of many, many others besides myself.

The chapter, after all, had been a going concern for more than seven years before I came along. and the efforts, during those years, by Dr. & Mrs. Richard Noyes, Dr. Thomas Jukes, Benjamin Cummings, Merritt Kastens, Gurney Breckenfeld, George Adams, William Delmherst, and many others should not have gone unnoticed.

There were numerous additional people who helped mightily to build the chapter further during my own active period. Al Forsyth specifies more of them than I did, but I'm sorry not to see in either his interview or mine the names of such stalwart workers as Fred Allis (Al does mention him -- p. 47 -- but without a name and designated admiral; he is in fact a retired naval captain), Moe and Phyllis Eichen, John Mitchell, Azuba Ward, Irving Delappe, Michele Perrault, Stuart Driller, Brooke Alexander, Brian Moran, Hilde Werthauer, george Schindler, Gary Kuris, Bob Hughes, and many, many others.

Moreover, the encouragement we got from John Oakes of The New York Times and from Justice William O. Douglas, who led two important hikes for us, should have been more fully remembered.

Mention of the last two persons leads me to offer some slight corrections to Al Forsyth's interview. He reports that Justice Douglas and Brower hiked along the disused right-of-way of the Putnam Division of the New York Central trying to save it as a hiking trail.

I'm reasonably sure the Justice was not on that particular hike but indeed did lead one designed to save the right-of-way of the Old Croton Aqueduct as a public park (an idea initiated by the Atlantic Chapter). That hike, which got excellent media coverage, achieved its purpose. The 66-foot-wide aqueduct, long out of service and becoming impassable, was soon thereafter rescued by the state legislature and made into a 42-mile-long state park, "the longest noodle-shaped park in the world," as described by The New York Times.

A second Douglas-led hike was designed to improve public appreciation of the

Hudson River's west shore as a hiking trail -- and did so. Both hikes were conceived by the chapter but were carried our in cooperation with the New York - New Jersey Trail Conference and many member organizations.

In my interview, I notice one repeated misspelling: Brackenfeld should be Breckenfeld. Because Gurney was important to the early days of the chapter and because his mother and father have been Sierrans for many decades, I hope his name can appear correctly at least in your master copy of the history.

In Al's excellent interview, I noticed several small items you may want also to correct on the master version: Among named chapter chairmen were Robert Shull (not Shell), Harry Nees (not Harvey Neece -- see index), and Ted Hullar (not Heller). A onetime chapter treasurer was Murray Chism (not Chisholm). Rick Harris, mentioned on p. 56 as the chapter's man on a campaign we had to keep police stables out of Central Park, is actually Richard (Riki) Edes Harrison, whose maps you've seen in Fortune and whose drawings still regularly appear in The New Yorker. It was Bob Shull, by the way, professionally a management expert, who originally devised the plan to "decentralize" the chapter and form regional groups throughout its territory -- a practice that was later taken up for the club as a whole.

Finally, to fill in a name that escaped Al's memory (top of p. 17), ADK's diligent conservation chairman was and is David Newhouse -- doubtless also a member of the Sierra Club.

And a last word: Your letter spoke of "this first effort to document the history of the Atlantic Chapter." In fact, "The Sierra Club Handbook," a 1967 issue of the Bulletin, carried a brief A.C. history, written jointly by Tom Jukes and me. We differed over the value to chapter growth that our nominating Justice Douglas to the national board (and his subsequent election) had had. I thought it had been very helpful; Jukes did not. I'm sorry now that I gave in; the matter was omitted. But, as you know, the Justice's service on the board was brief; he decided he could work more effectively for conservation in other capacities and resigned.

Again my thanks for including me among the "oral historians." And best wishes for continuing success with the project.

Sincreely,

Stewart M. Ogilvy

SIERRA CLUB
Atlantic Chapter

15 EAST 53RD STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

Sept. 30, 1983

Dear Ann -

Going through some old papers today I came across this letterhead, which probably dates from about 1963-65.

Rather than toss it, it occurs to me that the list on the left indicates that the chapter had reached a stature of some consequence and you may want it for the archives.

If not, just toss. No ack. needed.

Regards,

Stew Ogilvy

Stewart M. Ogilvy
7933 Willow Street
New Orleans, LA 70118

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Anne Van Tyne

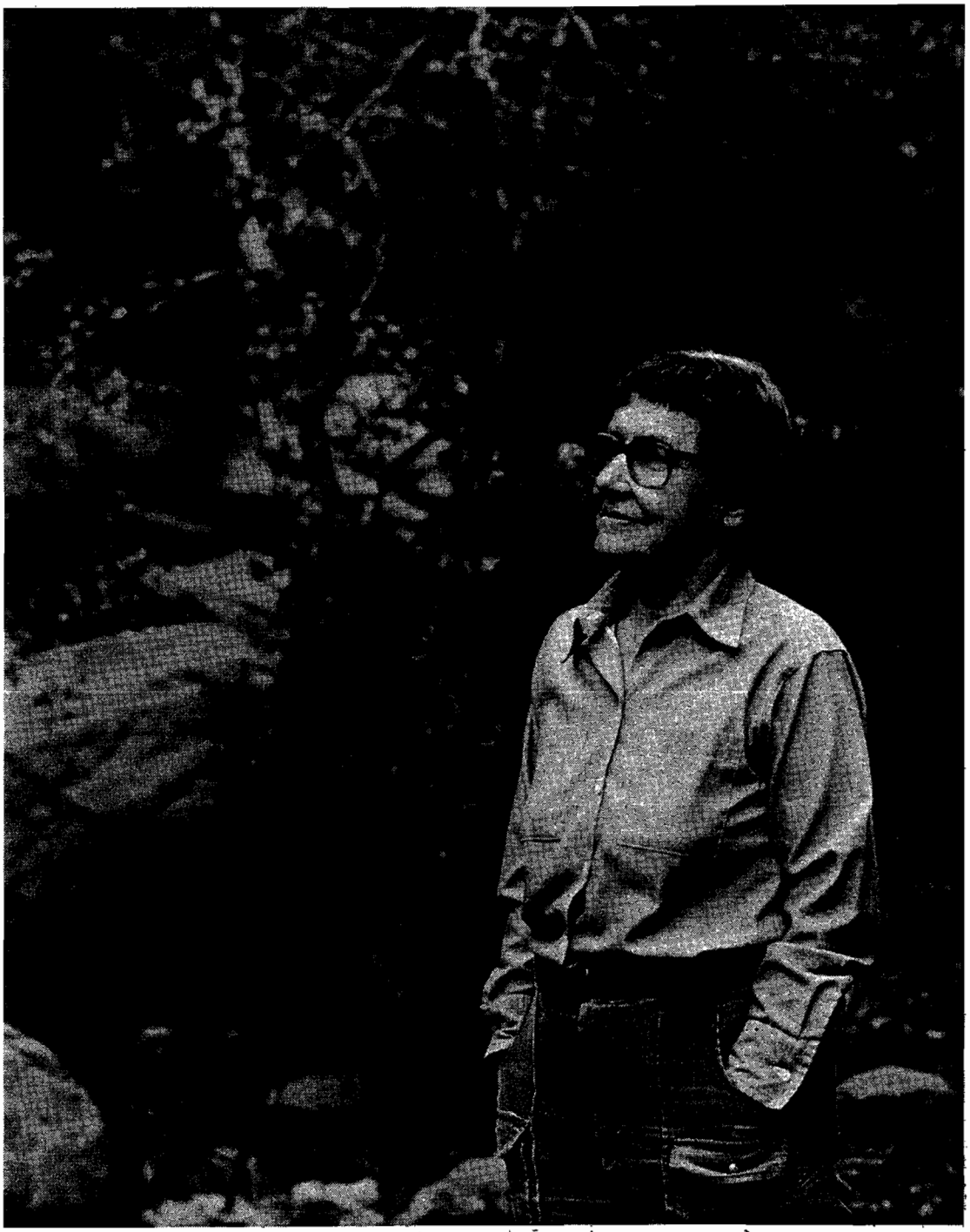
SIERRA CLUB STALWART: CONSERVATIONIST, HIKER, CHAPTER AND COUNCIL LEADER

An Interview Conducted by
Richard Searle
in 1980

Underwritten by
The National Endowment for the Humanities

Sierra Club History Committee
1981

Sierra Club Oral History Project



ANNE VAN TYNE

TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Anne Van Tyne

INTRODUCTION

The Sierra Club depends heavily on the willingness of its volunteers to do its work; we often acknowledge that the vitality of the club stems from the efforts of thousands of volunteer minds and hands and feet. These volunteers undertake the conservation actions; they staff the organizational offices; they lead the outings. They offer their time and talent to their group, to their chapter and its committees; they staff regional units; and they come to San Francisco and Washington to serve the national club effort in a multitude of ways. They display stamina in the face of adversity, ennui, and fatigue.

Every so often, too infrequently for the good of the Sierra Club actually, a person comes along who ranges widely and effectively across all these dimensions of club activity. Anne Van Tyne, of the Los Padres Chapter and Sierra Club Council, is such a person.

Anne has long been a stalwart of her chapter, having served effectively and repeatedly in a variety of committees and offices. She was involved in the formation of her local group when decentralization became the policy of the club. She also saw the need for cooperation and coordination among chapters in functions other than conservation, so she worked for a council of chapters in southern California.

She has been deeply involved in chapter conservation activities as well, on environmental problems in the Los Padres National Forest but also on the critical problems of the central California coast. She saw merit in meeting government agency folk as friend as well as adversary, resulting in productive contacts with Forest Service personnel. In her spare time she carried out the club theory of first knowing the area one proposes to save by leading walks and hikes to places of natural interest.

For more than a decade now, Anne has been a national Sierra Club figure (the one with knitting needles!), offering yeoman service to the Sierra Club Council, once again in a variety of capacities requiring energy, clear thinking, persistence, and mammoth amounts of time. Contemporary Sierra Club organization shows her imprint for her service to the internal organization studies, the council benefitted from her service as delegate and secretary, and she has sustained the council newsletter now for years.

So the whole Sierra Club program benefits from these extraordinary individual efforts. We can only be thankful when the Anne Van Tynes come along. When they tarry for nearly two decades to serve the club, we offer three cheers.

Kent Gill
President, Sierra Club Foundation
Past President, Sierra Club

March 1981
Davis, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY

The following interview with Anne Van Tyne was held at Anne's home (1319 Panchita Place) in Santa Barbara, California, on September 6, 1980. Anne has been a member of the club since 1962. She has been very active in Los Padres Chapter and national council affairs for over fifteen years, serving in many different ways, usually in positions of responsibility.

She has been a delegate to the Sierra Club Council and a member of the council internal organization committee, the club membership committee, and the club nominating committee as well as holding many responsible chapter positions.

In May, 1977, Anne was awarded the first Susan Miller Council Service Award, presented to club volunteers who have made exceptional contributions in the field of organization or management. At the time of the interview Anne was chairman of the Los Padres Chapter while at the same time serving as editor of the Sierra Club Forum published by the Sierra Club Council.

If the interview sometimes seems more like a dialogue between long-time friends than an oral history interview it is because we have known each other and not infrequently shared experiences in the Sierra Club for nearly fifteen years.

Dick Searle
Interviewer

April 1981
Sierra Club History Committee
Simi Valley, California

THE LONG ROUTE TO SIERRA CLUB MEMBERSHIP

[Date of Interview: September 6, 1980]##

Personal Background

Searle: Anne, as usual in these reviews, it would be nice to start with some of your biographical information such as when and where you were born. What is your background?

Van Tyne: I was born in Chicago in 1904, so it happened a long time ago. I lived in Chicago, it was in a rather suburban area, with enough open space so we used to go to Bushnell Fields to pick violets, for instance. Now all you pick there are apartment buildings.

Searle: I suppose Chicago's grown a lot since those days. And what about your family background? Mother and father, where did they come from, and brothers and sisters, a few things like that.

Van Tyne: No brothers, no sisters. My father--well, he traveled all over the Middle West. He was born in Ohio, he lived in Illinois, he lived in Iowa, he lived in a sod house in South Dakota one winter. And then the following spring, his father decided to move to Arkansas. They did, with two teams. My father was a big boy, he was ten years old, he was the older of the two boys, so he drove one team, and his father drove the other. I think that's why he never, never, never again was interested in anything to do with the outdoors. I think he'd had it.

Searle: Oh, I see. So your father wasn't exactly eager to--

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 75.

Van Tyne: And my mother was very much a city person. She came from Baltimore. My father was a printer. And apparently the printer's ink did rub off on me, because I seem to get into things involving editing and writing and that kind of thing.

Searle: I know that you are the editor of the council newsletter. What's the name of it now?

Van Tyne: Sierra Club Forum.

Searle: And of course you've put a number of articles out on various topics. Now, have you been editor in the Los Padres Chapter of the chapter newsletter?

Van Tyne: In 1963, to 1968, I was editor of the Condor Call. And I did another spell of editing back when I was working in a war plant. I edited the UAW's [United Auto Workers Union] paper for a year, a twice-a-month tabloid.

Searle: Getting back to the family aspect, you were raised in Chicago for a period of time, you were educated there also, and went to school there?

Van Tyne: Yes. I should say that even though my mother was very city, and my father never wanted to have anything to do with the outdoors again, I would have given my eye teeth to have been able to go camping and things like that.

Searle: And this is the way you felt at the time?

Van Tyne: This is the way I felt at the time. I read stuff about woodcraft rangers and boy scouts and all that kind of thing. It's just what I wanted. I wanted to go hiking.

Searle: What about your friends, at this age, did any of them get the opportunity?

Van Tyne: Oh, no.

Searle: Well, that may be an indicator of what happened later, obviously. How long did you live in Chicago?

Van Tyne: I lived there until 1931, and then I came out to LA from 1931 to 1942, and I finally went hiking. [interruption for phone call] For a couple of years we had a cabin at the Indiana Dunes, and I finally got outside, to the open air, when I was about nineteen.

Searle: What were you doing when you came?

Van Tyne: From 1931 to 1942 I lived in LA.

Searle: And then you were able to go camping at that time?

Van Tyne: Then too, but I had had the Dunes, which were very important. I lived there for four months, two summers running.

Searle: Did you have any friends that you associated with that got into that kind of thing?

Van Tyne: Well, out there, yes.

Searle: Did you belong to any groups that were involved?

Van Tyne: No, I didn't.

Searle: Did you come out here for a job at that time?

Van Tyne: Yes. Well, the idea was, since I had gone only to a two-year college, I was to finish, get my degree and teach. Well, I ran into a snag there, so I didn't. And then it was the depression, so jobs were few and far between.

Searle: So, actually what were you doing then? I know our records have you down as a union organizer and a few other things.

Van Tyne: No. I worked as the office manager for a small plumbing contractor, and I worked packing labels for Avery Adhesives, now Avery International.

Searle: Too bad you didn't have some stock then.

Van Tyne: Yes! Well, Stan Avery owned the whole thing when I worked for him.

Searle: And then, in 1942--

Van Tyne: In 1942, in a moment of temporary insanity, I went back to Chicago.

Searle: How long did that last?

Van Tyne: In six months I knew it was all a mistake, but it was during the war, I had a job, I had a place to live, so I stayed. And of course I subsequently met Dave, so that did make it worthwhile.

Searle: So you met Dave in Chicago?

Van Tyne: Yes, when I went back.

Searle: Well, what did you do, get Dave to come back out here?

Van Tyne: We came out on vacation in 1946, and I made noises about this would be a fine place to retire to. And, then, well, you really ought to have roots in a place before you retire. So we came out again in 1948 on a combined vacation-job hunt, and he went home thinking he had a job, and discovered a month afterwards that while the director of the agency wanted him, the board had made other plans while she was on vacation. So he decided to get his last six graduate units for a Masters in Social Work and in the meantime start applying for jobs. We finally got out of Chicago in 1950, to Phoenix.

Searle: So it took you eight years, almost, to do it, on a permanent basis, anyway. But you went to Phoenix then?

Van Tyne: Yes, we lived in Phoenix for two years.

Searle: So, 1950 to 1952 in Phoenix. And then, you still were trying to head towards the coast.

Van Tyne: Well, then, he and his board agreed to disagree, and so we started looking for a job, and the place we felt we'd like to be was Santa Barbara, but you go where there's a job, so we wound up in LA, which was the last place we wanted to be. That was the summer of 1952, but at Christmas time, Dave got an offer of a job up here in Santa Barbara, beginning the first of April, and we've been here ever since April of 1953.

Searle: Now what--

First Contact with the Sierra Club, 1952

Van Tyne: What was I doing? Well, when we moved from Phoenix to LA, I didn't know anybody, because all the people I'd known I'd lost touch with, so we went to two or three or four meetings at Clifton's Cafeteria, meetings of the Sierra Club, figuring it was a way to get to know people. How I knew anything about the Sierra Club, I don't know. I just knew that we would probably meet congenial people.

Searle: Do you remember any of the people that you met by going there?

Van Tyne: No. I don't. We went on one hike, in Elysian Park, and the people weren't very friendly. They really weren't. And we didn't go on another. And then we got a phone call, a week before we were going to move, from somebody saying, would you like to come on one of the--are there moonlight hikes in Griffiths Park?

