Sierra Club Oral History Project

SIERRA CLUB NATIONWIDE III

George Alderson	Environmental Campaigner in Washington, D.C., 1960s-1970s
Frank Duveneck	Loma Prieta Chapter Founder, Protector of Environmental and Human Rights
Dwight Steele	Controversies over the San Francisco Bay and Waterfront, 1960s-1970s
Diane Walker	The Sierra Club in New Jersey: Focus on Toxic Waste Management

Interviews Conducted by

Ted Hudson
Rose Gray
Karen Jorgensen-Esmaili
Claire Baruxis
in 1982 and 1983

Underwritten by
The National Endowment for the Humanities
and the Sierra Club

Sierra Club History Committee
1989

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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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, codirector 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

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
Coordinator, Oral History Project
Sierra Club History Committee

Berkeley, California
October 14, 1982

Sierra Club Oral History Project

George Alderson

ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNER IN WASHINGTON, D.C., 1960s-1970s

An Interview Conducted by
Ted Hudson
1982

Sierra Club History Committee
1989

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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INTRODUCTION by Avis Ogilvy

This is to introduce George Alderson--a tall handsome man in his early twenties when we met in 1966. He was stationed in our nation's capital by the U.S. Air Force and played the viola in the air force's musical groups. He took the train to New York for the Atlantic Chapter's monthly business meetings.

As the name suggests, the Atlantic Chapter (the first one outside of California) extended the whole length of the Atlantic seaboard from Florida to Maine. One of the continuing concerns of chapter leaders was to encourage the formation and growth of groups in areas other than New York with the aim of having those groups split off and become separate chapters when they had enough members. George represented the embryonic Washington group.

Over the years, Stewart Ogilvy and I watched new people come in to conservation group meetings. Some people came in blowing their own horns, trumpeting their abilities and connections. They usually did not stay long or do much. Others came in quietly, saw what needed to be done, wrote the letters, made the calls, organized the committees, and moved conservation forward. Such a one was George Alderson.

George seemed to know the issues already, perhaps because of his background in biology. Long-term effects and ramifications of man's intervention in natural systems did not have to be explained to him. He readily absorbed the people-developing skills, doubtless on a strong prior foundation, that enabled him to form a Southeast Chapter. He saw to all the details, stuck with the job, and followed it through to completion.

In 1969 when David Brower established Friends of the Earth, the Ogilvys and George Alderson, among many others, followed. Brower employed George to run the new organization's Washington office. He did a splendid job of presenting the environmental view to Congress despite slim resources. His office was outstanding within the organization for being always right on budget. George made such an exhaustive study of the best ways to get the environmental message to legislators that he wrote a book on the subject. The volume exemplifies his thoroughness and determination to carry a project to completion.

In addition to a conservation career alternating between nonprofit advocacy organizations and the federal government, George Alderson has other facets as well. Music was mentioned at the start. He plays both classical and popular music and has been in an informal string quartet for years. In the eighties he changed from viola to violin and added strolling violinist jobs to his activities.

At home in the kitchen George bakes bread, is a gourmet chef, and is knowledgeable about wines. He is also well informed about art with a strong preference for modern work. He has invested in several choice photographic images by respected photographers of the thirties.

In the conservation world he is relied on as a dependable colleague with good judgment. His dedication and quiet determination have won him respect and trust. I hope that, in the recorded interview following, George will have overcome his natural modesty sufficiently to tell of his accomplishments.

Avis R. Ogilvy
Secretary of the Board
Friends of the Earth Foundation

February, 1989
New Orleans, Louisiana

INTERVIEW HISTORY

George Alderson is a central figure in the early growth of the Sierra Club in the Southeast. He became active in the Sierra Club in the mid-sixties and chaired the Washington, D.C., group of the club's Atlantic Chapter, when that chapter encompassed the entire Atlantic seaboard. In 1968, he helped form and served as chairman of the club's Southeast Chapter, a particularly fecund club entity which has since spawned several additional club chapters and been the source of many club leaders at the national level.

In 1969, Alderson ran for the club board of directors on the ABC ticket of David Brower supporters. After the defeat of that group and the founding of Friends of the Earth, Alderson became Washington representative for FOE and helped organize the groundbreaking environmental campaign against the supersonic transit, working closely with the Sierra Club and other groups on this effort.

Mr. Alderson was interviewed for the Sierra Club History Committee in 1982 by Ted Hudson, himself a activist in the Potomac Chapter, which is the successor to the Southeast Chapter in the Washington, D.C., area. At the time of the interview, Mr. Alderson was an employee of the Wilderness Office of the Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management. He asked that we not release his interview to public view until the Reagan administration left office or he left government employment. In 1988, he agreed to release the transcript so that it could be included in Sierra Club Nationwide. Mr. Alderson now works for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Alderson reviewed the transcript for accuracy. Tapes of the interview are available in The Bancroft Library.

Ann Lage
Coordinator, Oral History Project
Sierra Club History Committee

Berkeley, California
March, 1989

I FROM BIRDWATCHING TO WILDERNESS ACTIVIST: OREGON YOUTH AND EDUCATION

[Interview 1: April 15, 1982]##

Family Background

Hudson: George, why don't we begin with the domestic side of your career? Where did you come from and when, and so forth?

Alderson: I was born in Ellensburg, Washington, on December 6, 1941. I grew up in Portland, Oregon, from 1943 until I left college and moved out of town in 1963. I went to school entirely in Portland, Portland public schools and then Reed college. There was a year when we lived in Sacramento, when I was in the sixth grade. Then after leaving Portland, I moved to Logan, Utah, for two years to graduate school, and then moved here to Washington, D.C., in 1965.

Hudson: Why don't we backtrack a little bit and fill in some details? I noticed in your history committee questionnaire, you said your folks came from Minnesota and California.

Alderson: Right. My father was from Minnesota and my mother was from California.

Hudson: Are they still living?

Alderson: No.

Hudson: Do you have a larger family?

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 60.

Alderson: I have one sister who still lives in southern Oregon.

Hudson: I'm particularly interested in this because I heard that the eastern Sierra Club largely sprang from transplanted westerners and it seems like you're a good example of that. Maybe we can pursue that after a while. You lived in Ellensburg for three or four years, I think you said.

Alderson: Oh, less than that. [Alderson was born in Ellensburg, Washington.] I didn't have any memories of Ellensburg at all, probably lived there for the first eight months of my life, until we lived in College Station, Texas, for about a year. My father was a college teacher, so at that point he was moving from job to job. He was a beginning college teacher. After the job at Texas A & M, he got the job teaching at Reed.

Hudson: Which is where?

Alderson: In Portland. We were in Portland from then on.

Hudson: So you grew up in an academic kind of family?

Alderson: Very much so. My father was a professor of English literature and my mother was a librarian. Their biggest interests were literature and the arts, generally. I developed an interest in the arts, in music, while I was growing up. I've been a professional musician part of the time.

Hudson: An instrumentalist?

Alderson: Yes, a viola player. We'll get into this later on, about my time as a Sierra Club organizer here. It was while I was playing viola in the Air Force. So it was music that brought me to Washington. I always had music going, then I got interested in other arts, drama and literature, after my father died. Something I felt that I could get interested in after he wasn't around any longer. My parents were definitely oriented towards that, not so much toward nature and the outdoors; that came from my aunt, my mother's sister.

Hudson: Who is that? I noticed [from the history committee questionnaire] you mentioned an aunt but didn't name her.

Alderson: Her name is Lora Kelts and her maiden name was Lora Ives. She was a longtime Sierra Club member, and she must have been a club member since her college days. She remembers going on the high trips in the Sierra when Dave Brower was on them. So, she was the one who used to brag about Dave Brower's exploits at the Sierra Club when he was executive director. She led me into all this; so now I have both the arts and conservation.

Hudson: Did you play the viola in high school orchestras?

Alderson: Oh, yes. I took up violin before my senior year in high school, and then switched to viola as my main instrument.

Hudson: Then at Reed did you major in music and fine arts, or something like that?

Alderson: No, I majored in biology. Let's go back a little. One of the things that my aunt got me interested in was bird watching. She was really interested in nature in general. Her greatest specialty was botany. I think she knew the plants better than she knew the birds. She was also a librarian at Oregon State University in Corvallis--spent her whole career there.

Often when I was growing up, in elementary school, high school, and college, I'd go down to visit her in Corvallis during school vacations and things like that. Or sometimes she'd invite me along on some trip to some other part of the state where we'd go bird watching together and sometimes with a group. In fact, it was with her that I think I first visited Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Hudson: Is that in Oregon?

Alderson: Yes, in eastern Oregon. She really got me interested in the outdoors and nature, and it took hold, and I made it my own. I was the only one in our family at home in Portland who was interested in that kind of thing.

Hudson: This was when you were a child, or older?

Alderson: Yes, I first got interested in bird watching heavily in the sixth grade. In fact, it was the year that I was in Sacramento; it was that interest that Lora had inculcated in me before.

So I joined my first conservation group--really more of a birding group at that time, the National Audubon Society--when I was in the sixth grade.

Conference on Northwest Wilderness, 1956

Hudson: So the Sierra Club wasn't your first love?

Alderson: [laughs] Actually I didn't get interested in the real active conservation side until quite a bit later. I wonder when I did? Okay, what got me involved in activist conservation was in 1956,

Alderson: when my Aunt Lora invited me to join her. We went down to downtown Portland to the first Conference on Northwest Wilderness.

Already by that time the Sierra Club had been having the Biennial Wilderness Conference in the Bay Area. So the northwestern people decided that they needed to have something to help organize action in Oregon and Washington. This was the first one, in '56. Many of the great national leaders were there. Dave Brower was there, Olaus Murie was there and Sigurd Olson and Howard Zahniser. It was such an enthralling experience to hear these great people talking about action and what was going on and what the threats were to the wilderness. This really got me interested in wilderness for the first time.

Hudson: This is when you were about fourteen or fifteen?

Alderson: Yes. I was in high school. I'd been doing this bird watching, and I'd been active in the Oregon Audubon Society, in birdwatching, and I'd led trips and bird walks for them. I'd been involved in the organization in the bird watching field, getting responsibility and leadership.

The wilderness issue seized my interest; it kind of diverted me from some of the more scientific side of the bird watching. But at that time I still wanted to be an ornithologist for my career. I continued the bird watching pretty steadily, didn't really get involved in activist organizing for wilderness at that time; wrote a lot of letters to my Congresswoman and my Senators.

This is another factor, speaking of Senators. One of the things that really inspired me to do this kind of thing was Senator Dick Neuberger. There he was from Oregon with a timber-oriented economy, and a timber-oriented politics, usually, and Neuberger was in there as a leader in support of the wilderness bill. The wilderness bill was really unveiled at that conference in '56. My memory is hazy on whether Hubert Humphrey had already introduced it or not. It was right about that time that the wilderness bill was first introduced.

Very soon after that, Dick Neuberger was in the Senate advocating it. You'd read about that, just that sort of courageous interest in the cause, in the issue, and the concept of political leadership, I thought, with him trying to advocate this in spite of the obvious opposition to it in the state. It was really inspiring. So I guess I felt, if he could do that and there were all these other people doing it, then I could do something for wilderness, too.

Alderson: But I didn't really get involved in it as a leader until--I did make some efforts to get other people to write letters, while I was still in college. I used some of my contacts in the bird-watching field, but most of them weren't really interested in action. I think most of the time that I was still in Portland, the Oregon Audubon Society was against the wilderness bill. It may have had something to do with it, but one Jack Crowell was on the board of directors, now known for his role--.

Hudson: Our John B. Crowell?

Alderson: Yes, the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and former general counsel of Louisiana-Pacific. His whole career in Portland, as I understand it, was with, first, Georgia-Pacific and, then, Louisiana-Pacific. He was a big bird watcher.

Hudson: Did you know him personally in the bird-watching business?

Alderson: Yes, yes. There were other people in the Audubon Society that had strong ties to the timber industry or the Forest Service. So they didn't support that [the wilderness bill].

Hudson: Did any of them have strong feelings about socialism and communism?

Alderson: [laughs] It never came up.

Hudson: A couple of the things you've said have sparked a couple of questions in my mind, that maybe we could cover before we leave this area. I don't want to cut you off.

Alderson: Let me remember. Come to think of it now, I guess I pestered the people enough that once I got the president of the Audubon Society to announce at a meeting that the wilderness bill was in serious trouble and--I forget what the crisis was--that everybody should write letters to so-and-so, probably to Chairman Aspinall. So I guess, thinking back on it, I did a little bit of leadership there but different than what I did later.

Hudson: Was this at the age of about twenty?

Alderson: Yes.

Hudson: The question that occurred to me when you talked about being a bird watcher was, have you maintained a life list over the years, and do you still pursue that?

Alderson: No, I think I've lost track of some of them. When I moved East, I never really pursued it as avidly. I guess my interests switched more into the conservation action field, and so I haven't been out in the field as much as I used to be.

Hudson: Another question on that--do you have a species or a critter that you think was your fondest sighting--the most rare bird or whatever you may have seen?

Alderson: I have a special fondness for the European widgeon. In fact, I did a paper on it in high school, on the American status of the European widgeon. I was out at Malheur a couple of weeks ago, and whenever I'd see a flock of the American widgeons, I'd be getting my binoculars out, and I'd be looking for a European widgeon in there.

Hudson: So there are widgeons?

Alderson: Yes, they are very interesting. I can still get interested in bird distribution and bird migration stuff. It's still fascinating. But I think I basically have a soft spot for all the birds and animals. One of the things that really struck me when I was out there at Malheur recently was that I like seeing the freedom of the animals out in the great wild area--a marsh or a field, or whatever it was. I like the idea that they were still free to come and go and didn't have a lot of human interference.

I think that's one of the things that motivates me on wilderness, too--the land is unfettered, and you don't have to be controlling it. I get a lot of satisfaction out of that.

Influence of Senator Dick Neuberger

Hudson: The other question that occurred to me: when you mentioned Dick Neuberger. I'm about six years younger that you are, I calculate. My only recollection of the name Neuberger is his wife who succeeded him. It occurred to me, did he survive this particular wilderness battle? What was the wilderness involved, was it a particular location? This was before the passage of the Wilderness Act, wasn't it?

Alderson: Yes. Well, he advocated the wilderness bill itself, that led to the Wilderness Act. He was also a supporter of the Three Sisters Wilderness, and that was one of the issues that was sort of a center, that led to organizing in the Northwest. It was a great big primitive area, and the Forest Service was going through the reclassification process, to classify it into wilderness. In doing so, they cut out some large areas, primarily for timber harvesting.

Alderson: In fact one of these was French Pete Creek, and so people had given up on it at that time. But they came back years later and kept trying, and they got it added back into the wilderness; it must have been around '72, '74, somewhere along in there.

The Three Sisters was one of Dick Neuberger's causes, and he also was strongly fighting for years for the Oregon Dunes National Seashore. After his death, and I'm not sure if it was after Maurine retired, it became sort of a special area under the Forest Service, but it never made it into the Park System. Dick Neuberger must have died several years before the Wilderness Act became law; I'm not sure of the exact year.

Hudson: The wilderness act was 1964?

Alderson: Right. I think he must have died around '61, somewhere around there.

Hudson: Did Mrs. Neuberger continue in that campaign, as the primary sponsor?

Alderson: Oh yes, she continued it, but she wasn't as much of a fighter as Dick. I think it was just a difference in personality. They had both been legislators in the Oregon state legislature, but Dick Neuberger was a writer; that was his profession. I think you'd see a lot in common between him and Bernard DeVoto, because he was writing cause articles as well; he was a professional journalist. He did a lot of free lance writing, and wrote some books.

It was a loss when he died because he didn't hesitate to go out right into the middle of a fray, take on a tough issue like that. In fact, this is one of the things I remember; it was while I was still in high school. It might have been a couple of years after that wilderness conference. Yes, it was probably in the fall of '58. I was invited to go to an Isaak Walton League state convention down in Eugene, Oregon. They had some special program to get high school kids to come that year, and one of my high school teachers put me up for it. So I went down there.

The Isaak Walton League wasn't all that hot on wilderness, at least in Oregon--they were pretty close to the timber industry. But who was the big speaker at the banquet? Dick Neuberger! And he spent his speech talking about wilderness. So I went up afterwards and interviewed him. I was writing a paper for my high school social studies class. So I decided, well, this is a good chance, and went up and asked him, "Do you think the wilderness bill is going to pass this session?" He said something like, "I would doubt it. It takes time to turn the

Alderson: tide on an issue like this." That's what he said. So I had a great line for my paper. But besides, it was that leadership that was really inspiring.

Hudson: Were you in high school journalism also?

Alderson: No.

Hudson: You talked about being a writer later on, in part of your career. This was just an academic paper you were writing?

Alderson: Oh, yes, it was just a paper for a social studies class. Writing was always a strong point of mine. I never took a journalism course or anything. It was something my father was very strong on, being a literature professor, and he helped with some of my writing now and then, if I could stand the criticism. It was all sort of expected of me, and then I got to liking it--nice to know that I could express myself.

Hudson: You mentioned being a writer as part of your resume. What sorts of things have you written lately, or within the last ten or fifteen years of your adulthood?

Alderson: Well, since I've been working for the Bureau of Land Management, I've written a lot of memos. [laughter] But I'm looking forward to not writing so many memos and writing other things. Of course, I wrote my book, <u>How You Can Influence Congress</u>.

Hudson: Oh, really?

Alderson: You haven't seen that?

Hudson: No. This is a tract book for activists?

Alderson: Yes, recommended by the Sierra Club. I haven't got anything formal in writing from them, but the regional office people are recommending it out there in the Northwest.

Hudson: Is it still in print?

Alderson: Yes, it's called <u>How You Can Influence Congress</u>, by George Alderson and Everett Sentman. [E.P. Dutton, 1979] Mr. Sentman is a publishing consultant. He worked with me at The Wilderness Society just before I went to work on the book, and he helped me with some individual arrangements, trying to find a publisher and so forth. But then he sort of dropped out of the project. He got his name on the book; we settled the matter almost amicably, not entirely.

Alderson: Since I've been working for the government, I haven't had the freedom of speech to write any articles of my own outside. But I used to do a lot of writing in connection with my work for Friends of the Earth and The Wilderness Society. It seems like I wrote countless journalistic things in their publications. And I've written articles for the Sierra Club Bulletin and some of the other environmental media. That's pretty much where the writing was done.

Hudson: In college you studied your biology and about this time, according to the history committee questionnaire, you joined the Sierra Club in 1960?

Alderson: Yes.

Hudson: What brought that on and why the Sierra Club; the Audubon Society wasn't doing enough, or what?

Alderson: I dropped out of the National Audubon shortly after I moved back to Portland. There wasn't any National Audubon branch there. The local group, the Oregon Audubon Society, was independent, and so I just joined them and did all my stuff there.

Joining the Sierra Club, 1960

Alderson: I must have joined The Wilderness Society in 1956, right after that wilderness conference. (I seem to recall the Sierra Club had a lower age limit in those days. It seems curious, but it seems to me you had to be eighteen. I'm not sure.) Anyway, I guess I joined the Club in '60. I joined because it was the group that was obviously in the forefront of the real activist work. I liked their courageous stands, their willingness to take on the opposition, their willingness to place the blame for why things were going wrong, why wilderness was being destroyed, and why things weren't going right in Congress. I liked especially the way that Dave Brower handled himself. I liked what he wrote, and I liked what he said. So that was the banner I wanted to get behind.

Hudson: I've heard recently from some of my friends that are longer time members than I am, that at least in the older days the Club was a more exclusive organization than it is now. You had to have sponsors to join. Did you have to go through a process like that?

Alderson: Yes, they had sponsors. I got my aunt to cosponsor me, my Aunt Lora. At the time I was active in the Club, if anybody's application came without a sponsor on it, then they filled in Dave Brower's name. They weren't going to turn anybody away. [laughs]

Hudson: I had a couple of other questions that relate back to your earlier career there. You mentioned having led birding outings and that sort of thing in the Malheur area. I wanted to ask if you had any favorite secret outing spots that you like to go to?

Alderson: Then or now?

Hudson: Either.

Alderson: Well, anyway my favorite secret place is Oneonta Gorge.

Hudson: In New York?

Alderson: No. There's an Oneonta Gorge in Oregon. It's a side canyon off of the Columbia Gorge, about fifty miles east of Portland. I saw recently that it's a part of the proposed Columbia Gorge Wilderness. It's all in the Mount Hood National Forest there. I used to go out there and hike on weekends, during my college years, and I've been out there in the roughest weather, when there was ice all over the ground and everything. It was just a spectacular place. I hardly ever saw anybody else in there. Probably much more populated now. It was very nice.

Hudson: I've seen parts of northwest Washington State, the Olympic Peninsula, and the North Cascades, and of course I've seen the Sierra Nevada and Point Reyes, but I've never been to Oregon. I wonder if you can describe that Oneonta Gorge a little bit. Is it steep-walled, bare canyon walls, or forested, or what?

Alderson: The gorge down near the entrance to the river is about ten feet across, and soars up to maybe 100 to 200 feet. It's sort of bare rock with a lot of ferns and mosses all over it, not exactly bare.

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Alderson: Then after you get out of that incised part of the canyon, you get to a V-shaped canyon with some sort of moss-covered talus slope part of the way, and Douglas fir. You can go several miles back and eventually you come to a Douglas fir forest up on top. It sort of flattens out. That was about right for me, going up that. About the only thing you could hear of civilization was if a train went by; you didn't hear very much from the highway. That was my favorite place close to Portland. I've got some favorite places in Olympic National Park, too, but it's a long time since I've been back there.

Reed College Biology Student; Park Service Summer Naturalist

Alderson: When I started college, I fully intended to become an ornithologist. I think that's what I'd been answering in all the high school classes when they'd ask me, what do you want to be? I wanted to be an ornithologist. So, one of my big boosts on that was this paper I did on the European widgeon, during my senior year in high school. I sent it in along with my application to the American Ornithologists' Union. They had this special award for ornithology students, travel money to go to the annual meeting of the A.O.U., which is the scientific society of the ornithologists.

Hudson: American Ornithology Union?

Alderson: Ornithologists' Union. So I applied for one of these awards and sent the copy of my paper in, and the fellow who was chairing the awards committee said that they'd never given one to an undergraduate before, let alone somebody who hadn't started college yet. I was between high school and college that summer. But they gave me $150.

Hudson: A lot of money in those days?

Alderson: Yes, I know, it paid a lot of the way to get to Regina, Saskatchewan, where the meeting was. So that was great; I got to see some of the leading ornithologists and hear a lot of interesting papers. I went back and started college with this heady experience. I really wanted to be an ornithologist.

Then, during the spring of my first college year, I had to decide what to do for a summer job. So I guess I saw an ad from the government about these student trainee positions with the National Park Service. I went down and took the student trainee exam at the post office, and applied for one of these jobs. Well, what do you know, I got one. They put me to work up at Olympic National Park, as a student trainee park naturalist. So there I was, leading nature walks and doing information duty in the museum and helping with the evening campfire program, giving campfire talks, and all this stuff. Boy, that was great, so I decided <u>that's</u> what I wanted to do, I was going to be a park naturalist.

For the rest of my college career I had the goal of being a park naturalist and having a career in the National Park Service. After graduating from Reed in biology, I went on to graduate school, partly to avoid the draft and partly because I wanted to get some more grounding in the ecology side of biology. I had never got that at Reed, it was mostly sort of laboratory-oriented

Alderson: microbiology and physiology and stuff. I landed a graduate student assistantship at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. So I went down there. In fact, it was taught in the range management department. That was where they taught the plant ecology at Utah State.

Hudson: That was about 1963?

Alderson: Right. I spent the first year there in range management, taking all these courses, some in range management and some in plant ecology. But then I had a disagreement with the department about how much time I was spending on music as compared to how much time I was working on my assistantship. So, in the end I told them to chuck it, and I switched to the music department. I spent my second year of graduate school as a music student, working for a Master's Degree in music. But in the end I dropped out of that, too, and joined the Air Force and played viola in Washington, D.C., for three and a half years.

One of my main motivations for being a park naturalist was that I thought that was the way you could save some of this wilderness. If I could spend my career in that--you know, sort of the educational approach to it. All these people who come to the park, if you tell them all about nature and about ecology, they'll respond by saving the parks.

Hudson: Did that dream fade out somehow?

Alderson: Well, it faded out when I concluded that I could do more and I could spend my time better in the cause of wilderness if I did it as more of an activist.

Also, by the time I got through with my third summer in the Park Service I had seen more of the bureaucratic side of it. Because the first year at Olympic the people there were all pretty much cause-oriented and wilderness-oriented.

In Yosemite and Lava Beds, the other two parks where I was assigned, you had much more of the sort of humdrum, "it's only a job" attitude, and you had people knifing each other in the back on the permanent staff. So I decided that wasn't the kind of thing I wanted to be engaged in for my career.

But I probably still would have done it if I had not gone to graduate school, because the Park Service offered me a job as a beginning permanent naturalist at Lassen National Park when I graduated from college. But I turned it down to go to graduate school.

I had done some activist organizing while I was still at Reed--

Hudson: I was going to ask, did you go to Sierra Club meetings during this time and participate in local activities?

Alderson: Not really. I went to one meeting of the [Pacific] northwest chapter executive committee in Portland, it must have been along in '61 or '62, one rainy Saturday afternoon at somebody's house in Portland--I think it was at Anthony Netboy's house.

That was pretty good, Pat Goldsworthy was there and some of the other activists from the northwest chapter, but I wasn't really involved in it; partly, I guess, because I was pretty heavily committed to my schoolwork and to music. I was already phasing out of the bird watching during my last couple of years in Portland.

Reed College Students' Committee For Wilderness

Hudson: So your activism is sort of self-starting and independent?

Alderson: Well, no. While I wasn't active in the Sierra Club meetings or anything there, I had my own group that I organized; it was called Students' Committee for Wilderness.

We organized it at the college; it was always pretty much of a Reed College student group. But we had our own letterhead, and we wrote letters in for hearing records. We must have printed up a couple of thousand copies of the fliers that we did on the wilderness bill--sort of a 'dear friend' letter urging people to write to their members of Congress about the wilderness bill. And it had a whole fact sheet attached that we took from the Wilderness Society mailing. We papered those as far as we could around the Northwest and got people writing.

Now that I remember it, I think one of my first formal involvements in hearings and organizing was when I was president of the Cleveland High School Science Club in Portland, Oregon.

In the fall of 1958 the Senate interior committee was holding a hearing on the wilderness bill over in Bend, Oregon. I drafted a letter to be sent to the committee on behalf of the Cleveland High School Science Club endorsing the wilderness bill and urging them to pass it right away. So we summoned a little executive committee meeting of myself and the other student officers and our faculty advisor. They approved the letter; I convinced them it was worthwhile, and we all signed it and sent it off. It appears to this day in the record of that hearing.

Alderson: In fact, one time Doug Scott was leafing through those old hearing records, at a northwest wilderness conference in Seattle in around '73 or '74, and he told the whole audience about my maiden effort that was the high school science club letter.

But anyway, I declined the opportunity to be chairman of that Reed College committee for wilderness because I thought it might interfere with my future career in the Park Service. But I was writing everything behind the scenes and had other people chair it. I guess I was the secretary. It was a good group; anyway, it was a nice early effort.

Testifying for the Wilderness Bill, Denver, 1964

Hudson: At Utah State, were you involved in conservation activities there?

Alderson: Yes. I had more time in graduate school than I did as an undergraduate, because Utah State was much less demanding at any level than Reed was to an undergraduate. So I did a lot; I played a lot of music, even while I was at Reed. I think I did attend a couple of meetings down in Salt Lake of the Uinta group of the Toiyabe Chapter [of the Sierra Club]. But it was really too far to go for meetings, and it was a headache to get involved with it. But I did go over to Denver to the hearing on the wilderness bill in '64, I guess it must have been January or February of '64.

Hudson: Was this the session of Congress that passed it?

Alderson: Yes. This was the last round of field hearings. It was the House interior committee--they were going around to give all the opponents a last shot. I think they pretty well knew that they were going to pass it by that time.

So I rode over with a woman from Salt Lake who was active in the Uinta group, named Margaret Piggott. She later was active in organizing the Club up in Ketchikan, Alaska.

Hudson: Did you testify in a panel situation?

Alderson: No. I was testifying not on behalf of the Club, but as an individual. In that case, the fact that I was a graduate student in range management was an unusual credential, so I testified and said something about range management. I also handed in a bunch of letters from other people in Logan that I'd been able to persuade to send something.

Alderson: One of them was a little disappointing because it was a letter that said that he'd take either bill. It was a case where there was a strong environmental bill, and there was another one that was a compromise. We were all pushing for the strong one, but this one fellow--in fact it was Huey Johnson--he said either bill will do.

Hudson: Huey Johnson is now the natural resources officer of California [Secretary for Resources]?

Alderson: Yes. Huey became much more of an activist later on, I think, when he got on the political side.

But that was an interesting task, to try to get some letters out of people in the forestry school in a cow college. I remember one fellow there on the faculty; I thought he would be interested because he was a wildlife professor, and somebody had said go and talk to him. So I did, and he said, "Oh, yes, I'll give you a letter, I'm against that bill." [laughter]

Hudson: Did you make the acquaintance of any of the more prominent wilderness leaders at that time? I'm thinking of Howard Zahniser and Olaus Murie and people like that.

Alderson: Yes. Well, at this stage, let's see, Olaus Murie had either died or was really ill and was about to die at this time in '64. Because I remember he died during that year, during my first year in Utah.

But in Denver at the hearing, well, Mike McCloskey was there because he had been traveling around following the whole series of hearings on behalf of the Club.

Hudson: He was the Northwest representative at this time?

Alderson: Yes. I'd met him before in the Northwest. I'd like to come back to that point. Howard Zahniser was there in Denver and I met him; that was probably the first time I really met him. And Tom Kimball was there from the National Wildlife Federation.

Denver was a great hearing, there were so many people from Colorado and the Rocky Mountain states there, primarily on that side of the mountains, that were supporting the bill; it just overwhelmed the other side.

But to go back, I met Mike McCloskey when he was early in his stint as Northwest representative. I used to send clippings to him from the Portland [news]papers and things like that. Once we had him come and participate in a debate with Hardy Glascock, who was representing the timber industry. This was a debate at Reed College with a student audience.

Hudson: Hardy Glascock is now with the Society of American Forestry, I believe?

Alderson: I'm not sure what he's with now, but he probably is.

Hudson: A few years ago he was.

Alderson: Another one of the things that our Students' Committee for Wilderness did was that we invited Olaus Murie to come to Reed and give a couple of talks. That was really successful. It might have been several years since he had last been in Portland, but Olaus had so many followers in the Northwest and people that loved him and knew him, he filled both houses.

During the afternoon he gave a seminar, under the auspices of the biology department at Reed, and he talked about wilderness and ecology. There was some grumbling by the biology department because he didn't really talk about population dynamics and all the technical things that they like to talk about. But it was a great thing, the audience loved it.

And then in the evening he gave a little more formal talk about wilderness and the current situation. One of the newspapers interviewed him over the phone after the afternoon thing, and it got in the newspapers. So we thought it was a good effort; it helped to get people's blood flowing again. And it sure stimulated me, being around him, because I got to go and meet him and Mardy when they came off the train. I spent some time with them; we had dinner with them.

An old school classmate of Mardy's was one of our deans at the college, Ann Shepard. It really was probably Ann who helped pave the way for the invitation, and they stayed at Ann Shepard's house.

Hudson: Mardy Murie is still living in Alaska, I believe, isn't she?

Alderson: I think she's living in Wyoming or Seattle or both.

Hudson: I was going to ask where were they from? I know the names, but I don't really know much about them.

Alderson: After Olaus retired from the Fish and Wildlife Service in the late forties he became president of The Wilderness Society. And he was still president of The Wilderness Society at the time I was involved, but he was becoming less active, and Howard Zahniser was carrying on more of it from the staff level in Washington. So they were basically living in Moose, Wyoming, in Jackson Hole, right near the park headquarters.

Alderson: But Mardy, I believe it was Mardy's sister or some relative or friend who lived in Seattle, so Seattle was a place they went to a lot. Well, I guess that's all I need to recount of that whole event.

II SIERRA CLUB VOLUNTEER IN WASHINGTON, D.C., 1966-1969

Grand Canyon Campaign, An Inspiring Experience

Hudson: Getting back to Utah, I guess, I think you mentioned before we began that you were involved, to a certain extent, in the Grand Canyon issue; maybe the Glen Canyon Dam and the Bridge Canyon and Marble Canyon Dams.

Alderson: Well, the Glen Canyon issue was lost before I ever got involved. That whole fight had been resolved in '55, '56; because the movement only turned its attention totally to the wilderness bill effort after they had saved Dinosaur National Monument. And one of the things that they gave up to save Dinosaur was Glen Canyon. So Glen Canyon Dam was being built, let's see, I think they were actually starting to fill it while I was in Utah.

Hudson: That sounds about right, I remember this was in '63 or '64.

I've just read--I believe it was the first of the Exhibit Format books that the Sierra Club put out, Time and the River Flowing, so I know a little bit about that fight. But I wonder if you could fill me in on some of the people that were involved and the occurrences.

Alderson: Maybe I better tell you how I got involved after I got to Washington. First I got--

Hudson: But this was after you left Utah?

Alderson: Yes, because I didn't get involved in that until I was here, except for writing letters. I wrote letters to my congressman while I was in Utah; of course, he was all in favor of the project.

But we old Sierra Club members never said die. They just kept on writing even if the guy was unconvinceable. But then I really sort of got off conservation work for a year--my second

Alderson: year in Utah was pretty much full-time in music. But then after I got here [in Washington, D.C.], the sort of oppressive atmosphere of the Air Force music had got me down and got me off of the music business, and I started looking elsewhere for inspiration.

And so I went on and got involved with the Sierra Club chapter. Out here they had what they called the Washington area group, and Irving DeLappe was the chairman of it at that time and he welcomed my interest. There was another newcomer here, Armin Behr, who was very interested in helping out, and so we started having little meetings. Later, during my first year here, the Atlantic Chapter appointed me chairman of the group. Irving DeLappe wanted to bow out, sort of pass the torch.

Hudson: The chapter appointed you chairman?

Alderson: Yes, the group chairmen were appointed, at least that was the way it was at that time. (You didn't exactly have home rule, as they say.) So I had started going to the Atlantic Chapter executive committee meetings, which were always in New York. I would get off after a rehearsal at noon over at the Air Force base and then would catch the train to New York, then come back on a late bus around eleven o'clock from New York. It was a little hard to get up and go to the next morning's rehearsal, but that was one of the ways I got to know the chapter leaders, and they got to know me and so, probably on the basis of what I was doing there, they appointed me chairman.

So we started with organizing things. We would put on a hike a week to get people involved. I really had to choose, at this time, between the Sierra Club organizing effort and more direct work on Capitol Hill because The Wilderness Society was eager to put me to work pounding the halls of Congress doing various things, even though I wasn't very skilled; I didn't have very much to offer at that time.

Hudson: As a volunteer?

Alderson: Right, as a volunteer. Then a third competing factor, Huey Johnson, who had been a graduate student at Utah State, now was on the staff of The Nature Conservancy--he was their acting executive director--and he got in touch with me when he came to Washington.

As things came about, I worked part time for The Nature Conservancy for about six months; it must have been about January to June of '66. I had so many irons in the fire, I was spreading myself pretty thin. So I guess I probably was doing some of each during the first year.

Alderson: The Wilderness Society part was interesting too because Stewart Brandborg, who was the executive director, had this little volunteer group called the National Capitol Wilderness Study Committee that met once a month down at their office in the evenings. I went to that, and it was a good part of my education because you would get the benefit of Brandy's experience, and Rupert Cutler was one of the assistant executive directors at The Wilderness Society then. Rupert was the one I worked the closest with at The Wilderness Society during the time he was there and I learned a lot from him. We made many trips up to Capitol Hill together working on things.

What finally made my decision for me was during the summer of '66, well it must have been in May or so, when Dave Brower was in town with Jeff Ingram, the Southwest representative of the Sierra Club, to go to these hearings by the House Interior Committee on the Grand Canyon dam issue.

I remember going to some of the hearings and introducing myself to Dave; this was the second time because I introduced myself once before when I was still at Reed and I kept in touch by sending him things over the years until then. So in '66 he would invite me along to lunch after the hearings, and I could sit around with these people who were trying to save the Grand Canyon. So then one of these days, I think it was Jeff Ingram called me up and said, "Dave thought that you might be able to help us out with this project." What they wanted me to do was to draft up little speeches for members of Congress to put into the Congressional record in opposition to the Grand Canyon dams.

Jeff would keep me supplied with newspapers, editorials and things that were against the dams, and it was my job to write a little introductory speech to go with it into the Congressional Record. So I did this, I took it on enthusiastically and wrote them up and then went down there and peddled them to various Congress members who were on our side.

Pretty soon their stuff started appearing. It was frustrating because you could never really know when they were going to drop it in; you would go for several days with nothing, then you would get a couple all at once. Anyway that really was interesting to find that you could get something in there; we had faith that this was going to do some good.