Searle: Yes, they have those kind of hikes there.

Van Tyne: So, here was somebody who was actually taking an interest, but all I could say was, well, I'm sorry, but next Thursday we're moving.

Searle: So that was the end of your association with the LA area Sierra Club.

Van Tyne: That's right. When we came up here, I did know a member of the Sierra Club here, whom I'd met in Yosemite in 1951, and we went to some of the Sierra Club meetings, and went on one day hike. Unfortunately, at that time, a chapter member who was one of these people who never stopped talking but has yet to say anything, attached himself to us that whole day. We came back feeling, well, the Sierra Club's ideas were all right, but we guessed we were antisocial, we'd rather hike by ourselves. With the consequence that we did not join until nine years later.

Searle: So about 1963 or so, I guess.

Van Tyne: 1962.

Searle: Your friend who was in the Sierra Club--do you remember who that was?

Van Tyne: We didn't see very much of her; she wasn't a close friend.

Becoming a Member--At Last, 1962

Searle: What finally got you into the Sierra Club?

Van Tyne: I was teaching cello to a few students then, and one of them, the mother of one of them, was an active Sierra Club member. And she would bring Kathy to her lesson and tell me about all the places she'd been the previous weekend. It sounded kind of nice, places I didn't know about, and then she invited me to go along on one day hike, and I did, and people were very friendly, I really enjoyed it. And so I said yes, we will join.

Incidentally, after we joined, I got acquainted with the man who was the leader of that first day hike in 1953, and told him what had happened, and said, "Hoby, you should have known; you knew Shep Lee. You should have seen to it that he wasn't allowed to attach himself to new people."

Searle: Shep Lee was the leader?

Van Tyne: Shep Lee was the guy who never stopped talking. I said, "Hoby, if you had done something about it, the chapter would have had nine more years of work out of me. We were ready to join."

Searle: What was his response?

Van Tyne: He didn't have one.

Searle: Well, I guess he would say, this is a no-win situation.

Van Tyne: Believe me, I made it a point, when I was leading trips, either to keep Shep with me, or to say, well, Shep, you know the trail, you go on ahead if you like.

Searle: I see. Let him commune with nature, then, on his own, or talk to it, or whatever. I get the impression that then the thing that got you so you wanted to participate was the social aspect. At that time.

Van Tyne: Well, not the social part, but getting to places I didn't know about. I'd gotten acquainted with some of the local trails, but not more than that. And here was an opportunity to get to places I'd sure like to get to.

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE LOS PADRES CHAPTER

Outing Leader, Editor, Council Alternate

Searle: And were you quite active in the outings at that time?

Van Tyne: No. The first thing I did in the chapter was about six months after I joined, when I volunteered for the staff of the Condor Call [Los Padres Chapter newsletter], partly because I had that kind of experience, and partly because I thought it could be a lot better than it was. That was in December of 1963, and in January I got appointed to the chapter outing committee, in spite of the fact that I didn't know much. They said they needed new people. I started leading outings and was on the outing committee for ten solid years.

Searle: They found somebody they felt they could depend upon, who had a modicum of intelligence.

Van Tyne: Well, you know, I enjoyed it. Then, also, in April of 1963, I became editor of the Condor Call.

Searle: Let's see, I have here in December you are on the Condor Call, and January you were on the outing committee, and in April, this is a sequence of months here...

Van Tyne: Right. All at once things started happening. I was appointed editor of the Condor Call and also council alternate. And at that time--

Searle: Who were the officers and the people who were appointed?

Van Tyne: Hugh Garvin was chairman of the chapter in 1963. That was still a time when the chapter chairman's way was paid to board meetings. Hugh couldn't go to the May meeting, which was both board and council, so I went in his place.

Searle: That was up in San Francisco?

Introduction to the Council and the Board

Van Tyne: Yes. That was my introduction to both the board and the council, and I got hooked that very first meeting.

Searle: When you got hooked, what is it that hooked you? What was interesting?

Van Tyne: Well, you go to something like that and you realize how much bigger the club is than just your own chapter. And you meet people whom you have, they're very much--

Searle: Like Ansel Adams, is that an example, or somebody whom you'd read about?

Van Tyne: I didn't really know names for some of them, but, you know, here was the board, and they seemed to know so much.

Searle: And you were there!

Van Tyne: And I was there! And all these people, from all over. It broadens your perspective so much.

Searle: Do you remember any of the people, or any of the conversations you had at that time, or was it just the events?

Van Tyne: One of the things I remember most, it impressed me terrifically. Here I was, and I didn't know anybody, and the chairman of the Bay Chapter, Margot Gwinn (I've never forgotten her name), kind of took me under her wing and saw to it I had somebody to sit with at the banquet, and introduced me to a couple of people at lunch, including Cicely [Christy], with whom, incidentally, I stayed, that first time, because I needed hospitality. It was a last-minute kind of thing so Cicely said all right, I could stay there, and that, of course, was the best possible introduction.

Searle: Well, Cicely is a wonderful person in conversation.

Van Tyne: So for quite a few years, as I say, I was hooked, and I went to all the council meetings. And I stayed with Cicely.

Searle: How many times a year did they meet?

Van Tyne: Four.

Searle: Four? It's down to almost two now.

Van Tyne: Yes, it's two now.

Searle: Did Cicely, at that time, express any thoughts, or were you just good friends, so to speak?

Van Tyne: Cicely taught me a lot. I learned a lot about the council, its background; I got some idea of the people, and so on.

Searle: What were some of the philosophies she may have expressed? Did she--

Van Tyne: I don't know that I could tell you. All I can say is that there couldn't have been a better person--a mentor--than Cicely.

Searle: Cicely has always impressed me as a person who has contributed much to the Sierra Club, and has done many things. I've known her somewhat later than that period of time, really. What was her position at that time?

Van Tyne: At that time, she was a member of the council as the Chairman of Committee on Committees, which meant that she had part responsibility for finding people for various jobs. She knew everybody, and she's a remarkably good judge of people. I mean, she could take an objective look. She might like you, but she could still see your weaknesses, and your strengths.

Searle: So she wouldn't put you in a position where you couldn't do the job.

Van Tyne: No. There couldn't have been anybody better.

Searle: Do you know, incidentally, what other positions she's held, in the course of your association with her?

Van Tyne: I know that she was on the club conservation committee for a long time.

Searle: Who was the president in 1963?

Van Tyne: I don't remember. I know that Ned Robinson was the Chairman of the Council, and was elected in 1963 or something like that.

Searle: The council had been started in 1956. As a matter of interest in that area, are you acquainted with any of the background of the Sierra Club Council, or some of the people who were involved in forming it?

Van Tyne: Well, I know that Ruth Bradley and Cicely and Ramona Wascher, Kathy Jackson--oddly enough, I can't name any men offhand--but I know they were all active in the formation of the council, and Kathy was, I think, one of the first chairmen.

Searle: Now, Kathy Jackson was quite active during that period, or about that time. What was Kathy doing, as far as you know, at that time in the club?

Van Tyne: At which time do you mean?

Searle: Well, 1963 or 1964

Van Tyne: In 1962, 1963, she had moved from Santa Barbara. She had been one of the founders of Los Padres Chapter, and its second chairman. But, in 1962 she had moved to Paso Robles, and was a member of the San Lucia group, which was part of Los Padres Chapter, and even then, was concerned about the Nipomo Dunes.

Searle: Which we're of course going to be discussing a little bit further on.

Editing the Condor Call

Van Tyne: Incidentally, in 1963, when I became editor, I started going to chapter executive committee meetings because I felt that the editor should know what's going on.

Searle: That got you more exposure, so to speak.

Van Tyne: Yes. And when I got started, I really got started.

Searle: What was the policy of the chapter as far as the editor of the Condor Call? Did they pretty well give you a range of authority?

Van Tyne: Yes. I pretty much had a free hand. I went to the executive committee meetings to get some idea of what direction the chapter was taking, so the Condor Call would reflect that, and the chapter activities. But I don't think anybody ever said you ought to print this, you ought to print that. There were two things that you had to print. The chairman's column, and the conservation chairman's articles. You were not supposed to change one word in the chairman's column, not one word, though sometimes I could gently suggest, if you said it this way it might sound better. And in the conservation chairman's column, and that of course was Fred--

Searle: Fred Eissler was chairman of the conservation committee even then?

Van Tyne: Fred Eissler has been chairman of the conservation committee for all but about two or three years in the eighteen years I have been a member of this chapter.

Base Camp Trips and Chapter Outing Leadership

Searle: We'll get on to that a little bit later, too, I imagine. Maybe we ought to go back a little bit. I have notes here that base camp trips in 1965-66 were also a factor in your--

Van Tyne: Yes. The base camp trip in 1965 was thanks to Kathy, who seemed to feel that I was a promising new member and should be encouraged, and so she persuaded the chapter executive committee to recommend me for a Morley scholarship. I chose to go to base camp.

Searle: What is the character of a Morley scholarship? What's the purpose of it?

Van Tyne: A Morley scholarship is for people, not necessarily members, who presumably are going to learn more about the environment and the club and go back and spread the gospel. And frequently it's been given to teachers, because of what they can do with kids. In your application you have to explain why you thought you should have a scholarship, and I sort of remember saying I was editor of the Condor Call, and I felt that going to base camp would broaden my perspective, and I would do a better job as an editor.

Searle: And a certain amount of recommendations are helpful, too, in this regard, and they place candidates up for this particular scholarship. How many are awarded in any given year?

Van Type: I don't really know. I do know that Kathy persuaded the chapter executive committee to recommend me.

Searle: And you got a chance, then, to go on one of the base camps.

Van Tyne: Yes. You get a chance to go on one of the trips, and I chose base camp. I thought I would like that best.

Searle: On the trip, did you meet any people or have any impressions that influenced your thoughts significantly about the Sierra Club?

Van Tyne: No, I don't think so. I did meet some people, and four of us palled around together the whole two weeks. And Betty Johnson and I agreed we would go to base camp the next year together. That's how I got to the 1966 one.

Searle: Where was the base camp?

Van Tyne: The first year I went it was at Waugh Lake.

Searle: Near the Mammoth area.

Van Tyne: You go up from the June Lake group. We were at the head of Waugh Lake, and it's just a little below where the John Muir Trail comes across from Donahue Pass to Island Pass and over to Thousand Island Lake.

Searle: Why don't we go on from there and talk a little bit about your chapter committee and officer positions? Now I know you mention about being the outings committee chairman for ten years.

Van Tyne: I wasn't chairman. I was on the committee for ten years. I finally got off because I said ten years is more than long enough. I led a lot of trips. I led a lot of day hikes, and backpacking trips, and I led three one-week trips in the summer for the chapter in the Sierra.

Searle: Do you still lead any of those trips now?

Van Tyne: No. I haven't led any trips for the last four or five years.

Searle: What about the character of those trips, then and now? What's your philosophy in regard to leading these trips? Do you need to have an exposure for a number of years?

Van Tyne: Yes. Well, I'm not sure what you want to know.

Searle: You mentioned that you went on a hike the first time, and then the second time, and it was entirely a different experience. And I guess I was thinking that it can be a good experience, and it can be perhaps a bad experience for people, and I wondered whether you had a philosophy in regard to your leading hikes.

Van Tyne: That experience, of course, I learned a great deal from, and I was very careful to try to avoid any situation like that ever occurring on any hike I led, or was along on, for that matter.

Searle: Did you have a group commissary on those trips?

Van Tyne: Yes. On the overnight trips we always had a central commissary, which I was very much in favor of, because among other things it pulls a group together much more, and of course the one-week trips were a central commissary, which is quite a job, believe me, planning for those.

Searle: They don't do that so much today as they used to, that is, a central commissary for trips, and perhaps because it is much more of a job.

The Chapter Council and Leadership Training

Searle: I know that you've been chapter chairman, and you've been chairman of the chapter council. Maybe you would mention a little bit of that progression.

Van Tyne: As I said, I was editor of the Condor Call until 1968, and at that time I'd been on the chapter executive committee the year before, but in 1968 I became chairman and gave up the editorship. And I've been on the chapter executive committee twice since then. I was secretary in 1974 and vice chairman in 1975.

I was always doing something. For instance, the chapter council was formed in 1964, and frankly, it was my idea. I felt that it would help pull the groups in the chapter together. We had at that time three. Santa Barbara was not a group to begin with. But we had San Lucia, Arguello and Sespe, and having been observing the Sierra Club Council for a couple of years, it seemed to me that something similar might be very valuable. And I think it has been.

Searle: What was the chapter council's function in the chapter?

Van Tyne: Well, in a sense, to fill in the gaps. To do some of the things the chapter executive committee isn't going to be able to do because it has the responsibility of running the day-to-day activity. The council could take a look in depth at things like outings, like conservation education, like membership, and that kind of thing. And that is what the council has done.

Searle: So the council has among other things taken on projects which you could not sit down and talk about and reach a decision at an ex comm committee. They would look at problems in depth.

Van Tyne: Council has never had final responsibility. They've only been able to make recommendations to the chapter executive committee. But council did take on a number of projects. For instance, the first outing leaders training course was a pilot project by the council in 1967.

Searle: Who taught that course? Do you recall any of that?

Van Tyne: We did it as a series of lectures. We imported Howard Stevens from Angeles chapter, and we got some of our own members to cover other aspects of it. It was a one-day thing, an all-day-in-the-park sort of thing. I don't remember at this point who all--I do remember Howard Stevens coming up for it.

Searle: What year was this, roughly?

Van Tyne: 1967. And for the next five years we had a training course every year, which I taught. Most of the time I had somebody as an assistant. We'd kind of spell each other. Sheldon Hicock did it for a while, and Atlee Clapp did it for a while, and Atlee then eventually took over for me. And we got one of our members who was a doctor for the final hour each time on wilderness first aid. After that first year, we made it a whole weekend. We stopped doing it on a lecture basis, and we had smaller numbers of people then, and we could do it more like classroom discussion, that kind of thing. And we even got to the point where we asked people to do a little preparation beforehand to come in with the plans for a trip, either a day hike or an overnight trip.

Searle: Then it would be sort of a critique type of discussion?

Van Tyne: Yes. And it was very, very interesting. That would be Saturday, and then on Sunday we had a field trip, where we divided the students into groups, and everybody had a turn at being leader and assistant leader, and the rest of the students made life miserable for them.

Searle: I was just going to say, that could be a rather stressful experience for somebody who had doubts about their leader capabilities.

Van Tyne: It was fun, though.

Searle: Most of the people who participated really felt, then, that they gained something by it and they enjoyed.

Van Tyne: Yes. We would discuss at the end of the field trip how people felt about it and so on, and what they'd learned, and there was a good deal of enthusiasm for the practice. And after all, if you felt that they were making life difficult for you, you had a turn at doing it to somebody else.

Searle: In the Angeles chapter we have chapter meetings annually, retreats, if you want to call them that...

Van Tyne: Beginning only in 1976. At least as far as I've been able to discover, and I went looking last night, the first one of these leadership conferences we had was in 1976. And that, again, was a project that the council initiated. Another thing that the council did was this thing in 1969. We had an all-day conference on the individual in conservation action, where we invited Bob Marshall from the Angeles chapter as a keynote speaker. And he gave a very remarkable speech. I still have copies of it. Then we had Bill Hansen, the supervisor of Los Padres Forest, and somebody from the planning department of the county discuss working with local agencies and officials. And we asked them to tell us our mistakes, and the things we had done that were wrong, and how we could improve our relationships with them. Hansen was rather diplomatic and didn't say too much, but the other man was very forthright.

Searle: What was his name again, the other man?

Van Tyne: George Whitmore.

Searle: And his position was?

Van Tyne: I think it was with the county planning department, as I remember.

Searle: And he just said, hey, here's what it's like.

Van Tyne: Yes. He said that we waited until the last minute and we came in with an attitude that we're going to fight, we didn't always bother to get all the information we needed, and that he felt that if we started sooner and were better informed, and we could be, we would probably find that there were things that could be worked out together.

Searle: What were some of the reactions to those thoughts? Some people would react as negative criticism. Did he get any positive reactions? As a result of his comments, did any of the ways you did things change?

Van Tyne: Lewis [Clark] took notes on that conference [refers to notes].

Searle: So Lewis Clark came down for this particular session. I guess Lewis would have had some comments from the perspective of being a board member.

Van Tyne: I asked the question, "Have we done our homework, or do we sound off half-cocked?" The answer I got was, "Sometimes you have been misinformed by your own people who have been doing all the talking for you." And Lewis has a parenthesis in these notes, "Is this a polite way of commenting on Fred Eissler?" Which certainly was true.

Van Tyne: Then in the afternoon we had Joe Fontaine from the Kern-Kaweah chapter to tell us how to organize a campaign, and Harriet Allen from San Diego chapter on how to organize a conservation committee. And we wound it up; we had signs around the wall of the hall, like Channel Islands, wilderness, I've forgotten what else, oil, I think, because this was two or three months after the oil spill. I summarized the whole day's discussion and then said, "It isn't going to mean anything unless you get involved in something, so please go to the sign of your choice."