The strategy was to get the members of the house thinking anti-dam because Mo Udall was on the other side, he was in favor of the dams. Because the deal that he had been presented with by Wayne Aspinall was that you don't get the Central Arizona Project unless these dams are a part of it, and you get the whole deal for the Upper Basin. So it was a package deal as far as Mo Udall was concerned.

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Alderson: So Mo Udall was really stuck with advocating the Grand Canyon dams in order to get what he wanted, the Central Arizona Project.

I don't think that any of the legislators that I wrote this stuff for ever said it on the house floor, but in one way or other they handed it in, and it appeared in the Congressional record. So I was delighted to see that I could do something, and they used my words, so at least my writing was good for something.

I think that was something that really spurred me into action in the Sierra Club and in connection with Dave Brower. I really came to admire Dave's instincts and his intelligence and his performance in a legislative battle situation. I've known others since who were much more skilled at it and who had spent much more of their time at that kind of thing. But still it was one of the greatest experiences of my life to work with Dave on the Grand Canyon dams fight.

Other people were part of that, like Jeff Ingram and Hugh Nash, who was then the editor of the Sierra Club Bulletin--I always wished that I could write the way Hugh Nash writes. I got my inspirations from those people, I think; work with them was really a springboard to everything that I have done since. After the Grand Canyon issue was over with, I spent a couple of weeks for The Wilderness Society during one of those summers while I was in the Air Force out in Utah doing some field investigations on wilderness proposals for the National Parks in Utah and working with local citizen people there.

But by and large, the rest of my Air Force time until January of '69, when I got out, I was primarily active in the Sierra Club as a volunteer; with the Washington area group, at first and then--

A Leader in the Far-Flung Atlantic Chapter

Hudson: You went on to the Atlantic Chapter?

Alderson: Right. I got elected to the executive committee of the Atlantic Chapter after a year or so.

Hudson: Could we get into this a little bit? How big was the Atlantic Chapter? We know first that it was very far flung, but how many members were there at that time?

Alderson: Let's see, it's hard to say. I think when I first came into it we only had about 300 members in the Washington area. It might have been 3000 in the whole chapter, I'm not sure, but I'm sure they've got the statistics somewhere. But [it was] not very big compared to later on. I think that by the time we had our chapter status for the Southeast Chapter back in '68--that ran from the Mason-Dixon line south as far as Trinidad, I guess--I think we had about 3000 members in the chapter, but that represented about three years growth from what it was in '65 or '66. The Club had quite a bit of growth, as I remember, during the Grand Canyon fight, which really wrapped up in the summer of '66. And then the Redwoods National Park fight was continuing on from there too.

Hudson: What is it like trying to run such a spread-out chapter? It's even more huge than the RCC [regional conservation committee] is now. It must have been terribly expensive and time consuming.

Alderson: Well, we really had to leave the far flung parts pretty much to their own devices. We tried to carry on a pretty active central operation here where a lot of the members were, in the Washington area. And we had Baltimore people getting involved, too. But then, as soon as possible, we got somebody to take on leadership in different locations, like Baltimore, and they were pretty quick to form a group within about a year or so after we had ours going strong.

Mary Vincett, Bob Wirth, and Robert Nied, they were quick to take up interest in Baltimore. And then Dennis Neuzil organized a group in Newark, Delaware, based around the university community there; so we had a Delaware group. And Carl Holcomb organized the Blue Ridge group, based in Blacksburg, Virginia. Then we soon had Ted Snyder in South Carolina and Bob Entwistle in Florida. And then there was a Georgia group.

Anyway each of these groups had something getting started. We talked to them on the phone, sent them membership application blanks like mad.

Hudson: Was this the Southeast Chapter now, or still the Atlantic?

Alderson: Well, a lot of this started out during the Atlantic Chapter, I can't remember which ones started during the Atlantic Chapter period and which happened [after we organized] the Southeast, but we had a decentralization program--

Hudson: So it was empire building in reverse.

Alderson: Right, right. We even had a decentralization chairman in the Atlantic Chapter, I think it may have been Alfred Forsyth. He may have been the first decentralization chairman. So we got a

Alderson: lot of this started under the Atlantic Chapter, and then the Southeast [Chapter] took over the groups that were from the Mason-Dixon line south and carried on as best we could to help them go further.

Hudson: And you, as a member of the chapter executive committee, helped appoint group chairmen in these cases?

Alderson: Yes, they were all appointed. Well, we just kept our ears open and kept inviting people to volunteer. I guess sometimes some of these were probably discovered by Gary Soucie, who was hired as the New York representative of the Club. It must have been along in '66; yes, it must have been right about then.

Hudson: How did you interact with San Francisco in those years?

Alderson: During the Atlantic Chapter period or the Southeast?

Hudson: Both, I guess. Were you a delegate to the Sierra Club Council sometimes?

Alderson: Yes, I think they must have appointed me Council Representative soon after I got involved with the Atlantic Chapter.

I know I went to several board meetings out West during my time in the Club, I don't know exactly how many. But I did serve on the Council. And I also knew Dave, so when necessary I could talk to him.

Hudson: Dave Brower was Executive Director at this time?

Alderson: Right. We also got a lot of support and a lot of things that we needed by writing to Anne Chamberlain and Diana Bohn, who, I think, were Dave's secretaries. But they were central people if you wanted to get anything done.

Hudson: The San Francisco office was much smaller in those days, it sounds like.

Alderson: Yes, by then Mike McCloskey was in San Francisco. I really don't have that strong recollections of a lot of that, during the time I was a volunteer, because I was pretty busy here; there wasn't that much work with the Sierra Club staff.

So mainly it was just a job of organizing and holding your meetings and getting people to turn out. Actually, it is kind of fun to think about some of the people we had involved in our group here. One of them was Jim Moorman, who went on to be with the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund; in fact, that was originally his idea. When he was on our local executive committee here, Jim came up with this idea that the Sierra Club should follow in the

Alderson: footsteps of the NAACP legal defense fund. So we adopted a resolution that Jim had drafted from our chapter--it must have been during the Southeast Chapter period--urging the board to establish the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund. The response came back, "Well, we can't do anything like that, we've got to have outside counsel do it. It would be ill advised to have inside counsel set up like that." Later on they set one up and hired Jim as the first executive director of it. [laughter]

Encouraging a Grass-roots Political Network

Hudson: Let's get back to the Grand Canyon fight for a little bit before we finish setting up the Southeast Chapter.

How did you get involved in that, just through an association with David Brower?

Alderson: Yes, just from showing up at those hearings and his and Jeff's asking me to do something on the issue.

Hudson: The speech-writing campaign you were talking about?

Alderson: Yes, that's pretty much all I did. It was pretty big for me, from the standpoint of somebody who hadn't had any real legislative responsibilities like that.

Hudson: And you were still in the Air Force at this time?

Alderson: Yes, yes. We only rehearsed in the mornings, usually, so I had the afternoons free to go and do whatever I wanted.

Hudson: What was the Air Force entity you were with? They have their military bands but those don't have violas.

Alderson: The Strolling Strings.

Hudson: The Strolling Strings?

Alderson: Yes, a famous group.

Hudson: Sort of like the Singing Sergeants?

Alderson: Yes, we played at military banquets. If we were in for some heavy duty, we might have to play on Friday night or a Saturday night, or we might have to go out to some other remote Air Force base and play on a Friday night. But it was pretty good duty.

Hudson: Enough of the militaristic stuff, let's get back to the Sierra Club. When did the Grand Canyon fight conclude?

Alderson: The real tough part of it was wrapped up in August of '66 when Mo threw in the towel, when he realized he couldn't get enough votes on the house floor. So they didn't bring the bill to the house floor.

I was out of town at this time, I guess it was my vacation time, and I'd taken off, in spite of everything. But Mo, as I heard later, came over to Dave's hotel room at the DuPont Plaza to tell him that he was giving up and that he knew he wasn't going to be able to get the bill with the dams through. The next session of Congress they had to work out something different. I wasn't that heavily involved in the other years. The Club's goal was to get the park enlarged to include the dam sites, but I can't really talk about that.

One of the things I did during this Grand Canyon fight, in addition to this business with the record insertions, was to call out to Sierra Club chapters where we thought we needed some letters to members of Congress. I'm not sure exactly how it was supposed to be organized, but I did make some phone calls. I was surprised to find that if I called the conservation chairman of the chapter someplace, or the chairman of the chapter, I often found that they had never talked to their congressman or congresswoman, and they didn't know exactly how to go about it, and they hadn't really done much action. I was shocked because I always thought of the Sierra Club the way I thought of Dave Brower, I thought the whole Club was like that. So it was gradually a realization that it wasn't like that. And I got to tell people what to do, and here was I, a newcomer to the whole thing.

It's nice to reflect on that, to think of the progress that's been made over the last sixteen years or so.

Hudson: There were other chapters, then, in the West. You mentioned earlier the Toiyabe Chapter. So the West was pretty well covered by chapters, the east had the Atlantic Chapter?

Alderson: Yes, there were gaps around the country but even in the parts where the chapters had existed, they weren't necessarily that strong or active. I think it was pretty much a case of pockets of really strong and knowledgeable activism, but it wasn't very consistent, you couldn't count on having it where you needed it.

Hudson: Did those pockets pretty much correspond where we had professional staff: You mentioned that Mike McCloskey was in the Northwest and Jeff Ingram in the Southwest. Did the professional staff help drum up that sort of activism?

Alderson: I'm sure that's true. The Northwest did have it. Yes, and Jeff's influence, definitely, you could see on the groups that were active down there. But the place where this fight was really being fought was east of the one hundreth meridian, east of the plains.

There wasn't any staff east of the plains until Gary Soucie started, which must have been in '66. But the Atlantic Chapter had been pretty active, and Gary made it a lot more so; he stimulated a lot more action up there. But there wasn't very much field staff at that time.

Formation of the Southeast Chapter, 1968

Hudson: Well, are we ready, I guess, to talk again about the Southeast Chapter formation? First, were you an officer in the Atlantic Chapter?

Alderson: I don't think I was ever an officer of the chapter. I was just on the executive committee.

Hudson: And a council delegate?

Alderson: Yes.

Hudson: Were you just a council delegate or were you on any particular committees or hold any level of responsibility on the council?

Alderson: I don't think so. I was on a bylaws committee, which was a Club committee on the council, but it never did anything. It was a bylaws revision committee; it never revised them as long as I was on it.

Hudson: It was Southeast Chapter, then, as part of this decentralization process; when did the final break come and what was involved to do that?

Alderson: Well, we got our freedom in May of '68. There was a process for it, I guess it consisted of getting a petition signed by the requisite number of members in the territory involved. So we must have done this with our central group here plus the people in the local groups down the line. Of course, the Atlantic Chapter approved the recommendation; they recommended to the board to approve it.

Hudson: So it was an amicable separation?

Alderson: Oh, yes. They were delighted to have us take the Southeast off their hands.

So I went out to the board meeting that time to present the petition and darned if they didn't have a special achievement award for me--I've got it on the wall here--which they gave to me at that very meeting. It recognizes my work with the organizing and also with the work on the issues in Washington.

But we had some really good people at work on this because the guys that drafted the bylaws for the new chapter were Jim Moorman and Tony Ruckel.

Hudson: Is Ruckel now with the Legal Defense Fund?

Alderson: Yes, and Jim Moorman, formerly with the Department of Justice. [laughs] It makes me think that I'm about the least thoughtful in planning my own career, after seeing how somebody like Jim has progressed. I think he knew where he wanted to go all along.

Hudson: So the Southeast Chapter consisted of everything from the Mason-Dixon line to Latin America?

Alderson: Right.

Hudson: How long did it last?

Alderson: Well, it still existed when I bowed out. Let's see, I was the chairman of the chapter, but then when I was getting out of the Air Force in January of '69, I spent a few months there trying to be a free lance writer and gave up and went into the music business as a stop gap. I played up at the Shoreham Hotel as a summer job. And then Friends of the Earth was getting started up, and so I went to work for, first, the John Muir Institute and then Friends of the Earth.

When I was getting into the professional work for those groups I bowed out of the chapter and let the others carry on, which they were fully prepared to do.

Hudson: When did the Potomac Chapter itself start, then? That must have been about 1970 or so?

Alderson: Yes, I don't even know.

Hudson: As the Southeast Chapter gradually broke up and dismantled; I thought you were involved in that.

Alderson: No.

Hudson: I guess that was after your time, then.

A Sierra Club Controversy: Diablo Canyon and the Election of 1969

Hudson: Well, before we get on to the professional lobbying it seems like an appropriate time to talk about the controversy that led to the formation of Friends of the Earth. I know very little about that, just generally that there were two factions within the Sierra Club, apparently. One led by David Brower [Club executive director, 1954-1969], and the other Ansel Adams pretty much. Maybe you can fill me in on that.

Alderson: I'm not sure really who led it, that there was any single person but Ansel and Dick Leonard, and Will Siri--

Well, I've never really understood all the factors that went into it. I knew that some of the board members were concerned about their inability to control Dave's expenditures. They felt that he spent things that the board hadn't authorized. And they were afraid he was going to get the Sierra Club bankrupt or something.

I think there were also, undeniably, people who were on that side that disagreed with the positions that the Club was getting into. For one thing, the fight over the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant which the Club at first endorsed. Then Dave and our group tried to get them to change and oppose it. It had been endorsed before anyone on the Board of Directors had ever visited the site, and so we had probably been convinced that it was a good place to build a nuclear power plant. The question of whether we should be building nuclear power plants at all was only being raised, at that point, by Fred Eissler. Dave hadn't even been convinced at that point. Dave was still saying that nuclear power was the answer; this way we were going to save all the canyons. They wouldn't need dams in them because we were going to have all this nuclear power.

Hudson: I remember reading that in Time and the River Flowing.

Alderson: Oh, yes, it's timelessly in the book there. [laughs]

So after some of the people visited the Diablo Canyon site, Dave and Martin Litton and Hugh Nash and I'm not sure who all else--

Hudson: Were these all board members?

Alderson: No, Martin was. I think Fred was a board member at that time, so it was probably Fred and Martin with that position.

Hudson: You referred to "our group" earlier; had it already factionalized or were you talking about your chapter group or something?

Alderson: No, I'm not talking about the chapter group but I think there was sort of a way of choosing up sides because you thought of yourself as a Brower person or not a Brower person. And there were those of us who thought of ourselves as Brower people. I'm not sure what all went into it, but I had a lot of faith in Dave's judgment on the issues. And in my own experience I had found the positions to be good ones.

You're taking a stand; you're a conservation group and the group is supposed to be in favor of saving wilderness. Well, I believe in the motto of asking for what you want rather than for what you think you're going to get. You don't ask for a compromise thing. You ask for what you want; save that canyon; save that country. From my standpoint it was pretty fishy to be endorsing the power plant site anyway. You might have to settle for it and let them build the thing, but why endorse it and tell them to build it there? It might be all right if you could tell them to build it in the middle of some devastated area, but I don't think it's the Club's business to be telling them to build it in a natural area.

So after they discovered that the Diablo site was a pretty nice area, this fight did develop. The fight over Diablo overshadowed the arguments about the specific merits of the project. There were those that saw this as another example of Dave Brower going too far or disregarding the board, trying to go behind the board's back. So that was the "you can't control Dave Brower" school of thought.

Hudson: And this was more an issues problem as opposed to a question of the amount of money he was spending?

Alderson: Yes. Well, maybe both; from their standpoint they probably saw it as the same thing. Then there were those that thought the Sierra Club was getting too feisty; they were taking on industry too much. They, I think, felt that we should be more cooperative, consulting with industry and telling them where to build things instead of fighting them every step of the way.

Then there were those who favored nuclear power who were active leaders and had been on the board or who may have been lawyers for power companies. There was a lot here, and I think some of the history I've read indicates that there was more to it than just the conservationist argument.

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Alderson: Well, I think we on Dave's side all saw the thing partly on the basis of a principle. What was the Sierra Club if it wasn't going to stand up for the principle of saving natural areas? And we, too, I think, saw it as an issue over Brower and over whether the Sierra Club was going to be active or not.

Now, in the long run, I agree, the Sierra Club has become as active as Dave would have wanted it to be.

Hudson: [At the present time] they don't ask for our bottom line right off. In other words, we don't push for the compromise position in the beginning.

Alderson: Oh, right, right. And, as you know, the Club has become highly effective at this kind of thing. And I'm sure some of the people that were against Dave must be horrified that the Club turned out this way.

But I think it did so because, well, I think not so much because of leadership at the national level, but because of the grass roots leadership. During the period when I was involved, I think the Sierra Club's emphasis, especially with cases like the Grand Canyon fight and the Redwoods, was something that really was originated by the national leadership.

I think now the Sierra Club's emphasis and method of operating is something that's come through demands of the chapters and the membership. So I think it would be pretty hard to kill it now. I guess one reason that [James] Watt is all wet, whatever he says about the Sierra Club, is because it's from the ground up.

Hudson: It's not a bunch of "commercial" environmentalists, as Watt calls our professional Club staff, dictating what policy should be?

Alderson: Right.

Hudson: Let's get back to the Brower fight again, and in this I'm trying to educate myself as much as get a story on the tape. I wanted to ask a question about Ansel Adams, whom I understood to be the main spokesman for the opposition [to Brower]. Recently, in his career, he has been a very eloquent spokesman for wilderness and against development and that sort of thing, and against the present Reagan-Watt Administration particularly. Is this a leopard changing his spots, so to speak, or what?

Alderson: No, I think Ansel was always in favor of saving as much as possible. I think Ansel was more involved in that fight from the standpoint of the Sierra Club's financial health. I think he was worried about that and worried about his responsibility as a

Alderson: director of the Club, as a member of the board. Apparently he was convinced that Dave was spending money he hadn't been authorized to, something like that.

Hudson: About that time, weren't you a candidate for the Board of Directors?

Alderson: Yes, I was one of the Brower slate the year of the showdown, in 1969. There was a Brower slate and there was an opposing slate.

Hudson: On the ballot did it clearly delineate that there was a Brower slate and there was an anti-Brower slate?

Alderson: Well, I don't think they were designated as such on the ballot but everybody identified themselves, and there was a campaign mailing on both sides. They used statements in the ballot material, the candidates' statement. There were also mailings that went out to the whole membership. The Brower group had a campaign committee called the ABC committee--Active, Bold, Constructive. And the other one was the CMC committee; that stood for Concerned Members for Conservation.

Hudson: Was the election result a clear-cut decision? Did one slate get elected and the other one not get elected?

Alderson: Oh, yes, the Brower slate got creamed. I think what did it must have been the financial arguments, because the Club never backed off on any of the [Brower] positions or anything.

Hudson: And at that point did Brower throw in the towel or what happened? Was he terminated or did he voluntarily leave by mutual agreement or what? Because I also know he formed Friends of the Earth, but I'm not sure when that happened.

Alderson: Well, you know, to tell the truth, I can't remember myself whether in the end it was actually a resignation. It was clear what he had said when he was running, when he decided to run for the Board--

Hudson: He was a candidate himself?

Alderson: Yes, he was one of the candidates. He said that if he lost he would resign as executive director, so it was inevitable from everything he said. And, I think, he still clung to the hope that he would be able to continue, but in the end he didn't. And he gave his farewell speech at the first board meeting after the elections, in May 1969.

Then he spent the summer getting things organized for his new groups. The John Muir Institute was part of the Brower set-up for a while; it was the tax deductible group. We put on a

Alderson: conference up in Aspen, Colorado, in the summer--I guess it was in September. And then he spent the fall getting Friends of the Earth organized, and I think it was finally announced in about December out in San Francisco.

I worked in San Francisco for the fall months, from September until Christmas and then moved back here.

Hudson: There's another name that I was curious about, too, that we've mentioned a couple of times. A name I ran across in Time and the River Flowing, as a member of the Board of Directors, Martin Litton, whom I don't know. And it raises the question--well, at that time, which was sometime in the middle sixties he was running the river, so I presume that he was an active young person. Is he still around, or was he on the slate also? What happens to old Sierra Clubbers, do they just fade away?

Alderson: No, Martin is still running his river trips enterprise, Martin Litton's Grand Canyon Dories. They run river trips through the Grand Canyon and other places.

He was one of the older members of our group. At that time, he was a travel writer at Sunset Magazine. I guess, after they wouldn't accept so much of his conservation writing that he wanted to put in, that he finally resigned and got the boat thing going.

But he had done these boats, I guess, probably for fun himself during those years. During the time the Grand Canyon fight was on he took groups through there, including Dave--I guess Dave must have gone on one of them, and a lot of the other fighters, although I never got to.

Hudson: And it was about this time after the Brower defeat that you, apparently, got out of the military to become a professional conservationist. And this marked the end of your Sierra Club volunteer activities?

Alderson: That's right. I must have bowed out of the chapter in the fall or the summer of '69.

Hudson: Is this just coincidental because of the end of the military, or did it have something to do with the slate going down to glorious defeat?

Alderson: Oh, no. It didn't have anything to do with the slate because our chapter and the Atlantic Chapter, also, were strongly Brower-oriented. If I was going to be spending my time working on conservation for a job, then I didn't want to do it on the sideline, too.

Hudson: I've talked to quite a few members, Doug Scott, among others, that feel the same sort of way.

At the beginning I wrote down a list of names of prominent Sierra Clubbers and wonder if you could give your recollections of any of them.

Alderson: I've seen Martin Litton off and on. I haven't worked so much with him over the years to say very much, just that he was always one of those that really believed in taking a strong stance and fighting for it. So I really admired that. He was sort of in the same category with Dave Brower's approach on things.

Hudson: Where does Dr. [Edgar] Wayburn fit in that pattern? He was the President of the Club when you got your award, I noticed.

Alderson: Yes. I was always puzzled by Ed, he didn't seem like that strong a fighter. He always seemed more conciliatory and more of a gentleman. Sort of a different tradition in the Sierra Club. But he sure knows how to get things done.

I think he served a difficult year as president of the Club while this factional fighting was going on, and tried to avoid getting really lumped in with either one.

Hudson: He was the presiding officer, and he didn't really have a vote unless there was a tie.

Alderson: Well, he stayed out of it more than he had to. I don't have too much to remember there. I'm sure I've forgotten a lot about those old days. It was quite traumatic for me; this whole Sierra Club fight. I know it was for just about everybody that came out on the losing side. I don't think any of us really enjoyed starting up a new organization from scratch. It's nice to have a machine going that's really got resources that you could use, at least that's my attitude. I've done some organizing; I like to be more in a position of having a going concern, to have a spring board instead of having to pull yourself by your bootstraps. [laughs] But I think all of us were kind of like that.

Hudson: I guess if you're very deeply involved in something, or care very deeply about it, it is tough to overcome a set-back like that.

Alderson: Yes. Now I realize more that organizations tend to go through this kind of thing, having seen The Wilderness Society go through it a few years later. When I was working for The Wilderness Society, their board fired Stewart Brandborg in early '76, and it caused the same thing. I think The Wilderness Society took a lot longer to get back to speed than the Sierra Club did.

Mike McCloskey's Unique Contribution in the Northwest

Alderson: I'd like to talk about Mike McCloskey. I was just recently thinking about Mike because of the interview with him in the Sierra Club Bulletin. It made me realize how long he's been involved in this, because I first met him when he was out there in the Northwest, working out of an office in Eugene. It was really great to have somebody you could consult about issues, somebody who you could tie in with in your own efforts.

I remember he thought up some awfully good arguments back in the days when we had never used economics in wilderness fights. I remember one time on a fight over--it may have been Mount Jefferson Wilderness--I think it was, and in order to fight the economic arguments the timber industry people were throwing around, Mike came up with a value for the tourist trade. Not just the hikers and everybody that goes into the wilderness, but he also threw in a value for the people who enjoy it by driving by on the highway. This is an area where there's a road that crosses the mountain and goes right through there. And so he assigned a value to every person that takes a look at the mountain. To figure out that value, he asked, well, what do people pay for a view? So you figure out what they charge to have you look through one of those telescopes at the popular roadside viewpoints, and multiply that by the number of people that drive this road and maybe deduct it from the half that don't enjoy it.

I thought that was pretty intriguing. That kind of thing really influenced me, to be able to develop an argument. It was probably at least as convincing as the other side's argument.

Hudson: Until that time were you pretty much giving up the econonmic argument as a lost cause?

Alderson: Well, I guess, it had never been done. The arguments in those days were pretty rudimentary, pretty shallow. Saving the area for recreational values: hunting, fishing and wildlife and some other philosophical arguments about why we need to save it. But that was about as far as it went. Mike went into a lot of that other stuff to get people to develop more arguments.

Mike also tried to get people up to speed themselves to carry a campaign in their own parts of the state, all over the Northwest. He was the first real Sierra Club field organizer, and he came up with nice little legal techniques, too. Like when the Forest Service wouldn't give you the information you wanted, he had some handy language out of the Administrative Procedures

Alderson: Act. He said, "Carry this around in your wallet, and if they won't give it to you, read them this thing." And so you read it to them-- [laughs]

Hudson: Sort of a Miranda warning.

Alderson: It didn't really apply to the cases we were talking about, but it sounded awfully legal to the Forest Service guys, so--

Hudson: Is Mike an attorney?

Alderson: Yes. So he was using his law there, it was a good thing. And he really knew how to handle the issues and how to write a good letter to the editor. He did a lot more of it than he should have, probably. In those days he should have got more of us doing it ourselves. In fact, he kept telling me, "Do it yourself this time, George." So he was a real motivator for me because he would write back. You might hear from Dave Brower once a year if you kept sending him stuff, but Mike was willing and ready on the scene.

Atlantic and Southeast Stalwarts: Ogilvy and Snyder

Alderson: Oh, yes. I wanted to talk about Stewart Ogilvy, who was one of the real pioneers of the Atlantic Chapter.

Hudson: Stewart Ogilvy?

Alderson: Yes. He must have been one of the founders of the Atlantic Chapter. I think he's an easterner, in fact, I think he was originally Canadian, but he spent his career as a writer and editor in New York. But he must have gone on some Club trip out West, I'm not sure exactly what it was that infected him with the idea.

By the time I got involved he was one of the mainstays of the chapter executive committee, and he really encouraged me in my role with the Club. He was one of those that had the strong interest in activism, and he would bring other people in too, some real, real stalwarts. He's one of those people who encourages everybody without being very obtrusive. Then he was later active on the board in Friends of the Earth, too.

Hudson: The name that I had written on the list was Abigail Avery and, I believe, Stewart Avery. Did you know Abigail and Stewart Avery? They are still very active.

Alderson: Yes, I don't know them very well. I knew Abby, I met her at some meetings and things like that, but not well.

Hudson: She wasn't on the chapter executive committee at that time?

Alderson: Well, not very much of the time that I was.

George Marshall's son, Roger Marshall, the architect from Cambridge, he was on the executive committee. But I think he was the only one from Massachusetts that came down very much.

Hudson: Is that the Marshall family that helped found The Wilderness Society?

Alderson: Yes. George Marshall, I didn't mention George Marshall. He was on the Sierra Club Board at that time and also on The Wilderness Society Board. I think George Marshall was President of the Sierra Club at some point during the period when I was active, but he was kind of against the Brower side, I believe.

When you get me thinking about this whole fight over Dave Brower, I really think it was the charges that his financial business was in trouble that did Dave in. And then I discovered later in Friends of the Earth, I had to admit that Dave didn't easily give in to authority, the authority of the Board of Directors. But I never thought that he spent money with bad motives. What he would usually do is spend too much on a good cause.

Hudson: I've been told that there was never any real doubt about his motives.

Alderson: Well, some people during this fight claimed that he was wasting it and spending it on hotel bills and all that stuff, parties. It was crazy.

Most of the other names [on Hudson's list]--let's see, are we going to get into the eastern wilderness?

Hudson: Oh, yes.

Alderson: Ted Snyder, that was really one of the real joys of being a leader in the chapter here was when somebody like Ted Snyder gets involved. And I had talked to him on the phone a long time before I ever met him. I probably talked to him on the phone for a year or more before I met him. And that real low in the throat South Carolina speech of his, I really got to love it. He could do so much down there.

Alderson: When Ted got involved and got his group organized down there, I thought, "Well, by God, we're really going to do it." The Sierra Club is really going to do it in the Southeast if we could get people like this.

I know I worked with him on some of the issues like that Timber Supply Act. It's still one of the great joys of being a leader in the Club when you found somebody that was a good leader like that. What I would do was open the door to them or give them a title and responsibility, and let it go on from there.

The Southeast Chapter, 1968-1969: Gifted Members, Regional Issues, Outings

[Interview 2: April 21, 1982]##

Hudson: George, can you tell us a little bit about what it was like to run the Southeast Chapter as a member of the executive committee and chairman [1968-1969]?

Alderson: Well, at the time that we were starting up the Southeast Chapter, the Club was still doing a lot of advertising, the large issue ads, the kind that were written by Jerry Mander, starting with the Grand Canyon ads and Redwood ads and so forth. There was quite a lot of publicity, so both the ads and the publicity tended to bring in members. So the membership effort was primarily done at the national level. We augmented it by putting out the leaflet highlighting just the Southeastern issues.

I guess we had picked out representative issues like the Everglades and various regional issues here. We would go over each of these issues and what the Sierra Club was doing about them and urge members to join. So I think the leaflet was called "The Sierra Club in the Southeast" or something like that. And we printed up thousands and thousands of copies and gave these to all the regional groups in the different states, essentially a membership brochure just for our region.

Aside from that, I think our membership efforts here were primarily done by the active groups, in person-to-person contacts. So we made sure that every group had plenty of membership brochures and entry blanks and that sort of thing. We also encouraged them all to contribute things to the Mountain Laurel, the chapter publication.

Really though, to a large extent, I felt that the regional groups were pretty much on their own. I believe we gave them a modest portion of the dues we got, that the chapter got from the

Alderson: national. But it was really pretty much up to them because we couldn't do very much except give them sound, sage advice over the telephone; it didn't especially help all that much.

Gary Soucie, who was then the club's representative in New York, also did quite a bit through his telephone contacts and occasionally his visits. For example, during his work with the Everglades, he would visit the Florida group leaders when he would be down there, and occasionally the other groups. And sometimes the group leaders would come here to the Washington area and sit in on executive committee meetings with us. Or we would get together with them and have more of a chance to talk and help them with problems they were having.

We did have a pretty active chapter; really the central chapter organization was the Washington area activities. We had an active executive committee that spent most of its time working with the issues rather than with management and finances of the Club. Some of the people on it at that time, during the first executive committee of the Southeast Chapter, went on to professional positions in this field, such as Jim Moorman and Tony Ruckel. So we had a lot of interested and really gifted people.

Hudson: Did the chapter just have the one newsletter, that is now the Potomac chapter's Mountain Laurel, or were there informal or formal group newsletters?

Alderson: My recollection is hazy on what they had at that time. I suspect that they had some kind of informal or sort of irregular newsletter of some kind.

Hudson: But the Mountain Laurel was this fact sheet that you sent out, that sort of served as the chapter newsletter?

Alderson: It wasn't a fact sheet, the Mountain Laurel was a chapter newsletter; although it did kind of heavily emphasize the things in the Washington area because most of the members were there. But we did try to get coverage in for the other parts of the region.

I remember one time we had the lead article on the Timber Supply Bill, which would have effected the Carolinas more because of their greater acreage of National Forest and potential wilderness down there, than it would have this part of the region. And we covered the Everglades issues with lead stories sometimes.

We always had an objective of getting the Club more attention in these other parts of the region where it was not strong at the time. And we realized from the beginning that the

Alderson: Club's political influence would become a lot greater if we could get well organized in the South, which at that time even more than now, had a disproportionate level of influence in Congress because of a lot of the old committee chairmen. So we had an objective there.

I think that we were primarily hampered in pursuing it more actively by the handicaps that any chapter has; namely lack of staff and lack of enough funds to really travel or get out and do that kind of in-person organizing. But we did a pretty good job, sort of based on opportunism; people that were coming to Washington--they would get together with us, all those kinds of contacts.

Hudson: These are the Entwistles and the Snyders and people like that?

Alderson: You bet.

Hudson: Did the Southeast Chapter have any sort of formal mechanism for responding to conservation issues; was there a conservation subcommittee? How did you work national campaign issues? Or how did you drum up grass-roots interest other than the newsletter?

Alderson: There's a real disparity between what we had then and what exists now. We tried some rudimentary telephone trees and that kind of thing, but it was just sort of a beginning effort. It was not something you count on. I would say that most of the chapter's role on the national issues consisted primarily of covering the issue in the newsletter, which would at least give it another whack in addition to what they would see in the _Sierra Club Bulletin_ or the special mailings. It also consisted of, in rare instances, a telephone calling effort to members. It consisted, in some cases, of contacts with legislators from the region.

But at that time the Club had a different attitude about contacts between the chapter and group organizations and Congress. The attitude seemed to be, and I think it was an official policy, that the chapter or the group was not to be contacting Congress in its own name, but you could ask your members to contact them. The idea, I think, was that the Club was supposed to be dealing with Congressional work at the national level.

I think it must have been based on the theory that these volunteer people were too naive to do this properly. But obviously that has been proven wrong in later years. Well, I think it just gave way from the bottom up anyway, because the national people found that you couldn't control the grass-roots people, so it just gave them their head. But then again, we didn't do very much with that.

Hudson: Did the chapter run outings and have other social type activities?

Alderson: Oh, yes, in fact, that's one of the first things that we did in the Washington area when we decided to make the Washington area group more active; and this was back in '65 and '66.

I believe it was first suggested by Armin Behr that we should have an outing every week. And so we--there must have been about six of us that were doing this new organizing effort--divided up the outings among the six of us, it might have been eight of us, something like that. And so it seemed that each of us was leading an outing about every couple of months. The outings were one-day trips, usually. It was quite a step, the following summer, when we moved to having overnight trips now and then. But it was a good move.

I was one of the doubters at first because it seemed like an awful expenditure of effort when we could be working on the issues. But I really became a believer in it because we found that we got new people involved; people who were already members and other people who were not members. And by seeing them on outings, that's pretty much where we ran into the people who became our leaders. You put the arm on them when they're on an outing with you and get to talking about the issues and ask them to do something.

Hudson: Did people show up just by word of mouth or did you advertise or something?

Alderson: We advertised in the newspapers; getting notices in the Washington Post and, I guess, just about any other medium we could get them in. And people showed up. People would just read about it in the newspaper and decide they would like to go on a hike in Shenandoah National Park that weekend.

III LOBBYIST FOR FOE AND THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY, 1970s

Early Days in Friends of the Earth

Hudson: Shall we shift gears now and go back to the turn of the last decade [1969-1970] after the Brower slate was defeated for the board of directors, and started thinking about forming new organizations? Could you go into that history a little bit?

Alderson: Well, as soon as Dave was ousted, I guess he gave his final speech as a Sierra Club staff member to the board in May of '69, he set to work pretty fast trying to come up with what he should do in terms of an organization after that.

At this time I was still trying to make a living as a free lance writer, but then I went and got a musical job starting in June. I guess by the end of June, Dave had already linked up with the John Muir Institute for Environmental Studies, which was headed by Max Linn of Albuquerque.

He and Max had agreed that the John Muir Institute would be the tax deductible component of a tandem Brower setup. There would be a tax deductible group, the John Muir Institute, and something else that would not be tax deductible and would be free to lobby.

Hudson: Analogous to the Sierra Club Foundation setup?

Alderson: Yes, that's right. So the John Muir Institute got set up and during that summer it was working up a conference to be held in Aspen, Colorado, the following September. Sort of an overall look ahead on the environment.

Since I had the musical job, I couldn't work full time on this project; I just put in some time. And then the first of September I went to work full time; first in the John Muir

Alderson: Institute and then later in the fall I switched officially to Friends of the Earth. And this was the period when I was in San Francisco for four months.

Hudson: As part of Friends of the Earth or as part of your musical work?

Alderson: As part of the Brower setup. Yes, I moved out there around about the first of September and at that time we had two things going. One was getting ready for the conference in Aspen and the other was getting things lined up for the new non-deductible organization.

And I think by that time it had already been decided that it would be Friends of the Earth and, I suppose, the bylaws were being drafted. It wasn't formally announced until later in the fall. But essentially that's what we ended up with. And at the same time, I guess during the summer, I must have met with Marion Edey who organized the League of Conservation Voters, at that time as a part of Friends of the Earth. And so when I was working in San Francisco, she set up the first Washington office of Friends of the Earth in my apartment, 323 Maryland Avenue. I came back around Christmas time and I discovered that she had thoughtfully dismantled my piles of papers that had been all over my desk and put them into folders with names on them describing what kind of material was in them. So it was pretty good, pretty good. My place was neater when I came back than it was when I left.

But it was an exciting time. Dave hired Gary Soucie away from the Sierra Club to become executive director of Friends of the Earth. So Gary set up the headquarters of Friends of the Earth in New York--I'm not sure exactly what month that was. The idea was that Friends of the Earth would complement the Sierra Club on issues where the Sierra Club had the lead, but Friends of the Earth would focus more on issues of runaway technology, because this was something that Dave felt strongly that we had to get into. The whole fight over the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant was one of the things that had led to the split, and it led to Dave's leaving the Club.

At the same time there was a broader view of what we thought the Sierra Club should be concerned with. Indeed, it's the kind of thing that the Sierra Club has gone into since then. But at that time, part of the issue between Dave and the other faction was: Should we be concerned primarily with scenic resources, national parks, and wilderness, and so forth? Or should we be concerned with these technology issues, and population, and so forth? And international problems relating to the environment. Friends of the Earth started off with this kind of scope. One of

Alderson: the things with that is that it makes it harder for the organization to choose its priorities; you've got the whole world to worry about.

Friends of the Earth's first major effort was the campaign against the supersonic transport, and it's one that the Sierra Club played a very effective part in. I'm getting a little ahead of myself because the real legislative fight against the SST only took place in 1970 and '71. But Friends of the Earth did publish an ad against the SST program--it must have been early in '70.

Gary Soucie had done a little work on it and made some visits about it on Capitol Hill in '69. He discovered that there was, he felt, a great potential for defeating the project. But nobody was doing anything about it except a few members of Congress like Senator Proxmire and Congressman Yates. So the stage was really set for us to get into it along with the other groups in 1970. We saw it as a symbolic issue representing a kind of unnecessary technology that had a lot of bad effects, and we could just as well do without it. So that became, I would say, the campaign that really put Friends of the Earth on the map.

Hudson: Let me back up a little bit and first find out your own personal role in the formation of it. What was your function at Friends of the Earth or at the John Muir Institute? And second, how does one go about starting up an organization of that magnitude?

Alderson: Well, my role was, as I seem to be in many of my jobs, sort of a jack of all trades. With the Aspen conference that the John Muir Institute was putting on, I wrote issue papers and made arrangements, physical arrangements for the conference, publicity arrangements and a lot of things like that.

With Friends of the Earth I did several writings of our early material. One of my main assignments, which I never completed, was doing a book that was to present the results of the Aspen conference. But the book never came to fruition, but it was an interesting conference because John Ehrlichman was there, and various people on the environmental side were there. That was in the days before the Watergate scandal.

So I guess my recollections aren't that helpful on what I actually did. I felt that I was sort of a fish out of water, to some extent, in that initial organizing effort because I knew more about the government relations side of the work.

Hudson: So you were prepared to be a lobbyist and that sort of thing once they got underway?

Alderson: Yes. So as soon as I left San Francisco and moved back here, I was the acting Washington representative. I used that title because we were still hoping to get somebody with years of experience, gray hair and everything. I told Dave recently I didn't realize I was going to be growing my own gray hair when he said that the movement needs more gray hair. [laughter] Now we've grown our own. So I did get right to work on the lobbying stuff when I got back to Washington.

But the organizing part is kind of frustrating to remember because Dave had lined up some large contributions, with one especially from Robert O. Anderson, who had contributed to the John Muir Institute, and that helped to support the conference. I'm not sure exactly how we got Friends of the Earth started, but I think Dave put a lot of his own money into it. Thinking back on it now, it seems to me that it was an effort without any good manager to run the organization, now that I've learned a little bit more about what managers do.

Hudson: And Gary Soucie didn't play that role?

Alderson: Well, he was more interested in lobbying and writing and things like that. I think in the decision-making role and the management stuff, Gary and I were probably equally frustrated by that kind of responsibility.

Hudson: Did the Sierra Club itself help out in the formation of the organization by doing things like making membership lists available and that sort of thing?

Alderson: No, no. I think we were more friendly toward the Sierra Club than the Sierra Club was toward us. Although, really, it's understandable because the group that won there was definitely anti-Brower. I supposed they wanted to chart their own course and not have any overt connections with the new organization. Probably some felt that it would support their view of Dave and his organization if it went bankrupt or failed or something. It's hard to think of people's motives that way but--even though many of our objectives were in common--the personal factor always comes in, especially when feelings were running high as they did then in that whole issue.

Hudson: I'm not yet a member of Friends of the Earth and I don't receive their newsletter except very irregularly, I guess. But when I think of the Friends of the Earth, other than Dave Brower, I think most often of the Lovinses, Amory and Hunter. Have you had any contact with them?

Alderson: Well, I haven't been around them very much, but I had been with Amory a few times with Dave.

Hudson: Was he involved in the formation of the organization?

Alderson: No, I don't believe he was. I think Dave discovered him in England very soon after that. But I don't really have any light to shed on that. Well, I guess maybe I should say something.

I was always struck by Amory's ability to use his technical background on things to make something completely clear, something really lucid. But I certainly never envisioned the kind of influence that he's come to have in this whole field. Because he's a continual innovator--that's one of the things about Dave, he could find somebody like that and recognize what he had to offer.

I'll tell you one of the things that was, well, I know it was one of the things that was great about Dave, to my way of thinking. It's probably one of the things that other people did not see. Because of the people that Dave would find and hire on some temporary job or something, some would fail, did not make a success of their project, whereas others succeeded magnificently, even beyond Dave's expectations, I'll bet. But Dave was willing to take a chance on people, usually young people who had potential, as he saw it. That's one kind of management skill--I think most people would always play it a lot safer than Dave did and only hire people that had a track record that you knew were going to deliver.

Campaign for the Eastern Wilderness Bill

Hudson: I understand your major conservation effort during these early years with Friends of the Earth was on the eastern wilderness bill; can you recount that history for us?

Alderson: Yes, I wouldn't say it was my major conservation effort but it was probably the one that took more of my time than any other public land issue.

This began, it must have been along in '71, I'm not sure of the dates here. But for some time, at that point, conservationists in the southeastern states, and I believe also in New England to some extent, had been pushing for some wilderness proposals in the national forests. And the Forest Service kept saying that there's nothing east of the one hundreth meridian that qualifies for wilderness in the national forests.

Hudson: Did they give a rationale?

Alderson: Their rationale was that it had all been too greatly altered by the hand of human beings. And their feeling was that it should only be wilderness if it was really pristine. This was not the approach that the National Park Service or the Fish and Wildlife Service had been taking in the eastern states, so the Forest Service were the ones that were out of step, as we saw it. The Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service had been recommending areas that had modifications.

We felt that as long as the land appeared to have been primarily influenced by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable, it qualified for wilderness consideration. The Forest Service used a more stringent test; it had to be pristine.

The pressure for some eastern wilderness in the national forests was building up pretty strongly at this time. Some areas in West Virginia were the object of some strong grass-roots citizen action. The Dolly Sods and the Cranberry Backcountry were becoming known at that time, too. People in Pittsburgh, as well as in the Washington area, were focusing on those areas. On down the line the national forest areas in North Carolina were being looked at by citizens; people from the Carolinas and Georgia were active on those.

This kind of interest was cropping up, and the Forest Service came up with a new idea. I think originally it was a sincere attempt by some members of the Forest Service to respond to the citizen interest. I believe the idea may have originated with Mike Penfold when he was forest supervisor down in Virginia. I know the idea has been attributed to him. The idea was to sell us a separate system called wild areas. So instead of putting these eastern areas into the National Wilderness Preservation System, they would be designated by Congress as part of a wild areas system with lesser standards. The Forest Service maintained that they could protect them with just as high a standard as the wilderness would have been.

The problem with this was that we felt if you set up a separate system, it was inevitable that that system would not be as protected as well as the primary system.

Hudson: And only administratively protected?

Alderson: No, I think it was a legislative idea. But still there would be that rationale to water it down and adopt less stringent protection. And also, if you started to put areas into a separate wild areas system then the Forest Service could use that excuse for any area in the country. They could say all these areas are not pristine, so make them wild areas instead.

Alderson: We felt that the real source of strength for the protection of wilderness was in having a system of wilderness areas; it was one system, one nationwide system that was under the same standard. We felt very strongly about that. Whatever the original motivation for the wild areas proposal was, we felt that in practice it was going to be something that would be very harmful to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

While the idea of the wild areas system was first unveiled to me--and I think it was also to a number of Washington based groups at the same time--Joe Penfold, who was then with the Izaak Walton League of America, invited us over to his office in Rosslyn, and somebody from the Forest Service came over to explain the proposal. This was the unveiling, at least to the citizen groups, of the wild areas idea.

Soon after this a wild areas bill was introduced in the House by John Kyl, a congressman from Iowa. And it was introduced in the Senate--I'm not sure of the timing on this--by Senator Aiken from Vermont.

The reason that this whole issue took up so much time was because the Sierra Club very nearly went off in support of the wild areas approach, largely through the efforts of one Peter Borrelli, who was then a Washington staff member with the Sierra Club, who was responsible for this issue. Peter seemed to see merit in the wild areas approach, while both Friends of the Earth and The Wilderness Society saw it essentially as I've described it.

The Sierra Club did not immediately take a position on this, and in fact, it was not until well into the following year--it was the first year of a new Congress--that the Sierra Club board finally took a stance on it. In the absence of a stance, there was great misunderstanding about the Club's position because, on the one hand, Borrelli was cooperating closely with the advocates of the wild areas bill. And on the other hand, there were Sierra Club grass-roots organizations, chapters and groups in the East and Midwest on both sides of the issue. There were some leaders in Missouri who were very much in favor of the wild areas approach. And then there were many others in various states who were opposed to the wild areas approach.

But it wasn't only the Sierra Club that had a flirtation with the wild areas bill. The Izaak Walton League also did; however they did not support it in the end. I'm not sure exactly what their position was.

Hudson: Was this because of the connection between Mike and Joe Penfold by chance?

Alderson: I think it was partly true.

Hudson: They were brothers or something?

Alderson: No, Joe was Mike's father.

I remember one time shortly after this began to boil up, the introduction of these bills, these wild areas bills, there was an Izaak Walton League convention taking place in Chicago. And so I flew out to Chicago with copies of a new bill which had just been introduced by Senators Jackson and Buckley, who assisted the first eastern wilderness bill.

Hudson: James Buckley?

Alderson: Yes. This bill had been drafted by our groups, and it took all of the same areas that the wild areas bill had in it and made them wilderness; they were part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

So here were two senators, certainly respected, saying, "You could use the wilderness system to protect these areas." So I took copies of that bill out to the Izaak Walton League convention and I turned them over to one of the leaders there so they could consider that too, as long as they were considering the wild areas [bill].

Well, the sands of time have sort of erased a lot of memories of all this, but in the end the Sierra Club board realized that the Club was being represented in a somewhat careless fashion. There were Washington staff members telling the news media, at one point, that the Sierra Club was gradually coming to a consensus in favor of the wild areas bill. Well, this came out in one of the newspapers, and some of the board members who were on the other side felt betrayed, and they leapt into it. Fortunately, I think what saved the Club from going off on a tangent on that one was that there were so many good grass-roots leaders who really understood the politics of the situation. [They] understood what risk was involved here and they were willing to take the issue up with the board.

Hudson: Who were some of these people; some of your old colleagues in the Southeast Chapter, Ted Snyder--

Alderson: Yes, I believe Ted was one of the leaders for wilderness there. Alfred Forsyth was one; he was one of the Atlantic Chapter leaders at that time, and he may have been a regional vice president or something like that.

Alderson: In the end, the issue was resolved by Congress. They rejected the wild areas approach and adopted wilderness protection for those areas.

But I think the lesson that I got from that was how easy it would be for somebody cleverly to get in and divide the movement up by sowing dissension and appealing to somebody in an organization--I think one of the things that led to this problem with the Sierra Club was that Peter Borrelli was the kind of respresentative who liked to be liked. I don't think he had the tolerance for rejection that any environmental spokesman has to have. Because there are many times when the organization you're trying to influence won't like you, and they will try to get you to do their thing so that you will get their approval. But that's not the answer. It's essential for the groups to work together to avoid that, and then keep working together all the time. Since that kind of thing can't happen when you've got solidarity in a working relationship from week to week between your organizations, then it's much harder for somebody to come in and sow that kind of dissension.

Hudson: When did the eastern wilderness bill finally get passed? What did it include?

Alderson: Well, it made instant wilderness of a number of areas, I'm not sure how many, it might have been a dozen or so; I believe from Florida all the way up to New Hampshire. And it set up a couple of dozen wilderness study areas. And some of those were dealt with during RARE II [Roadless Area Review and Evaluation] also. So the results of that are still coming out. [Eastern Wilderness Areas Act signed January 1975]

Hudson: Let's retreat a little bit in time back to the Sierra Club time. Did the Club have a professional staff presence in Washington during the time you were in the Southeast Chapter?

Sierra Club Washington Rep Lloyd Tupling, a Crucial Influence

Alderson: I would like to go back first to when I first came to Washington. At that time the Sierra Club Washington representative was William Zimmerman, Jr. I believe he was doing it on sort of a part-time basis. He was getting on in years, but he had superb contacts with members of Congress and the Executive branch because he had been in the government here in one role or the other for many years. Then in '66, I believe, Bob Waldrop was

Alderson: added to the staff as an assistant representative. Bob was young, more my age. They at that time worked out of an office in the DuPont Circle building.

Hudson: Where the Environmental Law Institute is now?

Alderson: Yes. Then in '68, I believe, after Zimmerman died, Lloyd Tupling became the Washington representative. And this was a great find for the Club. Tup had been a journalist to start with, out in the West. I believe he managed one of Al Ullman's first Congressional campaigns. And Tup had been a leader in the campaign for the high dams in Hell's Canyon back in the days when conservationists were for the dam. But he came to Washington as a legislative aide to Senator Dick Neuberger of Oregon, and then he stayed on when Maurine Neuberger was senator. So after Maurine retired, which must have been in January of '67, Tup took a year off, I believe, and built a boat. But then he must have got in touch with Dave Brower.

Dave and he set it up where Tup could come on as the chief Washington representative. I know Tup could have made a lot more money some other way, but he really believed in the Club's purposes. He believed in Dave's approach of hard-hitting political action on conservation, strong legislative action.

I remember Tup saying to me once when we were hearing all these objections to Dave's outspoken ways--when Dave would get out and give all these speeches and get quoted in all the newspapers--some people thought that was being too hard on the other side, too hard on the politicians. But Tup said, "I want Dave out there saying all those things and doing all that stuff, raising hell. I can handle the Washington end of it." He really wanted Dave out there because that political force created by what Dave would do around the country was essential to something that Tup, or any good Washington representative, could convert into pinpoint pressure in the Congressional decisions.

When Tup started up, the Club moved immediately out of the DuPont Circle building into an office on Capitol Hill. It was located at 235 Massachusetts Avenue, Northeast, now occupied by some right-to-life group, I believe. It was essentially a converted townhouse.

At first, Tup and Bob Waldrop were the staff, and they hired a secretary for the first time. And Tup put in an answering machine, and he got a Xerox machine, things like that that were convenient new technology for the Sierra Club's Washington office. And he immediately started putting out a weekly bulletin that was sent to all the chapters, the Club's field offices, etcetera, called Capitol Summary. And this later merged into what became the National News Report, essentially the

Alderson: Washington pages of the National News Report. Since then the distinction between the pages has become hazy, but at first it was a Washington thing. Tup wrote that himself. It was Xeroxed on Friday afternoon and mailed out in the Friday afternoon mail. So supposedly the leaders were getting it on Monday at their homes.

Well, Tup knew all the Senators, and he had good contacts on the House side, too. This was great to have somebody representing the Sierra Club who could walk up to those Senators in the hall or get in to see them at the drop of a hat or talk to them on the phone. It's a tremendous difference in access, and Tup had it. He also had the good will of many Senate staff people that he had worked with. I think he was known as one of the most beloved people in the Senate staff, so all that good will came to the Sierra Club when Tup came.

I think Tup's influence was absolutely crucial to the Club's progress from a relatively naive and legislatively inactive group to what it now is. Because he brought experience and credentials that I think were recognized by the Board of Directors, even though they didn't fully trust Dave's judgment and Dave's expertise. I think they found it harder to distrust when they were hearing it from Lloyd Tupling, because they knew about Dick Neuberger.

Eventually Tup added other positions in the office, and I think Linda Billings may have been the first other staff member that was hired. Tup was also very significant behind the scenes in the whole campaign against the SST. Because both I, during my part of the campaign, and Joyce Teitz, who was the coordinator of the coalition against the SST, learned a lot from Tup. And we always had the chance to test our ideas on him and get his reactions to them and get his own ideas too. So all the way through the campaign when Joyce and I, as really novices in the legislative field, when we all confronted some new event or some twist of fate in the legislative process, Tup could always put it into perspective. We would usually get together every day to talk about strategies, where we were on the campaign, what was happening and what we should be doing next. And once a week, usually, I guess, on a Friday, we would have a meeting of probably the key five people.

Hudson: This was when you were with Friends of the Earth?

Alderson: Yes, right. And at that point Doug Scott was with The Wilderness Society, and so Doug was always in on these strategy meetings. I guess we were all learning from Tup all that time.

Coalition Effort against the SST: A Groundbreaking Environmental Campaign

Alderson: I think it's been written about before about how the coalition against the SST [Supersonic Transport] got started. There was an angel before there was an organization, because a man named Kenneth Greif, from Baltimore, Maryland, wanted to help stop the SST, and he had his lawyer get in touch with somebody at the Department of Transportation who knew something about it. And that person in transportation was Larry Moss, Laurence I. Moss, who was then on the Sierra Club Board of Directors. So Larry, Tup and I got together with his lawyer and talked about it and decided, well, we'd better form a coalition. Then it was a matter of finding somebody to be the staff for the coalition, so we hired Joyce Teitz.

From then on, this was really a coalition effort. It was really my first big issue battle, because this was my first full year as a full-time professional in Washington working on these issues.

The things that I was learning during that campaign--the way you organize a campaign with episodes; always asking yourself what can we do for an encore. You try to de-fuse the different arguments that your opponents made against you and try to come up with your own new arguments, and try to come up with new tactics that present your arguments in a more convincing way, and get the grass-roots pressure organized where you need it.

In the campaign against the SST, as Jim Moorman said, "When the Senate voted to kill the SST that was Day One of the environmental movement." I think that's a good picture of it because that showed that we had some influence. And it was influence that was not gained easily, because it was done by careful influence at the grass-roots level where it was needed. The coalition, in preparation for these floor votes in the House and Senate, had divided up the states among different organizations based on which organization had strength where. It was not just our regular conservation groups: Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, Wilderness Society; at that time Common Cause was also active on our side on this.

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Alderson: The United Auto Workers was involved in the coalition against the SST until Walter Reuther died, and some other labor groups were too.

Alderson: By dividing up the states where we needed to have action among these groups, we managed to--well, we won in the Senate and then we had to do it again in both houses soon after the new Congress convened. We also, in this campaign, used a lot of Washington visiting by grass-roots leaders; something that's become common since then but it was not done before this, the way it is now. We had people visiting their legislators back home as the year went on, and then when we knew the vote was coming up, we told them to come to Washington for the vote. And where we needed to, the coalition came up with some money to pay their air fare to get here, and we managed to find places for them to stay.

Well, what this did was that the people from Oregon, for instance--one woman came from Oregon, Maradel Gale, who was then the president of the Oregon Environmental Council. And she went to see both of her senators, Packwood and Hatfield. I guess I'm thinking of the vote early in '71 because Packwood was new at that time. Well, she got in to see Packwood, but I don't think she ever managed to get an appointment to see Senator Hatfield about it. Later he was the one that missed the vote. He had a speaking engagement in North Carolina, which required him to leave for the airport shortly before the vote. So Maradel Gale was one of maybe a couple of dozen people from different parts of the country who came in to meet with their senators before the vote.

Then the same sort of thing happened when we had the House vote. There it was a little more targeted. Well, in both cases we targeted; we knew which ones we would try to get, which ones we had a good chance of getting, which ones we had more of a long shot of getting. In the end, actually, we got some of the long shots. In some cases it wasn't especially because of something that the coalition had organized, but simply because the mail had been coming in.

We also in this campaign used careful work with the media; giving them the kind of data they could use well. For example, it was one of Joyce's ideas, in collaboration with George Eads, an economist, to debunk the proponents' claims about all the money that was going to be funneled into each state through subcontracts. To debunk that, they took the amount of money that was claimed to be going into subcontracts in say, Louisiana, and then you calculate the proportion of the total project cost that Louisiana would be paying on the basis of taxes. You just take their percentage of the total tax burden, and it turns out that all the states are losing; they are paying more in taxes than they are getting out of it in subcontracts. So Joyce had worked this up in a table with state by state data and a map showing it state by state, and the press ate it up. And the editorials started coming out on this all over the country.

Alderson: Then we later put out--this was one of my projects--a pamphlet specifically for the use of the grass-roots leaders and any grass-roots activists we could reach that had all this key information in it that had been accumulated during the year of 1970. And we put this booklet out--it must have been a twenty-page booklet--right around the first of the year, so they had this to use in the final phase of the campaign.

Well, I learned so much about this whole business myself, from that on-the-job training; it's quite fun to think about it. There are all these things that we take for granted now, the way you run a campaign. It was new to me then, and I think a lot of it was quite new to the movement.

Hudson: Are these all ideas that you put into your book on how to influence Congress?

Alderson: Well, I put as many of them into it as I could. Although the book's more oriented toward the grass-roots side of the action, but there's a lot of this about organizing a campaign that you have to do on a little different scale at the grass-roots level. It's very similar, in principle, to what you do at the national level in a campaign.

Hudson: We somehow got onto the SST from talking about Lloyd Tupling and his career; what finally became of Lloyd, or Tup, as you call him? Was he also too closely allied with Dave Brower?

Alderson: Oh, no. I think he must have continued for another year or two after Dave was ousted. But then he decided to take his retirement more seriously, and he retired down to the Eastern Shore, where he had been spending most of the weekends when he was working here. But I understand he's still been active as a volunteer down there on some issues.

Other Sierra Club Lobbyists: Doug Scott and Brock Evans

Hudson: Did you have contacts with other Sierra Club staff people during these times?

Alderson: Well, I would like to talk about Doug Scott.

Hudson: Doug I know from my own dealings with the Sierra Club, he strikes me as somewhat of a political activist. Do you agree with that assessment?

Alderson: Absolutely. I first heard about Doug when he was an undergraduate at the University of Michigan in 1967 because he was studying under a professor named Ross Tocher, whom I had first known at Utah State University. And once I got a letter from Ross Tocher saying, "Dear George, I want you to meet Doug Scott, an undergraduate studying forestry here." And Ross went on in his letter to say that Doug has many good ideas, and he concluded, "some day he will give the loggers fits." [laughter] I'm sure he has given many loggers many fits. It was such a good prediction because who would have known at that time that Doug was going to go into conservation-activism.

In fact, Doug finished his undergraduate years there and then started working on a master's. His master's thesis was going to be the first part of a master's and doctoral program on the history of the Wilderness Act. As I recall, he was doing his master's thesis on everything that led up to the introduction of the wilderness bill. Well, anyway, Doug really got immersed in wilderness, and then he went to work for The Wilderness Society--that's right, I met him one summer--this may have been the first time I met him--when he was working for the National Audubon Society and their nature centers program. And he showed up at a wilderness hearing, I believe it was a hearing on Shenandoah National Park, as a representative of the National Audubon Society.

Then when he got to Washington working for The Wilderness Society, I think it started as a summer job, and then it became a permanent job. They created a job for him, Director of Special Projects, and he dropped out of his graduate school program to continue in that work.

Hudson: It seems like people are always creating jobs for Doug Scott, the Sierra Club did the same thing.

Alderson: During the period of the SST campaign and the eastern wilderness issue, Doug was one of the vital, central active group that I worked with. There would be Doug from The Wilderness Society, I was from Friends of the Earth and Tup was from the Sierra Club. And during the SST we also had Joyce Teitz, most of the time, on behalf of the coalition.

Well, it was when Doug moved to Seattle to be the Sierra Club Northwest representative that his job at The Wilderness Society opened up. After about six months hiatus, I took that job. Although I had a different title, Director of Federal Affairs. That's Doug's present title with the Sierra Club [laughs].

Hudson: It must have been about this time that Lloyd Tupling left also, because Doug went to Seattle, that meant Brock Evans came here.

Alderson: Right, right. That's right, Brock had come here then. Sure, because Brock succeeded Tup. There's something else I want to say about Doug.

Even though he was younger than the rest of us and had spent fewer years in Washington, at that time, he was right in the middle of things from the start. Well, I think it was partly because he was so unabashed about trying things out, about trying an approach--to try to sell something, to try to sell an idea or a bill or something, to try to go see somebody. I remember once waiting around at a reception. It was a fund raiser for Wayne Morse, I believe. Wayne Morse was going to try to run for the Senate again.

This was when we were trying to get our lead sponsors lined up for that eastern wilderness bill. What we really wanted--we wanted it to be a Humphrey-Buckley bill, reasoning that [Hubert] Humphrey and [James] Buckley would be such an unlikely combination on a bill that it would really knock everybody's eyes out. So I think we must have had Buckley ready to go, but we didn't have Humphrey. We hadn't had a chance to talk to Humphrey about it, hadn't gotten through the barrier of his outer office.

We figured that he was going to show up at the Morse reception, so Doug and I were waiting around there trying to talk to other Senators and House members. Well, I guess I got tired of staying around, but after I left, Doug saw Humphrey. He got turned down, but it was a good try. [laughter] Now when Doug and I get together we have all these stories to tell about each other.

During the campaign against the SST, part of the effort on the day of the vote was to make sure that the senators didn't disappear into the garage or someplace,or take off for foreign parts. So we had people assigned to wait outside of the different senators' offices, preferably somebody that knew them, preferably somebody from that state who had some influence with them. Well, as I recall, Doug Scott was supposed to watch Senator Eugene McCarthy. Anyway, he was supposed to keep him from ducking the vote. Well, so after waiting around in the hall, Doug sees Senator McCarthy come walking down the hall so Doug starts following him. He's saying to himself, "Oh, my God, McCarthy's going to duck the vote." So he follows him around the corner and so forth, and then McCarthy disappears inside a door. So Doug has to go up and see; it was McCarthy's office. So he just went back to his office--that type of thing, there are a lot of funny stories about him.

Alderson: Now you want to talk about Brock Evans. I first heard about Brock when he was a lawyer in private practice in Seattle. I, in fact, had written to him to get some advice on how to organize a speakers' bureau because he had organized one with the Pacific Northwest Chapter.

Hudson: Speakers' bureau, what does that mean?

Alderson: Well, it means that you have got people who are lined up and prepared to go out and speak to groups on behalf of your chapter about wilderness or whatever the current issue is. First you have to line up the people who are going to do the talking, if they have got slide shows or whatever they have got. Then you have to go out and recruit groups that might want you to come and talk. So it's a two-way thing.

Anyway, I wrote to Brock asking some questions about the speakers' bureau. He wrote back about a five-page letter with all the things about how to do it. I thought, well, that's pretty great.

Hudson: This was for the Southeast Chapter?

Alderson: Well, yes, it was even before the Southeast Chapter was formed. It was only the Washington area group. I was down at the board meeting in Santa Monica--it must have been along in May of '68. Some of us were walking along there after the meeting, and I think Gary Soucie turned to me, and he asked, "Oh, guess who's to be the Northwest Representative?" And I said, "Brock Evans?" [laughter] Gary was astounded that I guessed who it was. I guessed Brock Evans just on the basis that I knew that he was active from the kinds of things that Brock Evans, who I had never met at that point, had been doing out there. I thought he was a very likely candidate. So sure enough he was it.

Hudson: Just for the benefit of those who may listen to this tape or read the transcript, I believe that you and Brock are roughly contemporaries in age.

Alderson: Oh, I didn't even know that. I thought he might have been a little older than me.

Hudson: I guess he is just a little, a couple of years.

Alderson: Well, Brock's style was very different from Tup's, and I think it emphasizes the different roles that national leaders have in a group like this. While Tup enjoyed getting off a good remark that would get quoted in the newspapers or something, I saw his role more as being on the scene and dealing with the legislators behind the scene, testifying at hearings and so forth.

Alderson: But Brock has a magnificent gift for speaking to groups and evoking their enthusiasm and their loyalty to the cause, their commitment. And so I think Brock's greatest contribution has been in that field. I was recently at a wilderness conference out in Oregon, and he gave the keynote speech for the whole conference. I think it just set them up for a superb experience. It's the kind of thing that Dave Brower used to do when he would go around talking. The movement really needs somebody like that; it's really short of them right now.

Some Thoughts on Environmental Scope

Hudson: You have seen a lot of history of the Sierra Club in the last fifteen years or so, I just wondered if you have any comments on current trends and future possibilities for the Sierra Club as far as expanding issues coverage is concerned?

Alderson: I think the direction toward greater political involvement such as the Sierra Club Committee on Political Education is great. It's badly needed. As long as the Club does it on a strictly bipartisan basis, I think it can only gain influence and help the cause. That's been the experience of the League of Conservation Voters, and I think the Club can gain in the same way.

I have my doubts about how far you can broaden the scope of the cause, though. I know that there's a move to get the Sierra Club and other environmental groups to take stands and become active in the campaign for disarmament. I tend to think that that campaign should have its own organization. I don't think that it helps to have an environmental group get involved in that activity. I think it's worthwhile, as some groups have, to cover the issue in its magazine and publications. But not the kind of thing where it becomes an active force on that cause.

A diversity of causes calls for a diversity of organizations, and I think there is strength in that diversity. You can see that at the big national demonstrations. I guess I'm thinking of the one that happened shortly after the Three Mile Island nuclear accident. And there was a big demonstration down on the mall and the Washington Monument grounds. Now that was an issue that did unite environmental groups with all kinds of other groups. But if you had tried to form an organization that embodied all the causes that wanted to express their words at that thing, you couldn't have done it. Each group wanted to express its own viewpoint on nuclear power. And I think that has value when you have so many diverse groups coming to bear on an

Alderson: issue. But the other way around where every group has to expand its scope to include all the other issues, I think it detracts from the force that they have to bring to bear.

Hudson: Should the Club get involved in, for example, the nuclear arms race question by providing information on the environmental effects of radiation, that sort of thing? Would we have a role to play there?

Alderson: Oh, sure, yes. I think if they have some good coverage in the magazine about the issue overall it would be a good idea.

Transcriber: Ilanna Yuditsky
Final Typist: Catherine Winter

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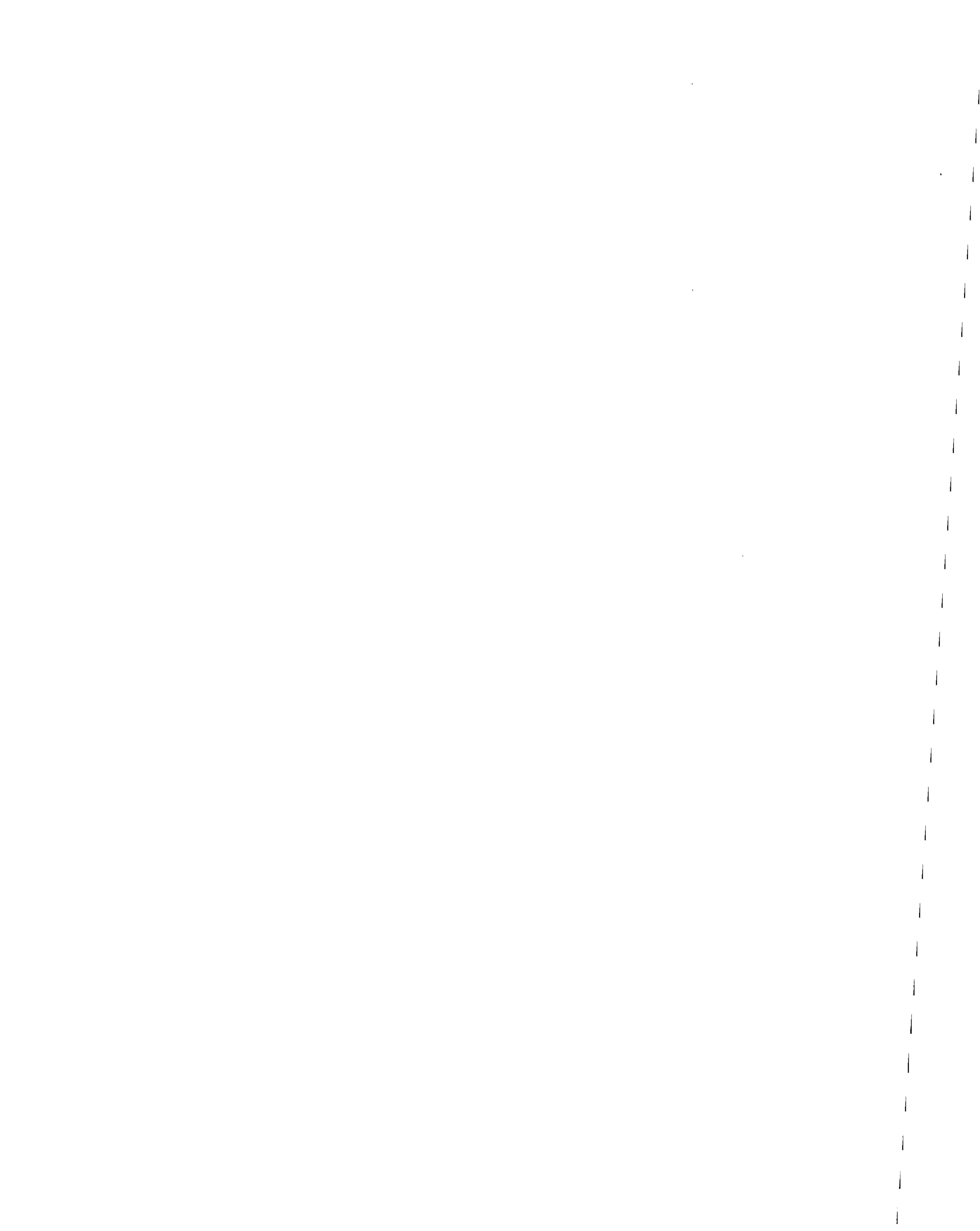

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Frank Duveneck

LOMA PRIETA CHAPTER FOUNDER, PROTECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

An Interview Conducted by
Rose Gray
1983

Sierra Club History Committee
1989

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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INTRODUCTION -- Letter from Wallace Stegner

Greensboro, Vermont 05841
Sept. 15, 1985

Dear Frank:

The news of your death has brought both a personal and a philosophical sadness to us in this place which we love about as much as you loved Hidden Villa. We will miss you both as a personal friend and as the guiding and steadying influence on causes for which we both have worked. I regret that during our short return to California in August we were unable to see you one last time, if only to shake hands and tell you, whether you could hear or not, how much Mary and I have respected, and learned from, your long good life.

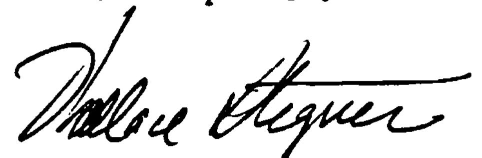
So I write you this letter after your life has ended. I write it not for your eyes but for others, including my own. For as Thomas Jefferson said, life belongs to the living, and so, as example and inspiration, do you.

I am not just fooling with inkhorn terms when I tell you that the two qualities I most admired in you were your magnanimity and your equanimity. You not only gave your time, your thought, your effort, and your money to make the world a little better, but you did it in practical and effective and persistent ways. That was your magnanimity, your unselfish thoughtfulness of others. But in all the years when you ran into selfishness, greed, spitefulness, vulgarity, and the other human and corporate and political weaknesses, I never saw you lose your composure. Though you could despise the sin, you managed to forgive the sinner. What really made you mad was injustice and callousness, not the weaknesses of individuals.

In consequence, I think you must have had more sincere friends and well-wishers than any man I ever knew. You and Josephine cast your bread upon the waters and it was returned to you a thousandfold. I think of the two of you as having lived really harmless lives--not harmless in the sense of weak or ineffective, but harmless in that all your actions were designed to bring good to someone, and never to gain an advantage, to injure, or to get even.

Though we no longer have access to you in person, we have you with us, and you will not lie around unused. I shall be consulting you and your example often. I am a part of the world that you left a little better than you found it, and I thank you.

Goodbye, Frank. Sleep well.



INTERVIEW HISTORY -- Frank Duveneck

This interview takes place in 1983 at Frank Duveneck's ranch in Los Altos Hills in his study overlooking a flower-filled garden. Frank was raised in Boston Victorian society. He was the son of a well-known American painter with a devotion to nature. He attended boarding schools in Massachusetts and went on to Harvard University where he studied mechanical engineering. It was during his last year in graduate school at Harvard that he met Josephine Whitney, who was to become his wife and companion for sixty-five years. He came to California and in 1924 purchased acreage in the Los Altos Ranch. He taught physics at Stanford University and worked as a research associate at the physics lab.

In 1933 the first formal meeting of the Loma Prieta Chapter took place at his ranch, so in effect the chapter was one of his offspring.

On his ranch he shared an open-door policy with hikers, picnickers, equestrians, and civic groups. He was a member of the board of Youth Hostel and assisted in establishing the first youth hostel on the West Coast. Along with his wife, he founded Hidden Villa, an environmental education project to acquaint school children with nature. He helped organize an interracial summer camp for children in primary grades as an experiment in interracial living. Frank was deeply involved in his community. At age ninety-three in 1982 he received the Community Service Award for his dedication to land-use principles and environmental education for school children. He recently donated four hundred thirty acres of ranchland known as Windmill Pasture to Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District. He was awarded special commendation from the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club for fifty years of devotion to the environmental movement.