Searle: Now, were those notes [which she was reading from] the minutes?

Van Tyne: No, that's just Lewis's summary.

Searle: Did Lewis publish his summary?

Van Tyne: No, he sent it to me. I don't know what else he may have done with it.

Searle: Well, that certainly sounds like an informative conference.

Van Tyne: It was. It was a good conference. Fred [Eissler] did not come, and Fred's friends did not come.

Searle: What year was that again?

Van Tyne: 1969. May.

Searle: That of course was in the middle of the Brower fight.

Van Tyne: This was one of the years that Fred was not conservation chairman. In 1969, after we had had our chapter elections and he had lost, because he ran for the executive committee that year, on his Brower slate, the executive committee decided it would be the conservation committee. Peter Hearst was chapter chairman in 1969, and Sue Higman was chairman in 1970. For those two years Fred was not conservation chairman.

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Searle: The Sierra Club Council, the national council, also has sponsored [Information and Education] conferences at times and perhaps you remember some of these. I remember going to San Diego for one. I don't know if you were at that one.

Van Tyne: Yes, I was. I went to three. I went to the one in 1964 in Carmel, the one in 1966 in San Diego, and the one in 1968 in Mountain View.

Searle: Yes, I remember those. I thought they were very interesting, but I was wondering what your observations were. We don't seem to have as much of that now, but maybe it's just a different perspective we have.

Van Tyne: At that time in the 1960s, still, the bulk of the membership was in California, which it no longer is.

Searle: Yes, we have about 200,000 members, and probably only about--

Van Tyne: No, 180,000.

Searle: Okay, and we've got about 60,000 in California. So we're down to about 33 percent. Go ahead.

Van Tyne: The one in Carmel was very good. The one in San Diego stands out more, principally, and that was dealing with where the individual fit in, too, interestingly enough. That's where we got the idea for ours, later. Although I think the reason for ours was a little different. All of the conference in San Diego was very good, but the thing that stands out was Dick Sill's speech at the end.

Searle: Yes. I'd like to talk more about Dick Sill if we could later on, because we will not be able to interview Dick, and so it would be nice to know about Dick even if it can't be through the first person.

Van Tyne: But I came home from that, after Dick's speech, really so impressed.

Searle: What do you remember about that speech? I know you can remember you were impressed, but did he have a particular perspective?

Van Tyne: I am not the kind of person who remembers the specifics.

Searle: Well, I was wondering about these conferences. The emphasis in the council today has changed a little bit, because of its national nature, to sponsor regional conferences. And maybe just for the record you might comment on what's been developing in southern California in that regard. You've been involved in regional conferences for the southern California chapters.

Van Tyne: And I can't remember how many we've had or exactly when. But I was in on the planning, particularly of the one we had up at Cachuma Church Camp. And that could have been in 1969 when Peter [Hearst] was chapter chairman. He had one view of it, and two or three of us who were supposed to be on the committee had a different view, and we finally managed to put over our view.

Searle: We'll have to talk about Peter in a little while, too. Because he was at the periphery of many things that happened.

Van Tyne: He seems to come into this more than I'd realized.

Let's return to our chapter council and the other things it had done. We keep getting off of that. There was the outing leaders training, the conference on the individual and conservation action. It was due to the pressure from the chapter council, it finally worked, and the Santa Barbara group was established. Here, up until then, over half of the membership was not in a regional group. As a consequence the chapter executive committee was actually acting as group executive committee. And the other groups were not happy about this.

Searle: This was about 1970, 1974?

Van Tyne: 1972 was when the group was finally established, but we worked on that for about two years before that.

Searle: Was the chapter council recognized in the bylaws of the chapter? When did that come about? About four years ago, didn't it?

Van Tyne: It was something like that.

Searle: So at that time it was existing by the pleasure of the executive committee.

Van Tyne: Right, and they weren't paying much attention to us, and the councils also had the responsibility for these annual leadership training weekends, which we now call a chapter camp meeting, but as nearly as I can remember looking back, it began in 1976. At least, we've been doing it every year beginning in 1976. And, the latest thing is--we'd talked about a chapter brochure. Well, the council picked it up, and they've done something, and it's now just about ready to go to the printer; the text and the layout have been approved by the chapter executive committee.

Searle: It's nice to have things come out the end of the pipe here, once in a while, little packages, and that's what it's going to be.

Van Tyne: Yes, and this is, I think, a nice little package that we've got. Everybody seems to like the text.

Searle: Then the chapter council, in essence, can take on projects which require a broad-based type of support, and also they can take on as much as they feel they're able to--unlike the chapter executive committee, where there is certain business which must be done, and it may be more than you can do adequately.

Van Tyne: Yes. Also the council is seen as being responsible for seeing that there's a budget committee, and in a sense acting as a nominating committee and handling the chapter elections. There are no other specific responsibilities. It's up to the council's initiative and imagination. And I think over the years they've done a pretty good job.

Searle: Have other chapters in the Sierra Club taken up the chapter council idea?

Van Tyne: Not that I know of. Michigan has something of the sort, I think. I think they only meet twice a year. Angeles has.

Searle: In fact, I started the Angeles chapter council about the same time.

Van Tyne: You sent me material from your first meeting when we were about to do something on ours.

Searle: I was looking at that, and I was amazed that we could put out minutes of forty pages at a meeting, or that my wife was willing to do my typing. That was about 1965, or so--no, about 1967.

Van Tyne: Our date is earlier than that.

Searle: Well, I was elected vice chairman along with Bob Marshall, and it was about 1967. I think.

Van Tyne: You see, when I looked up our date, I found that it was 1964, and in 1965 I was council secretary.

Searle: Okay. Well, I would have to stand corrected. I know I was active in getting things going in about 1963 and 1965, I was active in the San Fernando Valley group, at that time.

Van Tyne: But I do remember your sending me up a transcript of a council meeting. We didn't get off to the best start. It took us a little while. But by 1967, when we put on an outing leaders training course, we were really making progress.

Searle: And today, the council is still serving its function; sometimes it's more active and sometimes it's less active.

Van Tyne: It's had ups and downs.

Searle: Do you have anything else about the council you wanted to mention here?

Van Tyne: No, we've covered it.

SIERRA CLUB COUNCIL IN THE SIXTIES

Some Weaknesses--and Some Strengths

Searle: You got into national affairs by virtue of being a national representative in the Sierra Club Council. Let's discuss some of the people you worked with in the Sierra Club Council, both on a national and local basis. Peter Hearst is a name that was mentioned, and a number of other people. Did you have any comments on that area?

Van Tyne: Peter was very nice to me. He was our council delegate for ten years, I think. And I was the alternate for most of that time. And he used to split his transportation reimbursement with me so that I went up on the bus a few times, or else I just paid my own way. I stayed with somebody, as I couldn't afford to stay in a hotel. I stayed with Cicely for a number of years, and then along about 1968 when things were beginning to pop, I met Ruth Bradley and began staying with her over in Berkeley. Cicely was in Berkeley, too. In recent years I've been staying with Ramona Wascher, who was also one of the original council members.

I have some comments on the council as I've observed it. We have already talked about the I&E [Information and Education] conferences of 1964, 1966, and 1968. The 1968 one was a little different than the 1964 and 1966. In 1964 and 1966, life was a little more peaceful in the club.

Searle: That's true. Nobody was talking about problems; they may have been muttering about them.

Van Tyne: I feel that the council became considerably weaker in 1967--1968, that Peter as council chairman was not a happy choice, and that he got so involved in detail that he couldn't give the kind of leadership the council needed. And not too much happened. And it was even worse under Aubrey Wendling, when he was chairman.

Van Tyne: I went back over the minutes on time at the end of Aubrey's term to see just exactly what the council had done, and I discovered that the one action that they had actually taken that amounted to anything at all was the establishment of the council newsletter. And the rest of the time Aubrey was having people from various departments--the books department, this, that, and the other come for informational sessions. And frankly, they were an awful waste of time.

Searle: I was trying to think now, the 1967-1968 period, did we have the committee on groups in the council? The internal organization committee, I guess, was coming along at that time.

Van Tyne: That came along a little bit later.

Searle: Yes, I had the committee on groups. I inherited that from Dick Sill about 1965-1966. And then it became the study committee on dues allocation. That issue was pretty much settled about 1968-1969, I guess. Some of those things were going on, but I think, as you say, the main picture, the central scene, there were no moving decisions or--

Van Tyne: Anything that was going on was going on outside the council meeting, at lunch, and in huddles in the hall, and that kind of thing. That's where the, well, it wasn't exactly action, but at least the discussion was taking place.

Searle: Yes, as a matter of fact, that's one of the important things about those meetings, they're equally important, I would say, is the fact that many of the decisions, though they are not formally made at outside discussions, the environment to enable those decisions to be made is created in these outside meetings.

Van Tyne: This is where you learn so much from people from other parts of the country. You find that sometimes they've had the same problems you've had, and sometimes they've even found solutions to them that you can use. And it's encouraging, too, to find you're not alone in some of the messes you've had.

Searle: That's right, at least you know you're doing as well as can be done, as far as you know. But I remember, for instance, in the case of the dues allocation study, we came up with this formula, which I must admit I was advocating more than anything, and I remember presenting this idea to Phil Berry. This happened to be up at Norden in September of 1968.

The reason, I think, that we eventually got the dues allocation moved into that form was because we could do a fair amount of lobbying with the board members. The board of directors

Searle: works in a vacuum sometimes. They may know their own chapters, but unless they've got the council members and the officers from the various chapters over the whole country to lobby and influence them, I've got a feeling that they would be much less effective.

Van Tyne: Oh, I think so.

There was one council weekend, and this was when we were meeting separately from the board, and I don't remember the year it took place. But it was a most interesting and informative and lively weekend. Los Padres Chapter had asked a couple of quite innocent questions of the outings department. One, I think, was something about the cost of trips, and I don't even remember what the other question was, but they were very innocuous. But all hell broke loose.

Searle: People started learning things and finding out.

Van Tyne: And the Xerox circuit began. There was more stuff passed back and forth, so finally, and I don't recall who the council chairman was, it was before Peter, and I don't think it was Dick either. I don't know. They finally decided to devote the council weekend to an examination of the whole outings program.

Searle: Probably out of those recommendations came such things as limiting the number of people on outings and certain other rules, and so forth.

Van Tyne: They may have. But, I think that the stack of correspondence and stuff that came out was probably at least two inches high. The outings committee and Stu Kimball [outings committee chairman] were very much on the defensive. It turned out that other people beside Los Padres Chapter had questions and weren't happy about some things. There was a feeling that the outings committee was a very closed little clique, and that unless you were part of that group, no way were you ever going to be leading a national outing.

Searle: Yes. Stu Kimball, was he the chairman then?

Van Tyne: Yes, he was, and he had been for years and years and years.

Searle: I remember that feeling, and it perhaps is changing a little bit now.

Van Tyne: It has changed, I think, and they have broadened out considerably, and they have subouting committees in various parts of the country, and that kind of thing. But, a lot of things came to the surface that weekend, that never would have. And, I think it was a very good thing.

Searle: Well, it got people's juices going, if nothing else. Incidentally, was that point of view correct? Was it a clique, in effect?

Van Tyne: I think, to a large extent, it was.

Searle: And they got defensive.

Van Tyne: They got very defensive. I think it shook up the outings committee enough to try to improve their image, if nothing else. And maybe to make some changes. And they at least found out how a lot of people felt about a number of things.

Searle: I think a number of chapters sort of felt as if the outings committee had its domain and was limiting the chapters to taking trips of a shorter duration. I think there was a feeling also that the outings committee felt that the chapters were incompetent to lead outings of certain kinds.

Van Tyne: Yes. Sue and Jim Higman had volunteered to lead a trip for the outings committee and got turned down flat, and they were willing to do it without pay.

Searle: What was the reason?

Van Tyne: They never were told. That was part of Los Padres' gripe.

Searle: So that would be an example of perhaps similar things that had happened in other chapters.

Van Tyne: Yes. But I know, we had these two or three what should have been innocuous, innocent questions, that anybody ought to feel they were entitled to ask.

Searle: You know, in that regard, the whole impact of the Sierra Club Council--I think it's had more influences on what the board of directors has done than the board, over the years, would like to admit. Many people on the board as individuals recognize this. In a sense the council's opinion was always an underlying factor in a decision. It may not have been the sole factor, but I bet you the board's gone along with ninety percent of the things that the council has recommended.

Formation of the Internal Organization Committee

Van Tyne: The council came into its own in 1969, when the question of a paid president came up. We had that special meeting, and that was when the IOC was formed, out of that, to take a look at changes that might be needed, and so on. But that was the time when the council told the board, and they actually listened.

Searle: What did they say, in substance, at that time, to the board? What was the character of what they said?

Van Tyne: Again--

Searle: Did they want a paid president? Obviously not, I guess.

Van Tyne: Somebody came up with this idea. Phil Berry was elected president [1969-1971], and they felt this was a fine idea, and they didn't discuss it with anybody. And it was one of those times when suddenly all hell breaks loose, and chapters passed resolutions demanding a special meeting to discuss this, and there was enough pressure so that they did call a meeting to discuss this. They called a meeting not only to discuss the paid president, but it was a sort of brainstorming session, where everybody came up with changes they felt should be made or changes that shouldn't be made, how we could function better, and that sort of thing, and it was really, in the end, very, very good. And as a result of that, I think the council, originally the council appointed the internal organization committee [IOC], and they came up with a few specific recommendations.

Searle: Is this George Shipway at that time?

Van Tyne: Yes. And they were able to put them over. I know one of the things was no paid president.

Searle: Well, you know, in regard to the paid president bit, I consider that one of the less bright periods of my participation in the Sierra Club, because the board, or somebody, appointed a committee to look at these possibilities from an administrative standpoint, and I'm trying to think of who was involved in that. I was one of the people, but I'm trying to think of the name of the guy that was running the committee up in the Bay Area. And, to a great extent, we operated in a vacuum.

Van Tyne: As so often happens with committees.

Searle: Yes. Well, the committee was not a council committee. And unfortunately, I think, in retrospect, the working of that committee report was generated by one individual, and the feedback

Searle: and the discussion were limited, and certainly there was no discussion, really, with the chapters, or the volunteer leaders, and if nothing else, that was a big mistake, because the club is a democracy of sorts. We could not really foresee the reaction to that idea. And the idea probably would have been discarded rather quickly if those thoughts had been known.

Van Tyne: I think I'm wrong on the date. I think it was a little bit later. As I recall, I was council secretary, and I was council secretary in 1972 and 1973. So it must have been 1972. [1971, Ed.]

Searle: It seemed to me when they wanted to have a paid president, Mike McCloskey was in a situation here where he--it seemed to me that he was involved, and he said that he would--

Van Tyne: He wasn't happy about it.

Searle: He wasn't happy about it, because I know I attended a meeting in Los Angeles when they invited him down to present his views. In essence, his views were something to the effect that he would have left the Sierra Club as an employee.

Van Tyne: Yes, that's my impression.

Searle: Which was certainly, I think, something that the people who put the idea together didn't anticipate.

Van Tyne: Well, it was a way of trying to keep Phil [Berry], I think.

Searle: What were Phil's motivations, here?

Van Tyne: I don't know.

Searle: When I think about it, my personal opinion is Phil wanted very much to participate in the Sierra Club; it was becoming his life. I guess his marriage may have partially failed because of his devotion to the Sierra Club, and I think he, and this is just an opinion, I think he was pursuing getting that job. I would not have been surprised if he was not encouraging any action which would encourage the establishment of that job. He's a very discreet person, and also I feel that he doesn't have a bone of malice in him, but he was sure hungry for that position, wasn't he?

Van Tyne: Yes, he was, I think. He had devoted so much time, and lost a lot of his law practice as a result.

Searle: There was another concern at that time, and perhaps it was a reaction to the Brower period--how can a volunteer president ever keep up with a paid executive director?

Van Tyne: Yes, it was hangover.

Searle: And so that may have been another factor in taking that proposed direction in the discussion.

Van Tyne: I do remember that free-wheeling discussion we had was at the council meeting, but most of the board were there. I remember August Frugé saying that this had been an eye-opener to him.

Searle: Good. That brings up the theme that the council serves the purpose of keeping the board of directors, giving them perspective to the membership, reminding them that they're not gods. I don't think any of them think of themselves that way, but I think they would be much different--

Van Tyne: They would have been more likely to at that period than now. And, it was the board who asked the council if they might have a couple of representatives on the IOC. And we graciously allowed them to. That is the way it worked. We graciously allowed them to have a couple of representatives. Because after this free-wheeling thing, the opinions they heard came as such a shock that they decided maybe they'd better listen to us.

Council Achievements

Van Tyne: This is when the council began to go up again, after this slide downward under Peter and under Aubrey. Kent [Gill] was chairman, and the council began to gain influence. It began to get more response from the board and more respect from the board, and the formation of the IOC [internal organization committee] and the IOC's recommendations had a good deal to do with this, too. Because that committee went on for--well, it went on almost too long. But in its first years, we really did a lot of work. A lot of work. The regional conservation committees came out of the IOC, for one thing.