With inherent modesty and understatement of his accomplishments, he said, "My wife and I knew what we ought to do, and we did it. We were interested in the environment, like the rest of the Sierra Club. There's a lot of hilly land here," he said, "If you develop it with roads and houses, then you're going to get a lot of runoff in heavy storms. The next thing, the creek won't hold water. Then you have to line the creeks with concrete. I wanted to preserve an area free from pollution and concrete flood-control measures, to form a valuable watershed and biology lab for school science students."

He goes on to say, "In a sense, you know, we've never owned the land. It belongs to the animals, birds, trees, flowers. They're the ones who own the land. What I did, I simply held it and took care of them."

This interview took place when Mr. Duveneck was 96 years old and in diminishing health. His memory sometimes failed him for names and details, but his recollections of the early chapter, refreshed by his written records, seemed clear. Mr. Duveneck did not review the interview transcript.

Wallace Stegner graciously allowed us to include his open letter to Frank Duveneck following his death in 1985. It appears as the introduction to the interview.

Rose Gray
Loma Prieta Chapter

2 April 1983
Palo Alto, California

Interview with Frank Duveneck
Date of Interview: April 2, 1983
Interviewer: Rose Gray
Transcriber: Sam Middlebrooks
Begin side A

Early Association with the Sierra Club

Gray: Frank, can you tell us a little bit about your beginning involvement with the Sierra Club, or how you got started, that is, how you became interested in the Sierra Club?

Duveneck: In that process, there's one, youth hosteling, and the other one, the Sierra Club. I think the Sierra Club came first. But I suppose--I really don't remember. I was interested, and I've done a great of hiking around here, and also before I came here I spent several summers in the Moosehead Lake country in Maine, and I did a lot of canoeing there. I have canoed up several rivers there, and I've also canoed up to the Alagash River, up to northern Maine, and down the St. John River. But this was very different from what we do here. This was in a large canoe, twenty-foot canoe, with two people and sometimes three, and a whole lot of dunnage that you have to carry along--tents and so forth. That was my experience when I came here.

When I came to California, I hoped to--I had done that sort of camping in the east United States, but out here, there wasn't anything of that sort. So what I've done here has been on horseback and pack train.

Gray: Was that with the Sierra Club?

Duveneck: Yes. A large part of that, if not all of it, was the Sierra Club.

Gray: Can you remember when you first became interested in the Sierra Club?

Duveneck: [chuckles] Well, I became active in the Sierra Club when the Loma Prieta Chapter was formed. And I think probably that's where I came in. Because I was interested in outdoors and hiking. I became interested in the Sierra Club out of that. That led into being interested in youth hosteling and other outdoor activities like that.

Gray: Did you go on a lot of Sierra Club trips?

Duveneck: No, I haven't. My trips have been mostly in the Coast Range here. And most of the trips are trips that I led myself.

Gray: What kinds of trips were those, Frank?

Duveneck: Some of them were day trips, but many of them were overnight or several-day trips. We used to have a pack train to haul people. I have a list over there of some of the activities and the people that went on the trips.

Gray: Do you remember any of the people that went on those early trips with you?

Duveneck: Oh yes. I have the names of them all down that went on the trips.

Gray: Were there particular people that went along with you that you had kept--?

Duveneck: A large part of those are not around here anymore. I knew Frank Lewis very well. He was probably the one I knew best. But I knew many of the others when we started our chapter here.

Founding Loma Prieta Chapter

Gray: Who was the one who got you interested in the Sierra Club? I mean, how did you come to do that?

Duveneck: I really don't remember who. Of course, I knew some of the San Francisco group at that time, so maybe they got me interested. I really got interested because they were thinking that they were starting a Loma Prieta Chapter, and they wanted some people down here who were familiar with the country, and so forth. That's how I happened to be--I was on the original board of the Loma Prieta Chapter.

Gray: How did that getting together come about? I mean, how did you all decide about how--?

Duveneck: You mean how did the chapter get started?

Gray: Yes.

Duveneck: The chapter was started by those who belonged to the San Francisco Chapter.

Gray: Do you remember any of those people?

Duveneck: The number of people who were interested grew down here, and they thought it was desirable to have another chapter. Rather obviously, they wanted people who were familiar with the country down here. That's how they happened to get a hold of me.

Gray: They contacted you?

Duveneck: Yes, somebody did; I don't remember [who].

Gray: And then where was your first meeting?

Duveneck: It was here. The initial meeting was held on my property here. It's about a mile up the canyon. There's a bronze plaque on a little concrete base up there that has the names of all the people who were there at that time when we started the chapter.

Gray: Was it an outing, or was it a picnic, or it was just a meeting that was held outdoors?

Duveneck: Yes, it was just a meeting, a little group of us. Some of us were also members of the chapter in San Francisco; some of us were new people around here. But I don't remember how I happened to get started on the Sierra Club, except I've always been interested in that because I've been interested in camping and the outdoors.

Gray: So your love of the outdoors was what made you more--?

Duveneck: I went for many years to a summer camp in Maine, and afterwards I went on a number of longer trips, and also I've been on longer trips from Moosehead Lake up the Alagash River and down the St. John River. I suppose that takes probably two weeks or so.

Gray: What was the flavor of the group that met for the first meeting for the Loma Prieta? What was the kind of--? What were they interested in at that time in forming the new chapter?

Duveneck: Simply people interested in getting out into the country, hiking. So, as I say, there's a bronze plaque up there now that commemorates the starting of the chapter with the names

of, oh, I don't know, eight or ten people.

Gray: Was anybody interested at that time in conservation?

Duveneck: Oh yes, we were all interested in conservation.

Gray: Were there any big issues at that time that kind of pulled you all together?

Duveneck: I think always, since I've been in California, there have always been issues of trying to keep the country open, keep the trails places where people could go. I happened to own a large piece of property where there were long trails. That's how I got tied in on it.

Gray: So your love of open space and getting out and outings and maintaining trails were a portion of your connection with the club.

Duveneck: Yes.

Gray: Were there any political kinds of things that were happening in the club at that time?

Duveneck: No.

Gray: So basically what you all were interested in was outings and maintaining the trails and getting out on the trails?

Duveneck: That's right.

Gray: Were there any really strong people in the group who were trying to do this with you?

Duveneck: To do what?

Gray: To maintain the trails and keep open space available.

Duveneck: I think so, yes. Of course, another factor that came into the thing is that I'd been interested in the country below Carmel before the road was put through. That's where I've led the trips; most of the trips I've led have been in that area.

Gray: Did you find that area very beautiful?

Duveneck: It is a beautiful area, yes. I don't know that you'd be interested in how I happened to get started down there in the back country there. I went down on a trip with a friend of mine who had been in the First World War in France with me.

He was in kind of bad physical condition, and I took him down the coast on a trip. You could get as far as Big Sur then and not much further. And on the way there, I stopped in a little place to get something to eat, and a man came down with some horses. I found that he had a little place way back in the hills there. He used to take parties in there to his place. At that time I went in with him to get a place there. That's how I got started there. Later on I bought his place down there, which I still own. It's on the shoulders of Pico Blanco. It's about a three-hour ride to get there on horseback.

Gray: So you went down on horseback and then hiked in?

Duveneck: Yes.

Gray: And that made you more interested in leading trips down there?

Duveneck: That's how I got started, because I was familiar with the country there.

Gray: Were there a lot of Sierra Club trips in the very beginning of the chapter? Were there a lot of different activities?

Duveneck: Oh yes, we had a lot of trips. But most of the trips that I led were in that country down there. I've been in the Sierras, but I've never been on a Sierra Club trip in the Sierras. I've been there myself on trips, but most of the trips I've been on with the Sierra Club I've led down in the coast country.

Gray: I understand there was also a very strong hiking element and rock climbing element in the Loma Prieta Chapter in the beginning.

Duveneck: I've never been identified with that, although I did go around with some of the members to see certain places around here, and that was because I was familiar with the country.

Gray: So you accompanied them?

Duveneck: I didn't; no, I never accompanied them.

Gray: But you went--

Duveneck: I went around hunting proper places for--

Gray: I see; so you scouted? Is that what you were doing, scouting out areas, or what?

Duveneck: Yes.

Gray: Can you remember any of the people that went with you on those trips, or those scouting--?

Duveneck: You mean the trips around here, the rock-climbing trips?

Gray: Yes.

Duveneck: No, because I never went on one.

Gray: But you said you scouted some of the area?

Duveneck: I did; I scouted to get some places because I knew the country.

Gray: Did you go by yourself?

Duveneck: No, I used to go with somebody else.

Gray: Do you remember any of the people that went with you?

Duveneck: No, I don't. I would remember the names if you told me, but I was never interested in that side of the Sierra Club.

Loma Prieta Meetings

Gray: How about the social events that were happening in the early days of the Loma Prieta Chapter?

Duveneck: The first social events were in this house, and we had a--I suppose it was Christmas dinner or something like that, at Christmas time. We had a meeting in the house here and had dinner here. And then the events got bigger.

Gray: But that first time how many people attended the dinner? Do you remember? Was it just a very small group?

Duveneck: A small group--I don't suppose more than fifteen, twenty, something like that. And then the groups got so big that at Christmas time I carved for a hundred and fifteen people.

Gray: My God! They must have been coming out from all corners of the house.

Duveneck: And then my wife and I figured that it was a little too much, as big a group as that. So then they started going somewhere else.

Gray: Were there any other social events that were going on in the early part of the Loma Prieta Chapter that you can remember?

Duveneck: I suppose there were, but I don't remember. They used to come out and hike on this place, of course. I still have over a thousand acres here; or I should say I had as much as that. Most of it I've given to the Open Space District to preserve it.

Nature Camp for Children

Gray: So you have maintained open area to hopefully stop urban sprawl.

Duveneck: I have. The best thing seemed to be to turn it over to something where it would be preserved--hopefully be preserved.

Gray: So you have always loved wilderness areas, is that right?

Duveneck: Oh yes.

Gray: And that was part of your feeling when you turned [the property over to the Mid-Peninsula Open Space District]?

Duveneck: This had led to a number of things. I got interested in youth hosteling a number of years ago. People from the Youth Hostel board in New England came out here to establish youth hostels, and I got caught into that. I was on the board of the association, the Youth Hostel association, for a while. I have brought groups out here, but that's another story. That doesn't interest the Sierra Club particularly.

Gray: I'm sure if you're interested in youth hosteling--

Duveneck: Well, it does have various ramifications, because I started a summer camp here--well, I should say before that I built a little hostel down here. And then during the war, or after the war, the Japanese who came back at that time from being interned--I was always interested in the group that was interested in those people. But after they came back, my wife and I thought that if we could start a little summer

camp here and take young people before they got to be the adolescent age, then we could mix up various ethnic groups found here and we would contribute something towards bringing the groups together. There was a great deal of friction at that time. As I said, the Japanese had been away [in camps] and were brought back. There had been a lot of black people who had come out here to work in the shipyards, and they were--there was friction between them and the [rest of the] population. And there was friction between them and the blacks who were resident out here. So altogether there was a lot of friction, and my wife and I thought that if we could start a summer camp and have it mixed of various ethnic, colored groups, that perhaps we could help a little bit. And that's been going on ever since.

Gray: It's kind of an international brotherhood that--.

Duveneck: Yes, that's right. Interracial brotherhood. But that has nothing particular to do with the Sierra Club.

Gray: What kinds of things did they do in that summer camp? Did you educate them in wildlife?

Duveneck: I have horses, and I love to ride. And they loved to hike up into the hills.

Gray: So they learned a love of nature, which is also what the Sierra Club is about.

Duveneck: See, I owned a place where we could do a lot of these things. There's nothing very extraordinary about that except my wife and I were interested in doing what we could to help ease things a little bit. And we still have a camp here.

Gray: But you did, in fact, have kind of nature exploration kind of things in the summer camp for these youths?

Duveneck: That's true.

Gray: I think--

Duveneck: As a member of the Sierra Club, you know, I felt the desirability of getting out in the country and mixing people up.

Gray: Were these children underprivileged children, or they were just kind of children who were from different ethnic groups?

Duveneck: Were they what?

Gray: Underprivileged, in that they didn't have these things themselves. They didn't have backyards, they didn't enjoy nature.

Duveneck: The group[s] were formed for children who were, as I say, of different ethnic backgrounds--also different financial backgrounds. We also were able to--and still do--provide a certain amount of help for those who cannot afford it.

Gray: Do you know that the Sierra Club does that? It's called Inner City Outings. They do have a section that does try to get young children to enjoy nature. So you were doing those kinds of things.

Duveneck: I've done that for many years. And of course, there again, recently we've been involved in something else--the schools and others bring young people, children, around here during the week, and they don't have any--this is not a camping situation; it's just simply a day hiking situation around here. This is also led by--we have leaders who come from Stanford and other places who come out and take children around, show them where the cows are and the pigs. A lot of these kids have never seen a pig, you know.

Gray: I can imagine so.

Duveneck: I think our country's deteriorated a great deal where you have a child like we had here several years ago--this is not a camp; this is just a group that comes out here--and they were milking, and he said, "I don't like that kind of milk. I like the kind that comes out of a bottle." [laughter]

Gray: He had never seen a cow that they were milking?

Duveneck: I don't know. Sometimes I wonder how I get hooked onto a lot of things. I'd like to emphasize that with our summer camp, we don't take children over about twelve years old, because prejudice gets started out [early]. It's better to take them young.

Gray: Also their ability to really absorb at a younger age is much faster.

Duveneck: Oh yes, that's true. Oh, I don't know, I don't like to give the impression that this is an altruistic thing because, after all, I think I'm the gainer.

Gray: That's very nice of you to say that, but I think a lot of children have gained a great deal from coming out here at a very young age.

Duveneck: We also have groups come here that are older, much older, and take them up into the Sierras. I don't have anything to do with it. They're organized here.

Gray: Is that through the Sierra Club or through--?

Duveneck: No, the Sierra Club has no connection. No, I have the Sierra Club come in connection with these other activities I'm telling you about.

Gray: All these kind of activities, though, Frank, are the kind of activities that the Sierra Club is interested in. I think you were forerunners of a lot of those educational things for wilderness and for agricultural--

Duveneck: Well, I suppose that's where I got interested myself.

Gray: Yes, I think so.

<u>Hiking Trips</u>

Gray: Will you tell us a little bit about the early trips that you took? Like you said you remembered Elmo Robinson?

Duveneck: Yes. He was with a group down here on a trip.

Gray: Was that a hiking trip?

Duveneck: It was a hiking trip, but we had horses carry the dunnage. We started down there, down below Carmel, and they took the horses into Pine Ridge. This was just an overnight trip. I might tell you one thing I remember about the trip, and this was my fault. We got out a little way out on the trail, and there was one girl that went lame, and I found she was hiking in high-heeled shoes. [laughter]

Gray: Oh my goodness! What did you do about that?

Duveneck: Well, I had horses enough so I was able to put the packs--I was able to free one horse, and I set her on the pack saddle, and I'm sure when she got there she was sore in

other places [besides] her feet! [laughter]

Gray: In the very beginning, when you had people come out on hikes, did you have the option of telling them that they could or couldn't come on the trip?

Duveneck: I should have done that in this case. It was my fault. It was not my custom to examine everybody's feet that came out!

Gray: But it sounds like you had a good answer for it when it happened on the trail.

Duveneck: I did that particular time, but I couldn't go back to where I'd started.

Gray: I imagine she learned to wear hiking shoes the next time.

Duveneck: She did. Also I have a--I don't remember now; I had an accident on one of the trips that I led down to the Big Sur country. I think there was a girl turned her ankle. Or actually, I think she broke her leg on the trip. And I was fortunate; I was able to put her on a horse and bring her out. It's a very short distance, you know. This was only a matter of a half hour or so on a horse to a place where they picked her up in an automobile.

Gray: It sounds like some of those trips were in rather wilderness areas, that you weren't close to places where you could get a doctor.

Duveneck: Well, some of them were.

Gray: When you went on trips with people or you were the leader, what kind of camaraderie was happening? I mean, did you know everybody on the trip or did you know what they did?

Duveneck: Yes. Because our chapter was very, very small, I knew everybody in the chapter.

Gray: So you knew everybody by first name?

Duveneck: Oh yes. But this is a very different club now. And I told you how the chapter grew.

Gray: Yes, it grew very rapidly. Do you know how many are in the chapter now?

Duveneck: I don't know how many now.

Gray: Seventeen thousand five hundred in the Loma Prieta Chapter. And it sounds like there were thirty-three in the very beginning? Were there or thirty-two or thirty-three?

Duveneck: I told you we used to have a Christmas dinner in this house. I don't suppose we had everybody in the chapter, but in any case we had--one time we had a hundred and fifteen here, and that was the end.

Gray: During that time no politicians were involved in the club and the club didn't make any attempt to contact politicians to lobby or--nothing like that was done?

Duveneck: No, I don't remember any--around here, anyway. Of course, San Francisco did much more than we did. We were sort of a little outgrowth of the San Francisco Chapter.

Gray: It has grown a lot. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about what your first role in the Loma Prieta Chapter was. Were you one of the officers?

Duveneck: Yes, I was the chairman. No, I was not the chairman. I was on the board. Not the chairman. I think Frank Lewis was the chairman. Frank lived in San Jose. He was a very enthusiastic member of the Sierra Club, and he'd also belonged to the Sierra Club before I did. He belonged to the San Francisco Chapter.

Gray: So Frank Lewis was the chair?

Duveneck: That's right.

Gray: How often did you meet?

Duveneck: Oh, I don't know, I suppose we met once a month or something like that.

Gray: And they kept notes of the meetings? And what kinds of things did they do at the meetings? Do you have any idea what kind of significant decisions came out of the meetings?

Duveneck: [laughs] I doubt they were very significant because this was a chance for some people to get together and plan something for the future, plan hikes. As I told you, I'm not--most of the hikes, or all the hikes that I've led have been in the coast country. And I have not been on a Sierra Club hike in the Sierras, although I've been on trips in the Sierras.

Gray: So you met about once a month and you planned trips?

Duveneck: I think something like that.

Gray: It was a planning meeting and a board meeting--

Duveneck: That's all. Just a board meeting.

Gray: It grew very rapidly in the beginning because people were really interested in joining.

Duveneck: Oh yes.

Gray: The interest was there.

Duveneck: Yes. As I told you, we used to have Christmas dinner here, our annual meet[ing] and dinner here, and it got so big we couldn't do it anymore.

Gray: Did the people who came and used your trails here during some of the Sierra Club hikes also help maintain the trails, or was that something that just happened?

Duveneck: You mean many problems?

Gray: Yes.

Duveneck: Oh, I don't think so. It was just a question of planning hikes for the future. There was no question at that time of carving up a lot of this country and raising the taxes, and so forth.

Gray: Who do you believe were the strongest supporters of the Loma Prieta Chapter?

Duveneck: At that time?

Gray: Yes.

Duveneck: Around here?

Gray: Yes.

Duveneck: I told you that Frank Lewis and his wife were very important members. I could read off a list: Dr. Markoff--I knew her well. In fact, I knew all of these. Melvin Johnson; Russell Varian--he was a very enthusiastic member. He died a couple of years ago, and his wife was with him. [Dorothy]

Gray: Were they both enthusiastic Sierra Club members?

Duveneck: Yes.

Gray: Did they used to go on the trips with you?

Duveneck: Yes.

Gray: They were on that Pine Ridge trip?

Duveneck: I have a list.

Gray: The Pine Ridge trip in September of 1938.

Duveneck: That's just one trip, of course.

Gray: How many trips would you say you made?

Duveneck: I don't know. I'd have to look in my file and count them up.

Gray: About five?

Duveneck: Oh no, I would say at least a half a dozen trips.

Gray: And you had to make all the reservations for horses and--?

Duveneck: Yes.

Gray: And who did all the commissary work?

Duveneck: I don't know. I guess I did. It didn't amount to very much. [laughter]

Gray: As the leader you had to do all that, right?

Duveneck: Oh yes, that had to be done.

Gray: You never went on the trips just to kind of relax and let someone else lead?

Duveneck: Oh, I suppose I dragged in some people to help me.

Gray: If the trips were fun, I imagine you didn't have to drag them in, Frank.

Duveneck: No. Well, sometimes I used my horses and sometimes I hired horses down there in the Big Sur country.

Gray: I see that the trip cost three and half dollars for each, and that was for food for a weekend?

Duveneck: That's right.

Gray: That was in 1938. Prices are different now to go on a trip.

Duveneck: I was on a trip in the country east of San Diego and Los Angeles one time, and I forget what I--I didn't lead the trip. I was just on the trip. I don't remember what the expense was. For food--we drove down there, of course, [so we had the expense of] getting there and getting back. But I think for the several days it didn't cost us more than about five dollars for food.

Gray: [laughs] Oh, my! It's quite different nowadays when they have to set up a commissary and have to set up carpools. It's very complicated now to go on those kind of trips.

Duveneck: I have a number of trips like that in my file, if you'd like to see them.

Gray: It looks like you've kept--

Duveneck: When I took those trips, I used to--when I got home I used to like to write down about how the trip went, and criticisms of the trip and so forth.

Gray: What did you do with them? Did you put them in the newspaper or the newsletter?

Duveneck: These were all my personal comments about whether we had enough food or not.

Gray: Did anybody ever write up the trips and put it in the newsletter?

Duveneck: I don't think so. They may have, but I don't recollect it. My Sierra Club file that I pulled out is so long, I couldn't--I thought I'd pull out a few things like this.

Gray: What changes do you see in the use of land in this area now? Do you think that the wilderness is kind of receding?

Duveneck: You mean in general?

Gray: Yes.

Duveneck: An awful lot of land has been built over. And around here a

lot of the old ranches have disappeared.

Gray: Do you think that the Sierra Club has taken any stand on those kind of issues?

Duveneck: I don't think they've taken much stand that I know of. Well, of course, it's a little different--individuals have. And many of those individuals were members of the Sierra Club. I don't think the Sierra Club as such has taken much stand around here. Although they may have taken more than I think they have.

Changes in Sierra Club Personnel and Policies

Gray: Do you see any changes in the Sierra Club other than the growth that happened so rapidly?

Duveneck: I think that one of the most significant things is the change of personnel at the Sierra Club. It started, of course, in San Francisco and was a small group and included John Muir and some of the people who were interested. When I first joined the Sierra Club, the club had been going for several years then, but it was essentially a California club. And particularly a San Francisco club. And this changed radically, because nowadays it's not a California club at all; it's a national club. In fact, it's an international club. I think that in the beginning the members of the board were, I guess, all of them residents of San Francisco or a community down this way. Of course, then the southern chapter came in. I don't know just when that was started. But it's a long way from being a California club now.

Gray: Do you think it's lost some of its intimate flavor?

Duveneck: I think, like our chapter here, when we were only a few hundred, or a hundred, where you could know most everybody in the chapter--this was different from what it is when it grows bigger.

Gray: And in those early days when you knew everybody by their first name, it was more of a close-knit orientation?

Duveneck: I think so, yes.

Gray: When did you think it started to change from that? Very soon afterwards?

Duveneck: I think it started to change when the Loma Prieta Chapter was formed down here probably. Personally, I feel very strongly that the club should be something more than just a little group which they had [originally formed] in San Francisco.

Gray: So are you saying there's a positive aspect to it, being a large club?

Duveneck: Oh, I think so. Of course, there again, the positive aspect leads into the power to work for protecting some of the open spaces and things like that. And that I'm very much in sympathy--

Gray: That was one of the first things that you felt very strongly about, preserving open space.

Duveneck: That's right.

Gray: And you did it on your own territory.

Duveneck: I have preserved a small part of open space.

Gray: A pretty large part. I think that you've also maintained it by--you said you gave some of your open space over to Mid-Peninsula Open Space District, is that correct?

Duveneck: Yes. Well, at the present time most of the open space that I own has been turned over to a nonprofit organization, the Hidden Villa, Inc. And that--hopefully it is going to be maintained as one of the few open spaces in the area here.

Gray: Is there anything that you would like to see the Sierra Club doing more of that it's not doing now?

Duveneck: No, I don't think so. As I say, I'm hardly able to get out to hike the way I used to, and I don't have a great many contacts with the Sierra Club anymore. But I'm sure that some of the things that I've tried to promote were things that the Sierra Club was also interested in.

Gray: I would say so. And as I recall, about two years ago you also gave a picnic here on your ranch area in the picnic area for the Loma Prieta Chapter, about two years ago--an old-fashioned picnic. Do you remember?

Duveneck: Oh yes.

Gray: And there were politicians and children and family and games and hiking.

Duveneck: That's right.

Gray: And the idea of getting together in an old-fashioned way and enjoying the outdoors--

Duveneck: This [experiencing wilderness] was another factor which I'm interested in, I think which many of the Sierra Club people are interested in--I know that--we had a man who used to come down here with a group from South San Francisco from one of the schools there. He took them up, hiked them up the canyon here at night. And I suppose these kids had never been outside the electric lights, electric street lights. But he hiked them out to the canyon and then had them sit down quietly and listen to the night noises. I thought this was a very desirable thing to do with the kids. I don't know what they do now, but this is something which those who are so interested in the outdoors, I think, ought to be able to do.

Gray: You mean as individuals we need to be able to do them or as a group in the Sierra Club?

Duveneck: No, I mean I think you ought to do them yourself, but then I think we ought to be able to get some of the kids around and take them out, too.

Gray: We need to experience it ourselves and then also share it with others, is that what you're saying?

Duveneck: That's right.

Gray: Talking about any other kinds of things you would like to see the Sierra Club doing--they're very active politically now, are you aware of that?

Duveneck: I know that. I also joined with them in that, too. And I think that if we don't act politically, I think a lot of the things that we do and that we've stood for are going to disappear. I think this is a highly important thing to do.

Gray: I talked about, were there any kinds of things you'd like to see the Sierra Club doing more of, and you said you'd like to see them being out in open space and dedicating themselves to open space. You know that they're also doing international work now?

Duveneck: I know.

Gray: And that was something that you started on a one-to-one basis with young children. So that you have been a Sierra Clubber

and the Sierra Club is now taking on some of the things that you started a long time ago.

Duveneck: [laughs] I don't know about that. I think the--I hope that in anything that may be published of my interview, that it should be realized that according to my mathematical theory, the whole is made up of a lot of infinitesimals, of which I am one.

Gray: That's a very significant statement.

Duveneck: Also I don't--I think it's a great pity for somebody or some group to think that they're fundamentally the only people who are interested. There are a lot of people.

Gray: Are you saying there are a lot of people doing it on a small scale?

Duveneck: Let me put it another way. I think that there are a lot of very good people around, but I think it takes a sparkplug to get them going. I've known a number of sparkplugs. One of the most important sparkplugs that I've known was my former wife. I think oftentimes you can get things going and you're surprised how people join in with you. As I said, I think there are an awful lot of very good-hearted, willing people around, but I think you have to have some sort of an ignition to get them going.

Gray: That's a great way of putting it. You're thinking there are people who are available, and you think that the Sierra Club could be an ignition to get them going.

Duveneck: Yes, I think so at the present time. Certainly, I don't think this is the only situation for the Sierra Club, to be political; I think there are many other things to be done. I think a lot of people need to get out into the open spaces and to be taught about the open spaces.

Gray: You mean to appreciate nature like [John] Muir wanted them to do.

Duveneck: That's right.

Gray: Did you know Muir at all, or had you ever met him?

Duveneck: Oh no, he was before my time.

Gray: Okay.

Duveneck: A little before my time. [laughter]

Gray: You speak of him as if you've read about him.

Duveneck: Oh yes.

Gray: I think that was a significant thing you said about a sparkplug, and I think that's a good place--

Duveneck: I can tell you a story. I don't think this is particularly interesting for you, but in any case--a friend of mine from here was going on the train. He was going to Santa Fe, I think, or someplace out there. He got off on the platform of the train, and there was an old man out there, and they got to talking together. He said, "You know, I'm going to go to a certain place, and what I'd like to do very much--I wish I could have John Muir go with me." And the old man was John Muir. My friend was very much excited about that. When he got back into the car, there was a traveling man occupying the other berth, and he said to him, "You know that old man there? That's John Muir." And he said, "John Muir--what's his line?" [laughter]

Gray: That's a great story.

Duveneck: It's a true story.

Gray: That is a great line. I'd like to thank you very much, Frank, for taking the time to tell me--

Duveneck: I think I've told you about my wife and I have tried to do out here, and also with the Sierra Club, which falls very well into the pattern.

Gray: I think your philosophy of life was very similar to what the Sierra Club is doing. I want to thank you again for sharing all this.

Duveneck: I've enjoyed talking to you, and I enjoyed looking around some of these old files of mine.

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Caretaker

From the environment to society at large, Frank Duveneck wanted to make a better world.

BY MARJORIE KELLOGG-VAN RHEEDEN

There is a ranch off Moody Road in Los Altos Hills that is surrounded by wooded hills and wildflowers. It's the late Frank Duveneck's Hidden Villa Ranch. Duveneck died two years ago at a ripe old age; he would have been 100 years old this month.

When he first moved his family to California in 1917 to avoid the severe New England winters, Duveneck did not envision owning one of the largest areas of open space in the country. Nor did he anticipate hosting some 20,000 people a year, nor that he would become one of the area's most beloved citizens.

FRANK DUVENECK WITH HIS GREAT-GRANDSON, IAN WHITEFORD, 1985.

"Frank Duveneck was a public-spirited man uncommonly interested in the common good," says Wallace Stegner, local Pulitzer Prize-winning author and long-time friend of the Duvenecks. "His good works, most of them done in collaboration with his wife, Josephine, and many of them concentrated within the activities of Hidden Villa Ranch, qualified him to be called a philanthropist, a mankind lover. Hidden Villa itself, as it heads into the future, is a lasting monument to Frank's good will and good sense.

"But the best monument is the memory of the man himself—unassuming, self-effacing, humorous, laconic, capable of generous indignation but never of anger or hatred. He loved the earth, the earth's creatures, and he felt himself not the proprietor but the responsible caretaker of what others said he owned.

"Hidden Villa is a splendid legacy, but in my view an even more splendid one is the example Frank set, the model he provided of a man serenely determined to live up to the responsibility he felt."

At Hidden Villa, a footbridge leads over a creek to the 77-year-old rambling Italian-style villa known as "The Big House," where Duveneck lived most of his life. Within, its mighty living room—with hand-hewn beams and the massive fireplace made of stones gathered by the family from their creekbed—has been a gathering place for political meetings, a spawning ground for social justice, and the scene of countless festivities.

It's here where the local chapter of the Sierra Club was formed; where the West Coast's first youth hostel began; where Japanese Americans and German, Jewish, and Russian refugees were housed during World War II, and where it was decided to provide the Peninsula with one of its largest open spaces.

During his golden years, the Boston-reared gentleman, known as "Frank" to most people, was showered with accolades and recognition throughout his lifetime.

The Democratic Club of Santa Clara

COURTESY OF DUVENECK FAMILY

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
FRANCIS BOOTT WITH HIS GRANDSON FRANK, 1888;
LIZZIE BOOTT DUVENECK; AND FRANK DUVENECK,
THE ARTIST, WITH HIS SON FRANK, JR.

MARJORIE KELLOGG-VAN RHEEDEN

sponsored a testimonial luncheon for Duveneck, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Hidden Villa, where many meetings and fundraisers were held for the Democratic Party.

Among the outpourings of affection was a handwritten letter from Paul "Pete" N. McCloskey, Jr., who was a Republican Congressman at the time.

"The cheerful optimism you and Josephine constantly presented to so many of us has done more to advance the cause of peace in this world than the contribution of any of the multitude of highly-talented friends and neighbors we are privileged to share. . .when I think of you and your late wife, I tend to feel more gentle and less fierce in attacking the problems of our time. (signed) Pete."

Just after Duveneck's death, the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and the Senior Coordinating Council of Palo Alto honored him for his "lifetime of achievement as a humanitarian and multicultural and environmental pacesetter."

Dorothy Varian and her late husband, Russell (he helped invent the klystron tube and became one of the pioneers of Silicon Valley with the Varian Corporation) were also close friends and among the frequent visitors to Hidden Villa. "Making the ranch available was the most important thing Frank did," says Dorothy, a renowned conservationist herself. "But Frank set the tone—the informality. I don't know that it will ever be the same without him."

The Varians and Duvenecks did a lot of hiking with the Sierra Club, which was founded by conservationist John Muir. Duveneck served on the board for many years and hosted their annual Christmas parties. The club's Saturday afternoon meetings were held at the ranch, after which the living room rug was rolled up for dancing. Then on Sunday, Duveneck led their hikes.

As the organization grew, a need for local chapters became apparent. Frank invited 25 Sierra Club members to hike on his trails and hash over the prospects. In 1933, they founded the Loma Prieta Chapter, named for the highest peak in the Santa Cruz Mountain chain. A bronze plaque on the ranch's creekside trail marks its inception. Sierra Club functions and discussions at the ranch also led to legislation for the conservation of natural resources.

For the Duvenecks, however, that wasn't enough. Shortly before Josephine's death, they gave a 430-acre parcel, called Windmill Pasture, to the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District. At the time, Stegner said, "It crowns the whole life of good works by the Duvenecks." But it wasn't the end. Frank, Josephine, and their four children care-

FRANK DUVENECK, JR., 1918

fully planned an inheritance which would eventually leave most of Hidden Villa's facilities and 1650 acres of land to The Trust for Hidden Villa, a non-profit organization.

Frank had more than aesthetics in mind when he promoted the need for such open space. "I think we need open space for people, but also to control the water," Frank explained in an interview a few years back. "The floods we get in many places should show people that we cannot cut the trees down for roads and surfaced areas indefinitely—this means more runoff."

The conservation of nature was only one of the Duvenecks' many concerns. The two were always working toward social improvements, particularly with youth. In their pre-ranch days, when they lived in Palo Alto, Josephine and a group of parents founded the Peninsula School in 1925 because they wanted their children to be educated with wider concepts of learning and to be allowed more opportunity for individual growth than public schools offered.

Frank Duveneck was a member of the board, taught mathematics and shop, and even served as the general handyman who "kept things going," according to Josephine's autobiography, *Life on Two Levels*. The school, housed in an old Menlo Park mansion, is still in operation.

While traveling in Europe in 1935, they became intrigued with the youth hostels which were becoming popular there. Recognizing an opportunity to involve American city youth with constructive diversions, they opened the first youth hostel on the West Coast in 1944. People from age three to 103 and from all over the world have been fed and bedded there. The hostel has been in continuous use, except for a few summer weeks when an interracial camp uses the facility. These camps for children of various racial, economic, and cultural backgrounds began in 1945; it was the Duvenecks' personal United Nations effort to bring youngsters together while their minds were still unclouded with prejudice.

"We needed a seed hostel," says Greg Snyder, marketing director for the Golden Gate Council of American Youth Hostel, Inc. in San Francisco. "One to begin the movement on the West Coast. They were able to bring hosteling here, and from then on it really blossomed; had a hostel appeared 10 years, 20 years later, we wouldn't have the system we have today—a quarter of the overnight stays in this country are in Northern California."

Perhaps the most dramatic example of the Duveneck's spirit for social justice was in 1942, when those of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from the West Coast. An old friend and fellow conservationist, Gerda Isenberg, who operates a native plant nursery on Skyline Boulevard in Woodside, remembers it well.

"They were ordered out of their homes and could only take a few belongings," she recalls. "The camps weren't ready for the evacuees, so they were temporarily put up in horse stables at the old Tanforan Race Track in San Mateo.

"We called the Red Cross for help in transporting them, but they said, 'It is not part of the war effort.' So I helped the Duvenecks find people with station wagons to transport them and take food and blankets.

"After the war it was worse. Shipyard workers had taken over their housing in San Francisco and they had no place to go. The Duvenecks took care of many of them at the ranch."

Largely because of the outraged protest initiated by the Duvenecks, legislation for the orderly return of Japanese Americans after World War II was enacted. Not only Japanese Americans, but Indians, Blacks, Mexicans, and religious and political groups were all given an ear and space at Hidden Villa.

A prominent note of thanks for their efforts came on February 11, 1980, when Frank Duveneck was distinguished in the nation's capital by a speech made by Representative Norman Y. Mineta, San Jose, which was read into the U.S. Congressional Record.

All these accomplishments were possible due to the powerful one-two punch that Frank and Josephine Duveneck represented. "I made up my mind that, if and when I got married, the girl would have to be interested in music and the out-of-doors," said Frank. Josephine not only qualified on both counts, but made a name for herself in political and social circles. Frank often accentuated his wife's role in their endeavors: "Josephine was the sparkplug, I was simply a part of the balance that carried on."

Josephine, who died in 1977 at age 87, was indeed a crusader, a mover and shaker for causes from environmental issues to affordable funerals. While Josephine spoke out, promoted, and pushed the action along, Frank quietly worked behind the scenes.

"Frank was wearing blue jeans and leaning on a fencepost talking with Russell one afternoon," recalls Dorothy Varian with a laugh, "a jaunty sports car drove up. The driver, who looked like a Brooks Brothers model, stepped out and asked, 'My man, where can I find the master of this estate?'

"Frank replied, 'Oh he must be around someplace.' As the man sped away, the two roared with laughter."

"Nevertheless, he was the head man in his house," according to Beverly Blackman, boyhood friend of the Duvenecks' son, Frances. " 'I am captain of my ship, master of my soul,' was true of Frank Duveneck," she said during a visit to the ranch.

His father and namesake, Frank Duveneck, was born in 1848 in Covington, Kentucky, the son of German emigrants. Frank's mother, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Otis Lyman Boott, was born in Boston in 1846, descended from a long line of Boston Brahmins who were in the import and textile businesses. Frank Duveneck, Sr. went on to become one of the most respected artists of his time. He is gaining more notoriety these days, honored with retrospectives of his work first at the San Francisco Museum of Art and more recently at the Triton Museum's opening exhibit. He is the subject of a new book, too: *Unsuspected Genius: The Art and Life of Frank Duveneck* (by Robert Neuhaus, Bedford Press, San Francisco).

Their son, Francis Boott Duveneck, was born at the Villa Castellani in Italy on December 18, 1886. His mother was at the risky child-bearing age of 40 when her frail, two-months premature baby arrived. "The child can't live," the attending Italian doctor declared. An American doctor, also present, proclaimed, "Oh, but you don't know Americans."

Two years later, just after they had gone to Paris to paint, Lizzie suddenly became ill with pneumonia and died.

When the tragic news reached Francis Boott's half-sister, Ella, and her husband, Arthur Lyman of Boston, they invited the baby to come live with them. Winters were spent at their fashionable Boston address. In the spring, the family moved

to The Vale, a 500-acre 18th-century estate in nearby Waltham, Massachusetts, built in 1793 by Frank Jr.'s great-great grandfather, Theodore Lyman. It was there that Frank developed a respect for nature and learned the Latin names of plants.

The younger Duveneck was educated in private schools and studied mechanical engineering at Harvard University. During his college days, Frank met Josephine Whitney when he attended her debutante ball. They saw little of one another for some time, but Duveneck confessed to looking down from the Lyman pew at King's Chapel Unitarian Church in Boston to gaze at Josephine in the Whitney pew below.

An inheritance from his grandfather Boott, who died in 1904, allowed Frank the freedom to choose between work and travel. He did both. Eventually he settled in Lowell, Massachusetts "to be near Josephine." They were married in King's Chapel on June 7, 1913, then traveled for a year in Europe, the Western United States, and the Far East.

After settling in Boston, a daughter, Elizabeth Boott Duveneck, and a son, Francis (III), were born.

But it was an unsettling time for Duveneck: his father was ill, the children were sick, the United States had declared war on Germany, and their rented house was unbearable in the winter. They moved to the West Coast during the war.

Duveneck felt it was time he joined his fellow countrymen "Over There." He enlisted in the Army 332nd Field Signal Battalion and embarked for France in 1918. Before sailing, he was notified that another daughter named Hope, "in the hope he would return," was born. After the war and Duveneck's return to California, the family's fourth child, Bernard, arrived. Before Duveneck died, he welcomed 11 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Duveneck ran the Stanley Steamer Company in San Francisco for awhile in 1922, but steam was on its way out, so he became a research associate in the Stanford University physics laboratory. Gradually, Hidden Villa Ranch became the focus of his life, his purpose for being. And he spent the better half of his life working for it.

To the end, he had faith that others would continue to protect the land and perpetuate his principles of preservation.

The ranch has not changed much. The same old iron gates open to a narrow lane which begins at an ancient olive grove on the right, meanders past an open meadow, the youth hostel, the big hay barn, and a couple of bridges before reaching the footbridge to the Big House, where Frank died on September 2, 1985, at age 98.

He was in his sparsely furnished bedroom where old-fashioned pull shades at curtainless windows controlled the afternoon sun. A scene of Venice, painted by his father, hung over the bed. Opposite, above a small fireplace bordered with tiles made by his daughter, Hope, was a painting of Frank as a youngster.

Negotiations are under way to buy the house from the Duveneck heirs for use as headquarters for the Trust, according to Ann Warren Smith, the executive director, who uses Frank's old office on the lower level.

His books are still on the shelves which line the walls: *Wildflowers*, *American Indians*, *The Conquest of Space*, Theodore Roosevelt's *Rough Riders*, and other books all gather dust and become webbed by spiders. Perhaps one day they'll be dusted off and packed away. One just hopes the spirit will remain, surrounded by the wooded hills and wildflowers, within the ranch off Moody Road in the Los Altos Hills. □

(Note: The Town of Los Altos Hills has been featuring a year-long exhibit commemorating the 100th birthday of Frank Duveneck, ending December 18. Call (415)941-7222 for information.)

Marjorie Kellogg-Van Rheeden is currently writing a biography of the two Frank Duvenecks.

MARJORIE KELLOGG-VAN RHEEDEN

Hidden Villa Ranch

"Hidden Villa is no longer a family-sponsored organization," explains Frank Duveneck's daughter, Liz Dana. "The funds which Dad left for the two-year operation after his death have now run out and support for the on-going programs falls on the community."

The Friends of Hidden Villa handles fundraising in order to "preserve and enhance Hidden Villa as a natural, historic, educational, and recreational resource using the natural setting, the farm, facilities, and traditions of Hidden Villa to teach social, humanitarian, and environmental values," according to Ann Warren Smith, the executive director.

Programs which operate from mid-June to mid-Audust are: Day Camp, Residential Camp, Farm & Wilderness Camp, Bay-to-Sea Backpacking Trips, and Community Leadership Training. The programs are attended by some 19,000 people annually, in addition to over 10,000 other visitors who use the facility.

Hidden Villa's teaching techniques endeavor to strike a balance among scientific investigation, awareness, and fun.

The Environmental Program is based on Frank and Josephine Duveneck's philosophy that understanding our interdependency with the natural world will help us develop a sense of values and a caretaker ethic. A curriculum guide, "Manure, Meadows, and Milkshakes," helps children understand the connection between "Big Macs" and cows, sweaters and sheep, creek water and baths, as well as the effect our lifestyles have on the environment around us.

The Horsemanship Program, which has been offered for a half-century, provides riding lessons, grooming, safety, horse care, and riding skills.

Hidden Villa Ranch, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills, (415)948-4690.

Sierra Club Oral History Project

Dwight C. Steele

CONTROVERSIES OVER THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AND WATERFRONT, 1960s-1970s

An Interview Conducted by
Karen Jorgensen-Esmaili
in 1983

Sierra Club History Committee
1989

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Dwight Steele is a lawyer and long-time environmental activist. Now semi-retired and in his seventies, Mr. Steele remains active in the Bay Area environmental movement. His work with labor leaders and others on important San Francisco environmental controversies during the 1960s and 1970s made him a prime subject for an oral history interview.

In the winter of 1981, Mr. Steele was interviewed by graduate student Esther Herrera as a class assignment for a seminar on oral history at the University of California, Berkeley.* Because this interview was limited in length and scope, it was decided to conduct a follow-up session. Mr. Steele consented to another interview and a planning meeting was held at his Walnut Creek, California, office in September of 1984. A two-hour interview was taped in December. Throughout the process, Mr. Steele was warm, cooperative, and friendly.

Mr. Steele carefully edited the interview transcripts. The final mamuscript accurately reflects his speaking style, attitudes, and recollections of significant Bay Area environmental controversies. The original tapes of the interview are deposited in the Bancroft Library.

Karen Jorgensen-Esmaili
Interviewer

Berkeley, California
August 25, 1986

*Dwight C. Steele, "Environmentalist and Labor Ally" in Labor and the Environment in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1960s-1970s, Sierra Club History Committee, 1981.

I SAVING THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY

[Date of Interview: November 9, 1983]##

BCDC and the Sierra Club

J-E: This is November 9, 1983, and I'm here with Dwight Steele in Walnut Creek. We're going to be talking today about controversies and conservation issues that have involved the shoreline and the water of the San Francisco Bay.

Why don't we start with the Save the Bay controversy, which was important throughout the sixties and seventies? I wanted to know, first of all, how you became involved in this particular Bay Area issue.

Steele: I became involved in the mid-sixties when I began to get active in the Sierra Club's conservation efforts, particularly in the Conservation Committee of the San Francisco Bay Chapter. I had read about the threats to the bay probably by 1964 or '65 and the efforts by Kay Kerr and Esther Gulick and Sylvia McLaughlin to organize the San San Francisco Bay Association and get legislation in 1965. It was state legislation--the McAteer-Petris Act--to stop filling the bay or make filling subject to permits while the agency that was set up, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission [BCDC], developed a plan and submitted that plan back to the legislature. That was the subject of fairly broad discussion in the Bay Area. There was even a disc jockey, Don Sherwood, who spent a lot of time on his radio program talking about the bay problems. In any case, the Sierra Club Bay Chapter's Conservation Committee got into the bay problems, and I guess by about 1967 I was designated as the spokesman for the Bay Chapter on San Francisco Bay problems and began attending all of the BCDC meetings.

J-E: You say the Bay Chapter became involved about 1967 or you became involved?

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 27.

Steele: They may have been involved before that; I just don't really remember. I'm sure that they were concerned about some bay problems, but, as you know, the Sierra Club really didn't get into much activity in urban environmental matters until at least the late sixties and maybe later.

J-E: Until the late sixties?

Steele: That's my impression. I've been a member of the club for a long time--since the thirties--and my recollection is that most of their concern had to do with the wilderness and the mountain areas and streams and dams and Grand Canyon and Redwood Forest--primarily non-urban issues during most of the thirties and forties and fifties, and even the sixties.

J-E: Were you active in the Sierra Club when they began their involvement in urban issues?

Steele: Certainly at the time I got active in the club there was very little focus on urban environmental problems.

J-E: What happened to create that change?

Steele: Well, a lot of the urban issues became more well-known, more publicized. There was more general concern about them. And I think, tracking back from the concerns about water pollution, which I guess broadly went back to Silent Spring, as you began to get concern about streams and pollution of streams in non-urban areas, it was inevitable that you would track those down to the effects on urban areas and what can happen there. And then the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act nationally were things that the club and other organizations got involved in.

More direct involvement in urban city problems was pretty slow. It really only has been in the last ten years that the Bay Chapter--and I think the Sierra Club as a whole--has spent a lot of time on problems of the environment in places where people spend most of their time, where people live and work.

J-E: Do you recall any specific disagreements in the Bay Chapter during the sixties on whether or not to become involved in an urban issue such as the Save the Bay campaign?

Steele: I don't think there was any disagreement about getting into the Save the Bay campaign, but there certainly was disagreement about getting into other urban issues. Well, in a previous interview I think I mentioned the problem when a number of us felt we ought to support a labor union [Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union] at one of the Shell Oil Company refineries at Martinez because one of the major issues in the strike was the dangerous conditions under which employees were working--including exposure to toxic substances. There was a lot of feeling in the Bay Chapter that we shouldn't join forces with unions and that the

Steele: Sierra Club would be reaching out in the wrong direction to support a strike. Plus some of the members of the Bay Chapter lived in Martinez and probably had members of the family working in the refineries. So there was quite a hassle. We finally got it to the board of directors, and I helped arrange to have some of the labor leaders there. A lot of people resented that, and there were several resignations from the Bay Chapter.*

J-E: What I seem to hear you saying is that the bay was a special urban issue. Is that true?

Steele: Well, yes; but I don't think the bay is looked at as primarily an urban issue in the sense of the quality of life in a city. When I use the term "urban environment," I really am using it very broadly--primarily the quality of life where people live and work. And then broadening out from that to things like the bay itself--its effect on esthetics, on the climate, on its use for recreation. But the gutsy issues that I think of as urban issues are really not recreation; it's the kind of space you have to live in, whether you've got healthy surroundings, whether you've got clean water, whether you've got clean air, whether you've got traffic problems. And basically, even just whether you have conditions where you can survive.

J-E: Weren't a lot of the bay issues involved with that--transportation, development of the shoreline?

Steele: No, not really. The bay issue started out as a simple issue, and that was to stop or substantially slow up the filling of the bay. That really was the issue. The bay was being filled at a rapid rate. At least 40 percent of the water area had already been filled, and Mel Scott's book, I think, predicted that if this kept up, because a lot of the bay is shallow, that over half of the water area would be filled. So that was really the issue.** Now, obviously, you can't set up an agency to address that without getting involved with other issues. BCDC jurisdiction over what happens on the shoreline area abutting the bay became a critical issue and was compromised to a narrow strip in the legislature.

I think the bay plan in 1968 initially recommended that BCDC have jurisdiction back a thousand feet. Some of the bills introduced in the 1969 legislature provided for five hundred, some for three hundred. We

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*On May 5, 1973, the Sierra Club board passed a resolution supporting the union. For additional discussion of the strike, see the Daniel Jenkins interview in The Sierra Club and the Urban Environment II: Labor and the Environment in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1960s-1970s, Sierra Club Oral History Project, Sierra Club History Committee, 1983.--Ed.

**See Mel Scott, The Future of San Francisco Bay (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California), 1963.

Steele: finally had to settle for only a hundred feet of shoreline, and then the authority basically only to assure public access. So that the Bay Conservation and Development Commission never really got into urban planning as such.

J-E: It was my impression in reading through some of the material that you gave me that the shoreline issue was one that came in the later sixties and was not as much an issue as the bay waters itself. Is that correct?

Steele: Yes. The crisis period for BCDC, for the controls on the bay, was 1969. The legislation started BCDC in '65. It was controversial at that time because it was a relatively new idea, and there was a lot of citizen input to get that through. That was kind of a one-time battle, and then for the next four years, really, there was a process of developing the bay plan. So it wasn't until '69, when we had to go back to the legislature, that there was a real big battle, and the forces lined up, with the banks, Santa Fe, Leslie Salt Company, Ideal Cement Company, and other corporations on one side and the environmentalists on the other. A Leslie Salt spokesman called the bay plan a kind of "Fabian socialism."

J-E: When you're speaking of environmentalists, was there a coalition of environmental groups?

Steele: In '69 there were really two. There was one that was called the Citizens Alliance to Save San Francisco Bay led by the Save San Francisco Bay Association. There was another one that was headed up by Claire Dedrick of the Sierra Club and Janet Adams called Save Our Bay Action Committee. During that '69 campaign we merged those plus a lot of other efforts, a lot of other organizations, into a coalition. We would have meetings regularly at the Sierra Club with fifteen or more different organizations represented.

J-E: So during the real heat of that issue, when you were working with the legislature, that's when the coalition came together and the Sierra Club was a part of that?

Steele: Yes, really, the Sierra Club was the leader of it. I acted as chairman at meetings and Dan Rosenberg of the Sierra Club staff was assigned pretty much full-time by Mike McCloskey to handle the campaign. It was the Save the Bay Association--primarily Kay Kerr--and the Save Our Bay Action Committee--primarily Janet Adams--who did the most work. Janet was very good; she had experience in political campaigns, and she did an excellent job of mobilizing a broad public input directed to the legislature as a whole and to individuals. She circulated petitions, attacking Senator [Richard] Dolwig's position, because he was the senator from San Mateo. And I think there were forty or fifty thousand signatures on them. Then she would take them to Sacramento every week and drop them on Dolwig's desk.

Campaign Strategies and Tactics

J-E: What other strategies did you use? There was mass political organizing--

Steele: Well, we obfiously used the media--we used radio; we used television. We even bought some ads. We didn't have much money, but we did buy some ads. We individually would get on debates on television. We used a lot of internal communication within the environmental movement. We really flooded the legislative committee hearings. At a number of them, we requested that they be held in the evening so people could get there, and we chartered buses. So there were the largest turnouts in the state legislature of people to attend hearings that had ever occurred in the history of California. That was very effective. The legislative halls were filled with people. The phones of legislators were ringing all the time. We got good editorial support from, I think, all of the major newspapers. And certainly at least some--probably most--of the radio and television stations.

And then there were campaigns, like the one aimed at Dolwig, that were aimed at individual legislators. Senators Dolwig and [John F.] McCarthy, a very conservative senator from Marin County, got so much heat from their constituents that they reversed their position; instead of opposing the BCDC legislation, in the final weeks they said they would support it.

J-E: How would you coordinate these strategies? Was there a steering committee? How were you directly involved in that?

Steele: We had a committee that met at least every two weeks, and sometimes more frequently--usually at the Sierra Club, although occasionally elsewhere. And there would be twenty to thirty--sometimes, I guess, more than thirty--people there representing various organizations--more than one from the Sierra Club and more than one from Save San Francisco Bay Association and from other organizations. We would discuss strategy. We would arrange for people to appear at legislative hearings, the order of appearances, and the subject they would cover for a committee hearing.

Dan Rosenberg was handling the mechanical side of the campaign and spent a lot of time getting together material to go to the media, organizing the turnouts for Sacramento hearings, and also developing ideas. One of the good things about that campaign was that it was understood that anybody who had an idea was expected to come up with it. There were a lot of gimmicks that I've now forgotten that developed in the course of it. We set up a speaker's bureau sort of thing, and we got volunteers--quite a few of them were lawyers or people who had had some experience in public speaking. And we encouraged service clubs like the Rotary Club or women's groups to invite speakers on the bay, and we would supply them.

J-E: How did you organize people to do the mass phoning and to be at hearings and write letters and so forth?

Steele: We set up kind of a phone network. It was not as well organized as the telephone networks have become since, but we did some of that.

J-E: And how did you generate letters, get people to meetings, to a hearing?

Steele: Well, I'm trying to think which was the most effective. I think it was probably newsletters from Save the Bay Association and the Sierra Club, and to some extent some other organizations. It was the Peninsula Conservation Committee [PCC] which Janet Adams and Claire Dedrick had set up. It was really synonymous with the Save Our Bay Action Committee, and they had a big mailing list. I don't remember all the details on that.

J-E: You mentioned ads, too. Was that done by Dan Rosenberg? Was that one of his jobs?

Steele: We got some volunteer help from advertising agency people. And we got some free ads--you know, the National Advertisers Council--that may not be the right name--but as a public service they provide public service ads for free. And as I recall, we got a couple of those, including, I think, one in a national magazine. But I don't remember the details.

J-E: Were there other Sierra Club staff people that were working on this particular issue during this period?

Steele: Yes, and of course we had the facilities of the office. But Dan Rosenberg was the main one. He also would carry around exhibits--pictures and charts and all that kind of stuff--that we would take around. He set up and exhibit in the rotunda of the capitol that was there for some time.

J-E: What about the national Sierra Club board or staff? Was there any contact with them? I'm thinking of Mike McCloskey and--

Steele: Yes, Mike was the executive director. He was very supportive and very helpful and spent some time on it. The board, policywise, approved a resolution on March 10, 1969, which we dug out last night.* I think this resolution [shows to interviewer] was by the Bay Chapter, but it or the substance of it was approved by the [national] board. And about the same time--I don't remember whether it happened in '69 or '70--the board appointed me to be the Sierra Club coordinator for all San Francisco bay and delta matters. The national board gave me general support for whatever efforts were necessary to protect the bay and the delta. Will [William E.] Siri, who had been on the Sierra Club board of directors for a long time, was also president of the Save San Francisco Bay

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*See the appendix for the full text of the resolution.--Ed.

Steele: Association, I guess maybe from the beginning. So obviously, there was a direct tie there. And at that time, in the sixties, a much higher percentage of the members of the board of directors of the Sierra Club were Bay Area people than they are now.

J-E: So there was a good working relationship between the national organization and the local chapter?

Steele: Oh yes, right. Let me mention, too, that one of the issues that did take up a lot of board of directors' time during the same period and after that was the proposed Peripheral Canal around the delta; so that, although, as I mentioned, the BCDC project was primarily aimed at stopping fill, there was a close relationship between the California Water Plan, and particularly the Peripheral Canal, to the problems of water quality in both the delta and the bay.

J-E: Did the political issues and battles that were going on about the proposed canal in any way affect what you did in the bay controversy?

Steele: Oh no. There were certainly no conflicts. As a matter of fact, I probably spent more time on the Peripheral Canal and related problems before and after the '69 BCDC legislative campaign than I did on the bay. Well, I don't know whether I did or not, but I spent a lot of time on the canal. And I felt, and I guess I still feel, that the overall water quality problems of the delta and northern California as a whole are more important than perfection in administering a plan that has to do with filling the bay. But having gotten into the bay thing, I obviously have never let loose. When I became less active with the Sierra Club, I became more active with the Save San Francisco Bay Association.

And now I'm getting reactivated on several matters that involve the Bay--particularly the Eastshore State Park, which is something we've talked about for years: that is to have all of the east side of the bay shoreline from the San Francisco-Oakland Bridge clear out to Richmond made into a public park.

J-E: I think that would be interesting to talk about. Perhaps we can finish the bay controversy and talk about that later. Your involvement with the Peripheral Canal at that time was part of your involvement with the Sierra Club?

Steele: Yes, I served for quite a few years as a member of the Sierra Club's Water Committee, which involved a number of chapters of the club in northern California. So I regularly attended those meetings, which were monthly and sometimes more frequently. And we were working on broader problems of California water plans.

J-E: I had another question about strategy, actually. How did you bring experts on these issues in? How did you use their information to help you achieve your ends?

Steele: There were a number of experts that were brought into the BCDC planning process between '65 and '69, and they did twenty-three separate specialized studies on such subjects as water quality, marshes, refuse disposal, the effects of the amount of water surface on smog and weather and various other things. So we got acquainted with some of the experts who worked on those studies, and we used some of those experts. We even, as I recall, found some viticulture experts who were able to testify that if the bay shrunk much more it would have an adverse effect on the vineyards in Sonoma and Napa counties. Peter Behr, who was one of the leaders of the Save the Bay effort and later became a senator, found some people that could produce some evidence about that. And there were a lot of articles in membership association publications--in things that lawyers read and doctors read and other groups. So we got volunteers.

We really didn't use expert testimony much in the legislative hearings. Legislators didn't want to tlisten to experts; they wanted to see where the votes were, primarily.

J-E: So that's where the mass support was the most effective?

Steele: Yes, I don't think there's any question. Because some of the senators and assemblymen who originally opposed it realized they would not get reelected if they continued that position. And some of them didn't--both Senators Dolwig and McCarthy and two or three assemblyment were not reelected. And the conscientious ones, the ones that were not primarily thinking about their reelection, realized that most of the people in their district wanted something done. And the best way to demonstrate that is letters, telephone call, etc.

Taking Sides: Corporations, Politicians, and the Government

J-E: We've talked about some of the actors in this campaign. You talked about developers and corporate interests and politicians. Could you expand on some of these? Let's focus on the corporate interests and the development interests, if those go together. Who were those people? And what kind of contacts did you have with them? What were their interests?

Steele: I have some memories about this which are less than precise and which become less precise as time goes on. When I was reading over the interview of almost three years ago, there were some mentioned in that that I recall, and there were several others--certainly Leslie Salt and Ideal Cement. There was an organization called the West Bay Community Associates, which I think was partly Ideal Cement. Also, a businessmen's organization known as the Bay Area Council also opposed the 1969 law.

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Steele: There were fairly massive projects proposed for further development down the peninsula on the west side of the bay. There had already been in Foster City a residential development and quite a bit of industrial development. Crocker Ban and others had been promoting the idea of taking down a good part of San Bruno Mountain and using that as fill in the bay. So they were very much involved and had their attorneys and people at hearings.

Another geographical area where we had problems was in the Richmond-Martinez area where there is a lot of industrial development, and particularly oil refineries. We had some relatively small problems, but serious because of the importance of the company. I remember particularly that we had some problems with Standard Oil. They wanted to expand their piers, or they wanted to do some other things, and I had some meetings with the key legislators and Standard Oil representatives to work out some solutions. There was a lot of general talk about the right of people who owned the property, who owned the shoreline, to make economic use of it.

J-E: What about local governments? What was their involvement?

Steele: I wish my memory was better, or I knew where the file was. We had a list of city and county governments that had supported BCDC legislation, that, as I recall, took up more than a page, so it must have been more than forty or fifty. I just don't remember. But a number of people worked very hard on city and county support. We used to go to board of supervisors meetings and city council meetings. Even cities that were geographically remote from the bay passed resolutions or other actions to favor it.

J-E: In general, was there support from local governments?

Steele: Yes, there was.

J-E: How about the Corps of Engineers and the federal government; what was their involvement of relationship to this campaign?

Steele: The Corps obviously didn't get into the battle in the state legislature. They stay out of those kind of things. However, they did sort of get dragged into some hearings that were held by a congressional committee. Henry Reuss, who was, I think, a congressman from Wisconsin, was the head of the Conservation and Natural Resources Subcommittee that held hearings on estuaries of the country, and the first one that they picked was San Francisco. They held hearings first in Washington and then out here.

J-E: When was this--about the same time?

Steele: Yes. This was--I don't know the precise date now, but I think it sort of bracketed the '69 crisis. I learned a lot from Reuss. He was very skillful. He told me he discovered that conservation was a motherhood

Steele: issue [laughs], and it was great for getting reelected as well as doing good. But anyhow, when he had a Corps of Engineers colonel or general on the stand, and the Corps of Engineers testified that they had to continue manipulating nature to some extent, doing things that we would view as bad, instead of arguing with them, Reuss said, "I'm sure that the Corps is in the process of giving much more attention to the public interest, and that you will go back and do these things." [laughs]

The Corps of Engineers has always had a representative on BCDC, and they did get involved in the planning process, and were supportive. They were not an opponent, but they didn't get into the political arena.

J-E: Wasn't it their function to give permits?

Steele: Sure, they still have that.

J-E: Were there any problems with that? How did they deal with it?

Steele: Well, there have been some problems from time to time. I'm trying to think of an example, and I can't think of one. The main continuing things that is troublesome is their control of dredging spoils. They are the ones that designate, after consultation with BCDC and the water quality agency, the areas where dredging spoils should be deposited. The primary one is right off Alcatraz. There were some others. Since BCDC has direct jurisdiction over filling and dredging, there have been some conflicts about that. Although many of us would prefer that the spoils be deposited outside the Golden Gate, we recognize as a practical matter that it's not economic to do that, and this primary dumping ground is probably the best compromise.

J-E: I've also read that the federal government is a major polluter of the bay. Has that been a source of conflict?

Steele: Oh yes. We had a big hassle with the navy, and this resulted in some BCDC hearings because they were, up to just a few years ago, continuing to dump their sewage, untreated sewage, out of their ships in the bay when they would come in. The volume from a carrier is quite considerable! And here all these efforts are going on for water quality and--I forget the millions of gallons of sewage they were dumping in the bay. So at the hearings, in a typical navy response, they said, "Well, this sounds like a good objective. We don't know whether it's practical; it will take time to study it--probably several years." And they just dragged their feet. They may still be doing it, for all I know.

J-E: What does the representative from the Corps do when these kinds of things come up? Does he remain quiet?

Steele: Most of the representatives of the Corps on BCDC, after they've been here a while, become pretty supportive of environmental positions. Unfortunately, as you probably know, the Corps of Engineers has a policy

Steele: to move these people around, so every couple of years you get a new colonel who has to be educated. But within the rather unfortunate general policies of the Corps, I think that, number one, we've had pretty good people assigned out here, and they were willing to learn.

J-E: Did you personally know--?

Steele: But let me mention that one of the other serious areas where there's overlapping Corps jurisdiction and BCDC jurisdiction is the wetlands, the marshes, and some areas that have been diked off from the bay where the Corps still has jurisdiction, and should be opened up. Fortunately, in the 1899 federal act and in other laws, the Corps was given jurisdiction over areas which at one time had been subject to tidal action. So they were very helpful about ten years ago in implementing the jurisdiction that they had. Because of pressure put on the Corps by the present administration, some of that help is being taken away.

Labor Movement Involvement

J-E: During the controversy over BCDC in the late sixties, the labor movement in the Bay Area also became one of the actors. How did they become involved in this issue? I understand you had some direct contacts with labor people during this time.

Steele: They weren't very active until 1969, so far as I can recall. But they were involved in the '69 campaign, and I helped to organize a committee of labor leaders who held press conferences and who went up to Sacramento and called on legislators, who lent their name to some ads; circularized their membership. So we had about--oh, I don't know--six to ten union leaders who were fairly active in the bay campaign in '69.

J-E: What unions were involved?

Steele: In that situation they were very broad-based. It wasn't just individual unions; it was what in the union organization are called the central labor councils, which represent all the unions in an area. So that we had Jack Crowley, who was the head or the secretary of the San Francisco Labor Council in the labor union organizations--the guy who is called secretary is usually the head--he's what you and I would call the chairman or the president. Jack Crowley and his predecessor, whose name was George Johns, represented all the unions, really, in San Francisco. They were both very active--at least, George Johns was in '69, and Jack Crowley later. The then head of the Contra Costa County Central Labor Council, whose name was Carter, was active. A labor leader named Emerson, I think, from Santa Clara County Central Labor Council was also active. So we had representatives of a broad cross-section, or a large number of unions.

Steele: Then, in addition to that, we had several people from the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union], particularly Dave Jenkins, and they were directly identified with the bay because of their waterfront activities. I guess Tim Toomey got into it from the Service Employees Union. And others whom I just don't recall at the moment.

J-E: And this was really the first time that environmentalists and labor people came together and worked jointly on a conservation issue, is it not?

Steele: I think it was the first time in the Bay Area.

J-E: That's what I meant.

Steele: I think there was some labor union involvement in the 1965 bay legislation. My recollection is that McAteer, who was the co-author with Petris, had labor contracts. I just don't recall. I probably heard sometime; I was not active at that time, so I would have no personal recollection.

J-E: Do you have any speculation on why labor people became involved at this time and in this particular issue?

Steele: Filling the bay was really a simple issue. Everybody could understand it; they could see it. And anybody who lived and worked around here could see it, even if they never went down to the shoreline. And then, in a lot of the unions, people would go boating or fishing, and they had some direct experience. The ILWU—obviously, that's where they worked, so they knew what was going on.

Then, I don't think it was because they were unionists or because they were leaders of unions that they got involved. It was an issue that there was broad public concern about, and they were just part of the community.

J-E: Were there any areas of conflict or disagreement that you recall during the campaign between labor and environmentalists?

Steele: Oh yes, with some unions, particularly construction trades. They got a lot of jobs out of things like Foster City and filling the bay. There were then proposals to fill more of the shoreline for expansion of highways and a lot of jobs for the operating engineers, teamsters, and other unions. So there was opposition based upon not just loss of profits by corporations but loss of jobs. And a lot of politicians picked that up. I remember a conference where San Francisco Assemblyman Willie Brown was one of the speakers, and he said, "If I can get jobs for my people by filling the bay, that's what I'm going to be in favor of." Well, that's a typical Willie Brown approach to public speaking, but there was a lot of that kind of thing voiced.

Steele: But it wasn't a big issue for labor unions as such. There were no big internal battles over this between labor unions. I can recall one of the labor leaders whose judgment I respect very highly, although I used to get in very serious battles with him across the bargaining table and in strikes. I asked him once whether on the letterhead of the Save the Bay Action Committee we should list the unions that supported it and identify the leaders, and he said, "You're speaking for everybody, not just individual organizations. Why don't you just assume that posture?" So we did, and we sort of said publicly that the labor unions support this. And we weren't ever seriously challenged on that.

J-E: Were labor leaders on your steering committee and involved in meetings that you held on strategy?

Steele: No. They were a little shy about getting involved in the strategy sessions or coming to our meetings. And they've always had their own meetings, and they were uncomfortable in meetings of environmentalists. The Sierra Club was not an embraceable concept for labor unions. Just as labor unions were not an embraceable concept for Sierra Club-type people.

So I don't recall any joint meetings, except that some of us would help organize a press conference of labor people, and they began to get acquainted, at least with myself and Dan Rosenberg and some other people. But the first meeting that I recall where we got Sierra Club people and labor leaders together was not until 1970 or '71.

J-E: So what it amounted to was that labor supported, in general, the campaign, and the communication was basically through people like yourself, who really acted as informal liaisons, in a way, between the steering committee and labor; is that correct?

Steele: Yes, basically. Some of the labor leaders got acquainted with more and more of us. Dave Jenkins is a good example. I introduced him to Janet Adams, and they got along well together. As the campaign progressed--and it was concentrated in a relatively few months; it wasn't a long thing--it got to the point where some of the labor leaders would call me or somebody else on the phone, and we would exchange information. I think that helped to lead to some better relations later on at a number of levels.

J-E: So these were very initial efforts in many ways, weren't they?

Steele: Well, I think so. I remember talking to Mike McCloskey about it, and he--Mike had been pretty much in favor of trying to establish some lines of communication, maybe coalition efforts, with labor unions--so he lent some help and encouragement to this and felt it was very much worthwhile.

J-E: Was he receptive to these ideas?

Steele: Oh yes, sure.

J-E: And were there people in the Sierra Club Bay Chapter who were particularly resistant to becoming involved with labor unions or on issues that involved unions?

Steele: I don't recall that there was anybody that squawked about our having a Save the Bay labor committee. But labor unions used to be kind of a dirty name in the Sierra Club circle, and I've never really been able to figure out why. I related in the interview in February of '81 that--I guess it was in 1970 or '71 that I had arranged for a meeting at the Sierra Club offices with about seven or eight labor leaders with leadership not just from the Sierra Club Bay Chapter but from the national board and staff. There were about sixty or seventy Sierra Club leaders invited, and only twenty of them showed up. And it wasn't a warm, receptive kind of meeting. Some individuals were--I think most of the Sierra Club people who were there felt that they were just there out of some kind of duty. They really weren't enthusiastic about meeting with labor union leaders.

And, you know, the labor leaders don't speak the same language. And their priorities are not the same. So that the typical Sierra Club type has a hard time putting himself in the shoes of a labor leader.

J-E: Looking back on the outcome of all this, what actually happened to BCDC in the final plan, were you satisfied with what happened, and if not, what would you have wanted to change?

Steele: Well, I'm satisfied that the 1969 law was as good as we could have then gotten approved by the legislature. We didn't have a vote to spare in the senate. A lot of the compromises were made to get the needed votes. The shoreline jurisdiction was cut way back. Part of that was because the then chairman of BCDC had said in a public hearing that, so far as he was concerned, the shoreline was not a major issue, and maybe they didn't need any. Well, that cut our compromise position from three hundred feet to a hundred feet in a hurry.

There were compromises with respect to the salt ponds. There were some compromises with respect to possible oil and gas drilling in the bay and a number of other things that I would have preferred not to have happened. But looking back at it, I don't think we could have gotten it through if it had been much better.

Fighting the Southern Crossing

J-E: Let's talk about the Southern Crossing, a somewhat related but separate issue. In November of 1969, BCDC voted seventeen to six to approve the Southern Crossing. Perhaps you can explain a little bit about what the Southern Crossing was and if you have some speculation on why that initial decision was made.

Steele: Well, I know that at the time I had a very vivid understanding of what was going on and why BCDC voted that way on the Southern Crossing. I must confess that my memory does not serve me well in pulling that back now, which is partly the passage of years and partly that I'm approaching my seventieth birthday, I guess. The Southern Crossing proposal, which was another automobile bridge across San Francisco Bay from Alameda County to San Francisco, had been in the works for fifteen or twenty years prior to 1972 and had been delayed for a number of reasons. It became an issue that got a lot of publicity and a lot of attention, I guess, starting in about 1969, which was the same time that BART was being built. A lot of people felt that if we're going to have BART, which is aimed at reducing the number of automobiles going across the bay, why do we need another bridge? But there was a lot of special interests in building another bridge.

And, of course, the highway department, which is now CalTrans, was very much interested in it. A lot of the labor unions who would get jobs were interested in it. I'm trying to recall what the exact issue was the BCDC voted on, because it was a kind of a technical thing. It really wasn't because they thought that the bridge was a good idea. It was because of either a question about their jurisdiction to stop it or whether it was grandfathered by the legislation--and I think it may well have been the latter. But anyhow, I recall that we attempted to get that reversed, and I think we did get some subsequent action by BCDC that maybe didn't directly reverse that but put them in a position of at least neutrality. It seemed to me by 1979 the BCDC posture was against the Southern Crossing.

J-E: At least a year before Proposition A, then, you had turned BCDC--*

Steele: I wish I could remember the precise action on it. Someplace in one of these stacks of BCDC minutes--I could find it if I could take a couple of hours. If you really wanted to pursue that, the person to call would be Joe [Joseph E.] Bodovitz, who is now with the state PUC [Public Utilities Commission] but was then executive director of BCDC.

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*Proposition A was an unsuccessful 1972 ballot initiative on the Southern Crossing issue.--Ed.

J-E: Were the labor unions that were for the Southern Crossing pretty much the same ones that were against BCDC in the beginning? We talked about people who were interested in jobs in the construction trades; was that pretty much the same group?

Steele: I think so. Yes, I think that's right. It seems to me that of the labor unions against the Crossing, that we had some involved that were not involved in the Save the Bay thing. But, again, I can't really call that to the top of my head.