Searle: And of course, they, at various times, even advocated some changes which perhaps will come about later, but did they advocate basically having a regional structure?

Van Tyne: Not while I was on it.

Searle: I brought that up partly because my impression was that George Shipway was in favor of regionalizing the Sierra Club, if I can use that terminology.

Van Tyne: Yes, I got that feeling, but that was after I was no longer on it. I was on from 1969 to 1974. 1969 tells you when it was formed. And then I was presumably on the advisory committee for a couple of years after that, which meant I just commented on paper, but those three or four years, those first three or four years of that committee, it was very effective, and it did a good job of looking at a lot of things.

Searle: We might bring up the question of where is the council going now?

Van Tyne: Well, following this explosion over the paid president, and following Kent, Kathy Bjerke tried to inject new ideas, but they weren't really very acceptable to the majority of the council delegates. She was not able to put them over. That's Kathy's problem. George followed her as the council chairman. He stayed in the chairmanship too long. His last year was not so good. He gave some leadership at first, and he ran down. He should have gotten out before he did. I think the past two years have been a great improvement. The workshop program is really valuable, and I think the council has a greater sense of what it can and what it should do, responsibilities and so on. And I think, too, there is a change in attitude on the part of the delegates. You don't any longer hear delegates saying there's no need for the council. And for years before that, this came up every May.

Searle: Well, there's a point there. I can recall comments to the effect that, well, the only reason you were on the council is because they got a paid trip to the board meeting. And there were two camps in this regard. There were those who wanted to make the council work, and those who came because it was a free ride.

Van Tyne: It was given to people in some chapters as a reward.

Searle: From the East Coast area, especially.

Van Tyne: Some chapters sent a different person each time. That kind of attitude created real problems for the council, because how could it get anywhere when it had a different composition every-time it met?

Searle: The council used to meet four times a year. They're down to two now.

Van Tyne: And we had one year when there was one.

Searle: That's right. And the question is, what impact is that having? Should we have more meetings, or should we regionalize the council, or what? Maybe we're doing fine.

Van Tyne: What's happened is that as a result of only two meetings a year, the council ex comm in the last couple of years has decided to make those meetings longer so that we can do some of the things that we think we need to do. Like the education of delegates and some of these workshops.

I've always felt that the council was necessary. I think its effectiveness was dependent on the character of the chairman, and to a lesser extent the members of the council ex comm. But there are a lot of real achievements over the years that the council doesn't always get credit for. The I&E conferences, for one thing. The wilderness study committee, under Francis Walcott, where the club wasn't doing anything on this, and it was the council who established the wilderness study committee, and got things moving, got a lot of people out in the field doing studies of prospective wilderness. Finally, it achieved recognition from the board, and it's being made a board committee. And that's something that nobody seems to remember.

The IOC is another achievement of the council, and the IOC particularly in its first few years got a job that needed badly to be done, and did, I think on the whole, a very good job. We've talked about the successful effort to stop the move for a paid president. One of the other things that's not quite as spectacular is a reorganization of the membership committee. It had been only a paper committee for years and years and years.

Searle: That's right. They approved applications for memberships.

Van Tyne: And that was it. And I don't remember exactly the date, but it was reorganized in 1973, under Sandy Tepfer. From there on out, the membership committee has done a pretty good job. They've certainly tried to do a good job. I think that the council newsletter, which is now the Sierra Club Forum, has been a worthwhile project of the council. I'm saying that on the basis of the kinds of responses I get from time to time from people.

Searle: Could you think in terms of that publication as being an extension of the meetings, or a means for exchanging thoughts. And, there's one other thought that just occurred to me in your discussion. You could think of the council as sort of a gene bank for ideas. And that is a place where the board, and a lot of the ideas the council generates, they implement. I guess if we didn't have a council, the question might come up, how would the things that the council does be accomplished, or would they be accomplished.

Van Tyne: A lot of them wouldn't.

Searle: And what would that do to the club? How would the character of the club change? I would just hazard a guess we'd be closer to something like the Wilderness Society.

Van Tyne: That's likely. The council has also been a training ground, to a certain extent, for future board members. Kent Gill, Paul Swatek, Kathy Bjerke, Dick Sill, Marty Fluharty, Sandy Tepfer, June Viavant, all come from the council, and there may be others. But these I'm sure about.

Searle: That may have influenced the board's attitude, too, in terms of working with the council.

Van Tyne: Yes, when you get people who have come up through the council onto the board, it brings a new point of view.

Searle: Back in 1969, I guess it was, or about that time, the Sierra Club Council recommended to the board of directors, or at least they advocated, that the number of consecutive terms that a director could hold be held to two [three-year] terms. I was involved in some of the lobbying for that. Again, I seem to remember that that decision came about up in Norden, at the meeting there. A lot of interesting things occurred at that meeting, and I'll have to listen to the recordings, and we have them.

Van Tyne: It doesn't show up in the minutes; I was looking at them.

Searle: But I was there, I was advocating--

Van Tyne: A lot of things were going on outside the formal meetings, believe me. We had two meetings at Norden. We had the 1968 meeting, and those are the minutes I was looking at, but we also had that meeting when Phil Berry was president. That's the one.

Searle: That was 1970, was it? Or 1969?

Van Tyne: 1969. The reason I know when it was is because Dave went with me, we had just bought our van, and we stayed in our van for that meeting, rather than staying in the lodge. June of 1969.

Searle: That's good, because I can remember three things. One is that's when I was appointed a vice president of the Sierra Club, and I made that remark to give you a chance to keep an eye on what they're doing, some people winced at that. Two, that's the meeting at which we advocated the dues allocation study committee of which I was chairman, and we had advocated the allocation, which to a good extent is still used, and which nobody understands the basis--not nobody, but people don't, and I think the third thing was, the recommendation came out of that meeting, and I won't say that,

Searle: it wasn't the internal organization committee quite yet, it was in a transition, that the consecutive tours of duty, for lack of a better word, be limited to two, and then you'd have to be off for one term.

Van Tyne: That was an IOC recommendation.

Searle: Okay. I guess that was a transition, because the dues allocation committee had sort of served its purposes; the committee on groups, in essence, sort of disappeared, and they instituted the IOC. Okay. The thought is this, that it must have had some influence on the board of directors, subsequently, and what do you think about that? What's your opinion of that particular decision, requiring the board member not be there for thirty years straight, that he take some time off?

Van Tyne: I think it's a good one, in spite of the fact that you may lose some good board members that way. I think--I was thinking of Dick Leonard, who was a tower of strength on the board for years and years and years [1938-1973]. But we had some other board members that went on and on and on, that weren't. Jules Eichorn [1961-1967] who never opened his mouth from one board meeting to the next, but he was on for years and years and years.

Searle: Yes, in fact, the name is familiar, but I never knew of anything he did.

Van Tyne: He didn't do anything. He never opened his mouth. Polly Dyer [1960-1967] was another one. Charlotte Mauk [1943-1968], as much as I liked her.

Searle: She served as secretary--

Van Tyne: For a long time, and then--but Charlotte didn't have very much to say. Of course, women. We had token women on the board.

Searle: Well, we even had a token president, if I can be so--way back when. Yes, we had one lady president of the Sierra Club--Aurelia Harwood.

Van Tyne: Harwood Lodge is named after her.

Approval of the Santa Lucia Chapter

Searle: I was thinking of going on at this point to an area which had to do with the Santa Lucia chapter. Did you have some other comments before that, though?

Van Tyne: No, I think we've covered this middle period, and the Santa Lucia chapter comes into that. There were always some problems with that group, from the time of its formation, and I'm not really sure just why.

Searle: Maybe you want to set the background for the people who don't know what we're talking about. What was the Santa Lucia chapter situation?

Van Tyne: Santa Lucia group was one of the regional groups in the Los Padres chapter. It was formed about 1962, principally, I think, through the efforts of Kathy Jackson, after she moved up to San Luis Obispo County. She and Lee Wilson and Bob Hoover--I don't remember the names of some of the others in the group. Jay Holliday was in that group briefly, and then he moved to Spokane. There were problems with that group from the very beginning.

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Van Tyne: The group itself was not completely united in 1968. You had Kathy Jackson versus Lee Wilson. And that group had wanted chapter status for a long time, in fact, they had been thinking about it from the time they were formed, and in 1968 they felt ready to really push for it. I think Fred encouraged it because he saw it as another chapter in Brower's camp.

Searle: Fred Eissler.

Van Tyne: Yes. We had all kinds of difficulties in the chapter executive committee that year. That was the year I was chairman. I look back at that year and think, what a lousy job I did! I didn't think so at the time, but I do now. But we had two kinds of attitudes in the chapter executive committee, for instance, toward the Forest Service. Santa Lucia group's attitude was one of confrontation. They were having a big fight with the Forest Service over the Sergeant Cypress Grove up on Cuesta Ridge. So John Hamilton and I (John was vice-chairman and I was chairman) went up with Bill Hanson, the Forest Service supervisor, to take a look at what the Forest Service was doing with its fuel break in the Sergeant Cypress Grove. We had no fixed opinions on it, we only knew what we had heard from the Santa Lucia people, and we wanted to see. The Santa Lucia group, learning that John and I had gone with Bill Hanson, then tried to find a way to impeach us.

Searle: They literally tried to impeach you?

Van Tyne: Literally. There was no way, nothing in the chapter bylaws that provided for impeachment.

Searle: This was a case where you were consorting with the enemy.

Van Tyne: Yes, we were consorting with the enemy. We did not in any way commit ourselves one whit to Bill; we simply looked at it. That was all. But this was treason, high treason. So we had this kind of a situation all year. They came in with a resolution asking the chapter executive committee to agree to their petition for chapter status. They had the requisite number of signatures on a petition.

Some of us on the executive committee--a good many of us--didn't feel that it was a good thing. I mean, here is a county with a population of only 100,000, and they had at that time, I'm guessing, about 150 members or something like that in the group. But on the other hand, we didn't believe that they would get chapter status, and so we had to approach this resolution very carefully.

One thing that they wanted, which we were adamantly opposed to, they wanted to include the Santa Maria River watershed in their chapter boundaries, and we flatly opposed that. We said, "It's got to follow political boundaries." The congressional district, county line, the state assembly district and the state senatorial districts at that time all followed the county boundaries. So we passed a resolution that we would not oppose their request for chapter status. We didn't think they'd get it. We wouldn't oppose it, but we were not going to encourage it because we figured they wouldn't get it, and we were going to have to continue to work with them.

Searle: You had a proviso, though, in regard to the boundaries?

Van Tyne: Yes, the motion specified that the boundary should be San Luis Obispo County. My personal opinion was that I was opposed from the standpoint of what was best for the club. I could not see, in this small county, that this was a good idea. We had, many people feel, too many chapters in California already; it could never be a very large chapter; there aren't that many people in San Luis Obispo county; and it didn't meet with the council's guidelines for new chapters.

Searle: That's right. You had to have at least about 300 people in the area.

Van Tyne: And, several other things. When it came before the Sierra Club Council, the vote was twenty-eight to nothing, with two abstaining, I believe, or two absent, I guess it was.

Searle: And I think that possibly the Los Padres chapter abstained in that particular vote?

Van Tyne: I don't really know. No, they wouldn't have abstained, because there were no abstentions. There were two absent.

Searle: Right. That was up at Norden, wasn't it? That was 1968, I believe.

Van Tyne: September, 1968. That was when Alaska, Hawaii, and Los Padres all came up. The council approved Alaska and Hawaii; it did not approve Santa Lucia. It came before the board. I was called on. What was the chapter's position? So I said we do not oppose their request for chapter status; we do feel that the boundaries should not include the Santa Maria watershed, that it should simply be San Luis Obispo county. Will Siri commented that that was the weakest recommendation for a chapter he'd ever heard.

However, the board did vote for chapter status, and if you look at the vote, you'll know exactly why. Because there were the Brower supporters, who voted for Santa Lucia being a chapter, and there were those opposed to Brower, who opposed it.

Searle: I remember some of the responses to that. Let's see, there's Maynard Munger, I think a number of people got up and spoke, even after the vote, in regard to that. August Frugé got up and spoke. And I don't remember which of the gentlemen made that comment, but he said something to the effect, "Gentlemen"--I don't know if he used those words to the board, but--"you've just told us to go to hell." Do you remember who said that?

Van Tyne: No, I don't.

Searle: But I was most impressed. My feeling was that at that board meeting, when the board of directors ignored a twenty-eight to nothing recommendation of the council, that a number of people at that time decided that this was the time that there had to be a change, that is, the time had come.

Van Tyne: That same weekend was when they tried again to reverse the referendum on Diablo Canyon.

Searle: That's right, it came up again.

Van Tyne: It was all part of the same picture.

Searle: And I remember it was August Frugé, and you have to listen to the tapes, but I remember coming home and vowing, well, this is it. This is war.

Van Tyne: It sure was. But my personal opinion, and this is very personal, was that from a personal standpoint I thought there ought to be dancing in the streets. Because it had been so difficult all year, and the three months left in that year of my chairmanship were so much more peaceful, you wouldn't believe. But I was opposed to it, because I could look beyond my own problems to the good of the club.

THE BROWER CONTROVERSY

Nipomo Dunes vs. Diablo Canyon

Searle: That issue, in a sense, was a watershed issue, in that--it's sort of like something that makes an anarchist happy. The structure was unwilling to change itself, but finally, like when an earthquake occurs, the stress and strain builds up until the stress gets great enough that finally you have a rupture. And that was the straw that I think pushed a number of people over into where there had to be a change in the way the club was doing its business and the politics of the situation. I think if the Santa Lucia issue had come up at some other time that didn't involve the Brower situation concurrently, perhaps, it wasn't the Santa Lucia that caused it.

Van Tyne: It wouldn't have come up another time.

Searle: It probably wouldn't have come up another time, or at least it wouldn't have reached that conclusion; they would have put it off, if nothing else. But that was an issue that was promoted by the pro-Brower people. Was there some sort of a promise from the pro-Brower group, as far as you know, that they would give the Santa Lucia group chapter status?

Van Tyne: I have never known.

Searle: I wish I could, sometime we'll have to play a couple of those recordings from that...

Van Tyne: I have never known. I'm convinced that Fred encouraged them.

Searle: It could well be, but that's your opinion, anyway.

Van Tyne: That's my opinion. I don't know. I can't prove anything. And from there you go to Nipomo Dunes and Diable Canyon.

Searle: Why don't we go on to Nipomo Dunes soon.

Van Tyne: You can't separate them. You did in your outline, but you can't.

Searle: I realize one was a trade-off in the minds of people.

Van Tyne: Kathy had been carrying on a long campaign for preservation of the dunes. PG&E owned land, industrially zoned, in the dunes, and was proposing to build this nuclear power plant. And Kathy did a lot of work, and I believe some other board members did, and also I can't remember the name of the organization [Conservation Associates] that Dick Leonard's wife, Doris Leonard and George somebody-or-other [Collins], whose name I don't recall, worked on this too. So PG&E finally said, "All right, we will forego the dunes site; we'll listen to you." They consulted with the state Department of Resources, and came up with their proposal to build the plant in Diablo Canyon. Now you have to realize that no one had ever seen Diablo Canyon. It was absolutely inaccessible; it was private land; there were no public roads that went to Diablo Canyon, no trails, nobody had ever seen it.

Searle: That was involved in these decisions, or these questions.

Van Tyne: Practically nobody but the owners. It's down around the corner from the south end of Montana de Oro State Park. And around the corner the other way from Avila Beach.

Searle: Yes, it's certainly out of sight.

Van Tyne: It's completely inaccessible. There wasn't any movement at that period to preserve that part of the coast. There were several ranches, there were no roads to them, nothing. And the club at that time, you have to realize, was not anti-nuclear. As a matter of fact, in 1954, at the time the Echo Park Dam and Dinosaur, Dave Brower had said there was no need for the dam, the coming source of power was atomic power.

Searle: I might add also, in the case of the Grand Canyon controversy, Alan Carlin and Larry Moss, the Rand Corporation people, made a study for the Sierra Club and stated that there was an economic advantage to nuclear power over dams in the Grand Canyon.

Van Tyne: But of course they came up with another study where they were on opposite sides of the fence in their interpretations. But, it was very clear that PG&E was going to build a power plant, and that the club wasn't going to be able to stop it, and I don't think wanted to. I think they felt that the projections were that a power plant was needed, and Diablo Canyon was probably a better place than any other possible site, and certainly better than the Dunes, which Kathy had gotten the state parks people interested in, and so on. Then there was the problem about thermal pollution, and I remember Will Siri gave a long speech, saying that this was not nearly so great a problem as--

Searle: There were a number of board meetings when that was discussed. In fact, it was a case of Litton and some of the other people sort of attacking Siri's viewpoint, and I guess Wayburn and Siri were two of the principal people that were involved, at least as spokesmen.

Van Tyne: Siri particularly had been working closely with Kathy on this. My feeling is that while Diablo Canyon became a major issue, I suspect that it was something of an accident. I think it could have been some other issue on which Brower chose to fight. It just happened to be Diablo Canyon. I think it was pure chance.