J-E: How did you become involved in the campaign against Proposition A in 1972?

Steele: I had been in on discussions about the issue for a couple of years. And, again, it was one that the peninsula conservationists were very much concerned about, particularly Janet Adams and Claire Dedrick, who was also a leader in the Sierra Club. We at some point in '71 or so had set up what we called the Southern Crossing Action Team, SCAT. I was involved in lobbying for the legislation to stop it, which I guess was '71. I was invited by the then secretary of Resources, Ike Livermore, to come up to Sacramento one day and brief him. They were trying to get the governor to sign it, and Livermore had to go in to a Cabinet meeting and make a pitch to the governor to sign it.

So I was up there and spent a couple of hours with Livermore before he went over to meet with the governor, who was Reagan at the time. And I learned that day that he was going to veto it, but that--and I didn't learn until later because Livermore was sworn to secrecy at the moment--the governor had said to the people in that cabinet meeting that he felt this was a kind of an issue that the people should decide, the people who were directly involved in the counties that would be most concerned. So then I helped with a lot of other people to get a bill through, which the governor supported, to get the measure on the ballot. And then I was persuaded to be chairman of the campaign committee to get a favorable vote on the ballot measure. And as you probably know, the vote came out four or four-and-a-half to one--

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Steele: There was one interesting thing about the campaign on the Southern Crossing ballot issue. I had never had any direct responsibility before on that, but I had heard a lot of horror stories about political fund-raising, particularly funding a campaign. Most campaigns of that type, or political campaigns as a general rule, get in debt, and you don't collect as much money as you have commitments for. I had had the impressions that the public relations firms that handle political campaigns usually got their money off the top and were not as much concerned about the financial stability of the program. So I recommended, and we adopted, a policy that we would not commit to spend any money for ads or anything else unless we had the money in hand. And secondly, that our political PR firm would have to get approval of the committee or the chairman for any commitments that they would make.

Steele: We were able to hold to that. We didn't raise a hell of a lot of money. I think it was less than $70,000. When we got through, we were able to return some money to people who had loaned it, which was practically unheard of in a political campaign because usually, when you loan money to that kind of a campaign, you call it a loan but you figure it's gone.

J-E: What was Ike Livermore's role? Do you think he played a significant role in convincing Reagan that it--?

Steele: Livermore was a very good secretary of Resources. Considering that he was appointed by and working for Reagan, he did just a tremendous job, I think. I think he was primarily responsible for the protection of the north coast rivers, particularly for the Eel River not being dammed. He persuaded Reagan to do the right thing on a lot of issues. On the Southern Crossing issue, I don't think he was surprised that the governor said he had to veto the thing because the governor was pretty well committed, but I think Livermore was pleasantly surprised that the governor would give his blessing to having it voted on. Which, of course, the highway people didn't want any part of.

Livermore was and is a very dedicated public-minded person, as is his brother, Pat. His brother has been a leader in the Republican party for a long time, and on gutsy environmental issues, he's usually in the right place.

II CONTROVERSIES OVER THE WATERFRONT

The Citizens Waterfront Committee

J-E: Let's switch to the waterfront and some of the controversies in which you were involved in the early seventies. I know you were a participant on the Citizens Waterfront Committee. Can you describe the other people who were involved and the purpose of that particular committee?

Steele: I don't think I was in the initial organizing sessions of the Citizens Waterfront Committee, because I think that started in 1970, and I didn't become a member of the committee and active until early 1971--maybe it was December of 1970.

It was an organization that sprung up primarily to defeat the plans to build two high-rise buildings adjacent to the Ferry Building in San Francisco. One was the U.S. Steel building and the other was the Ferry Port Plaza, a Castle and Cooke proposal through a subsidiary called Oceanic Properties. Some of the San Franciscans who had been involved in the successful campaign to stop the cross-city freeway, and to stop the Embarcadero freeway particularly, got very much concerned about high-rises on the waterfront and put together this committee, which had business people and neighborhood association representatives and conservation types. And, as time went on, it involved, at least informally, labor unions.

I think from the very beginning Dick Goldman was the chairman of it. He's in the insurance business. He and his wife have deep roots in San Francisco, so they were very much concerned about the whole character of San Francisco, and particularly the waterfront. Do you want to know anything about the other people, the kind of people they were?

J-E: Sure.

Steele: We had some planners, particularly Larry Livingston, who had done the plan for Market Street, which was successfully funded in one of the first massive issues for that kind of thing in the area. I think a $25,000,000 bond issue passed to do that. There were some other planners and architects involved. There was Herb Caen's then-wife, Maria Theresa. There was Bob Katz, a very active member, who's been active and represents the Telegraph Hill dwellers association, which looks down on that area. There was Jerry Cauthen from San Francisco Tomorrow. Dan Rosenberg, the Sierra Club staff person, who worked so well on the Save the Bay campaign, was also active. And Kay Kerr of Save San Francisco Bay Association and a number of other people. Tony Rosenblatt was active on it. He has since become chairman of the San Francisco Planning Commission. There were about a dozen active members of that committee, and we met as frequently as weekly during the critical period, and were finally successful in getting the planning committee and San Francisco Board of Supervisors to deny the applications for preliminary approval of those projects.

One of the other fellows that was active with this group, although not formally a member of the committee, was Alvin Duskin, who had made some money in the clothing business and was a very public-spirited citizen. He was very effective in rallying citizen support to stop high-rises on the waterfront, and then went on to campaign for more restrictive height limits throughout the city, and I think ran for supervisor. He wasn't successful in getting the initiative through on limiting heights to, I think it was, six stories, nor in getting elected as supervisor.

J-E: Was the Sierra Club formally involved in this group?

Steele: I don't think I was formally designated as a Sierra Club spokesman, but certainly members in the Sierra Club Bay Chapter or the Sierra Club generally looked at me as a Sierra Club representative on that effort. I'm sure the Citizens Waterfront Committee and the public thought I was there as a Sierra Club representative.

J-E: How was this group funded?

Steele: It's all volunteer. We didn't have much in the way of expenses. We didn't ever get into taking out ads or buying time on radio or television or anything like that. I don't remember that we did.

J-E: Was it formed because of these two controversies, or did it have a more general purpose?

Steele: Yes, right. As time went on, it became more general and got into the planning of the waterfront, and even into issues about what to do about Yerba Buena Center, because that was related. One of the arguments for development on the waterfront was that it would be a great place for a convention center. So the Citizens Waterfront Committee began to get into some other issues.

Steele: After those two proposals were defeated, it didn't continue to function very long. I think after a couple of years it sort of faded away. By that time Goldman had been named to the San Francisco Park Commission, I'm sure in part because of his activities as chairman of the Citizens Waterfront Committee.

High Rises on the Waterfront

J-E: The waterfront committee was really active in 1970-71?

Steele: 1971 and 1972, yes.

J-E: And they were active because of major controversies that involved high rises on the waterfront. Perhaps we could talk about each of those. What were the issues involved with U.S. Steel? Was that the first one, or were these controversies happening simultaneously?

Steele: The main issue was the bulk and height, but there was an issue which a number of us were concerned about, and that's the use of the shoreline for office buildings and such. Or for housing. Particularly the Save the Bay Association felt very strongly that the shoreline should not be used for either one of those purposes--office buildings or housing. Kay Kerr was very vocal on that. I think she was the one that designed the lapel button that said, "Did We Save the Bay for Buildings?" So it wasn't just the visual impact. It was broader than that.

But for most of the public that got involved in it, I think it was the visual impact. And this combined with the Embarcadero freeway issue, for which there had been a citizens' campaign not just to stop it where it is now stopped, but to take it down. So there was quite a bit of sensitivity in San Francisco, particularly to opening up the area near the Ferry Building for public use and enjoyment.

J-E: The Embarcadero freeway issue was earlier, then?

Steele: Oh yes. The Embarcadero freeway battle was--I would guess it was about 1960, but I'm not certain.

J-E: That was a long, protracted battle, wasn't it?

Steele: Well, they stopped it. The idea was that the Embarcadero freeway was to be a connection between the freeway that comes up the peninsula and the Golden Gate Bridge, and there were alternatives to that, across town and farther inland. But they didn't stop the Embarcadero freeway soon enough, so you've got this little piece of it up there that blocks the access and view to the Ferry Building.

Steele: Every few years over the past fifteen years or so there have been moves to get it removed, and we get promises it's going to happen. Joe Alioto, when he was mayor, promised me he was going to get it down almost immediately. [laughs] And that's being renewed now. They've actually gotten down now to specific amounts of money from the feds to do it. But it was a related issue.

There was also, as you probably know, a lot of opposition to a fountain that was put in that area, the Vaillancourt Fountain, which a lot of people felt was very ugly. So a lot of people in San Francisco, and in the Bay Area as a whole, know a lot about that part of the waterfront.

J-E: Where was the U.S. Steel building to be? Could you give me a better sense of that?

Steele: Yes, there were to be, as I recall, one on one side of the Ferry Building at the end of Market Street and one on the other. I think the Ferry Port Plaza was to be just immediately north and the U.S. Steel building immediately south. Obviously, it would have dwarfed that nice structure, which everybody knows and loves and identifies as the Ferry Building. There are a lot of people in the Bay Area that commute to San Francisco, and in the old days we used to take ferry boats over, so it belongs to everybody.

J-E: It's my impression that the area around the Ferry Building is a major area of controversy. There have been several proposals for development and a lot of resistance to them.

Steele: Right, on each side of the building.

J-E: What kinds of strategies were you using, and who were the people, besides U.S. Steel, who were in favor of the buildings being constructed there?

Steele: I think the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce got into it officially, promoting it. The business community in San Francisco probably was split. I don't know. The mayor of San Francisco, Joe Alioto, was very much in favor of it, and he said publicly that he thought this was the most valuable piece of land in the country and should be developed. I can't recall all the players on both sides.

J-E: How about labor? Was there resistance? How did labor line up? Were they involved?

Steele: The Citizens Waterfront Committee invited representatives, particularly of the unions involved with the waterfront--the ILWU and the Sailors Union of the Pacific--and we did have Morris Weisberger, who was then head of the Sailors Union of the Pacific--he came to some meetings of the Citizens Waterfront Committee. I'm not sure whether Dave Jenkins came to meetings, but we were in touch with him. I just don't recall the other labor union contracts.

Steele: Typical of the labor union leaders' and members' attitudes is the Embarcadero freeway. Most labor people that you sit down and talk to will agree that it's a visual monstrosity, but I've had one of them say to me, "Well, my membership would crucify me if I was a party to taking it down, because they don't get much chance to get out and enjoy the things that you and I might enjoy, and one of their pleasures is on Sunday to load the kids and the wife in the old jalopy and drive around the Embarcadero freeway and look at the bay. For a low cost and convenient recreation, that's their Sunday." That is a good example of how we as conservationists assume that everybody ought to agree with us about things without always thinking about these kinds of considerations.

J-E: Were people from the Longshoreman's Union receptive to this? As I recall, they were really on the opposite side.

Steele: Yes. One of the complicating things about the ILWU position during this time was that Harry Bridges, the first and longtime president of the ILWU, had been serving on the Port Commission for quite a while. I used to negotiate with Harry, and so I knew him very well over a long period of time, and I knew that he had ambitions to show the capitalists that he could outdo them in a capitalistic venture. So that, to a lot of people's surprise, Bridges was promoting commercial development of the pier areas rather than retaining them for the kind of operations--that is, shipping--that his union was involved in. So he was promoting all kinds of development in order to get revenue to the Port of San Francisco and to make it a money-making venture.

He was working closely with Cyril Magnin, who had been president of the Port Commission for a long time and who used to say regularly that he had promised the State of California that when the city took it over that the port would be self-sufficient and would not be a burden on the state's taxpayers. So that complicated the ILWU's position on this kind of an issue.

J-E: It seems to me that Dave Jenkins pretty much fought you. Not you personally, but the group that you were involved with on this issue.

Steele: I don't recall what Dave's position was on the U.S. Steel building and the Ferry Port Plaza. I do recall that at at least one hearing of a Board of Supervisors committee, he and I were there and I should remember, but I don't remember what position he took.

J-E: What were the similarities and differences between the U.S. Steel building and the Ferry Port Plaza as an issue? Were pretty much the same people involved and were the issues the same, or was that a different kind of controversy?

Steele: The citizens' groups that were opposed were the same. My recollection is that the design and purpose of the buildings was quite a bit different. The U.S. Steel was going to be higher by some 550 feet and was going to be, I think, entirely office building, whereas the Ferry Port Plaza was going to be lower, spread-out, and involve a marina and other mixed uses.

J-E: And the position of the group on this was that it should not be built?

Steele: Yes. Not just those particular designs, but that those areas should not be developed for those kinds of uses--even by a low-rise building.

J-E: Was the forty-foot height limit an outgrowth of this? Alvin Duskin, I believe, was involved in that local proposition in San Francisco.

Steele: Yes, I think for some time the general height limit in the residential neighborhoods in San Francisco has been forty feet, although I'm not certain about that. But it had been tpaered, obviously, upward for the business district, and so the height limit for the waterfront area was much more than forty. In 1971 the Board of Supervisors established an eighty-four-foot limit for the waterfront with exceptions to 175 feet. But I think these two buildings would have required even a variance from the existing height limit. It seems to me that Duskin's initiative [1976] aeroed in on a maximum of six stories, which sounds like more than forty feet. And as a recall in his initiative, it was forty feet except for some closely confined exceptions--I guess the business district. And I think there was a pretty respectable vote on that. I don't remember what it was, but it was fairly close.

One of the good things that the campaign did was to get such a head of steam that the San Francisco Planning Department--Alan Jacobs was then head of it--was able to get adoption of a city-wide urban design plan which was a very forward-looking and responsible document. And I think the Board of Supervisors felt that in order to have the Duskin initiative defeated, they had to do something, and so they approved this plan, which is a hell of a good plan. It hasn't been meticulously followed, but that was one of the plusses that came out of it.

The Waterfront and BCDC

J-E: Were there ties between the waterfront committee and BCDC? I was wondering if there were any besides Katherine Kerr?

Steele: There was a direct tie between the Citizens Waterfront Committee and the BCDC activities. In the BCDC plan there's a provision for special area plans. You take a critical area and do a refined, detailed plan

Steele: for it. And the first area that BCDC decided to do that for was the San Francisco waterfront--both sides of the Ferry Building and extending north and sourth as far as the piers extend.

So some of the people who had been active in the U.S. Steel-Castle and Cooke battles were also involved in both sides in this planning effort. And an advisory committee was set up by the BCDC with about twenty of us, including some very good people. Dianne Feinstein was then a supervisor, and she was representing the Board of Supervisors. Walter Newman, who was head of the Planning Commission, was on it. The Chamber of Commerce, several other business interests were on it. And then I was the Sierra Club representative; Kay Kerr was on it from Save the Bay; Bob Katz was on it from the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Dave Jenkins was sort of--I don't know whether he was officially on it, but he was very active. It was set up on a schedule of monthly meetings initially, but sometimes there were more than one a month. We met over a perod of, I think, close to two years, and worked out detailed plans for literally every square foot of the waterfront. We would take them pier by pier. And it was an open process. It came up with a pretty good result.

J-E: This was the Waterfront Advisory Committee, is that right?

Steele: Right. And we recommended a plan which was approved then by BCDC and by the City of San Francisco. And one of the reasons that there was a tie with the Citizens Waterfront Committee was that part of this effort was to get the city on record with a plan that would not permit a U.s. Steel-Ferry Port Plaza type of project ot even get started again. So, again, I think partly because of the fear of initiatives on the subject, not only BCDC but also the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved this special area plan.

J-E: We probably want to conclude in a few minutes. I have just a few more questions.

Steele: Let me just add one other thing. The issue of the area immediately around the Ferry Building has continued to be unresolved. That's probably due to two things. One, the special area plan that this two-year effort resulted in specifically provided that the area immediately around the Ferry Building should be subjected to even more detailed study called a "total design plan." I did not continue on the committee that worked on that. Berry Bunshoft, who had been active in the Citizens Waterfront Committee for years and has been active with the Save the Bay Association, served on that. I think Becky Evans served from the Sierra Club. And, as you may have noticed, there are even current proposals for a massive redevelopment of the Ferry Building area and the Agricultural Building, which we took great pains to preserve. So it's a continuing sort of battlefront.

J-E: Were there conflicts with the BCDC staff on some of these issues? What was the working relationship between the BCDC staff and the committee?

Steele: BCDC and the people were very fortunate in their initial BCDC staff to have excellent people, and particularly the executive director, Joe Bodovitz. He and the first chairman of BCDC, Mel Lane, worked very well together, and they were both dedicated to having wide public participation and hearings in every stage of the way, and it worked very well.

When he left, unfortunately from my point of view and, I think, conservationists generally, the executive director's spot was taken over by Charlie Roberts, who had been the Corps of Engineers representative on BCDC.

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Steele: During the time that Charlie Roberts was executive director of BCDC, we--both the Save the Bay Association and the Sierra Club--had a number of problem issues with BCDC staff. A number of issues involved the Port of Oakland, which had expansion plans. A number of us felt that Roberts was unduly favoring the Port of Oakland. He later left BCDC and went to work for the Port of Oakland and is still working for them.

Then he was succeeded by Mike Wilmar, who was another dedicated person like Joe Bodovitz, and I think that conservationists worked well with him. And a more recent change, since we have a new governor--I think that was one of the reasons for it, although I'm not sure--Mike Wilmar has left, and Alan Pendleton, who's been on the staff for a long time--a very capable, dedicated person--is now executive director. I think he will do a good job if he's permitted to. But Governor Deukmejian has removed five people from BCDC, a thing that had never happened before, and put in his own five people, who sound like they're very much pro-development. I haven't been to BCDC meetings lately, but I'm told by people who have that the chairman and vice chairman have been attacking the staff for being anti-development. So there's probably a bit of a problem developing there.

J-E: Is there anything else you wanted to add about BCDC or Save the Bay or some of the other issues we've been talking about?

Steele: No. There are a lot of things I'd like to talk about, and I'd like particularly to talk in some depth about the proposed Eastshore state park, but that's a subject that would take quite a bit of time, and it's not part of history yet. [laughs] I hope it will be. I have spent some time on the Eastshore Park with the new director of State Parks and Recreation, and I think it will move along. But it's very interesting because there's great opportunity. There's basically one private property owner: that's Santa Fe. They had acquired that

Steele: whole strip a hundred years ago when they planned to run a railroad track down there. But now they recognize that it's highly valuable property. And having seen one high-rise in Emeryville, the opportunities to make a lot of money and to do a lot of damage to the shoreline are pretty obvious.

Santa Fe has recently come up with a revised plan that has some good things in it, but it would not be a park. The area north from University Avenue is the area they want to put some development in, and they're talking about having just a hundred-foot strip of park around the outside of that, which is kind of ridiculous. The other part, the part south of University Avenue, they're willing to dedicate or give to the public for a park. So that's a plus.

J-E: I want to thank you, Mr. Steele. I've enjoyed interviewing you.

Steele: Right. I'm not sure this was very precise or informative or listenable or readable.

J-E: I think it's all four, actually. Thank you.

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TAPE GUIDE -- Dwight C. Steele

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APPENDIX A

San Francisco Bay Chapter

SIERRA CLUB

POLICY ON BCDC SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN

The San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club endorses the Bay Plan and commends the Bay Conservation and Development Commission for its thorough and thoughtful studies and recommendations. We believe, however, that the Plan can and must be strengthened.

Because of the complexity and detail of the Bay Plan, we urge that the Legislature, in approving and adopting the Bay Plan, make it clear that it is the legislative intent that:

1. The Bay is an invaluable and irreplaceable natural asset, of which all parts are interrelated. The overwhelming public interest in the maintenance and enhancement of the Bay requires stringent restrictions on filling and dredging to protect the ecology and environment, with particular attention to water and air pollution, climate, fish and wildlife recreation and scenic enjoyment for present and future generations. The legislative intent is that this public interest should prevail over any private profit or special public gain that might be obtained by filling portions of the Bay.

2. Further reduction in the total size of the Bay waters subject to tidal action (below the present 400 plus square miles) should be prevented. The Bay Agency should be mandated to provide for opening salt ponds, wet lands or other areas to tidal action to compensate for filling which is approved in accordance with the Plan. Consideration should be given to actually increasing the present water surface of the Bay.

3. Major fills are not in the long-run public interest and all fills should be limited to water-oriented uses which will benefit the entire Bay Area. Any filling permitted in accord with the Plan should be the minimum necessary for the permitted purpose.

4. All of the shoreline of the Bay should be available to public access except where such access must be restricted for safety reasons because of military, port, airport or water-oriented industry uses permitted by the Plan.

5. Filling is not to be permitted for housing developments and any use of the shoreline for housing should provide for public access and for increasing the shoreline and water surface area, in accord with the specific policy recommendations of the Bay Plan.

6. Any filling or development of waterfront areas is to be limited to the locations and sizes set forth in the Bay Plan and maps, and priority areas must be reserved for the Plan uses indicated for the future. The Bay Agency should have the power to amend the priority areas only within basic criteria established by the Legislature.

7. Spoils from permitted dredging should be taken outside the Golden Gate or deposited where flushing action will so carry them. They should not be used to build islands or other fills in the Bay.

All of the above matters are covered in the Bay Plan as submitted, but in some cases are clouded by details and discussions and references to the same subject in different parts of the Plan. We believe it is important that the above matters be clarified and underlined in terms of specific legislative intent.

There are some other policy recommendations of the Bay Plan which we believe should be modified or strengthened when the Legislature adopts the Plan. These are listed below.

The San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club believes that the BCDC and its staff and consultants have done an excellent job in preparing the Bay Plan and the supporting reports. However we believe that in some instances the recommendations would compromise the public interest. We respectfully suggest that the Legislature can strengthen the Bay Plan and better protect the long-run public interest by incorporating the following modifications and additions in the Bay Plan policies:

A. No filling should be permitted for Bay-oriented commercial recreation, hotels, convention halls, specialty shops and restaurants, or to "improve shoreline appearance." Permanent shrinking of the Bay is too great a price for such unnecessary fill uses.

B. There should be no supertanker facility in the Bay. This risk of oil pollution of the Bay should not be taken.

C. Drilling for oil or gas should be prohibited in the Bay.

D. There should be no additional freeways or bridges over Bay waters, whether on fill, piles or bridges. Any new vehicular crossings should be underwater. Transportation by other means than automobiles should be emphasized and assisted by various legislative acts, including appropriate Bay Plan provisions.

E. There should be no additional high-voltage transmission lines over Bay waters. Present lines should go under the Bay as soon as technically feasible.

F. Warehouses and container storage areas should be inland at right angles to the port facilities rather than spread along the shoreline. Container assembly yards should be inland from the shoreline.

G. In connection with the requirement that permits be granted only by vote of a majority of the Bay Agency body, it should be provided that an application that does not receive such approval vote within 120 days shall be deemed denied.

Some compromises were recommended by the BCDC with respect to the above matters on the assumption that the State Legislature and the public would not support stringent restrictions on Bay filling. We submit that such compromises are not in the public interest, would not be favored by the general public and should not be endorsed or adopted by the Legislature.

Although some of the modifications we suggest above are relatively minor, we urge that the Legislature consider such matters since compromises which encroach on the Bay are practically irretrievable.

The Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter supports the establishment of a permanent agency to carry out the San Francisco Bay Plan submitted to the State Legislature on January 6, 1969 by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

Although a multi-purpose regional agency may eventually absorb the Bay Agency, the 1969 Legislature should continue a single purpose regional agency to exercise controls over changes in the Bay and its shoreline. The functions of the Bay Agency should be transferred to a multi-purpose regional agency only after experience with a multi-purpose agency satisfies the Legislature that it will control Bay development at least as effectively as the BCDC has done under the McAteer-Petris Act.

If the Legislature cannot reach a prompt decision on the structure of a new Bay Agency, the Bay Plan should be approved and the existing BCDC designated as the continuing agency to carry it out, pending future legislative review regarding merger with a multi-purpose regional agency, or the establishment of a differently structured Bay Agency.

Since the Bay belongs to all of the people of the State and its importance extends beyond the immediate Bay Area, the State law must specify the criteria on which the Bay Plan is based and amending power given to the Bay Agency should be limited by these criteria.

The gradual destruction of the Bay should be halted. We believe the adoption and implementation of the Bay Plan, with the clarifications and modifications suggested above, by the 1969 Legislature is essential to the protection of the Bay in the public interest and that such action will receive broad public support.

(Approved and adopted by the Executive Committee of San Francisco Bay Chapter, Sierra Club, March 10, 1969)

EDITORIAL:

Lessons from the San Francisco Bay Campaign

The passage and signing of the Knox Bill adopting the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Plan for the control of filling and development of the Bay and its shoreline was a great victory for the people over the special interests who would exploit this great estuary. In the political infighting, some compromises and accommodations had to be made, but the law is strong enough to stop shrinkage of the Bay by filling and to provide regional control over development of its shores.

This was the first major battle involving the protection of an urban environment in which the club has been involved. The Board of Directors established this as a priority project in February 1969 after the state legislature was already in session. Although we started late and with practically no prior planning or preparation, the club was able to make a major contribution to this victory.

The temptation to celebrate is great, but it was a sobering success. We should never again be so close to defeat on a vital issue of regional and national importance.

Massive favorable public opinion, good media support, the determination of hundreds who paid their way on chartered buses to the state capitol on repeated occasions to crowd the legislative halls for committee hearings (the largest consistent turnouts for any legislation in California history), the wires, letters and telephone calls from thousands throughout the state, and the round-the-clock work of a few individuals, might well have failed because of serious weaknesses or gaps in our ability to mobilize our resources. We had excellent staff support and cooperation from Mike McCloskey and the indefatigable Dan Rosenberg, but were handicapped at first by the lack of an established plan or pattern for a state campaign.

The club has proven its ability to be effective at the federal level in many vital conservation battles. More attention should be given to regional environmental issues. The critical issues of air, water and noise pollution, the recycling of solid wastes, transportation, and control of pesticides will determine the livability of our urban areas.

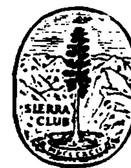
Success in tackling these problems in California, New York and other high population states will make a major contribution to the worldwide protection and enhancement of our whole ecosystem. Of course, we should not slacken our efforts to preserve wilderness, wild rivers, redwoods, and other vital natural resources, but we can more effectively work for protection of our environment at home.

Some will say there is no substitute for success, but the victory here was too close for any comfort. It might have been lost at any time, including the last hours of Senate debate. Many outside the club, including some dedicated, courageous legislators, helped avoid disaster.

We must be better prepared for the future so that we will not have another such cliff-hanger. And protection of the Bay or any other environmental factor will depend on our heeding the repeated admonition of California Assemblyman Knox that, "Eternal vigilance is the price of conservation."

DWIGHT C. STEELE
Project Coordinator,
San Francisco Bay and Delta

As the Bulletin was going to press, the editors learned of the death on August 21, 1969, of Walter Augustus Starr, Honorary President and a member since 1895 of the Sierra Club. A tribute to this life-long conservationist and his contribution to the Sierra Club will appear in the next issue.



Sierra Club Bulletin

AUGUST, 1969
VOL. 54 — NO. 8

. . . TO EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE NATION'S SCENIC RESOURCES . . .

COVER: Allerton Park, a midwestern *San Simeon*, is threatened by the Corps of Engineers, Oakley Dam project (see page 8). The Bourdelle bronze, "Death of the Last Centaur," bought for the park in 1929, has become a symbol of what the future may bring to the whole park. It has been written of the centaur, "The night which is closing in takes possession of his neck, his limbs; he is twisted and tortured . . .; his forthcoming death benumbs him little by little. . . . He is superb in pride and despair."

Photograph by Julie Cannon

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THE SIERRA CLUB,* founded in 1892, has devoted itself to the study and protection of national scenic resources, particularly those of mountain regions. Participation is invited in the program to enjoy and preserve wilderness, wildlife, forests, and streams.

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Diane Walker

THE SIERRA CLUB IN NEW JERSEY: FOCUS ON TOXIC WASTE MANAGEMENT

With an Introduction by
Anne Morris

An Interview Conducted by
Claire Baruxis
1983

Sierra Club History Committee
1989

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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INTRODUCTION

Visitors to the Sierra Club's New Jersey Chapter office must drive down Nassau Street, main thoroughfare of the old university town of Princeton. The gates, greenswards, towers and dignified structures of the university lie on one side of the street, with preppy shops and eateries on the other. A few blocks further down frame houses, none less than a century old, march in friendly order under stately trees in this quintessential college town, exemplar of America's northeastern traditions.

Turning into the parking area for The Sierra Club one is suddenly in a different world. California springs to mind. Dirt driveway with huge stones to direct traffic, a health food store on the first floor of a building that could have been built in Arizona, passage through the office space of a holistic, quasi-Zen organization full of papers and smiling ladies, and finally up a short flight of stairs to a crammed little office in the back of the building--this is one's introduction to the New Jersey Chapter and to Diane Walker.

Diane has been conservation chair, first of the Southern New Jersey Group of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club from its founding in the mid-sixties and then of the New Jersey Chapter since 1972. Her work runs like a bright thread through the whole course of environmentalism as we know it today in New Jersey, from its start to the present. Her steady hand, good judgement, selflessness and endurance have been at the core of public interest work on solid waste management, hazardous waste issues, resource conservation and the operation of the New Jersey Chapter itself. She has provided solid, gutsy guidance to the rest of the environmental community as it has developed around the state's toughest societal issues. One learns to listen in the ongoing debates, and when her colleagues hear Diane say, "Now wait a minute, guys!" they do just that. So do politicians since Diane and others founded the campaign-oriented Environmental Voters Alliance.

For Diane there is no inconsistency in getting along well with the legislature, the state's Department of Environmental Protection and the governor, while at the same time being their severest critic. Her principles are well-defined, her manner unflappable. She is thorough and thoroughly consistent, with a self-imposed boundary around herself that clearly separates the important from the less so. Diane's work week has run between halftime and overtime without stop--and without pay--for twenty-five years.

Diane was brought up in California. "We spent summers in the mountains of Colorado. Crossing the desert on those endless car trips to the mountains was so beautiful. It made a big impression on me," she says. Married and with small children, she came to New Jersey by way of New York City. Her first husband was an artist. They lived in Princeton, but spent summers in

the southwest, living and travelling in a made-over bus. Her West Coast sensibilities were offended by summertime views of dammed-up canyons, rapacious water projects, and blue skies marred by emissions from the Four Corners power plant. She wrote to New Jersey legislators, and soon was caught up in New Jersey issues at least as complex and a lot closer to home. When Silent Spring first appeared in the New Yorker magazine in the early sixties the die was cast for Diane. Rachel Carson's landmark publication elicited a dedicated environmental conviction from her that drives her actions still.

The various facets of her life have a holistic inner consistency that is rare in affluent suburban New Jersey. Her outrage at environmental insensitivities has turned its proverbial "other cheek" in adopting a positive personal philosophy in support of basic conservation of resources. Just as she lives that philosophy in her twenty-to-sixty-hour week, so does she live it at home.

As you get to know Diane a bit better, the chances are good that you will be invited to forsake her office and start going to her house for meetings. Now it becomes clearer what the complementary elements and driving forces are that have stood her in such good stead through a quarter of a century of environmentalism. The California element is intertwined with the northeast factor in an unusual house--and an unusual person.

The house is the first in a series of three. It is site-adapted, passive solar, wood-stove-heated, half underground and almost windowless on the north side, without lawns. It is a private, inward house, furnished as much with bowls of bright stones, driftwood and zany natural objects as it is with its carefully acquired chairs, tables, rugs and paintings.

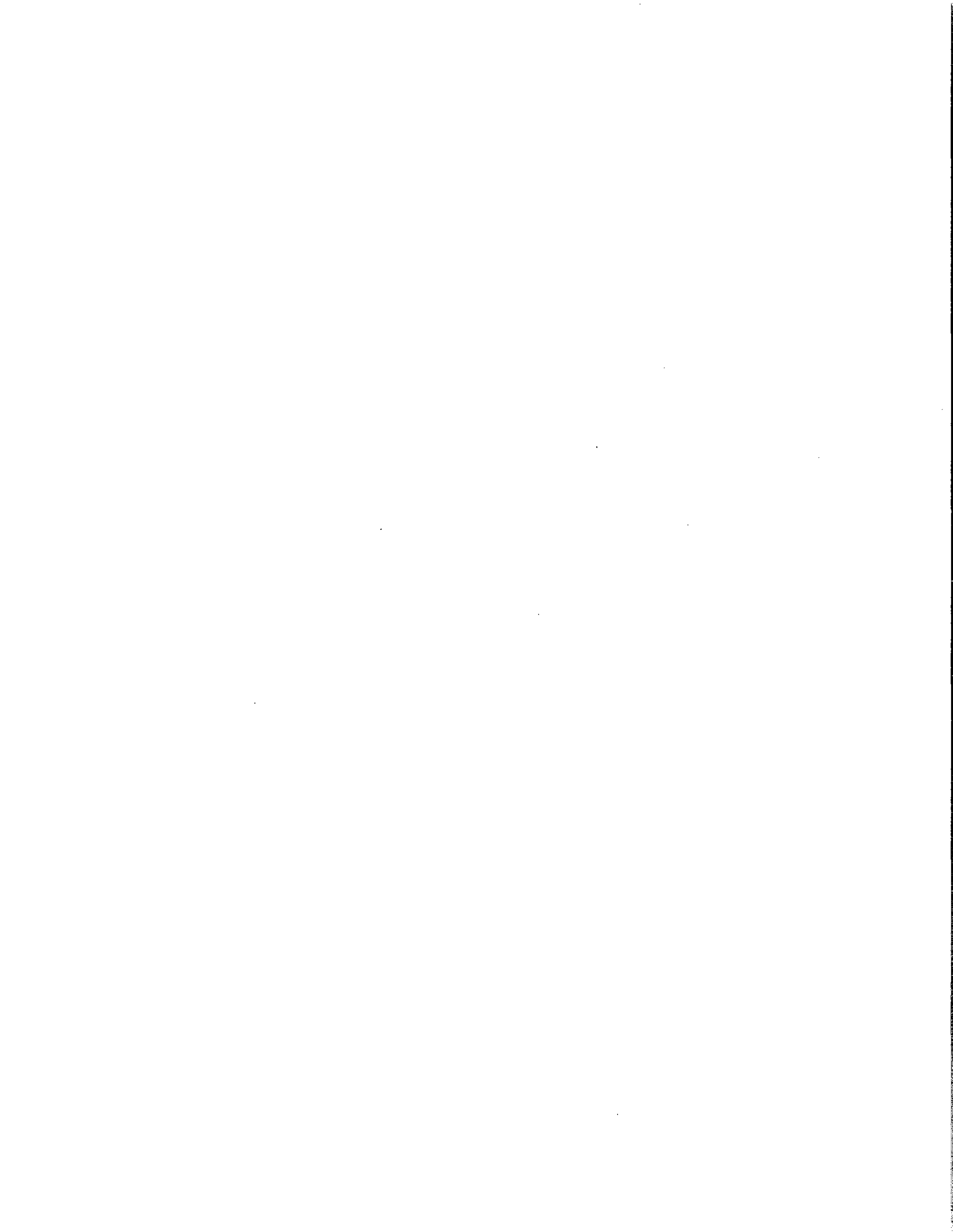
The second house is perched on a ledge on an island in Maine. It is octagonal in shape, resplendent with windows overlooking water, and simple in its interior appointments. Its walls were pre-built during one winter in the garage in Princeton and transported to Maine in a rented truck by Diane and her husband, Ian. They have worked on the second house for two lengthy summers, with more to go. When the third house is built, the second house will become the guest house for grown children and friends. Then Diane and Ian will become residents of Maine and carry to that state their convictions of conservation and lifestyle.

Ian Walker has the distinction of being the tallest environmentalist in New Jersey (Probably in Maine too). His work has moved back and forth lifelong between government and public interest organizations. As the current chair of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club, his work complements Diane's in a closeknit pairing of concerns and abilities.

Diane and Ian are a one-car, two-bike family. For them, the pleasures of biking, canoeing, walking, music, house-building, friends and family--and full-time volunteer envirnomentalism--are enough. We've been lucky to have them here in New Jersey. We will miss them when they go.

Anne F. Morris
Executive Director
Association of New Jersey
Environmental Commissions

April 1986
Mendham, New Jersey



INTERVIEW HISTORY

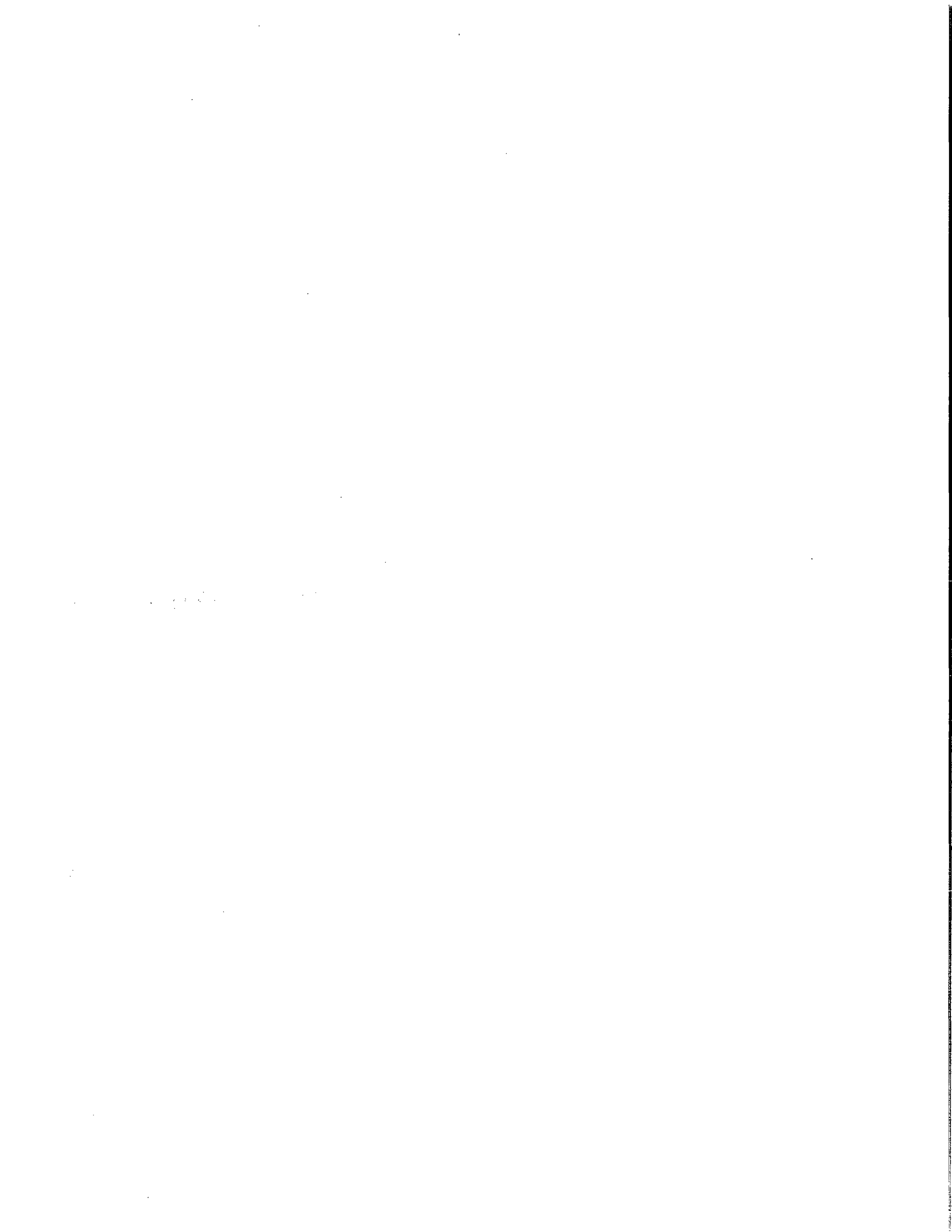
Diane Walker, who lists her occupation as "volunteer for the Sierra Club," is the epitome of the skilled and highly committed volunteer-activist at the core of the Sierra Club's organizational structure. Diane was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1931 and raised by her grandparents in the gracious Bel-Air community named after her grandfather, Alphonzo E. Bell. Her interest in conservation was aroused in the 1960s by the threat of dam building in the Grand Canyon and resulted in a letter of concern to New Jersey senator Clifford Case.

From this beginning, Diane went on to become the first conservation chairperson of the Atlantic Chapter's Southern New Jersey group and a founder of the Sierra Club's New Jersey Chapter. She has led innumerable environmental campaigns in New Jersey, served on statewide commissions, testified at state and congressional hearings, and, through her volunteer work in the Sierra Club chapter office, taught countless others to become citizen-activists for environmental protection. Her oral history discusses her work in wetland protection, the Pine Barrens, solid waste management, energy, air pollution, and nuclear policy, but focuses on her involvement in toxic and hazardous waste management issues. She discusses her efforts as advisor to, and critic of, several New Jersey political figures and the state Department of Environmental Protection. Her comments illustrate the contributions to be made, as well as the dilemmas faced, by the environmentalist who attempts to influence government policy through membership on advisory boards and commissions.

Diane was interviewed in July and August, 1983, by Claire Baruxis, a volunteer interviewer for the Sierra Club History Committee. Claire graduated from Rutgers University with an A.B. in chemistry and an M.A. in environmental studies. She was directed on this project by Dr. Susan R. Schrepfer, professor of history at Rutgers and member of the Sierra Club History Committee. Claire's informed background and careful preparation for this interview are readily apparent in the following pages.

Ann Lage
Editor/Coordinator
Sierra Club Oral History
Project

April 2, 1986
Berkeley, California



I EARLY CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

[Interview 1: July 11, 1983]##

Personal Background

Baruxis: Diane, I'd like to go into your background before we actually talk about the Sierra Club and New Jersey's pollution. I'd like to know if you can recount how you became involved in all this, how you got inspired to devote yourself to environmental protection. What were some of the earliest influences?

Walker: All right. It's sort of hard to put my finger on any particular thing that happened as a kid, or whatever. I did grow up in California and spent a lot of time outside. I grew up in summers in Colorado on a ranch in the wild and wooly West and went to camp in wild areas, and so forth. So that's bound to have had, at least I think that it had, some influence on my appreciation of the outdoors, the natural beauties, and all that.

I was aware of my surroundings. I didn't think of it as my environment, or not being polluted. Nobody heard the word polluted or pollution back then.

I went to school in a coeducational boarding school, starting from the seventh grade, that was sort of a country school. That had an influence on me and my values and lifestyle, too. Sort of an informal country school. It wasn't touted as a Quaker school,

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##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 169.

Walker: there were Quaker people there, and I know that had an influence on my life, too. How or if it actually had an influence on my eventually becoming involved in environmental things, I don't really know.

My best school subjects when I was in high school were physiology and biology and the sciences. However, I also was good in art and won some prizes. Of course, in those days it was much easier to encourage a girl to go toward the arts than it was toward the sciences. I sort of think that if I were growing up today, I may have been more encouraged to continue in the sciences when I went to college, as opposed to the arts. I did go toward the arts.

I don't know if that answers your question sufficiently.

Baruxis: It helps me a lot.

Walker: Did you want to know specifically about education?

Baruxis: If you want to discuss where you went to school and perhaps what were influences there, as well.

Walker: Just what I already mentioned. College was a two-year junior college, where I majored in art.

Baruxis: That was out East?

Walker: That was in New York, yes. And had no bearing whatsoever on environmental issues or science or anything. So that was beside the point, as far as what I've come to.

Then jumping a few years--and we will then go back, I think--I did become interested in environmental issues and what was going on. I took courses. There were short courses given at Rutgers at some point back then--I guess in the early seventies--on solid waste management and water pollution control and various issues. They were short courses, three-day courses, and things like that. I also audited the course in ecology at Princeton. I couldn't take the course, because it required a nodding acquaintance, at least, with higher levels of math that I just didn't have. So I audited it, and I got a lot out of that. It was in terrestrial and aquatic ecology and sort of reinforced what I somewhat knew, but gave me some technical understanding of ecological connections. I enjoyed that.

Walker: And I've read a lot. I've sort of educated myself in a lot of ways, I suppose, over time.

Baruxis: It always turns out that way; you can only keep on in school for so long.

Walker: I suppose. Well, you know, going to school didn't do me much good. I generally say as far as college goes, I might just as well have learned flower arranging.

Baruxis: You'd be surprised. I think it's important to have both art and science. I think it must be an excellent combination to have in one's background.

Walker: That's true. There was a lot of fine arts training, but my concentration was in commercial art, so theoretically I would have a skill. I got married instead and had babies, and so on.

Early Interest in the Environment

Baruxis: I bet you got a lot of inspiration just from the environment you grew up in. I know when I went through Colorado at one time I was just awestruck by the vastness of the landscapes and the sky.

Walker: Yes. I remember that. I remember as a kid driving from California to Colorado through the Southwest, with the vast spaces, and being able to see a hundred miles. I remember that as a kid. When I took my kids out there, in the early sixties, that was what I wanted them to be able to see. You know, coming from New Jersey, this was a whole new dimension for them to be able to drive along and come to the crest of a hill and be able to see this huge expanse.

Baruxis: Was it when you got back from college, coming back to California, that you became environmentally aware? Were there certain movements going on, certain issues, that drew you into political action?

Walker: There weren't thing that drew me actively into anything. But I can remember being back East for those two years, of course, flying back home on occasion. I can remember flying back into Los Angeles and seeing what had happened while I was growing up and then while I was away, too. It was just suddenly sprawl and the cutting off of the hillsides, and houses all over the place, struck me. But I didn't get involved at that point.

Walker: It really wasn't until '62 that I got involved. We'd been living here in Princeton, since, I guess, '55, and I was making babies and that kind of stuff. Then we fixed an old schoolbus, a middle-size schoolbus, as a long-range traveler and as a base camp and drove out West. The first trip was in '62, a sort of a reconnoiter trip. We saw, as I said, the vast open spaces, and so on and so forth.

Then we also saw--it was either in '62 or '63--that the Four Corners power plant had begun its power production, and there was just solid crud coming out of the smokestacks. You could see this plume for miles. I was sort of outraged at that. That was a new number for me, to see that.

I also, in '62, read Silent Spring. That was really a main trigger. I read that in the New Yorker and was profoundly moved by it and motivated by it, too, I suppose. And then seeing all the discussion on television and in the newspapers about that, and people lambasting Rachel Carson, and that guy from Rutgers, particularly, Robert White Stevens. I remember him. And I thought he was evil incarnate somehow, with his attitude and his expressions, these sort of nasty expressions about Rachel Carson. So it was sort of a combination of having read Silent Spring, seeing that Four Corners power plant with the solid stuff coming out of it, and at the same time, hearing that they had planned to build dams in the Grand Canyon.

Baruxis: That'll do it.

Walker: I was outraged at that prospect. I'm not sure how much influence this had, but earlier I had been very much interested in the McCarthy hearings and had listened to them on the television, you know, while babysitting, chasing around one baby, and I guess I was pregnant with the other at that point. No, it was just before moving to Princeton. That probably served to awaken me to what was going on in the world and to pay some attention other than just to babies.

Very soon after moving to Princeton in the late fifties or early sixties, I guess, I got involved in the civil rights movement and actually became a volunteer certain times of the week, down in an office in Princeton, a civil rights thing. And I went on those marches and all.

So it was sort of a number of things happening about the same time, all in the early sixties. I concentrated more when I was here on the civil rights stuff. That was a specific thing that I did. And then, with those trips out West, in '62, '63, I began to write letters to Congress on environmental things.

Walker: The first letter I wrote was to then Senator Case on the Grand Canyon dam. I don't know, do you want me to go into that whole--?

Baruxis: Absolutely!

Walker: Okay. Well, we heard about the proposed dams. I didn't know much about the Grand Canyon at that point. I didn't know there was a Sierra Club, or whatever. But I wrote him a letter and said that I thought it was an outrage for anyone to propose putting dams in the Grand Canyon.

Baruxis: You had heard about it while you were on your trip?

Walker: Yes. Or maybe I read about it in the papers. I forget how I heard about it. So when I got home, I went to the library and read everything I could about the Grand Canyon. I guess first I wrote to Senator Case just a very brief letter, expressed my outrage. I then got a letter back from him and a letter back from the Bureau of Reclamation. He had sent my letter on to them. It was sort of standard operating procedure for Congress. They would send along constituents' letters to the bureau, or whatever.

So they sent me what I recognized as just propaganda--information, or noninformation, or whatever. But I didn't know enough to be able to refute what I sensed was wrong. So then when I got home, I went to the library and found that, though they had told me the Grand Canyon was only--I forget the numbers--something like two hundred and thirteen miles, or anyway, one set of miles, I found out in the library that the actual Grand Canyon was many miles larger than that. But part of the Grand Canyon was included in Grand Canyon National Monument, which didn't have the protection of the national park. So somehow the Bureau of Reclamation tried to confuse me with that.

So I wrote Senator Case back and explained all that and whatever other information I had found, and we had a continuing exchange of letters between me and Senator Case and the Bureau of Reclamation. I was enormously impressed with the fact that Senator Case wrote me back the first time, and then again, and that we had this correspondence, and that he was obviously interested in whatever information that I was passing along to him.

Baruxis: What year exactly did you write to him?

Walker: It must have been '62 or '63.

Baruxis: Just for the record, what year did you move to New Jersey--around '55?

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: So anyway, the letters continued.

Walker: Yes. And then somehow, in '63 or '64, I guess, I discovered that there were these other conservation groups. There was the National Parks and Conservation Association, Sierra Club, and Audubon. I guess I knew about Audubon, because I had been a birdwatcher early on. I forgot about that. [laughs] I suppose that's sort of an influence, too.

Baruxis: As you remember things, just throw them in.

Walker: You know, just watching the birds at the birdfeeder at home, and then I went on some trips to look at birds, down to Briganteen and Tuckerton Meadows and all that. Anyway, so in '64, I joined the Sierra Club and a lot of organizations and began getting their magazines, which of course had a lot of information in them.

So then I continued on the Grand Canyon, but then I also began to get interested in other issues. It's funny, you get interested in one environmental issue, and then you begin to read the papers, and other things jump out at you, too. I remember reading stuff in the papers about sewerage outfalls into the ocean. There was some discussion about extending the sewage outfalls further out in the ocean. I was sort of outraged that that's what they were doing with sewage, that they would even put in that close to the shore. So I wrote letters, I think it was to Robert Roe, who was then the commissioner of New Jersey's Department of Conservation and Economic Development, or whatever it was in those days.

So I wrote to him and got some kind of gobbledygook answers back from somebody in the department. I began to write fairly often, I suppose, about different things. On the sewage outfalls, they said that, oh, they were going to add a lot more chlorine to the outfalls, or something. Then I asked the question, "How good is chlorine for the fish?" They wrote back and said, "Oh, it's no problem at all." I didn't really believe it, but I didn't know enough to know how to pursue that particular question.

Then the SST controversy came up, the supersonic transport. I began to write a lot of letters about that. I guess I had a letter to the editor in the New York Times on the SST. At some

Walker: point I made a connection with a guy--gee, I can't even remember his name. He was at Harvard. William Surcliff, who, interestingly enough, now is in solar stuff. I paid attention to his writings in building this house. But that's another question. Anyway, Professor Shurcliff and I had a lot of correspondence, and he was sort of a main honcho opposed to the supersonic transport, wrote some technical papers on it, and actually a little booklet called "The SST: From Watts to Harlem in Two Hours," or something, some way of putting down the whole idea. So that was another early thing that I was involved in.

Anyway, the Grand Canyon dams, the SST, and some minor questions just sort of on my own, without any organized effort or anything, and water pollution control and sewers, sewage outfall into the ocean business, were my earliest things, at least as far as I can remember.

Then we come to the Sierra Club being set up in New Jersey. Are you ready for that?

Baruxis: We will be getting to that. Maybe we could continue with the Grand Canyon issue. Let's continue with your correspondence and Senator Case. It seems you found a real ally in him. In fact, I think he proved himself in a number of issues. What developed out of that? I know eventually he introduced a bill for protecting the canyon. But can you continue with what happened? And the background to the Grand Canyon issue also had been an issue attracting a great deal of interest.

[phone interruption]

Baruxis: Maybe we can put it in the context with what had already happened, in terms of environmentalists fighting construction of dams on the Colorado River. But, again, just continue with your experiences with Case as well.

[phone interruption]

Walker: On those earlier bus trips--and I guess the first one in '62--we, of course, had gone to the Grand Canyon and stood at the edge and looked into the thing. I was overwhelmed by that and wanted to get down into the canyon and wanted to see more of it. I guess that on other of our trips we had gone to both sides of the canyon. And I was struck by that. Then we heard about the proposal to build dams. At some point, I became aware that there were other controversies, too, on the Colorado River. There had been a fight by environmental groups to prevent a dam at Glen Canyon that the conservation movement had lost.

Walker: I sort of vaguely remember my grandfather having talked about Glen Canyon and how beautiful it was. He must have gone on some trip there. Anyway, it's some vague recollection in my mind. When I first heard about it, it rang a bell for me then.

So anyway, then when the Grand Canyon came up, I thought it's bad enough that they did Glen Canyon, but to do Grand Canyon, too! So there were environmental groups that were fighting the Grand Canyon dams. I was unaware of that when I began to get involved in it, when I first wrote to Senator Case. But there was Grand Canyon National Park and Grand Canyon National Monument, so it had been given a certain amount of protection. But the monument section wouldn't have prevented dams from being built on it, and then the other dam was proposed above the technical boundary of Grand Canyon National Park. It was to be built in Marble Canyon. I've since rafted through the whole of the Grand Canyon, and so I know how glorious the whole thing is. That they were proposing such a thing was just outrageous. And, as I wrote to Senator Case, it was a world resource, and to have dams put in there was a crime against humanity, or something. I don't know that I ever said that. But anyway, I felt very strongly about it.

Ultimately, Senator Case introduced a bill to expand the Grand Canyon to include Marble Canyon and the part that was in the monument, which would give for all time the whole of the Grand Canyon the protection that being in a national park would give it.

Now, I know that I wasn't the only one working with or on, or whatever, Senator Case on that, but I do feel that I helped. That was important to me, to feel that I had made a contribution along with a lot of other people, in protecting such a place. And that made me feel, "Well, maybe I could help on other things, too."

Baruxis: How did he develop his proposal?

Walker: I'm sure he must have sat down with some of the national environmental or conservation groups, Sierra Club and others, to help prepare the legislation. At that time, I didn't know how those things functioned. But I know now that that's how they do work. And I imagine there were public hearings on it. I don't remember whether I wrote comments at that time or not.

Baruxis: Had you been aware at the time of the Sierra Club's efforts to protect the canyon?

Walker: Not until '64. And then, of course, I did become aware. That was one of the reasons that I joined, as well as to get the information from them.

The Controversy over Dave Brower as Sierra Club Executive Director

Baruxis: There was a great deal of controversy over David Brower.

Walker: Yes. He took out ads. They were wonderful ads! I may even have copies of them in my file. I probably do, because they were so good. One was on behalf of the redwoods, and the other was on behalf of the Grand Canyon. The headline on one of the ads was something about, "Would you flood the Sistine Chapel to more easily see the ceiling?" or something. Because the argument for building the dam was, well, if it's flooded, then more people can get in there and see the Grand Canyon, which is of course just absurd. But that Sistine Chapel ad was just wonderful. A full-page thing. And the text was just perfect. There were coupons to send in. And then it was a similar thing done for the redwoods. I gather the administration at that point, somebody, got the IRS to act. You know, the ad came out on a Sunday, and it was practically Tuesday that they knocked at the Sierra Club door and challenged their tax status. And actually, it was a favor to the club. I think they lost their 501(C)(3) status and had to become a 501(C)(4), which meant that they could lobby. Before that, they hadn't done lobbying to the extent that they now do.

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Walker: Of course, not being intimately involved with the workings of the club at that time, I'm not sure of all the ins and outs of the controversy over Dave Brower. My recollection was that there were two things that Dave Brower did that annoyed the Sierra Club board of directors or got them mad, or whatever. One was, he was very much more activist-oriented than some of the board members at that time. You know, willing to tread on government toes. Taking out those ads, for instance. It was a major, new adventure for any environmental group to do something as blatant and outrageous as that.

The other thing was, I think, he was willing to spend money less cautiously, or whatever, than the club was willing to spend it. He may have overspent the budget on the books program. It was at that time that they came out with the Exhibit Format books, which were these gorgeous big coffee table kinds of books. And, of course, taking out those ads. That was a big expense, too.

Walker: I think he may have somewhat run roughshod over the club ideas or thoughts on those kinds of things. But I think he was very healthy for the club at that time. He sort of forced them more into taking an outfront, strong, forceful position on issues. I think it made a big difference in the fact that the dams aren't built in the Grand Canyon, and that there are some redwoods that were saved. Of course, then he went and set up the Friends of the Earth, which I immediately became a member of. I continued my membership with the Sierra Club, and I remember voting in favor of Dave Brower at some--they had a referendum or something or other. I forget what it was.

Baruxis: Thank you. So your first experience with writing to the Senator was successful. He introduced the bill, which passed.

Walker: Yes. That was some years later, though. That was into the '70s, I think. It took a long period of time before that finally was squared away.

Baruxis: Big job.

Walker: Yes. It's typical, though, of environmental issues, in that it very often takes a long time before something is set aside or saved, or whatever.

Baruxis: What about the Four Corners power plant? You became active in that pretty early on. Did you actually work on that, again, by writing--?

Walker: Not so much. But it did enrage me on air pollution things. I don't recall that I wrote any letters specifically on that. But it made me aware of what can happen. I'm not sure what, if anything, I did that related to that specifically, other than getting mad. I suppose I concentrated more on the Grand Canyon than on that particular thing.

Lobbying for the Sierra Club in New Jersey

Baruxis: And the local issues in New Jersey. When was it that you first met with the Sierra Club here?

Walker: I think it was in '68 or '69--maybe it was '67. It was in the late sixties, anyway. I got a notice about a meeting to organize a Sierra Club in New Jersey. So I went to the meeting. It must have

Walker: been ten or twelve of us, or something like that. My recollection is fairly vague on the meeting itself. But there were few of us. We all introduced ourselves to each other. When I introduced myself, somebody said, "Oh, you had a letter to the editor about the Grand Canyon dams and the SST. Will you be conservation chair?" [laughter]

Baruxis: Is that how it happened?

Walker: That's exactly how it happened. I said, "Okay." I asked what that meant and what was involved, and they didn't know either. But, you know, the people were willing to help me do it, or whatever, and so I agreed. And I guess we sort of organized ourselves--it was divided into two groups. There was a northern New Jersey group and a southern New Jersey group. I guess this was the southern, central and southern, New Jersey group.

So I became conservation chair. I sort of continued on in the same vein that I'd been doing, being more aware of things and writing letters to whoever on certain things. The wetlands issue was one of the first things that I remember gathering information on, knowing that there was legislation being talked about, anyway, for a wetlands protection in New Jersey.

At some point, I prepared testimony and actually went and testified, and I think it was on the wetlands. That was my first standing up in public, for God's sake, [laughs] reading some testimony, my voice quavering and my knees shaking, and I was sure I'd pee in my pants. [laughter] But I did it. I think that was my first thing--it was on the wetlands, as opposed to flood-plains, or some of the other things. That was my first thing.

That for me was very hard, in part, again, back to my upbringing, I was brought up by my grandmother and grandfather. You don't want to put this in your thing, but my mother and father were killed when I was five in an automobile accident. So I was raised by my grandparents. It was a very happy childhood for me, despite that, although there is a time when I don't remember anything. But my grandmother would say--I can remember when growing up: My dear, young ladies keep their knees together and wear white gloves and are not controversial. There were times at the dinner table or whatever, I would raise a question or say something or other and I would get this, "Don't be so controversial, my dear." [laughs]

Baruxis: Oh, yes, look at you now!

Walker: So I had a typical, I suppose, at that time, upbringing, as far as male/female attitudes, fairly Victorian in some respects, I guess. So, to overcome that and to get involved in public controversy and to speak in public, even, that was hard; I don't know that it was harder for me than it would be for young women today, particularly. It's always nerve-wracking. But anyway, so I had that to overcome. And I guess had enough determination or something to do it anyway.

Baruxis: It was your determination that really helped you acquire those lobbying skills.

Walker: Yes, I guess. Yes, I understood that in order to solve these problems, or in order to save whatever it was, or to get a wetlands act passed, then you had to go do those things. And having accepted the responsibility of being conservation chair--chairman, as it was called then--that was part of the job, so, you know, I had to do it.

Baruxis: What qualities were most effective and needed to properly lobby? You mentioned assertiveness. There must have been times when you were challenged.

Walker: Actually, at those hearings, people weren't nasty and didn't challenge. You just said your piece and sat down. If anyone had asked me a question, I don't know what I would have done. [laughs] At that point. As I became more confident, I could handle questions. And I actually did some lobbying down in Trenton. I took myself down to the legislature and buttonholed legislators and urged that they support the Wetlands Act or the Floodplains Act, or whatever it was. That was a new thing for me, too, just to force myself to leave the wall. I sort of described it as being a number of vultures down there. You stand there like you were a vulture on a limb, and you'd see a legislator walking down the hall. Somebody would say, "Oh, that's so-and-so," and you'd spring from the wall [laughs] and go say, "Assemblyman So-and-So, may I speak with you for a moment?" They'd say, "Yes, you've got to talk to me while I'm on my way to the desk." Then you'd make your little pitch about you hope they would support the Wetlands Act, or whatever it was. That was hard, too.

Baruxis: Was being a woman an issue? Were there many of you there?

Walker: It was part of it. It was one of the things that was just sort of appalling. Fortunately, I'd had some experience with that in my civil rights work, in handling men making passes type thing. In the legislature, they literally would chuck you under the chin.

Walker: I mean, I had this happen to me several times. It wasn't just one time. They would chuck you under the chin, "Sure, honey, tell me about it. Come back here, and we'll talk about it back here in the back room." I'd, as nicely as I could, weasel out of that.

Or they would nudge up against you and stuff.

Baruxis: Do you want to name any names?

Walker: I don't remember. They sort of all did it. I sort of remember them as being--their cigar smoking, white shoes, double-knit suits.

Baruxis: Has it changed?

Walker: Yes. They don't do that. They're not as obvious about that any more. I don't know that it's actually changed. And it's in part because I probably don't look as vulnerable now as I did then, either, and I'm older now, too. They wouldn't dare try it now! [laughter] Whereas in those days, I probably looked innocent. Anyway, so they did that. But I didn't let them get away with anything, either.

Baruxis: Were the other club members supportive of the efforts, especially since you were new in a lot of this?

Walker: Yes. They were very helpful. Since I didn't have a job, and they all did--the group chairperson was a guy who had a full-time job somewhere, and the other people who were fellow officers, or whatever. But I would write a draft of my testimony and read it to them over the phone or show it to them. They were very helpful. Some of them had jobs where they could get stuff typed and xeroxed and would do some of that stuff, too. They were very supportive and encouraging. That was needed, for me to feel like I should do and could do.

Baruxis: None of the silliness of being treated like a little girl there?

Walker: No. There wasn't any of that from the club.

Baruxis: That's encouraging. Specifically, what issues concerning the wetlands did you start to address?

Walker: There was the wetlands legislation.

Baruxis: Up until 1972, because we'll continue with club business later in the interview.

Walker: Okay. I got a copy of the legislation and read it and understood it and made supportive testimony. I don't recall what else we did besides prepare testimony. It's possible--in fact, it's probable--that we wrote a letter to the legislators. That was a standard thing to have done, prepare a "Dear Legislator" letter and urge that they support the legislation. We may have gotten out what we call environmental alerts to our members at that time. That was standard operating procedure, too.

Baruxis: Do any legislators stand out in my mind, or anything the governor did that was supportive?

Walker: Let's see. Cahill at that time? Governor William Cahill was supportive. Yes, it wasn't until '73 that we began to keep tabs on the legislators. That was another thing. Josephine Margett, I think, was a legislator who introduced either wetlands or floodplains legislation, or both. I forget when Tom Kean was a legislator. Maybe he was in the late sixties or early seventies. I guess he must have been supportive, too.

Jim Florio was also a good legislator in the early seventies. Josephine Margett is a woman who comes to mind with either the floodplains or the wetlands. Then there was Millicent Fenwick, who was also supportive.

Establishing the New Jersey Chapter

Baruxis: That gives us a good background. You've already mentioned some of the issues concerning the environment that called for attention. Within the club, what kind of thoughts and situations led up to the decision to have a separate New Jersey Chapter? Had the New Jersey group come to view themselves as having different priorities?

Walker: No, it wasn't that so much. I think there was a general movement up and down the East Coast. At that point, we were part of an entity called the Atlantic Chapter, which took in all the New England states, all the way down and including Pennsylvania, I think. Maybe even further down. So it was huge and unwieldy. Then there were these scattered groups.

Walker: So I don't know how it was decided to split into separate chapters. There was discussion with the two New Jersey groups, obviously, and I think we all concluded it was a good idea if we formed a New Jersey Chapter. But I forget how that really sort of came about, other than that there were discussions, and I guess everyone sort of agreed, and then it was done.

Baruxis: Was there some sort of formal agreement, or perhaps they petitioned the national office?

Walker: It had to be done through the club headquarters in San Francisco. They gave the okay to become a chapter or become a group, or whatever. But the club in those days, and even still, is pretty informal, in the sense that if the grass-roots part of the club wants to do something, they'll figure out a way to accommodate them.

Baruxis: Within the New Jersey group, I'm sure people had different ideas. For example, between the northern and southern residents did priorities differ? How were differences resolved?

Walker: I'm not sure. I think the North Jersey Group was involved in the Hackensack Meadowlands thing. The group that I was connected with, since we're close to Trenton, it seemed--somehow or other, we were more involved in the statewide issues. It may have been because of my interests. My recollection is that we were more statewide oriented than the North Jersey Group. They were more locally oriented. And there was a certain logic to that, I guess, as I said, because Trenton is at hand. And there was legislation being proposed and acted upon, one thing right on top of the other, beginning in 1970, or beginning even in '69.

I guess we'd gotten somewhat involved, actually, in some federal legislation, too, with the passage of NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act.

Baruxis: Through letter writing?

Walker: Yes. That rings a bell for me, too. And the Pine Barrens--of course, that was less a statewide issue at that point than it is now. I was interested in that because John McPhee's book came out. My then husband did the drawings for that book. So we were brought into that. At least, I played a role in the Pine Barrens thing, and went down to the Pine Barrens with John McPhee. He had been a friend for sometime anyway, so that was a natural, too, to have some interest in the Pine Barrens.

Walker: But I think during that early part of the Sierra Club's getting going, at least through my involvement, we were involved in the wetlands and floodplains legislation, and then coastal legislation in '73, although that started in '72. So there were quite a few things that happened in the early seventies. There was all that remedial legislation, both on the national level and on the state level.

The DEP [Department of Environmental Protection] was set up.

Baruxis: Yes.

Walker: Yes. And the whole Earth Day business in 1970. I guess as two groups the north Jersey and the south Jersey group of the club were involved in Earth Day. I forget what all we did, but I sort of vaguely remember the hooplah and the teach-ins and all that stuff.

Baruxis: There seems to have been a lot of awareness among the general public about what was happening.

Walker: Yes. Well, and I can remember, too--and I have new articles (or clips) in my files, I was an avid clipper--Time magazine, Newsweek, just about every magazine that had any connection at all with news had cover stories on environmental pollution and pictures of pollution and smokestacks and yuck in the water, and all that. So from the late sixties, from '69 through, let's say, '73 or '72, a constant barrage of pictures and articles. So the climate was right to get a lot of that stuff done. It was a hot and heavy time of getting it done. So I sort of threw myself into all of that.

Baruxis: Was the New Jersey chapter involved in urging Assemblyman Kean to introduce legislation to creat DEP?

Walker: There wasn't a chapter at that point, because the DEP was set up in 1970. And I'm not sure how much encouragement was needed. That seemed like sort of an automatic thing. I don't know where the idea came from, whether it came from Tom Kean, or whether it came from one of the older environmental group in New Jersey, then called North Jersey Conservation Foundation.

Baruxis: At about this time, roughly how many active members were in the Jersey group.

Walker: Gosh, that's a hard one, Claire.

Baruxis: I mean those you may have been in contact with.

Walker: Not that many. The ones I was in contact with were mainly the group officers and at meetings. We had meetings, monthly meetings, and maybe at some of those meetings we'd have two hundred people come. We'd have a film or a slide show or something like that. Yes, I remember. That was in the good old days, when we had access to Peyton Hall. I don't know if you are familiar with Peyton Hall. It's on Ivy Lane. It's a nice little building with an observatory in part of it, or something.

We would plan these meetings and announce it in the press, and a lot of people would come. I was always very nervous, because I had to make an announcement about how we would want letters written to legislators about the Wetlands Act or bring them up to date on what was happening. I'd forgotten about that. I would come prepared to those meetings, with handouts for everybody, and make a little spiel. Here, again, it was getting practice talking in public, I guess. And I was very nervous.

People would sign petitions, and people would pick up the handouts, and I could tell when I was talking, people were making notes. I don't know who all the people were. They were always signed up.

Baruxis: Who stands out in your mind as having played a notable role in the leadership of the New Jersey group?

Walker: There were a couple of people. There was the group chair. I guess one of the first ones were--I'm not sure of the sequence here, but Stockton Gaines, who was a group chair, and Tom Southerland. Tom may have been the first chairman of the southern New Jersey Group. He lived in Princeton. He's still here. He's a noted birdwatcher. I don't know that he's an actual ornithologist, but he and his wife do a lot of birding. Walter Wells may have been the first chapter chair. I think Tom Southerland was a group chair, and then either Stockton Gaines or Walter Wells were the chapter chairs. I forget the order. You can probably look it up in the office if you really want to know. I would have that in the records.

Baruxis: No, it's more what comes to your mind.

Walker: Okay. All three of those guys were very helpful to me, very encouraging. They might offer some suggestions on how I might change the testimony, or "Don't forget to say this," or whatever. They were all very supportive and very encouraging. I see Walter

Walker: every now and then. In fact, I saw him out in Colorado just last week. Stockton is in California now. He's been gone for a long time. And Tom I talk every now and then on a bird matter or other--[laughs]. Or he calls about something or other. Those were the three who come to mind.

There was another guy who came to meetings in the early setting up of the chapter. I think he had some official capacity, and he then became at some point an EPA person down in Washington. I then went down to Washington to meet with him on solid waste or something or other, and he'd become sort of a standard bureaucrat type. [laughter]

Baruxis: Oh, watch out. I don't want to hear stories like that. [laughter]

Walker: I mean, a nice enough fellow and all that. But anyway, those three were the early supporters and encouraging people.

Wetlands Protection

Baruxis: Okay, Diane, I'd like to go on to the major issues that the club has dealt with since 1972. Perhaps beginning somewhat chronologically, although they really do overlap, with some of the more traditional conservation-oriented issues. Specifically, we'll continue with wetlands protection up to the present. There has been enactment of strong regulatory protection at the federal and state level, but it seems that environmentalists have to continue to be vigilant, perhaps because there are powerful development interests, and there have been cuts in federal spending, etc. The Reagan's administration's efforts to ease regulation is now an example. I'd like to go into currently the Army Corps of Engineers decision on easing regulations on wetlands filling and dredging. The Sierra Club is hoping to join with environmentalists in litigation. They've petitioned--is it the national club?--to allow them to take legal action.

Walker: I'm fuzzy on that. But any legal action that any entity of the club wants to take has to go through the national and get approval. But something with the corps, I suspect it's the national club that's going after that.

Baruxis: Okay. What changes would you like to see in the administration of the Hackensack Meadowlands: I recall reading in one Sierra that the HMDC's appointees are largely based on pay-offs, politically appointed, that sort of thing. Would you want to see perhaps an improvement in membership of the commission, or stronger enforcement of regulations? How can it be improved?

Walker: I'm not that tuned in to the HMDC operation. You'd have to talk to Vivien Li, who would know the details of it and what's going on there. I don't know that even my impressions would be of any particular use.

Baruxis: What about the general objectives of the club in protecting wetlands?

Walker: The club from way back has been concerned that those wetlands be protected. As I recall, when the coastal act, the coastal protection act, was passed in '73, CAFRA, Coastal Area Facility Review Act, one of the amendments--I think it was an amendment--sort of exempted the HMDC area from the coastal protection law, set it up and gave it sort of a separate status. We were opposed to that at the time. Our concern was that it be brought back to a functioning wetlands area, once the pig farms were gone, and once the landfills were closed up, and so forth. I know there's been continuing concern, particularly on the part of the North Jersey Group, on the amount of development that's been proposed and been permitted to happen up there. I know they're involved now in the Harts Mountain controversy.

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Walker: The club is concerned that it be allowed to come back and become a healthy wetlands. I think--in fact I know--we were involved earlier, too, with the sports arena and all that complex. We urged way back that they not be allowed to build those things until they have a mass transportation plan in place. And, of course, they sort of vowed and promised that it would be taken care of; and, of course, it never was. It still isn't. They still have a huge traffic problem out there, and resulting air pollution burdens, and so forth.

But the wetlands itself evidently is beginning to come back. There is life in the wetlands.

Baruxis: What area within the state would the chapter consider suitable for housing developments? I mean, growth has to occur somewhere. Where could people go?

Walker: That's a fair question, but I think it's the sort of thing where we wouldn't put ourselves in the position of saying, "You should build over here instead of over there." Our role, as we see it, if there is a particularly environmentally sensitive area, wetlands or a floodplain or a dunes, is to say, "You shouldn't build there." For, you know, all the environmental reasons. And it's up to somebody else to say, "Okay, don't build there. Over here is okay." There are a lot of areas in the state where developers have proposed and built and environmental people haven't said anything. Because it's not an environmentally sensitive area that the environmentalists point it out. We see that as our role. It's really not our role to do the planning for the state. It's our role to say there should be planning. But we don't have the resources to do it.