Searle: If it hadn't been that one, the next one to come along--

Van Tyne: If it hadn't been that one, it would have been something else. Sooner or later, the fight would have taken place. It happened to be Diablo. I think if the fight had been sooner, it might have been a little less bloody.

Searle: I know what you mean. People were not as committed earlier.

Van Tyne: Yes. But, if it hadn't been Diablo, it would have been something else. It just happened to be Diablo.

Searle: Let's say that Diablo was a vehicle.

Van Tyne: Yes. And at one time, Lee Wilson of the Santa Lucia group was all for the plant being in the dunes.

Searle: Oh, I see. Well, we won't hold it against people for changing their minds.

Van Tyne: There were switches that were made. Lee got brought around to this other point. Of course, the anti-Diablo Canyon people never came up with a proposal as to where else it could be.

Searle: Well, there's this approach that's taken sometimes: "Hey, my concern is with preserving something, it's not my business to find an alternative for these people. If they want to do something, they'll find a way."

Van Tyne: Yes, and that was a position that some people took.

Searle: I remember, in the case of Diablo Canyon, going there; they arranged a tour, and--

Van Tyne: I never have been there.

Searle: Well, Montana de Oro is a pretty area and so is that area a pretty place, and it's a pretty canyon. And I remember on that trip because Alan Carlin, myself, and Larry Moss went along. And Larry Moss was already--

Van Tyne: He was committed to one side.

Searle: Though he had not openly committed himself, the arrangements had been made, partly through, I'm sure, Brower, and when we came back from that trip, looking at the canyon there, he was committed in opposition. Now, he may have been committed before, but he had seen the ammunition, I guess, and that was all he needed.

Van Tyne: Yes. The beautiful oaks. I heard all about the beautiful oaks.

Searle: Well, there were oak trees in there, and they're nice oaks. You know, you could argue about--

Van Tyne: I remember somebody talking about these oaks, and they were bigger than anybody'd ever seen anywhere. And right offhand, I could think of places where there were larger oaks. It was a handy issue on which to fight.

Searle: Let's progress in that matter. Have you got some thoughts?

Underground Discussions

Van Tyne: As I say, it might have been a little less bloody if it had been sooner. When we were talking earlier about underground discussions going on among council members, Dick Sill, Francis Walcott, Darrell Southwell, Peter, you, and some others, I don't remember. And I remember, I was a kind of hang-on in this, and not really considered part of the inner circle, and I knew that, but I still tagged along, and I remember suggesting at one point the desirability of open discussion on principles. Not on personalities, and that rather than this underground rumbling, let's bring it out in the open, but on the basis of the principles involved. Well, I didn't get anywhere, because I didn't have any clout.

Searle: There is a gentleman who attempted to do that, and as a matter of fact, he considered himself, I think, somewhat of a martyr, and expected that to be the case. Bob Marshall. Do you think that'd be correct? Bob Marshall spoke out--maybe it was on a personality basis, maybe that's the problem--but he spoke out against Dave Brower.

Van Tyne: It's awfully hard, twelve years later, to sort out who did what when.

Searle: He wrote a letter, I think it was for the Sierra Club Bulletin, I'm not quite sure, though, in which he essentially stated his opposition to certain viewpoints.

Van Tyne: But this underground discussion I'm talking about is before the fall of 1968.

Searle: Yes, that's true. We had a meeting which you probably weren't at where we discussed the question of what we were going to do. Dick Sill, myself, and Francis--I think it was probably in early 1968, like maybe in May.

Van Tyne: I was not invited.

Searle: It was one of these where the people get together and we decided--I remember the acronym--Help Brower Out. HBO.

Van Tyne: Oh, I remember people talking about HBO.

Searle: And that's where we sort of generated that thought, but we decided at that time, you know, we didn't make a manifesto.

Van Tyne: It was a little bit before this, when you were talking in halls and at lunch, I made my suggestion, and didn't get anywhere.

Searle: Well, maybe it had some influence, because, though admittedly, you said speak issues, well, Dick Sill came down from Reno, we had a discussion about it, and in essence we decided that the situation, whatever had led up to it, had reached the point where eventually Brower was not going to be able to--we would not allow him to remain in the position of power that he was in, for all of the various reasons which would come out. And we didn't say, we'll form a CMC, or something like that, at least, I don't remember that, but we were dedicated to formulating means of doing these things...

Van Tyne: Well, I'd come to my own conclusions about Brower a year or two before that. Particularly in a board of directors meeting on the budget, where he wanted to publish any number of Exhibit Format books, and the budget didn't allow for it. And he was extremely abusive and nasty and insulting to the board members. He said he would do as he planned, the money would come from somewhere, he was not going to pay any attention to their budget. Well, I somehow don't go for that kind of thing. I didn't discuss this with anybody; this was just how I reacted to the performance he put on at that board meeting.

Then I had my own little go-round with him a little bit later. It was probably toward the end of 1967, where I had been appointed by the council as the chairman of the committee to produce a guide

Van Tyne: for chapter editors. And there was one section in it that in effect said certain things you could not do, where we had gotten a wording from the legal committee on just how this should be said. I was presenting the guide to the council; the one and only time that I can recall Dave came to the council meeting. He was there. Whether he knew this was coming up or not, I don't know.

He took objection to this paragraph, and I pointed out that we had cleared this with the legal committee, and the legal committee said this was the way it should be worded, and no other way. And this was the way it was going to stay. I remember his looking around at me, "Well, who are you?" It stayed, I might add. But, you know, this doesn't sit well with somebody who has really put an awful lot of time and work into something and come up with what presumably is a pretty good job, and certainly on this one point, it was not my personal opinion, it was the considered opinion of the legal committee that this had to be in there, and stated in this way.

Searle: Yes, I can see where that would create a somewhat adverse opinion.

Van Tyne: So I had these two things already. I don't really remember when CMC was actually formed.

Concerned Members for Conservation

Searle: That's a good question. I was trying to think of that myself.

Van Tyne: It was the fall of 1968.

Searle: Yes, it was after--

Van Tyne: It was probably a meeting in October, following the meeting at Norden.

Searle: We did have several meetings--

Van Tyne: I was commuting between here and San Francisco once a month, I was driving up and back. I remember it well. Boy, I'm glad gas was cheaper then. But, at this particular meeting, I know how I got on the steering committee. Something came up, and I couldn't recall the exact situation now. But I remember speaking up and saying I had been in two factional fights before, and they all seemed to follow the same pattern. And if you do this, then this happens. And then this happens. And I think that what I had said would happen had. So, people seemed to think I was--you know--

Searle: Sounds like there was a little bit to be learned.

Van Tyne: I really knew what this was all about, and it may possibly also have been because of some organizational suggestions, but all at once people started listening to me, which was a new and interesting experience, particularly, Ruth Bradley coming over and saying, hey listen, you're good. But from there on I was on the steering committee.

I also remember one discussion we had in the CMC when Will Siri came begging us to support Edgar Wayburn in that election. I opposed it, and I remember what I said in opposition, that we presumably were running this campaign on the basis of principles, and the candidates we were supporting were candidates who were a hundred percent in support of our principles. And that Wayburn was not willing to accept our principles, and that therefore if we were supporting him, we were saying, in effect, we only believe in our principles eighty percent. And twenty percent we don't. Well, we supported him.

Searle: Yes, the decision of the committee, as I recall, was we may need Wayburn's support to make the difference, or something like that, and that we had a weak, there was one weak candidate--Nick Clinch.

Van Tyne: Nick had already withdrawn. We only had four candidates.

Searle: Right. We had to cut it down to the number available.

Van Tyne: We had just four candidates. Some people felt Wayburn might get us votes, and I felt if you were running a campaign on the basis of principle, you run it on the basis of principle, you don't run it eighty percent on the basis of principle. I may have been wrong.

Searle: But nevertheless, that was a very definite viewpoint.

Van Tyne: I had some support for that.

Searle: That meeting was held up at the airport, Hilton Inn in San Francisco. And while it didn't come about that way, it would be interesting to conjecture what the results of the election would be if we didn't support Wayburn.

Van Tyne: I think they would have been the same.

Searle: I think you're right. Because first of all, my opinion, I did not gauge the level of support that we actually received. I didn't think it would be as great as it was. I was amazed by the effectiveness of CMC, and it really wasn't CMC that was effective, it was the fact that the conditions were right.

Van Tyne: The CMC was effective because of what we stood for.

Searle: Yes, that's right. You didn't have to go out and recruit people in the chapters. You just had to tell them about what was going on.

The Campaign in Los Padres Chapter

Van Tyne: It was what we stood for, because we did run a campaign on the basis of principles, and things we stood for. We had a preview of that campaign in the Los Padres Chapter. Our chapter elections came in the fall of 1968. So we had two slates running. There were the people who were nominated by the nominating committee, all of whom, as it happened, were anti-Brower, so Fred Eissler put together his own slate of our candidates. They were nominated by petition. Fred, Carroll Purcell, Rod Nash, and Selma Rubin. And we had a discussion, which I recall. I don't remember now whether the discussion was in the Condor Call or whether we put out a special mailing. We may have done the special mailing. But I remember that Marshall Bond wrote an excellent article saying that this is a preview for what is happening in the club, and the same things are involved here that are involved in what's going on in the club nationally. [Turn it off and let me look.]

Searle: Apparently this was in a mailing separately, and I'm putting this on the tape so we know we couldn't find it in the Condor Call.

Van Tyne: It must have been in a separate mailing that went out. That really laid it on the line, and said this is what this amounts to. In December [11-2-68] we held a chapter meeting at the museum.

Searle: Ah, go ahead and talk about that. I think I know that one.

Van Tyne: We felt that the membership needed further clarification and information on what was going on in the club. We invited Dick Leonard representing one side, Phil Berry representing the opposite side, and Cicely Christy as--uninvolved isn't the right word.

Searle: I know what you mean. A person who is neutral.

Van Tyne: Yes, as a neutral person, but one who was very well informed, not only on what was happening, but what had gone on in the club before, as members of the panel. And I'm not--I believe Fred may have been asked originally, and refused. I'm not sure.

Searle: Fred Eissler, right.

Van Tyne: Marshall Bond, who had been chapter chairman the year before, was the moderator. And we agreed and announced at the beginning of the meeting that all questions were to be in writing, because we wanted to avoid the complaints and arguing that can go on when you have oral questions. Partway through the meeting, Dave Brower, accompanied by Fred and three or four others, suddenly appeared in the hall and demanded to speak.

Searle: We have recordings of that, too. Go ahead.

Van Tyne: I can only tell you as I remember it.

Searle: Just for the record, somebody can listen to that meeting someday if he wants to do it.*

Van Tyne: Marshall sent a note down to me, "What should I do?" As moderator, it was a very tough place. Finally, getting the feel of things, just getting the sense of the audience, I sent a note back and said, "All right, let Dave have five minutes." Which I think was what we had allowed each of the speakers, and then the rest of the time was going to be questions, or something like that. So he was introduced. He came up on the platform, and refused to answer any of the charges that had been made.

Searle: Refused in the sense of "I'm not going to"?

Van Tyne: "I'm not going to. I have no intention of it." He didn't do a bit well. I think he must have come on part way through the question period. He wasn't there at the beginning of the meeting, he came in some time nearer the end.

Searle: That's correct. The people had already made their presentations.

Van Tyne: They made their presentations, as I recall.

Searle: And then he appeared, and then Marshall, I guess, after your note-passing, announced that he was in the hall. In fact, I think Fred Eissler said, "May I have your attention," or something like that.

Van Tyne: Yes, something like that, yes. It was a very dramatic entrance and all that sort of thing. One of the interesting sidelights was that Phil said that he wasn't too sure he was exactly on the other side at this point, which was an eye-opener to a lot of us.

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*These tape recordings were donated to The Bancroft Library by Richard Searle, in May 1979.

Searle: Did he make that statement?

Van Tyne: Yes.

Searle: I'd forgotten that. Very interesting, yes. Incidentally, Phil was the author of Prometheus Unboundaried.

Van Tyne: Yes, Great Hero.

Searle: I hope that they've got that in the records.

Van Tyne: You know, I had a copy of it, and it's not in here. It's gotten lost, and Frances Scafidi lost it, I think. I just discovered last night, it's not in there, and I think it was one of the things that she borrowed.

Searle: I thought that one of the classic bits of satirical humor.

Van Tyne: Marvelous. Anyhow, we had a big attendance at that meeting, and I think that cleared up a lot of things. I believe we handled it in the best way we could, where both sides had an opportunity to present their views, aside from Brower's crashing the gate. We also had a committee of about twenty in the chapter, and we called every chapter member for whom we could get a phone number, to discuss the issues. We tried to keep it a discussion of the issues in the club election campaign. Some of the phone conversations lasted as long as twenty minutes, so it was reported. The general response we got from people was, I am so glad you called me, I am so glad to know what is really going on. And our guess is CMC probably carried our chapter by about eighty percent.

Searle: Right. The southern California area was about eighty percent for the CMC viewpoint. It was still very high, even up in the Bay Area. Of course, California was the CMC bastion. There weren't that many people outside the state, either.

Van Tyne: Wisconsin, Rocky Mountains, and some other places, but Great Lakes, no, Atlantic, no.

Searle: Was that meeting held prior to the chapter election ballot?

Van Tyne: No, after.

Searle: Okay. Because were the results of the chapter elections comparable in magnitude to what happened in the national elections?

Van Tyne: Two to one. One of Fred's slate was elected, and that was Rod Nash, who came to the January and February chapter executive committee's meetings, and in February, resigned.

Searle: He's straightforward about it, anyway.

Van Tyne: He resigned, he said, because he didn't think he'd have the time to give to it. My personal feeling was he resigned because he didn't see that it was going to forward Rod Nash's career.

Searle: Where is Rod Nash, now, anyway?

Van Tyne: Still out at UCSB.

Searle: Doing his thing, whatever it is.

Van Tyne: Well, hopefully, nobody pays any attention to Rod Nash anymore, and hasn't for years. And it didn't help him any a few months back when he was quoted extensively in a Mobil Oil ad, in Parade Magazine. It comes out with some Sunday papers. That put the finishing touches on Rod Nash.

Searle: It sounds a little bit opportunistic or something. One thing, and I think that perhaps we'll go on with the post-Brower business in a while here, but do you have any comments, because I wanted to make one comment about communication that occurred to me.

Van Tyne: There's just one addition that you might put in. When Phil appointed the 1969 nominating committee, that is, he appointed them in 1969 for the 1970 elections, that was a committee that was rather carefully balanced. I was on there; so was Dave Sive. Bob Howell was the chairman of the nominating committee. But I remember discussions at a nominating committee meeting on the character of the nominees and the character of the board of directors; Dave insisting it should be people who were outstanding, in fact, he proposed somebody who wasn't even a member of the Sierra Club. And there were trade-offs. All right, if Dick Sill's nominated Martin Litton has to be too, that kind of thing. At that point, when the nominating committee gets appointed, in the spring...

Searle: A lot of horse-trading.

Van Tyne: It had to be that way. We were appointed about June, I think. As it turned out, Bob Howell was going to be in England, and I did most of the work of corralling--this is off the record, I think.

Searle: Okay. It's back on now. I don't know why that had to be off the record.

Van Tyne: I don't think it's particularly important.

Searle: It is, as a matter of fact. But it's too late now. I won't let you do that to me again. The oral history book says to try to avoid getting off-the-record statements.

I was going to say one other thing that occurred to me on the side here, is this matter of communication in the club. Back in 1968 or so, I was secretary of the Angeles Chapter and my wife was publisher of the Angeles Chapter newspaper, and I saw to it that we sent out transcripts and details of what was going on in the board meetings. And I think that had a lot of influence in the Angeles Chapter in the attitude of the leaders there. I think a lot of it had to do with the confidence of the membership in the leaders of their chapters. And when the chapter leaders took a position in opposition to the ABC, that was what sealed the election. And I think really, though, to say the eighty percent vote, look at it, my God, that's overkill. But on the other hand, it was necessary in order to keep the issue from rising again.

Van Tyne: We needed the intensive campaign we put on. But I firmly believe if we had not had the kind of principles we had, it would not have been eighty percent.

Searle: Incidentally, there were a number of people who were not on the CMC but who gave considerable support financially and otherwise. Isn't it correct? I think Ruth Bradley probably donated money for that cuase.

Van Tyne: Well, she was on CMC. And Harold did too. And Wallace Stegner wrote a wonderful letter to the Palo Alto paper, in response to a story they had carried, a really remarkable letter.

Searle: I remember seeing that, and that's one of these things that's again, I know it's in the files in The Bancroft Library, and they can look it up, but that letter was cited a number of times in terms of arguing issues.

Van Tyne: Oh yes. He did a beautiful job.

Searle: It's nice to have something like that once in a while. You can't always express yourself that well.

Van Tyne: Yes, because nobody had known it was coming. It simply appeared. It was not anything that anybody had arranged for. Nobody called him up and said, write a letter. He did it. And it was an indication of the way people felt. A lot of people felt.

CMC in 1969-70##

Van Tyne: I think we made a mistake in trying to continue CMC. There wasn't the support for it, there wasn't the interest, and some of the people involved were something of a problem.

Searle: Be specific.

Van Tyne: Raffi Bedayn. I was supposed to be chairman of the steering committee that second year, and Raffi Bedayn kind of took over and did as he pleased and didn't even tell me what he was doing. Basically, I think there wasn't a need for it, and I think we were trying to do something that we didn't have support for.

Searle: Yes. I think what happened is the cause, the cause had sort of disappeared. And the replacement was--sort of like the March of Dimes, you know, when they had infantile paralysis, there was a cause. When that problem was solved, they had to find a new issue. And they have a new issue. The new issue after that election was, was far as the CMC, mostly a consolidating.

Van Tyne: Yes, and I think that that was it, and that we wanted to consolidate the CMC position on the board. But there wasn't interest, the campaign was handled badly, and we didn't do too well. Sill and Leonard were elected.

Searle: I got the most votes of anybody who ever lost. I got more than Brower did when he lost.

Van Tyne: You were very, very close, as I recall.

Searle: Yes, I was, and Litton beat me out, and as Litton said later, in the board meeting, "I really didn't expect to be here." Which is probably a true statement. I think that there was a mailing up in the Bay Area for CMC people, and I think there was a fair amount of support up there. In the Angeles Chapter, I found a lot of apathy, at least among the people that I might approach. I was hoping that as a candidate that somebody, frankly, who had been working in the CMC would come forth and say, I'd like to help, or provide some organization. I suppose maybe it's the wrong way, if you're a politician you go out and form a party. If you're a politician you go out, and you do these things.

Van Tyne: We couldn't get much going in our chapter, either. We tried.

Searle: Everybody said, well, fine, it's all over, you know, and that was it. Anyway, I hope that we hadn't prostituted our principles in the previous election, I like to think that this lack of support was more a case of saying the issue is resolved.

Van Tyne: I think people felt it was. Dave was out. Remember that at that May 1969 board meeting, I still remember well, five minutes before he would have been fired, Dave's speech of resignation. I also remember his saying very flatly, "I do not intend to go out and organize a competing organization." Six months later he formed Friends of the Earth.

Searle: I don't think Dave could live without having some sort of a group of people--

Van Tyne: Frankly, I didn't believe that he wouldn't form a competing organization. So I was not surprised when Friends of the Earth burst on the scene.

Searle: Well, I think a lot of people welcomed that as a method for Dave to operate in an environment over which he had control. At least he thought he had control. I have some comments, in that regard, don't you, about that organization? Do you want to bring them up later?

Van Tyne: Just one, a discussion that Al Forsyth of New York and I had in the airport in San Francisco.

Searle: This was how much later?

Van Tyne: Two or three years later. Al was an Atlantic Chapter delegate to the council; we were both waiting for planes. He brought the subject up. He said, you know, I couldn't understand what you were getting at about this business of financial responsibility, you people in CMC. Now I understand. He was treasurer of Friends of the Earth. He said, Dave is totally irresponsible, as far as finances are concerned. Totally irresponsible.

Searle: You know, sometime, as a peripheral thing, it would be nice to talk with somebody who's been close to Friends of the Earth, and see how they're doing now, today. I'm out of touch with it. I don't know if you have. Whether they still have the same problems, or whether it's boiled to some level of equilibrium.

Van Tyne: I really don't know. I don't know how large their membership is. The last I knew, it was about 20,000; my impression is, it's never gone beyond that, to speak of.

Searle: Do you know, there is a Friends of the Earth in New Zealand? I passed by their office.

Van Tyne: There is in England, too. And when I've been there I've seen stuff in the Guardian, some years back, about Friends of the Earth doing this and that. Maybe doing better abroad than in this country. There's a local Friends of the Earth branch here. They don't seem to do much.

Searle: That's an interesting side issue. Somebody ought to look into that and find out if the concerns that the CMC had or the ABC had about the individual and his policies, or his approaches, whether those, what kind of effect they've had on another organization where that person has gone. Of course, the Oral History Project has interviewed Dave Brower.

Van Tyne: I read it.

Searle: Right, you've read parts of it, and I certainly want to see more of it some day.

Van Tyne: I read, particularly, the part about--

Searle: Did you have any comments on some of that, and what he said?

Van Tyne: My comments on Dave Brower's interview are that it's very interesting but he doesn't seem to have been in the same fight I was in. It doesn't read like what really happened. Oh, there's one other sidelight on that CMC campaign. And that was the Condor Call had printed a purely factual article--I think regarding a board meeting or something of that sort--and out of the blue, the editor of the Condor Call and I as chapter chairman got letters from Dave's attorney, threatening to sue us for libel unless we printed a retraction.

Searle: Yes, a lot of letters went out like that, too, trying to intimidate people.

Van Tyne: I didn't know any other libel threats were made. I called Dick Leonard and told him about it, and he said, "Don't worry." So I didn't. I didn't worry too much, because I knew we had not said anything libelous. But I was damned mad.

And when that was publicized, it helped CMC rather than ABC.

Searle: Yes, I think especially among the leaders of the chapters because the thing is, when you do that, you have now established a power base. You've got the leaders, the subleaders on your side. You've got the organization.

Van Tyne: If you're smart, you don't go around threatening libel suits.

Searle: That's right. Was there anything else, before we go on to the post-Brower period.

Van Tyne: No, I don't think so.

WORK ON LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST PROBLEMS

Ojai Phosphate Mine

Searle: You've been active in the forest land-use committee. Is there something in that area?

Van Tyne: It was formed in 1970, at my suggestion, because I thought, here we have about forty-five percent of the chapter area in national forest, somebody really ought to keep some kind of an eye on what's going on there. My feeling was that this would be a really simple thing, wouldn't have too much going on. I suggested this to Sue Higman, the chapter chairman, in April. In May I went to England for a month. I came back, and Sue informed me, "We've got something here for your committee to do. There is an open-pit phosphate mine proposed near Ojai."

So we started right in with a bang, getting information, getting out information also, stirring people up, pushing for a local hearing, which we got in July of 1971, and it turned into a two-day hearing. Our committee worked very closely with Pat Weinberger down in Ojai, who did a marvelous job of mobilizing community support in opposition to the mine in the Ojai area. She and I worked very closely on this. We did a lot of work here. We had started circulating a petition back around December, both in Ventura County and here, and it spread wide enough so we got requests from people in Angeles Chapter for copies of the petition. We wound up with, as I recall, about 1,200 names on our petition, in opposition to the mine on environmental grounds.

The hearing lasted all one day, that evening, and all the next day. And I believe at that hearing there were about a half-dozen people in support of the mine. The hearing started off with US Gypsum's parade of prostitute scientists. It's the only way you could characterize them.

Searle: "It's going to be good for the country."

Van Tyne: Oh, my, yes. The man who got up and said, "I am an expert on vultures; I know all there is to know about the condor." And everybody just laughed at him.

Searle: He literally said that?

Van Tyne: He literally said that. But, we did a very good job. The draft environmental impact report was a matter of thirty-two pages, and it had practically nothing in it, and we tore it to shreds. We were able to get experts, and so on. They finally appointed a team to do a new EIR, and they spent two years on it and an awful lot of money. They finally came out with what was purported to be a final EIR, and scheduled a hearing in July of 1976. At that hearing a miner from the Mojave Desert came over to support the proposal for the mine, but what he really talked about was don't change the 1972 Mining Act; he didn't talk about the phosphate mine. US Gypsum had only Frank Appleyard there, who made a rather brief presentation.

Searle: Who's Frank Appleyard?

Van Tyne: He was vice-president of US Gypsum, and had been the guy promoting the mine all along. That hearing lasted from 9:15 in the morning until 11:15 at night, and during that period there were 1,500 people there, at one time or another.

Searle: There must have been a sign-up list.

Van Tyne: The testimony that was presented was even better than that presented in 1971. In doing our comments I worked with the Forest Service, to a certain extent. We traded information.

Searle: The Forest Service was not too favorable towards the mine?

Van Tyne: The Forest Service had always been opposed to the mine. Paul Barker gave me some information, figures from the Bureau of Mines, that showed that phosphate wasn't needed, and I traded seismic information that I got from Oren Sage. That was very important, because they had looked at too small a map, and while there was a fault that ran through the area covered by the lease application, it was not an active fault, and there was another one about two-and-a-half miles away. What they didn't look at was the San Andreas fault, which is seventeen miles away, where you would expect an earthquake at least of the magnitude of eight. Oren suggested I talk with a structural engineer. So I did, and Stanley Mendes said, "Well, yes. And at that rate, and that distance, they would have to build the dam to hold the tailings back, and that sort of thing, to withstand an earthquake of magnitude eight point five [8.5]."

Van Tyne: The phosphate was low-grade, about eight and a half percent ore. A man whose name I don't remember who came down to that 1976 hearing from the department of Transportation and Business, or something like that, a state department, and pointed out thirteen bridges that wouuld have to be rebuilt on Highway 33, and the need for addition highway patrol personnel, and on and on and on, and the state would expect US Gypsum to pick up the tab for all this.

We also had an expert on ground water, Dave Kleinecke, who testified. And Larry Weinberger, who did special testimony on fluoride emissions. At the end of the hearing, the hearing officer agreed that they would have to do more; this could not be accepted as a final EIR; they would get back to Dave Kleinecke, and to Larry, particularly, for additional information from them. The next we heard was that the application had been denied on the basis that there was a prior claim on the same land. This prior claim comes under the 1872 Mining Act, and it is for gypsum, and it is held by US Gypsum. So, US Gypsum then filed suit against the Department of Interior, and we have never heard another thing. Anyhow, I don't think there's going to be a phosphate mine near Ojai.

Fuel Breaks, Herbicides and Goats

Van Tyne: Besides the phosphate mine, one of the first things we got involved in was the question of herbicides on fuel breaks. We had a number of discussions with one of the Forest Service officials, and he brought us all kinds of material and so on, but we kept saying, no. We had at that time a member of the committee who was an expert on chaparral, a very valuable member (I wish she hadn't dropped off because she was so busy). She suggested, "Why don't they try the use of sheep or goats on the fuel breaks?" They listened. And then, fortunately, the Sunburst people came along and they had a goat herd, and so for three or four years we had goats keeping down the brush on the fuel breaks.

We had a field trip out to see them one year. They were doing a splendid job. There was a very good management plan that provided they would stay just so long in each area, and they would be corralled at night, provisions for where they were getting their water and that sort of thing. It was very satisfactory, and we like to feel that we had something to do with that--that if we hadn't kept saying no on herbicides and saying, how about trying this, they probably wouldn't have done it.

Off-Road Vehicles on the Forest

Van Tyne: Another thing we've been involved in, and still are, is Ballinger Canyon, and the ORV [Off-Road Vehicles] question generally. And there we don't make too much headway. The Forest Service attitude--as Fritz De Holl, the present forest supervisor, said, "You're asking us to solve a social problem." Our reply is that it is not a social problem; you must put the land first, and what the effect of any action is on the land. If this means you close an area to ORV use, you close it. If it means you close an area to hikers, you close it. But the land must come first. And this is a position we will continue to take.

There have been improvements. When they first started talking about an ORV management plan, there were a lot more open areas. We did get them to take one trail off the plan for trails--this was about 1972--we managed that by taking Sam [Alfano], the recreation officer, over, getting Sam out of his truck for once, walking him a few miles, and showing him the trail. And after he'd seen it, he said, you're right. This should not be used by ORVs.

Searle: For the benefit of other people, you might mention where Ballinger Canyon is.

Van Tyne: Ballinger Canyon is in Ventura County, east of Highway 33; it's an area where open use, which means hill climbing, has been allowed for years, and where some of the hills are absolutely denuded of all vegetation, and in some places, the soil is gone, clear down to the bed rock. The present management plan allows for no open use, but for certain designated trails, and they are trying to regenerate the hillsides. They are optimists; they think they can. We doubt it. We feel, too, that they have not really done the thorough studies that need doing, and they have opened trails that should not be open. They've done a half-way job.

Searle: When you say open trails, do you mean open trails to motorized travel?

Van Tyne: Trail bikes.

Searle: So it means that people can walk these trails.

Van Tyne: Yes, but nobody is ever going to want to walk in that area, not while it looks like it does now. It's one of the areas that is cited by Howard Wilshire in the study he did of nine areas (he's with U.S.G.S.) of ORV use, and the terrible things that have happened. It's a problem of erosion, of sedimentation of creeks, the loss of vegetation. There are threats to the blunt-nosed leopard lizard and the hybrid blunt-nosed leopard lizard. That's

Van Tyne: one of the few habitat areas for those. At the present time, I don't know where it stands, I know that the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund appealed the latest Ballinger Canyon Management Plan. I haven't heard what's happened on the appeal. And we've also had problems with the Red Garter Enduro, which is a long motorcycle race sort of thing, that goes on. We don't feel that that should have been allowed.

Searle: What is the attitude of the ORV people? Is it solid in one direction, or is there a spread of opinions?

Van Tyne: So far as I know, there is not a spread of opinion. I went to one meeting with Zane Smith and Allen Lamb from the Forest Service regional office, and Al West, who was still supervisor, and Sam Alfano from the supervisors' office, and about ten ORV people, mostly Ballinger Canyon users, and three of us from the forest land-use committee. It was a total waste of time as far as we were concerned because we hardly were able to get a word in edgewise. We tried to be moderate in our comments, trying to avoid a confrontation atmosphere. They certainly didn't. They didn't even hear what we were saying.

Searle: Was this to be an exchange?

Van Tyne: No, Zane Smith simply wanted to find out how people felt. I don't think he had much of a chance to find out how we felt. And after the meeting I told Sam Alfano, "Don't ever ask me to come to another meeting like that, because it's a complete waste of time." Originally, somebody from Washington, Barry Lamb, was supposed to have been out here for it, and he was sick. He came out a couple of months later, and he and two or three regional office people, a couple of local people, and I were at a meeting out at the supervisors' office. I was the only one who wasn't Forest Service. And we discussed ORV use again, and I put forward our position, that the land is the thing you have to consider, and if you have to close it to us as well as ORVs, you close it. The land comes first. This is the way you've got to do it, and it's your responsibility. You're charged by Congress to protect the land, and are you doing it?

Searle: That issue is unresolved.

Van Tyne: It's unresolved. It's one of these things, I think, you nibble away at. You get a little farther. There was one particular thing which came out of the study that was done for CEQ [Council on Environmental Quality], and it was very, very good, and it particularly hit at some of the things Los Padres Forest has done and hasn't done.

The Genesis of the Dick Smith Wilderness

Van Tyne: We've also worked on the wilderness proposal that is now Dick Smith Wilderness. We first proposed it in February of 1972, when we went up to the area to take a look at the proposed road. When the San Rafael Wilderness was established, we wanted to include Big Pine Mountain on the east side of Buckhorn Road (it's a Forest Service administrative fire road). The legislation said you've got to realign that road, put it around the east side of Big Pine.

We went up in 1972 on a Forest Service field trip to take a look at where they proposed to put the road. While we were up there I took a good look at the country east, over toward Madulce Peak. I had a bright idea, and said to Don Vaughan, the district ranger, "You know, Don, you could get out of building that road if you establish a new wilderness, a new Madulce wilderness, and transfer Big Pine Mountain into the new wilderness, and leave the road where it is as an administrative corridor." He said, "You'd go for that?" and I said, "Yes, we would be perfectly willing to transfer Big Pine Mountain into a new wilderness. But we've got to have a new wilderness first."

Since the road had been estimated to cost, in 1972, $180,000; since it would have made a scar that you could see for miles, and miles; and there was no way that you could build it so it wouldn't leave a scar, Don seemed to listen some. I just learned recently, when I saw Bob Lancaster, who was then the supervisor on Los Padres, Don had come to him and said, this is what Sierra Club proposes, and Bob apparently listened with great interest. But I didn't know that until three weeks ago.

Then along came RARE I (Roadless Area Review and Evaluation) the next year, and Madulce wilderness, which was then about 32,000 acres, came out as a candidate for wilderness study. As you know, nothing happened on that for a while, and then came RARE II, in 1978, and at that time, we formed a coalition with three other organizations, Audubon, Citizens Committee for Wilderness, and Friends of Dick Smith. Dick died just a year before, and Friends of Dick Smith were trying to figure out a suitable memorial, and had come to us and said, "How would you feel about naming the new wilderness for Dick?"* and we had all said fine.

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*Dick Smith was a writer, photographer, naturalist, who used his talents to bring to the attention of Santa Barbara citizens the wealth of values to be found in the Santa Barbara back country. He was often called "Santa Barbara's conscience" and his activities related to wilderness and to the California condor brought him national recognition. He was the author of California Condor: Vanishing American and Condor Journal (published posthumously). He died Feb. 2, 1977 at the age of 56.--Van Tyne, 3-8-81

Van Tyne: The coalition of four organizations worked very hard on this process of RARE II, and we worked with the Forest Service. By then, under the new criteria for RARE II, it had expanded to about 70,000 acres. There was one ORV trail up in the northeast corner of the area, with just a little triangle beyond it; it didn't amount to anything. So we figured a boundary change there that would leave this ORV trail where it was. We could easily forego that little corner, and it would keep the ORV people from opposing it, because that was the only thing they would lose. Then it seemed the Forest Service was very concerned with the southwest corner, where there's a lot of very old chaparral, and they would like to do some fuel management in there. So they laid on an hour's helicopter flight over the entire area for five or six of us and for five of them, and then afterwards we talked a little bit and then set up a meeting with Forest Service people and us to discuss a boundary change in the southwest corner.

We got together with all the topo maps, and we had previously talked about what we felt we could give. They said that they wanted a boundary that ran along the top of a ridge. It was easiest to administer. But both lines they came in with went down into Indian Canyon, to Indian Creek, which we wanted all of. So they made their proposals, and we said, "Well, no, what do you think about this? How about following the top of the ridge between Buckhorn Creek and Indian Creek? Then you won't have to go down in the canyon." I think it probably gives them a little more acreage than they thought they would get with their proposal. They said, "Would you go for that?" and we said, "Yes, we think it makes sense, and it certainly fits what you say you want in the way of a boundary." So that was the way it came out.

We had a joint meeting--[Robert] Lagomarsino (the local Congressman), the Forest Service, and a couple of us from the coalition and discussed our boundary proposals. Lagomarsino had been in favor of the name change, the local Forest Service people were, and I think convinced the region, so that it went into Congress with agreement everywhere. But we ran around all that summer of 1978--we were not taking any chances--building up support for the Dick Smith Wilderness. We had put together a slide show that runs about twelve or fifteen minutes on the area, a slide-tape show. We showed that to the board of supervisors, we showed it to the city water commission, we showed it to the NAACP, and we showed it to the Soroptomists, we showed it--

Searle: You showed it to anybody who'd look.

Van Tyne: Anybody where we could twist an arm and get in with it. So we had very broad support for the proposal. And of course, where we stand right now, it's passed the House.

Van Tyne: During the process in Congress, we were told, "No way are you going to get a name on there. There's too much opposition. You don't name wildernesses for people." And we said what about Bob Marshall, Aldo Leopold, and John Muir wildernesses? But we had agreed with Lagomarsino that the wilderness is the important thing, not the name. If you have to give up the name, you give it up, but we'd like to have it. By george, it came out in the legislation, the Dick Smith Wilderness. It's now passed--it's part of the California Wilderness Bill that Burton put together. It's passed the House. So right now we are very busy putting some pressure on Cranston to introduce a companion bill and get it through the Senate this session, so we don't have to start all over again with a new Congress in January.

Searle: Which would drag on and on.

Van Tyne: Burton did a magnificent job of working with various interests and other California congressmen, particularly Don Clauson, Biz Johnson, and so on--

Searle: Biz Johnson is on the other side of the fence, usually.

Van Tyne: --getting agreement on this bill. It's not all the conservationists would like, but it's a darned good bill. There's never been any disagreement on the Dick Smith, because of the fact that the Forest Service and we and the congressman from the district all agree on it.

Searle: Burton is from northern California, isn't he?

Van Tyne: San Francisco. So that's where it is now. We've gotten letters to Cranston from people from different organizations in the coalition, and I just got letters from Gary Hart and Omer Raines, our state assemblyman and state senator, to Cranston. Both of them are influential Democrats, and I think will help a lot in getting it through. Lagomarsino's Washington office seems to feel that Cranston is going to go along on this. But we're not counting on anything; we never do.

Searle: Well, until it's nailed down, you don't want to. You can have a celebration when it's over.

Van Tyne: Believe me, we're going to have a celebration, and I'm beginning at this point to think, yes, I am going to live long enough to see that classified officially as a wilderness.

Searle: And that will be how many acres?

Van Tyne: It comes out 67,000.

Searle: That's a healthy size. That's twice the size of San Gorgonio.

Van Tyne: Yes, it's not bad. Our forest land-use committee had done a slide-tape show some years back, called Why Wilderness? because we felt that people needed to understand the whole idea of wilderness, and we put the emphasis not on recreation, but on the scientific value, the use of wilderness as a baseline to measure what damage we were doing, and that kind of thing, and we got to show that in a number of places.

Searle: That avoids the issue, also, about who's using it, and who has the rights.

Van Tyne: And we genuinely believe that recreation is not the major reason for wilderness. That, yes, it's part of it, and the ability to have solitude, and that sort of thing, but the other things are equally important. We tried to balance all these things in our show.

Working With the Forest Service

Van Tyne: Another thing we've worked on are proposals for new trails and better alignments of some old ones, with some success. The Forest Service proposed a fuel break a few years back, about seventeen miles long, and when the EIR for it came out--it was an environmental assessment, actually--it was a miserable job. We had several pages of comments, which I managed to get excellent publicity on. We got a story about a column length. So then the Forest Service proposed a field trip to look at it. And that was very good, because we discovered that in some instances, the problem wasn't what they said they were going to do, the problem was the one of semantics. They talked for instance, in the environmental assessment, about laterals in certain places. All of us assumed by laterals they meant running out on ridges from the main fuel break. And I hadn't met anybody who didn't think that that was what was meant. What they really meant was in certain areas, widening the fuel break.

There were two or three other things in that environmental assessment that were just as badly put, so that by the time we had had this all-day field trip, we'd come to the conclusion that really it wasn't nearly as bad as it had sounded. We did get them to change one thing. They were going to run the fuel break on the back side of McKinley Mountain, which would have been visible from the whole San Rafael wilderness, and we persuaded them--we had some very good arguments--that it should be on the south side. Their landscape architect agreed with us, and that's where it's going to be.

Van Tyne: One long battle, it really was long, was where the gate was to be on the Sierra Madre Ridge Road at the Santa Barbara Canyon end. It originally was up close to Santa Barbara Potrero, which we felt was a mistake, for many reasons. First of all, it gets people, too many people, up there too close to some of the archeological sites. And also, it's dangerous. First of all, there's very little parking area there. Second, in winter, among other times, you can get stuck up there, because there are serious storms that come in. In fact, a group of our members were up in that area one Christmas vacation, and it took them two days longer to get out than they had anticipated, because of the heavy snow. One tent collapsed, and all that sort of thing.

We worked and we worked and we worked on this, and we finally went in, along with the Citizens Committee for Wilderness people, and discussed this at length with Bob Lancaster [Supervisor, Los Padres National Forest, 1971-1976]. Finally he agreed to go and take a look. A few months later, at a committee meeting (a committee of both Angeles and Los Padres chapter people really looking at the Cobblestone Mountain area), Lancaster was there, and he was talking about some other things too, and he said, in the course of his talk, "Anne was right. The gate does belong at the bottom, not at Santa Barbara Potrero, and that's where it's going to be." It wasn't that Anne was right; the committee was right. But anyhow, it was very good, and the gate has remained there. But it took us years. One of the things we have learned in this committee is that nothing happens fast. It takes a long time, and an endless amount of patience, but you keep at it.

Searle: And bringing points up again and again and again, and at the right time, they get accepted.

Van Tyne: Yes, finally you wear them down or something.

Searle: Isn't that using the bureaucracy against itself?

Van Tyne: Well, I don't know. But, if you say it enough times, they begin to hear you. We've had very good relations with the Forest Service. We haven't always agreed. We have said, and we will continue to say, no to herbicides. But we've made some inroads there. I talked to the Santa Barbara district ranger not so long back, and he said, "I have no intention of using herbicides, at least in the next two years, and I hope never." But we listen to them, and we try to find what their concerns are and why they feel this way, and so then they listen to us.

Searle: Some people consider the Forest Service very oriented towards industry or not necessarily supporting some of the principles that we think they should be supporting. What are the attitudes of the people in forestry?

Van Tyne: Well, we are fortunate. On this forest, there is no commercial timber, and that makes all the difference in the world. This forest is managed for recreational and water resources. Watershed. And that's tremendous help.

Searle: It removes a lot of the pressure.

Van Tyne: It removes a lot of the pressure. We try to find areas of agreement, as many as we can, and then we go on from there. Often we find that there are a lot of areas of agreement. So there isn't so much to argue about as both sides thought originally. And we've been doing this long enough now so that it's taken for granted we're going to sit down and talk about something. We do not go in for confrontation tactics. I feel that that approach is self-defeating, and the kind of thing you find in some people who make gratuitous remarks about the Forest Service opposition to wilderness. I don't know that you can say flatly that the Forest Service is opposed to wilderness, and I don't think it gets you anywhere to keep reiterating that they are opposed to it. I prefer to assume that, yes, they are going to be for wilderness if you can demonstrate its importance. I serve on the Southern California Forest and Wilderness Committee, a subcommittee of the Southern California Regional Conservation Committee.

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Van Tyne: The attitude of some people on this committee is inclined toward confrontation. I think it's toned down a little bit now.

Searle: This matter of confrontation in attitude, in some conservationists, you sort of wonder, is it an emotional thing that drives people? I guess it's an approach to conservation, either emotional, or rational. I shouldn't use the term rational.

Van Tyne: It's not rational.

Searle: It's not rational, it's emotional. And some people, that's what motivates them, perhaps. I suppose we all get emotional--

Van Tyne: I am perfectly willing to stand up when I think the other side is wrong, and say I think you were wrong, for thus and such reasons, but I don't see that anything is gained by going in with your fists up, ready to fight, until you find out whether you have to fight or not. And on what you are going to fight. And this is why I think this business of listening and finding out how the other side feels is so important.

Searle: Even if you didn't want to hear, it's good tactics to listen, because the other side feels that they've had their opportunity.

Van Tyne: They've had their opportunity. Yes.

Searle: It's dumb if you don't, aside from the principles of the matter.

Van Tyne: I'm not convinced that the Forest Service is all bad. I think they want many of the same things we do, but I think we have to realize that they are under pressures from all kinds of people. We have to appreciate the pressures they're under, from others as well as from the Sierra Club, and just convince them that our position is right.

One thing, I've been chairman of this committee for ten years, and I don't approve of anybody holding the job that long. However, we have talked about it, with some of these other organizations we've worked with, and there is agreement that it is important, for the sake of continuity. The Forest Service policy of shifting people around at least every five years has meant we're on our fourth supervisor, our fourth district ranger in three of our districts and third in the other one. Somebody needs to be there who knows what has happened in the past and why; who knows the history, because they don't. Somebody's got to know where the bodies are buried.

Searle: An interesting aspect, the first six months you spend educating the new supervisor, and then after that, they'll ask you what was the reason we did this.

Van Tyne: I spent two-and-a-half hours, when we got a new deputy supervisor, a little over a year ago, just an educational sort of thing. I spent an hour and a half with the new forest supervisor, over a year ago, just explaining a number of things that they needed to know, that they wouldn't have known. What happens, you know, with this five-year policy--they come, and they have ideas, and they put some into practice, and some of them are mistakes. They move on, they don't learn from their mistakes, and we have to live with them. So if we can provide some continuity, maybe we can show them where this was a mistake. And we've had to live with it, but let's not do it again.

Searle: What else have you got on the forest land-use committee?

Van Tyne: We've had a change of personnel; I don't think there's anybody left on the committee who was on it in the beginning. But for the most part, people have left the committee, with a few exceptions, because, as Ynez Haase did, she simply did not have time, or they have moved away. But we've brought in new people.

Searle: And, a committee which is accomplishing things attracts good people, too. That's the other aspect.

Van Tyne: I'm always looking for new people. We now have a member--he's been on the committee for a little over a year--he's a grad student at UCSB, and a tremendous help on the technical end of analyzing some of these environmental assessments, and so on. He's a real asset, and he is tremendously interested in what he's doing. He enjoys doing it; oh, Steve Yool is just a godsend.

Condors and the Captive Breeding Program

Searle: The question of the condor came up earlier, Anne. I know that you're aware of it, I know that you have opinions on the subject, I wondered if you cared to comment on that.

Van Tyne: Our chapter has been concerned about the condor from the very beginning, because, after all, we have I think all but one known nest site, and all the condors are in our chapter. We've kept an eye on what the proposals of the recovery team have been; we've had discussions about whether wilderness would be good or bad for the condor--the question being, does wilderness attract more people. Then is this a good thing, down in Ventura County, in connection with part of the Sespe Frazier, and so on?

When the captive breeding program was proposed, we were not sold on it, and we were very glad when the Sierra Club Board of Directors took the position that it was opposed at this time. As you know, the board set up the study committee in connection with the captive breeding program. We had put on a program here in Santa Barbara with Carl Koford and John Borneman. Carl Koford is a long-time expert on the condor, who died last December, just a couple months after he was down here. He was on the club's condor study task force too. John Borneman is the Audubon condor naturalist. We had a very well attended meeting, and both sides (of the captive breeding program) were presented.

I read a statement for the chapter at the hearing before the State Fish and Game Commission on the application for permits for the captive breeding. We were in agreement with the club's position, which was to separate this into two parts, the first for capture for radio telemetry and to come back later for a captive breeding permit. We felt that they needed to see what happened with the Andean condors and radio telemetry. There should be just one pair captured for radio telemetry, to see what happens and that sort of thing. We went right along with the statement that Mark Palmer made for the club.

Van Tyne: Subsequently, as you undoubtedly know, under an obscure permit that nobody knew anything about, the biologists were investigating nests of the two condors hatched this year, to weigh and measure, the idea being that they needed to see whether the food supply was a problem, and the lack of reproduction, and so on. The first chick they examined in the nest survived. The second one was a little larger; it fought, they had great difficulty in doing the measuring, and just as they finished, the condor chick's head began to wobble and it died. The preliminary autopsy showed it wasn't a matter of a broken neck or anything like that, and the final autopsy concluded that it was shock. It was done at 2:00 in the afternoon on a very hot day, and the biologists have agreed that yes, they should have stopped when the chick put up such a fight.

We had a chapter executive committee meeting the night after the chick had died, and passed a resolution asking for an immediate halt to the whole program, and cleared it with Joe Fontaine [Sierra Club president], so we could release it. And that's where we stand now. We have felt all along that much more has to be done in the way of habitat protection, and that they don't know enough, yet, to know, really, what they are doing. And the thing is, all right, you are breeding condors in captivity, and the second generation that you have bred in captivity presumably will be released in the wild. Is there going to be any habitat left for them to be released to, besides all the other questions--when they have been brought up by captive parents, so to speak, what are they going to know about life in the wild, and all the questions that come up in connection with it.

Searle: The thought has been voiced that it may be too late for the condors already, as far as living in the wild, at least.

Van Tyne: It may be, but I don't think that all has been done that should be done in the way of habitat protection, and I think a lot more study needs to be done to find out just what is needed. But not study that involves handling chicks in nests, at six weeks or two months.

Searle: Are we in the horse race, so to speak, with time?

Van Tyne: I think we may well be.

Searle: Is there a question whether they could even breed them in captivity?

Van Tyne: Nobody knows. It's never been done. Andean condors breed in captivity, but there can be a difference. Nobody knows. I think less is known about the condor than about a great many birds, and can we afford to experiment with the twenty or thirty of them that are left?

Searle: Is there a consensus that if nothing is done, that they will become extinct.

Van Tyne: It looks that way, but on the other hand, they have been reproducing, not at a sufficient rate, but there were two this year.

Searle: And they live how many years, normally, or do they know that, even, about the condor?

Van Tyne: They know that they aren't mature and ready to breed for five or six years.

Searle: And then do they know how long of a breeding life they have?

Van Tyne: I don't think they really do. I don't recall. I've read practically everything I could get my hands on, but the thing is that we know so little. DDT has had an effect, but DDT has been phased out. If we could get rid of 1080, which is another--

Searle: That's a rodent poison.

Van Tyne: One of the problems on food supply has been that we are just too sanitary. If cattle die on the range, we dispose of them. And we're taking away the condor's food. Another problem is that because of the Smokey Bear philosophy of keeping all fire out in fire climax vegetation, you have a tremendous build-up of brush, and if a deer dies, a condor may not be able to find it. So that a few fires in condor area would be helpful.

Searle: Some decision is probably going to be made within the next year as to what they're going to do, I suppose.

Van Tyne: That will come up again. The state cancelled all permits at the death of the chick. And it will come up again before the State Fish and Game Commission, because Fish and Wildlife Service has to get a permit from the Fish and Game Commission.

Searle: Let's hope that you and I are both around, and maybe twenty years from now the condor will still be flying.

Van Tyne: I hope so.

Searle: Maybe we'll have a codicil to this discussion, maybe about five years from now.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE SIERRA CLUB

Some Personal Views of Club Leaders

Searle: Why don't we turn to the topics of comments on individuals and the Sierra Club directions. I know you said you had a number of pointed thoughts.

Van Tyne: I made some notes on people, first, because I was following your outline. And I think you led off with Dick Sill.

Searle: I have a few names to add, but you get your shots in first.

Van Tyne: All right. I didn't have anything to say on some of them. Dick is one of my best friends, even though I don't see him very often. Just recently, we've been corresponding more frequently and have become much more intimate than we had been. But I've always had tremendous amount of respect for Dick. I think that he's not been really understood or appreciated by a lot of people, and I think probably because his mind works so much faster than most of us, and because he hasn't known how to approach people in the best way to get his ideas across. Perhaps because he doesn't realize that their wheels don't turn anywhere near as fast. He's so far ahead.

I know that at one time, when he was writing stuff for this and that, he would send me a copy and say, "I'd like your criticisms." I would have to say, "Dick, people don't understand. You've got to make it simpler. We don't know what you're getting at." I think it's unfortunate that this is the way that it's been. But I think he is learning now. It appears that he is learning how to relate to people better. And he also is becoming active again...yes, he is on the Toiyabe Chapter executive committee now, and he is the council alternate from that chapter. And I think he's beginning to pick up. The personal problems were a lot of it.

Searle: Yes, I know, he and his wife were separated; I guess they're divorced.

Van Tyne: And I think he wanted to pull out because she felt he was a rival and so on.

Dick's got a lot of personal problems. For him to make the really great contribution he could make, he's got to solve the problem of his dealings with other people. He's got to learn what other people are like. I think he may be beginning to. Why he's ever listened to me and what I had to say, I've never figured out. Except that apparently he felt that I represented how other people reacted, and somehow he felt he could talk to me.

Searle: Perhaps he felt that you would be more rational than the sometimes emotional response you might get with a person less well known. But certainly his behavior had an influence on the board of directors. Dick was a unique person in certain aspects, a personality that had an influence on the board, and for that matter, when he led the council--

Van Tyne: But with the council, it seemed to work. It was with the board that the problems were created. And I think that's because you had too many power-hungry people on the board.

Searle: Yes, it was actually a positive-negative reaction, in this case it was positive to Dick Sill, and there were other positive people, and they repelled, and he never did--I guess he was fifth officer; that was about as far as he got. And I don't know whether Dick ever aspired to be president of the club, but--

Van Tyne: I don't really know, either. But I think in the council, where there wasn't this push for power--

Searle: He had lots of responsibility and no authority in the council. I mean, you could take on responsibilities, and you could get things done, but you didn't do it by virtue of your authority.

Van Tyne: The council's not that kind of an outfit.

Searle: That's right, and besides, if you get it out of line too far, it doesn't make sense, you're out of business anyway. Go ahead, though.

Van Tyne: That was all I wanted to say about Dick, I think. The next one on your list was Ed Wayburn, whom I would characterize as an opportunist and a politician. He's a good politician. He remembers that you are a chapter chairman, and says something about it when he sees you, that kind of thing. But he's very much the opportunist. And going to take the easier way. If he had been stronger we might have gotten farther in 1967 in solving the problems the club had. An example of this is in 1968, when he ran for the 1969 election, where he wanted to get support from both sides when he was running for the board.

Searle: Did he try to get Brower's support?

Van Tyne: I couldn't prove it, but I suspect he did. Let's put it this way. I rather suspect he did. He didn't get it.

Searle: You look at hindsight, too. You wonder what his thoughts were in terms of managing Brower prior to that final blow-up there.

Van Tyne: He finally got enough courage to stand up on his hind legs. But it took a long time, and it took a lot of prodding.

Searle: If he'd gone much further, Brower would have made him look silly.

Van Tyne: Okay. We've already talked about Cicely Christy, in connection with the council. Ruth Bradley, I got to know, as I said, through CMC, and we became very good friends, perhaps because we tend to approach things somewhat the same way, and of course, we got to know each other very well on the IOC. She made real contributions to the work of the IOC. I think she was underrated by George, who thought he was making more of them, but Ruth, I think, kept us on track, better than anybody else, and pinned us down--"What are you trying to say."

Searle: Which is always answered if you don't aim for a target. Go ahead.

Van Tyne: Ruth was a very strong, made real contributions to the IOC. Dick Leonard, you mentioned, I got to know him through CMC. This is how I got to know a lot of people, and I'm so glad.

Searle: It was an experience, aside from the problem-solving aspect.

Van Tyne: Yes. I am so glad. I like Dick. I have a lot of respect for him, as well as affection. And one of the things I like about Dick is I feel he listens to you. You know, that's not true with everybody, but I think Dick listens.

Searle: Yes, some people tend to take the direction, and you may be talking to them--

Van Tyne: But they aren't hearing you. No, I think Dick listens. I think because Dick listened is why he took some of the stands he did, because he realized the things that were going on, and ferment, and so on and so forth.

You mentioned Kent Gill. He was wonderful to work with on the council executive committee. He, too, respects other people. He, too, listens to them.

Searle: If he appears to be paying attention to you, he is.

Van Tyne: Yes, he's not just looking at you, he's listening. He works well with people.

Searle: I suppose you could look at all the presidents we've had in the recent years, and I'm not going to ask you to make comparisons. Go ahead.

Van Tyne: No, but I think Kent was one of the best.

Searle: I think he certainly kept things rolling.

Van Tyne: And one of the reasons he was one of the best was because he came up through the council, and he had a feeling for what goes on in chapters, and an understanding of the council as a whole, that too many of our presidents have not had.

Brower, I already told you, his arrogance alienated me early on. His drive for power, I've no use for.

Searle: Got any others?

Van Tyne: Those are the ones I've listed.

Searle: Well, I have a couple of others. You got to know George Marshall a little bit. How did he impress you?

Van Tyne: I didn't know George too well. He's a nice guy, but sort of a weak sister. I don't think he was a good president.

Searle: Incidentally, George was perhaps one of the last people to get on the board sort of by invitation. In the sense that George, I guess, met Brower and some of the other people when he lived back on the East Coast, and it was sort of, like, "how would you like to be on the board" kind of situation that developed there. I think that after the time of George Marshall getting on the board, with the change to a two-terms in sequence maximum and with the council, that the manner of how people would get on the board just changed tremendously. That's just an aside here. I wanted to mention Bob Marshall. Did you know Bob very well?

Van Tyne: Yes. Not as well as I would like.

Searle: Why don't you comment about Bob. Because Bob was an individual I'm going to refer to as sort of a martyr, or self-intentioned martyr as far as the club is concerned. He was one of the first people who openly took a position in opposition to Dave Brower, at a time when it was very unpopular from a political standpoint, and in fact most people didn't even understand what he was speaking about. If I remember correctly, he wrote basically an open letter

Searle: criticizing some of the policies that were being implemented, and pointing out a number of cases where these were inappropriate or downright contrary to board policies, in his opinion. So anyway, Bob took a lot of flack for that.

Van Tyne: Yes, and I have a lot of respect for Bob. When we asked him to come and be the keynote speaker for this conservation conference that the chapter had, he said, "Well, you know, I'm in retirement," but I persuaded him to come. And the talk he made was very, very good, because he talked about the necessity of having the community in back of you, if you're going to accomplish anything. And not getting so far ahead that you can't do anything. It was an excellent speech. I've still got a couple of copies of it.

Searle: That's good. How recent was that?

Van Tyne: That was 1969.

Searle: Okay. He retired about two, three years, at about that time.

Van Tyne: Yes. And I am sorry. He came out of retirement for that, but that was about it. His retirement is a real loss.

Searle: Yes. Well, someday it would be just nice to have Bob around, just so he could express thoughts. You don't have to make him work, just make him talk.

Van Tyne: I'd love to see Bob again.

Searle: Let's have a reunion sometime. How does that sound? It doesn't have to be CMC necessarily.

Van Tyne: No. Although, you find that most of the people you really like and respect are CMC people.

Searle: That's a big percentage. Francis Walcott. Now, you know Francis.

Van Tyne: Oh, Francis and I have been good friends for a long time.

Searle: Francis is, my impression is, somewhat of a free spirit. Is that a way to put it, or is that a poor description?

Van Tyne: In some ways, yes. He retired early from his job, he said, so that he could climb more, but he got so involved in the Sierra Club, particularly the wilderness study committee, eh didn't have time to climb.

Searle: I didn't know he was retired at the time he got into that. I mean, he stopped holding a regular job, is what you're talking about.

Van Tyne: I didn't know for a long time that he had actually retired. He was devoting practically full time.

Searle: He's up in Idaho now, isn't he?

Van Tyne: No, in Montana. I spent two weeks with him in 1977.

Searle: And he's got a garden patch, there now, and...

Van Tyne: He lives on it. He has a very small income. He moved to Montana first because he loves it. He discovered that in the course of the wilderness study committee activities, and because he could live there a lot less expensively than he could live in San Francisco, which was getting just beyond his income. He has a big garden, in which he grows enough in the summer to carry him over the winter. He has a friend who has a ranch with a wood lot, and he cuts his wood, because he heats mainly by wood. It's in some ways a rather primitive existence, but he is comfortable.

Searle: And he has people visit. I hear remarks from Dick Sill, once in a while, in regard to Francis working ten hours a day to feed himself.

Van Tyne: Yes, the two weeks I spent up there with him were very interesting. He doesn't seem to have any close friends, but he knows everybody in Absarokee. Absarokee is a town of 700. You walk down the street with Francis, and everybody stops to talk with him. Everybody knows him.

Searle: When Francis was in the Sierra Club, now of course he was in the wilderness study committee. Do you know anything about how he got associated, and what was his earlier activities in the Sierra Club, or was it the wilderness study committee where you met him?

Van Tyne: He was on the council, representing the mountaineering committee. That's how he got on the council. You see, he was a climber to begin with. And, like happens to so many of us, you get so busy you don't have time for the things you like. Now Francis has been active in the Stillwater Protective Association, which is the valley he lives in, and they've got some very good things going up there in Montana. He gets very concerned about the very radical approach that a lot of people take, you know, wanting every square inch of wilderness that they can possibly get. He feels that it's done primarily on the basis of recreation, and so on. His dealings with the Forest Service have been pretty good. He apparently has gotten to know people. He's now conservation chairman for the group that was formed about a year and a half ago in Billings. He only lives sixty miles from Billings and in Montana that's close. And he is a delegate to the Northern Plains RCC, active in that. He's not completely inactive. And he's keeping track of what's going on. We have discussions by mail on various things.

Searle: I guess Jean and I will have to drive up there some day for a vacation and see him.

Van Tyne: Well, there's some beautiful country not too far from him, there's the Beartooth Wilderness.

Searle: I understand when he first moved there, he said it was smart to go ahead and get some local license plates, if you were going to go around talking and working with people.

Van Tyne: As I say, he knows everybody in town, and everybody seems to have a very friendly feeling toward him.

Searle: And, I don't know if you have another comment on Francis, but Sandy Tepfer, do you know Sandy?

Van Tyne: Sure I know Sandy. Particularly, first, through the council, then when the membership committee was reorganized, he was chairman, and I was on it. I worked with Sandy on the membership committee. I don't always agree with Sandy. But I think he's a good kind of person to have around. Sandy thinks. He doesn't just react, he thinks. And he'll speak up. I was delighted when he was nominated by petition for the board, and elected.

Searle: That's an interesting thought. It doesn't happen much.

Van Tyne: I felt he was a real addition to the board. As I say, I haven't always agreed with Sandy, but by gosh, you listen to him and he listens to you.

Improving the Club's National Functioning

Van Tyne: You wanted comments on the national club.

Searle: Pointed or general, broad or narrow.

Van Tyne: They're perhaps somewhat narrow, but the things I've been talking about. I feel that the last two or three years the quality of nominees for the board of directors seems to have fallen off, on the whole. That doesn't mean all the nominees, but some of them. And I don't know whether it's the fault of the nominating committee, their poor judgment, or poor choices of members for the committee, I don't know.

Searle: Do you feel the nominating committee is sufficiently involved in the club to know?

Van Tyne: I really don't know, because I haven't always known who was on the nominating committee, and I don't know what their approach toward finding nominees was, so it's hard to say whether it's the fault of the choice of people for the nominating committee, or the fault of the committee, once they were appointed, in how they went at their job. But I do feel--of course, and then there's this question, are we producing leaders of the caliber of former years. I don't know. It seems not too likely, but it's possible.

Searle: I'm worried a little bit about the Sierra Club as a whole in the sense it has tentatively broadened its objectives. Yes, it's broadened out. It's the environment, you know, whether it's urban or otherwise, and it may be that the character of the membership of course then becomes much broader in nature, and I think that would change the character of the candidates.

Van Tyne: Yes, but this last election, there were three people on the ballot that I had never heard of. When you stop to think that I get all the chapter newsletters and read them, and that I have been attending council and board meetings for seventeen years, and when they come up with three people that I have never heard of, this is a little odd.

Searle: Yes. It is odd. It might be worth discussion--you know, that question might be put forth somewhere in the club, in the council or someplace, not criticizing any individual, but are we getting the caliber of board members that we could? Of course, you have to go back. What's the objective?

Van Tyne: This year's nominating committee is talking to lots and lots of people and getting lots and lots and lots of suggestions. I know because Ellen Knox talked to me, and somebody else on the nominating committee talked to me for any ideas I might have. They were apparently doing this on a very broad basis, which sounded good, and they wanted information. Why are you suggesting Joe Blow? What has Joe Blow done? Why do you think he'd make a good board member?

Searle: Okay. Let's see what happens.

Van Tyne: [I should insert here that I was a candidate for the Board of Directors in 1972. I felt quite ambivalent about running and when I wasn't elected, found myself <u>so</u> relieved. It wasn't the right place for me. Dave, my husband, however, was quite disappointed.--3-8-81]

Van Tyne: Another comment. I think we have to have a constant search for new and improved ways in which the club can function. There's a good example of this in the way that they are arriving at the club priorities for 1981. First, a request for suggestions from individuals went out to chapter and group chairmen and RCC members and that sort of thing. These were to be considered by the RCC forum, and board members and the staff at their meeting last weekend. And a summary of this will go to chapter and group chairmen for discussion in chapters and groups. Incidentally, I think this is something that Joe should be primarily devoting his time to on Sunday morning at the chapter camp meeting. This summary will go out for discussion down below, and then back to the board for final decision.

The process, if it's followed, should mean a list of priorities that have grass-roots support, that the grass-roots volunteers consider important, not what the staff and the board thinks important, and if it is what the volunteers down below think are important, they are going to be willing to work on it. It may seem a cumbersome process, but I think it's the way to go. Then it isn't an imposition of priorities solely from above, but from down below too, because I think you're going to get more action on them. And I think that's very good.

I don't think that new ways of functioning necessarily mean great organizational changes. The kind of thing that was proposed about three years ago in the Gill report [report of the committee on effective volunteer organization, chaired by Kent Gill] created a heck of a lot of wasted time and unnecessary discussion, and nothing came of it. Somebody said something at the last board meeting about this national assembly idea, and it dropped with a gentle thud, and nobody picked it up. I think the fact that nothing came of this big hoorah about the Gill report is an indication that structure isn't the problem, but making what we have work better.

Searle: In essence, they looked at the alternatives, and they didn't think they were any better than what we've got today.

Van Tyne: And probably worse. It's a matter of making what we have work. Just like this matter of arriving at priorities is using what we have, but using it in a new way that should be very much better.

Searle: There was a hue and cry, as you mentioned, about the organizational aspect, my god, some day we're going to have fifty chapters, or we're going to have so many this or that. And you mentioned about making the system work better, and I think an example might be the greater use of committee structures, and, within the organization, there are the means within the organization of organizing yourself.

Van Tyne: And sometimes it's a matter of looking at what you're trying to do, on this priorities thing. They're using exactly what's there, but they're approaching it in a different way. That's about it on the national club.

Los Padres Chapter Problems

Searle: Let's turn to the Los Padres Chapter.

Van Tyne: I think that the chapter executive committee has got to exert more leadership. It's been lacking in the last few years. Maybe setting goals this year was a step in the right direction, but the progress toward those goals needs to be checked up on, to see if there is progress, what the problems are--a special effort is needed. We've done something of that, but probably not enough, and I think maybe the next step would be to encourage the groups to do the same kind of thing.

Searle: The group structure has to be strengthened in the next few years. It has to be strengthened, period. Because the chapter with an ex comm, you know, just by itself, and no effective groups, is going to be much less--

Van Tyne: It doesn't mean anything.

Searle: It doesn't mean anything. You know, the old theory about you only can run about 300 people out of one ex comm is probably true.

Van Tyne: Yes. I'm concerned that we are almost standing still as far as membership goes, and the one thing that makes me feel better about it is that the club is in much the same position. Because we've really worked on that, at least in the Sespe group, and in the Santa Barbara group, following up on people who get their second dues notice, and so on. I think the recession is having some effect.

Searle: We're in a period where, like the energy crunch, there appears to be a little bit of an antithesis between conservation, the movement, and the other economic concerns people have. And I think that on a national basis that the Sierra Club at this time appears less desirable in the eyes of people than it would--

Van Tyne: Yes. Another problem we've got is developing many more leaders than we have.

Searle: Motivating leaders, too.

Van Tyne: Motivating them. And it's a problem, I think, in almost every group. Sespe seems to be doing better than the others. And I was encouraged when I went up to visit the Arguello group's executive committee. They seem to be getting new people. They were kind if ingrown for a while, but they do have some new people coming along, and as I say, Sespe seems to be in pretty healthy shape. Santa Barbara is not.

Searle: Well, I guess I'm an eternal optimist, Anne. And I hope you are, too.

Van Tyne: Oh, yes. We'll find answers, but I wish we'd find them sooner.

Searle: Wish we knew where they were so you could start working on it, huh?

Van Tyne: Right.

Searle: Okay.

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