The Towne of Smithville: Growth Controversy

Baruxis: That's fair. The Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge is one example of a hard-won battle with a successful outcome, but it's recently threatened by proposals for a housing project right next door to it. How did your concern about this resource initially come about way back?

Walker: I'm not sure how. We have a West Jersey Group, headed by a woman named Carol Barrett. At some point we should talk about how Carol got involved, because that ties in with some of my activities. But anyway, either through Carol, or through my contacts with the coastal people, we got wind of this Towne of Smithville proposal. I guess it really goes back further. I was involved in the development of the coastal protection legislation, CAFRA [Coastal Area Facilities Review Act], and then in the four-year management plan that evolved from that legislation. The legislation said the state, the DEP, shall develop a four-year management plan for the coastal zone. I participated throughout those four years in reviewing the proposed policies and rules and regulations, in this whole process.

One of the policies that the state decided on was that the state should determine where were areas where only low growth could occur, as opposed to areas where it's okay for high growth. That's what we were talking about earlier. For the state to have a plan. The Towne of Smithville area was determined to be a low-growth area. At the same time, way back when--and I forget the details of this, or how it came about--the state allowed a sewer

Walker: to be put in that area, or there was an extension of a sewer, or something. We'd known, for a long time, through our sewer involvement, that as highways direct growth, so do sewers.

But anyway, the area was designated as low growth. Despite that, it had the sewer in there. I don't know the story of the sewer. I suppose it was typical of all the earlier sewer authority plans. Since there was all that big money coming out of Washington under the construction grants program, they overbuilt, and that was probably one of the results, having that sewer line down there.

So the next thing you know, we hear that this gigantic proposal has been made. A number of us agreed to oppose it, to appeal the department's decision. The department decided to approve it. Why that was nobody has yet been able to figure out or to find out who was it that made that decision. Evidently, there were staff people in this agency who said no, from water and the coastal planners themselves. And a number of bureaus and divisions recommended denial, and yet the decision was made to approve. We suspect--at least I suspect--that it was more political than anything else. That's somewhat typical of the agency. I guess we can get into that later on, if you want to talk about the agency.

The West Jersey Group, which takes in a good part of southern New Jersey and includes that area of the state, Smithville, got involved in that on more of a day-to-day basis than I did. The American Littoral Society has been playing an active day-to-day role, too. That's not an area that I've been playing a day-to-day role in.

Baruxis: And the environmentalists are keeping up their fight?

Walker: Well, trying to. It's hard, because there are so many proposals up and down the coast. To follow the ones that are going to be the dangerous ones or the precedent-setting ones or the policy-changing ones, or whatever, as opposed to every little thing that comes along--it's hard to know which way to go.

Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge

Baruxis: When Brigantine was established as a wildlife refuge, perhaps there was less pressure at the time for development. The task force was forming, I believe, in 1973. It was a coalition of groups, was it not?

Walker: To set up Brigantine? That's possible. I forget.

Baruxis: Were you involved?

Walker: I don't really remember, to tell you the truth, so I suspect I wasn't heavily involved. Often, when it was sort of a coastal issue, I was sort of supportive of the coast, but we sort of said, to the American Littoral Society, "Okay, you take care of coastal stuff;" and Dery Bennett would say to me, "You take care of sewers and toxics and that sort of stuff." But we would be supportive. Dery would take the lead. We would join in writing letters or testimony, and that sort of thing. That's how we function a lot. I mean, there's no way that the Sierra Club can play the lead role in every issue that comes down the pipe. So we cooperate with each other.

But in those days, Brigantine was not in an area that was heavily impacted. But with the coming of the casinos and all that development in Atlantic City, that's what has been the impetus for a lot of the pressure in the surrounding area. And, of course, one of the reasons why we opposed that whole business, or the casino development, was our fear of the spreading out of development into the Pinelands and up and down the coast. The promises were, "Oh, no, it's to revitalize and fix up downtown Atlantic City. Oh, yes, we will have a transportation plan. We will have mass transportation facilities. Oh, no, we're not going to have air pollution problems. Oh, no, we're not going to run the minorities and the low-income people out of town. It's going to be all revitalized. It's going to be a 'neat-o-jet' place for everybody." And, of course, that's not what happened.

Baruxis: Yes. Everyone but the wildlife. Do you want to go into the history of how the Brigantine Wildlife Refuge was established? Were you involved in any of the legislation?

Walker: Not particularly. I'm somewhat hazy on it. I suspect we played that supportive role, as opposed to the leading role.

Baruxis: That's the way things work often.

Walker: Yes. It's possible that I wrote a letter, or whatever, but I don't remember. You know, I go through the files every now and then, and I'm always sort of amazed at how many issues and things I've touched upon, you know, briefly. Somebody said, "Please, you've got to write a letter," so I'd write a letter, and that was the beginning and the end of it--other than those things that I concentrated on.

Baruxis: I would imagine the Littoral Society would have the expertise and experience for that type of issue. That's how things can get done, by dividing up the work as you described.

Walker: Sure.

Baruxis: Audubon is taking legal action against some of the development in that area now, I believe.

Walker: I think so. There are a number of groups that have joined in the appeal, including the Sierra Club. I forget whether Audubon has joined in that, or just what. National Audubon, as opposed to New Jersey Audubon.

The New Jersey Pine Barrens

Baruxis: Perhaps we can go on and discuss the Pine Barrens. I see that as another example of an area protected by hard-won legislation, yet constantly threatened by development interests. Opposition has been directed at all phases of legislation and implementation processes. Is that right?

Walker: Yes. Actually, we got involved in the Pine Barrens way back when the jetport was proposed down there. I vaguely remember writing letters or something about that at that time on behalf of the club.

Baruxis: That was before the chapter was formed?

Walker: It may have been. Here again, I forget the timing on it. It's all very hazy. But I remember some guy came up with this scheme for a new city including a jetport down in the Pine Barrens. It was a serious thing. They thought, "There's nothing down here. It's a perfect place to put it." So a number of us sort of organized and got up in arms and wrote letters and did whatever it is that we did at that time. And it finally did sort of go away.

Baruxis: Okay. Let's come up more to the present and get into more specifics. When Governor Byrne and Commissioner Bardin were in office, they were very critical of the Pinelands Environmental Council, and the New Jersey chapter, in a policy statement, called for abolishment of the council. Can you go into some of the actions that the council had taken or attitudes of the council?

Walker: Yes. There were two guys on the council who supposedly represented the environmental or conservation interests. Neither one of them did. They voted right along with the development interests.

Baruxis: How were they appointed?

Walker: I guess they were appointed by the governor. I don't really remember. But at that point, there were these two guys down in south Jersey who were touting themselves as conservationists. One of them was pretty good at botany and had some understanding of it. The other one had lived down there for a long time and also knew the area and was thought of, or he thought of himself, touted himself, or whatever, as a conservationist. But they were both in real estate, too. They weren't bad people or anything, but they did vote right on down the line in favor of all the proposals; on policy questions they voted with the developers.

So I guess they were appointed because soembody asked who would represent the environmental--it wasn't environmental--but the conservation interest, and somebody must have suggested them.

Baruxis: Well, legislation that later came along, I imagine, brought about changes. What led to Congressman Florio's introduction of the Pine Barrens Ecological Preservation Act in 1977? Did the club directly deal with Florio to encourage him?

Walker: I believe so. There again, I saw part of my role as helping other people in the club get involved. Carol Barrett who was the West Jersey Group person way back, had gotten in touch and was obviously interested in the Pine Barrens and so forth. My role was to encourage her and to help her to the extent that I could, but for her to take the ball and run with it as much as she could. And she did. She formed a working relationship with Jim Florio, and with whoever else needed to be worked with, too. Carol really sort of carried the ball for the club on the Pine Barrens.

Baruxis: You attended hearings with her in Washington perhaps?

Walker: Yes, I did. And there were hearings down in the area, over on the coast, that Congressman Hughes held. I remember he was very nasty. Yes, I did some of that. But Carol was the main person to be involved and to trek around and make the phone calls and so forth.

Baruxis: What kind of conflicts came up at the hearings among perhaps the local people?

Walker: I guess sort of the same ones that you'd expect. There were people who said, "Well, we've been taking care of the Pine Barrens for two thousand years, and they're not wrecked yet. We don't need a law. We'll continue to take care of it." Just absolutely not looking beyond their noses, or not noticing the huge pressures. I mean, things do change.

And there were others who felt that home rule should prevail, that the towns should be allowed to develop as they saw fit, without any restraints. "Oh, yes, we like the Pine Barrens. We want to protect the Pine Barrens, too. But..." That was the continuing cry. They simply didn't want to have restraints.

And it always struck me--and one of the arguments that I used at one time or another, I guess--was there seemed to be some attitude that anyone who had made an investment, whether it was speculative or whatever, ought to be able to make a killing in the marketplace at the expense of the Pine Barrens. That wasn't the way they put it. My attitude was, which I expressed several times, if there are two people and one of them invests in land and the other one invests in the stock market, they are both taking a risk. And if you look up the word risk in the dictionary, it explains it to you. You take your chance--you might win or you might lose. But if somebody loses in the stock market, we don't expect that somebody is going to pick up the tab for them or make it impossible for them to lose in the stock market. There really isn't all that big a difference between taking a risk on land-ownership, too. But somehow we have a different attitude to land. Or at least some people have a different attitude. They think that if you speculate in the land market, it's your right somehow or another to make a bundle.

But anyway, there's that attitude. And there's obviously a lot of speculation by developers in the Pine Barrens. So there was huge pressure to let them make good on their investment.

Baruxis: The pressure must have been very great, because while the 1978 Pine Barrens legislation was being considered, Senators Case and Williams, who were strong supporters and sponsors, gave in to last minute pressure. Fortunately, some Sierrans--I believe one may have been Carol Barrett--went to Washington the very last day practically and saved the day. The national Sierra Club helped, and other environmental groups.

Walker: That's right. They came up with some amendment at the last minute or other that fixed things. I forget what it was now. But they came up with something that sort of satisfied enough people that it was passed.

Baruxis: The planning entirely would have been changed.

Walker: Was that it? Yes.

Baruxis: It seems national Sierra was helpful in lobbying and other national groups.

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: It actually got nationwide attention.

Walker: Yes. Part of the strategy was to make it a national issue, or point out that it is a national resource, and bring in the national groups. And actually, some of them--I think the National Parks and Conservation Association, for instance--had early on had an article on New Jersey's Pine Barrens, in the sixties or early seventies or something. I remember seeing that. It was mostly on the plant life and on the water, and so forth. It wasn't talking about particular developments or proposals. So it was recognized as a national resource, and we highlighted that, as a way to help in the movement to get it protected.

Baruxis: Does the state chapter have to go through national Sierra to develop its policy on an issue like Pine Barrens?

Walker: No. So long as the state's involvement in issues is compatible with the club's national policies, if there is a national policy. The national policies range from sort of broad things, "we're in support of clean air" kind of things, down to very specific details on particular things. So long as we sort of fall within the general policies, we can do as we see fit. We seek their advice on stuff, particularly when it involves national legislation. We obviously benefit by talking with and getting the help from the very talented national staff people.

Baruxis: That is a big resource. Actually, national Sierra did help in protecting the Pine Barrens by lobbying for the Senate omnibus bill. So there's that going for us also.

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: If you were not directly involved with the Pinelands Planning Commissions and hearings, etc., we won't go into too much detail. I just kind of want to get a flavor or a feel of what the controversies were at these planning meetings that you attended because once the legislation was passed, meetings had to take place to develop a management program, I imagine.

Walker: Yes. Management plan.

Baruxis: The South Jersey Building Association and other concerned citizens were attending. And then some opposing legislation came up in the legislature.

Walker: The state legislature.

Baruxis: And ironically Doyle's bill was passed overwhelmingly.

Walker: I've forgotten, but that sounds right. Then the governor had to veto it or something, or did it get that far? I don't remember.

Baruxis: I'm not the authority on this.

Walker: I'm not either. Thank goodness for Carol.

Baruxis: It seems, actually, when Governor Kean came in, things got worse with the commissioners, because he appointed some people who were really growth oriented, whereas Byrne was considered to be sympathetic.

Walker: Yes. Do you want to get into this?

Baruxis: Yes.

Walker: There were two very strong conservationist environmentalists on the commission.

Baruxis: When Governor Byrne was in?

Walker: Yes. They were among the initial seven appointees that Governor Byrne appointed. The commission is made up of seven gubernatorial appointees, and seven county appointees, and then there's one federal person. The gubernatorial appointees are supposed to represent New Jersey citizens and, more precisely, the environmental sympathies of the state, if not environmental interests. Governor Byrne understood that, and I think just about all of the seven appointments that he made were, if not avowed conservationists, at least sort of neutral on it. And they balanced the very definitely,

Walker: clearly pro-development county appointees. So two of Governor Byrne's were very strong conservationists, Floyd West, who was the mayor of Bass River Township, and Gary Patterson, who was a science teacher and lived right in the heart of the Pine Barrens. They served their purpose very well. They pushed very hard for the strongest environmental view and policies and decisions, and so forth. And, to their credit, they were seen by some of the more middle-of-the-road, or certainly by the pro-development people, as being far-out environmentalists. But that's what was needed to help counteract the far-out pro-development interests.

So then when Governor Kean came in, he was under big pressure, and we saw no evidence that he fought against the pressure at all, to get rid of those two and to appoint people who would be more moderate, more amenable, or more whatever. So he did. He got rid of those two. I remember talking with Steve Lee in the halls of the legislature. He was down there fighting against the Pine Barrens Management Plan, or the legislation, and we were down there lobbying in favor of it. Steve Lee was an ardent, adamant opponent from way back. He's one of the ones that Kean appointed.

The other guy I don't know. What's his name? Huers, I think. He was not as obviously an anti-environmental person, but had credentials that made him suspect, or clearly not a strong conservationist.

And why Governor Kean, who supposedly has environmental and conservation sympathies, would allow those interests or sympathies to prevail or overwhelm him, or whatever, I don't know. Nobody yet has explained it or understood it or been able to talk with him directly about it.

Baruxis: Then the hearings took place on the appointees, and some senators were outspoken in criticizing them. Nevertheless, for some reason the appointees were accepted, even though the Sierra Club at least testified. I would imagine it must take a great deal of pressure or opposition to actually counter the governor's decision.

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: Do you understand perhaps the dynamics of why the senators are so quiet?

Walker: Well, it's generally--and this is true on the national level and on the state level--if a governor or a president wants a certain person in his cabinet or wants to make a certain high-level appointment, people, or legislators and congressmen, generally feel

Walker: like, "All right, if he wants them. If we can't find anything criminal against him or anything else of that sort, let him have him. Even if we don't like the policies, or we don't like the attitude. Let the governor or the president have whom he wants." That's generally been what happens. They go through this sort of charade of a hearing. For instance, I've testified twice now at Senate judiciary hearings on nominees for DEP commissioner, in opposition to whoever it was the governor wanted. And, you know, the judiciary committee makes it very clear. The chairman says, "Well, we think that the governor ought to have who he wants to, and we can't make him change it anyway." They sort of say, "We can't vote against it." So I say, "Well, why are you doing this?" [laughs] It's an automatic thing.

Baruxis: Now that the chapter has a grant received from the Northeast Regional Conservation Committee of the club, do you know what activities are planned?

Walker: A grant was given to pay someone to do a study of the Pinelands Commission, to see how they were functioning, whether they were in fact meeting the charge set forth in the act and being consistent with the policies in the management plan. That study was--let's see, we've seen a preliminary or very rough draft, and this would not be for publication. But we were very disappointed in the first draft. It was poorly written, amateurish even. I guess we made a mistake in the person we hired. It happened to have been a part-time Sierra Club person; some of his time was given to us, and, I suppose, you get what you pay for. So we learned something from that. And we did get some information. All was not lost, but it was not what we had hoped.

Baruxis: There are remaining funds? Can it continue?

Walker: I'm not sure. I'm not sure how that's going to come out. We agreed to pay the guy what we had contracted to pay him. He did do a lot of work.

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Walker: But a number of us read his report, and after reading it, we concluded that even if we were to give him more time the report was not going to serve our purposes, and that he would not be able to repair or rewrite, or whatever. We decided to terminate the whole procedure.

Baruxis: I just want to go back to clarify one thing we were talking about on the Pinelands Environmental Council during Governor Byrne's administration. You mentioned two council members who were appointed who were opposed to the environmental interests. They were appointees of Governor Byrne as well?

Walker: Let's see. There were several entities that were set up at one time or another. There was a very early PEC, Pinelands Environmental Council, with those two guys. It was Brooks Evert and Mort Cooper. That may have been set up before Governor Byrne.

Baruxis: I believe so.

Walker: I think it may have been under Cahill. Then there was another thing that was set up under Governor Byrne that was also sort of a disappointing entity. What was that called? There was the PEC, Pinelands Environmental Council, and then there was--hell, I forget the name of the other group. Set up under a guy named Dick Goodenough. I think it floundered. It was not effective.

Baruxis: At another level, the federal level, federal funds for land acquisitions are being threatened by the Reagan administration. Is the national Sierra Club active in pressing for the continuing funding?

Walker: This is for what?

Baruxis: The state receives federal money to buy land included under Pinelands protection, and that money is now being theatened. I wonder if national Sierra is working at the national level to protect it?

Walker: I don't know. Carol would know. That's not something that we've talked about. But it wouldn't surprise me. It all sounds so plausible. I don't know whether it's something that I've heard, that it is another one of the things that is suffering under the Reagan administration, or whether it's something that--you know, I can believe it. I'm not sure which is which.

Baruxis: I guess we can wrap it up. I'll pose a question to you. First of all, there is an entity, the Development Rights Transfer Program, working in the Pines area to help people find alternative areas to develop, if you want to build or purchase land. Do you think that has promise? Do you think that controversy over land rights in the Pines can ever be happily resolved?

Walker: [laughs] I think it probably does have promise--the whole concept of the transfer of development rights or TDR (it's called something else in the Pine Barrens). But it's a new game, and I don't know that it's been tested sufficiently, or there's been enough experience with it, to be able to say for sure that yes, it will work. As far as the attitude, or whatever, that things will be resolved happily in the Pine Barrens, in time it may be that some of these now raging hot issues will fade by the wayside and people will begin to see that it is in the long-term best interests of the state. But I think there will always be people who are more interested in their short-term profit motive than in seeing the long-term benefits to their grandchildren. There will always be a controversy.

The Tocks Islands Dam Proposal

Baruxis: Another issue I want to touch on today--we can wrap up after that--is a landmark issue, actually, the struggle to keep the Delaware a free-flowing river. It seems a key element in the issue that may account for the successes that were achieved was that a coalition of groups that work together and effectively work out their differences was established. Can you talk about how the Save-the-Delaware Coalition came about and how it made decisions?

Walker: Not so much on the Save-the-Delaware Coalition, although maybe in bits and pieces. Here again, as I said earlier, part of my role was to, is to, bring other people in to get things done, because I can't do it all myself. In the case of Tocks Island dam, we were involved in it just as it was erupting, or beginning.

Baruxis: Which was?

Walker: It was in the late sixties or early seventies again. It had been very much on a back burner for a long time, and then it came forward again. I had talked about it, I suppose, at some of those earlier Sierra Club meetings and had articles in the newsletter, and so forth. It was obviously a new, big controversy.

A woman called me at the office--I guess it was at the office, although we may not have had an office at that point--and expressed an interest in it. Now, this was a woman who couldn't talk very well over the phone. She had a terrible speech--I don't know that it was a speech impediment, but a halting kind of thing. She

Walker: couldn't get it out. But anyway, she said she was interested in working on Tocks Island dam. So we chatted a bit, and we agreed to meet. She came to my house. After talking with her a while, even with this speech difficulty, she clearly was an intelligent person, who was really interested and felt that she could do something. So I gave her some material. I forget at what stage things were and what needed to be done at that time. But anyway, she grabbed onto that Tocks dam ball and ran with it. She was great. Her name was Hope Cobb. I don't know if you know Hope. She's at Rutgers.

Anyway, Hope got very deeply involved in the Tocks Island dam and kept us, the club, notified as to what was going on. We kept in fairly regular touch in exchanging ideas and what to do next and checking her testimony, and whatever. Very soon, I didn't mess with it very much at all, because she clearly was on her own and trustable and all the rest of it. So Hope became the Tocks Island dam lady. Hope went to all the Save-the-Delaware Coalition meetings. I can remember, we would talk about what went on at all of the meetings. I think it very much was a cooperative thing on everybody's part, a common interest. There may have been some relatively minor disputes as to who does what or what policies there might be. But my overall impression was that that group and the Sierra Club with it was organized and figured out what needed to be done, and got people to do it, and got technical people to prepare papers on things. When testimony was needed, by God, they went up there, and they did it. That was my overall impression.

Baruxis: Some of the other groups, League of Women Voters were involved.

Walker: That's right. That's still one of the league's concerns. There's a league person who I work with on occasion in Sierra. Any time it comes to a water supply question, she and I both say, "And if they don't do that, and don't do this, this, and this, and get themselves so-and-so, then they're going to push for the Tocks Island dam." So it's still very much on people's minds, and not as much on a back burner these days as it has been.

Baruxis: Environmentalists did point out New Jersey lacked a master water supply plan, especially when supporters claimed that the dam project would be necessary in the future for adequate water supply.

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: Did the club address this issue in pressing for the state to develop a water plan?

Walker: Oh, yes. And they do now have a water supply master plan. It allows an opening for Tocks Island dam. So, you know, they need to be watched. But one of my concerns; even though I was sort of peripheral to all this, I'm sort of the continuing thread through all this. Hope has now gone on to other things, and so on and so forth. But again, I continue to see my role at least having some awareness of what's going on and to say something every now and then. I see one of the threats, or one of the things that we have to watch, is that the state makes sure that it does, on a systematic basis, do what has to be done to secure adequate water supply for the state, so that when you get down here to this point, or the year 2000, or whatever it is, they won't be in a position to say, "Oh, my gosh, we didn't do this and this and this. We have to go for Tocks Island Dam." They won't say, "We haven't done this or this." They'll just say, "Oh, we need Tocks Island dam," and it'll be too late then for us to say, "Well, if you had done this, this, and this, we wouldn't need it." We have to see that they do this, this, and this now.

Anyway, there is a group formed. It used to be called, during the planning process, during the water supply master plan development process, the Water Supply Coalition. We're part of that, the Sierra Club. I was sort of the Sierra Club's person. It's now called the Water Resources Coalition. That coalition is sort of seeing to the implementation of the water supply master plan. We're part of that. Not as totally active in that as some of the others, but. . .

Baruxis: It's interesting, because the Army Corps of Engineers Owens Study, funded by Sierra Club Chapter here, and the Council of Environmental Quality's evaluation of the corps's environmental impact statement, all concluded that the dam should not be built. So you wonder what the motives are, the pressures that continue for the dam. I wonder if you were to identify the opponent? It seems that perhaps labor interests and the power utilities had stakes in this.

Walker: Oh, sure. And the Delaware River Basin Commission, DRBC, has been a long, long-term proponent of the dam. You know, people get in their minds that they want something, particularly engineers. They decide for some reason or other that building a dam would be just such a grand and glorious scheme, and they're just not going to let go. So any opportunity they get, they're going to put it forward. There are people within the DEP who are proponents of Tock Island dam, just because they always have been, you know. I think

Walker: some people get themselves sort of in that kind of a bind, where they feel like, "I've invested so much time in being a proponent of the dam, I'm not going to let go now." So no matter what the evidence, or what year it is, or whatever, they still talk it up as being the salvation or something. So, you know, it's like any conservation or environmental issue, it's not going to go away.

Baruxis: No, it doesn't seem to work that way here, not at all. The Delaware River Basin Commission, what influence does it have? Are you aware of any of the individual members' perspectives? How do they work?

Walker: I've been sort of a long-term, very peripheral watcher of the DRBC. How it works officially is that each of the four compact states has a representative. It's the governor, but the governor appoints somebody. He appoints a DEP commissioner, who in turn appoints somebody else, to go to the meetings and to represent the state. It's the relatively new executive director, Jerry Hansler, who was in--

Baruxis: The EPA?

Walker: Yes. Jerry must be there two years now, or something like that. I was trying to think who the former one was. Gee, people's names go out of your mind in a hurry sometimes.

Baruxis: So many names.

Walker: Yes. The other guy who was in charge was much more of a proponent of Tocks Island dam. I think Jerry is a more moderate person. But still, he's got the same people within the DRBC who are heavy duty proponents. Frank Thompson's brother Dawes Thompson is still a DRBC person. He's always been a proponent. And then there's, you know, the staff people. Some are pro, and there are probably some who are not so pro. But basically, DRBC has been in favor of it.

And what did you say? How do they work?

Baruxis: Yes. Do they make recommendations?

Walker: I'm not sure how it works exactly. I've never been to any of their regular meetings. I get their minutes and scan them and see if there's anything of interest. Companies have to have a permit from DRBC if they want to do something within that basin. So they make a proposal for water withdrawal, or whatever, and the DRBC representatives review it and pass a resolution allowing it, whatever.

Baruxis: Can they play an important role at some point if a decision is to be made?

Walker: Oh, sure. They played an important role way back when the decision to not go with Tocks Island dam was made.

Baruxis: Oh, the governor is voting.

Walker: Yes. But there again, you know, probably it has as much to do with the people who are appointed by the governor and the attitudes that they express and how they operate, as much as anything. I worry now, because when Governor Byrne was in, Governor Byrne was obviously the person. Then he in turn appoints the DEP commissioner, who was different people at different times. The commissioner appoints somebody else. The last guy who was the regular representative to the DRBC was a guy named Steve Picco, who was a strong voice for the environment, more on the environment side. I mean, I felt much better with Steve Picco there carrying the message, whatever it was, or discussing it, as opposed to the guy who's doing that now. It's a guy named Dirk Hofman, who--we traditionally called him Dirk the Jerk. [laughs] You don't have to put this in. Dirk is the assistant director of the Division of Water Resources. He is the standard close-to-the-vest type bureaucrat, whose motives everybody questions and nobody trusts, and nobody even likes very much. [laughter] I'm sure Dirk is in favor of Tocks Island dam. So even if Tom Kean was adamantly opposed to Tocks Island dam and said, "That's the state's policy, and you, Dirk, have to function under that policy," you know, different people can be an advocate or not be an advocate, or express an attitude or not express an attitude, or speak vigorously or sort of sit there and not say anything. That has an influence on how things come out. So as long as Dirk is in there, I figure that outfit has got to be watched.

When Steve was in there, Steve would come back and tell us what was going on if we asked him about it, or even without asking, I have a sense that Steve would say, "Hey, you know, the DRBC, they're really cooking against something or other, and I had to fight hard to do such and such and such and such." Or, "Somebody had better go to the meeting next time, because they're going to be talking--" You would get that from a Steve Picco. But you wouldn't get that from a Dirk Hofman.

Baruxis: Interesting.

Walker: Oh, but on this line, on the Delaware River--and I don't know that you need this in here, but very briefly--there's the Save-the-Delaware Coalition, and now there are a number of other groups that are popping up, up and down the Delaware. There's the Delaware River Watershed Association, that's a new group. The Sierra Club has just made a large contribution to them. And there's the group that's up the river aways. Well, there's the one that's fighting the Point Pleasant pump. What do they call it? The Point Pleasant diversion. And another group fighting the Merrill Creek thing, and so forth. So there are groups up and down the river that are paying attention to what's happening, which is very encouraging.

Baruxis: Different tactics being used, too.

Walker: Yes. But they're all working together, you know. One of the things I queried somebody about early on was whether turf was going to be a problem or anything. And apparently not, which is very good. Because there certainly is enough to do for everybody to play a role.

Baruxis: When the whole issue of deauthorization of the dam came up, who actually coordinated outreach or personally spoke with Congress? Were you involved with that at all?

Walker: Hope Cobb was. I don't remember whether I did anything like going down to Washington. What would happen, though, would be, Hope would prepare an environmental alert or letter to be gotten up to congressmen, or testimony or whatever, and then we would see that that happened. I don't recall that I trekked down to Washington for that particular thing.

Baruxis: If there had been any personal conversations with anyone, that would be interesting.

Walker: Yes. I don't remember. It's possible that I did some phone calls from the office to congressmen and talked with aides, but mainly, I was just grateful that Hope was so involved in it.

Baruxis: It seems like nationwide support from environmental groups had a big influence in getting congressional endorsement. Do you recall if the national Sierra Club, or regional, joined in the act?

Walker: I'm sure they did, but I'm trying to think who or whatever. I'm sure that the club was involved. Carol, I'm sure Hope, too, had contact with the national staff people; in fact, I can remember

Walker: Hope mentioning names of national staff people who she had talked with about such and such. So I'm sure that was that regular connection, and help.

Baruxis: I guess again, Hope would have been the one involved if there were any conversations with Byrne or Bardin.

Walker: Yes. That's right. There would be meetings, though, down with Bardin, or whoever, that we would all go to. That's sort of the way we still go. We all go down there, but then there are the key spokesmen, and then the rest of us who are in leadership roles, we might do a little bit more than nod or say un-huh. I generally have seen myself in that role, as just being backup or support, or looking fierce, or whatever seems to be required at the moment to help the key spokesman.

Baruxis: That's important how one views her role in terms of being the delegate and working with others.

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: Where is it at now, the legislation in the deauthorization issue?

Walker: I don't think it's anywhere in particular.

Baruxis: Yes, that's the feeling I get from it.

Walker: Yes. It's sort of a matter now of seeing how the water supply master plan is implemented, and that the state gets itself functioning in such a way that you get certain things done, so that we don't need the dam. That is a worry, when I see how screwed up the department is and that it doesn't have itself coordinated. It's not doing certain things it should be doing. What's going to happen a few years from now? So that's why I've encouraged the chapter to support the Water Resources Coalition. There's a part-time staff person now whose business it is to watch and see what's happening. That's very important and very useful. Because none of us that are involved in these other things can do that on a day-to-day basis.

Baruxis: Thank you very much. I think I've really covered everything for today.

II SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN NEW JERSEY

[Interview 2: July 26, 1983]##

Recycling and Landfills

Baruxis: Okay, so we'll continue from where we left off. I'd like to get on to some of the major issues in the state, such as solid waste management, hazardous waste issues, water quality, water resources. So we'll go back in time again.

Walker: Well, that can be a long haul back.

Baruxis: Can you talk about your first involvement with solid waste problems in New Jersey, perhaps even before 1970 and right about that time?

Walker: I'm not sure of the timing on all this, but at some point, either late sixties or early seventies, some of us were concerned about the lack of recycling in Princeton. We set up an organization at that time called the Conservation Coalition, which included me as Sierra Club and a bunch of other people from around the area. We organized and established a recycling thing. In those days it was volunteers manning a parking lot area for recycling on a Saturday morning kind of thing. We mapped out a whole program, and our purpose was to reduce the volume of waste going to landfills for one thing, but our main purpose at that point was to be sort of a consciousness-raising thing, the fact that we were such a wasteful society in throwing everything away. That was the main concern. We wanted the town to do it, but we had to show the town that people in the town were willing to recycle, were willing to bother to haul their stuff, their glass and cans newspapers, to a recycling center.

Walker: So we ran that operation for nine months or so, I think it was, and then the town did take it over, and has been doing it ever since. So that was my first actual involvement in anything having to do with solid waste.

Then in 1970 there was legislation proposed in the New Jersey legislature, a solid waste management act. I don't recall whether I got involved in that particular piece of legislation other than to understand, either at that time or sometime later, that it wasn't particularly useful. We called it "a toothless wonder." But it did point out that there was a need to manage solid waste. And there was an effort about that time by Mercer County to site a landfill in the area which is now taken over by Quaker Bridge Mall. There were a lot of questions raised at that point and people were opposing it and so forth. And I was working with the Stony-Brook-Millstone Watersheds Association, which was more deeply involved in this whole question. Actually, the guy--this is a side thing--who was the executive director of the Watershed Association is now my husband. So we sort of met and got involved in garbage and sewers! It was not romantic at that time at all. [laughing]

So in the course of doing a report, he got the idea that, all right, Mercer County people, including Princeton, were opposing this proposed new landfill, and maybe it should have been opposed at that particular site, but he felt that it was important for people to know where their garbage did go and what burdens Princeton's garbage and Mercer County's garbage was imposing on other communities. Because some garbage was going to "L & D" Landfill and some were going to Lone Pine Landfill and some was going to some other landfill, I forget where.

So anyway, Ian [Walker] did a report, and he has the technical expertise to be able to do a technical report, on those landfills where Princeton's garbage was going. In the course of actually doing some on-site investigations, he discovered that it was really a foul, stinking mess down at the Lone Pine Landfill, and he detected what he described as chemical odor, and this stuff coming from the landfill and going into the Manasquan River.

Baruxis: Were you also involved in the field investigation?

Walker: No, I wasn't involved in it, but I was aware of what he was doing and the purpose of it. And at the same time I was beginning to read materials on solid waste and the volume of waste generated. It further indicated the need not only for the recycling but also to get some rational handle on managing hazardous waste.

Walker: So Ian [Walker] completed that study, and got a certain amount of press attention, and he sent it to the department. So they were aware--this was in '72 I think that he handed in the report--of some severe problems at Lone Pine, and some severe but not as severe problems in those other two landfills, too, that early. And it was clear that it was what we now call hazardous waste; at that time it was industrial waste or chemical waste or whatever.

So some of us got together, we prepared a report to the legislature on solid waste in our effort to get further attention on it. I guess early on the legislature described it as a "crisis," and that was about the extent of it. The County and Municipal Study Commission did a report, and I think that came out in '73, on solid waste management.

Baruxis: The Musto Report [County and Municipal Government Study Commission, chairman Senator Musto]?

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: '72, I think.

Walker: Yes, whenever it was. They did both a water report and a solid waste report, which we used extensively. I mean anytime I got an opportunity that was pertinent or whatever to testify in public on something or other that was related, I would talk about it. There were those opportunities at that time, such as the [Statutory Committee of the] Solid Waste Council, which was a worthless entity basically, but it did have an annual hearing on solid waste. So, you know, I'd go quote from the various reports and say, "We've got a problem here, we have to deal with it." I forget the details and the particular things that I did to talk about it, and others talked about it, too, to try to get some attention on solid waste.

In '75, I think it was '75, there was new legislation proposed that was finally enacted in '76 which beefed up the earlier solid waste management act, and in fact was the first time that anyone really addressed hazardous waste and made it sort of a separate issue. Unfortunately the legislature didn't choose to fund the program, so it sat there for a while until David Bardin, who was then the commissioner, devised a scheme to charge fees for dumping of garbage, which would in turn pay for trying to manage it and so forth.

Baruxis: A little bit later than that, the Solid Waste Control Landfill Reclamation Act, '73.

Walker: I don't remember the particulars of that, but that provided another occasion to talk about it at least, to begin to get the attention of legislature. Unfortunately the legislature spent a lot of its attention on trying to solve the problem, as they saw it, by banning out-of-state garbage. So that's where their attention went. And, of course, that wasn't the problem. It was the garbage that was generated in-state; the garbage that was coming in from out of state was a drop in the bucket, and what had to happen was that New Jersey get itself coordinated and manage the stuff.

There was a map developed, I guess by the Musto Commission, with lines showing where each town's garbage was going, and it was like pickup straws. You know, when you drop the straws and they're going every which way? One town's waste was going this way, that town's waste was going that way, and stuff was coming back this way.

Baruxis: So the club was encouraging coordination?

Walker: Trying to get some rational planning and to manage it on some less chaotic basis, and also as a health protection. It was quite clear that these landfills were leaking all over the place and causing problems. There were odor problems, there were rats and blowing paper problems. You know, stuff was literally just dumped, they were open dumps.

About the same time the federal government began to address the issue, too, and called for what are now called sanitary landfills. They're clearly not sanitary, but at least they have to throw some dirt on them and there are certain requirements of a specific amount of dirt has to be used to cover the garbage each day, and after it gets to a certain level, then it has to be capped and so forth. So there are some regulations now.

Baruxis: Some of the other things you did, you had a TV appearance?

Walker: I did?

Baruxis: In '73?

Walker: How did you find that out?

Baruxis: Oh, in _Sierran_.

Walker: Oh, really. Oh, my gosh.

Baruxis: And there you had again recommended a comprehensive plan implementing existing regulations and also coordinating efforts statewide. Do you want to talk about that?

Walker: I don't remember that.

Baruxis: It must have been very valuable in terms of public awareness.

Walker: I suppose I've probably blocked it out of my memory because I was so scared at being on television. That still scares me. I know way back then in my days of innocence, as far as being in front of a TV camera goes, it was awful.

The "Famous Memo" to Governor Byrne--1974

Baruxis: Okay, well, other efforts. You had testified at hearings, then there was a memo to Byrne.

Walker: Oh, the famous memo, we've always called it "the famous memo." Shall I talk about that? That was in '74, I think. Yes, it's sort of interesting. I dug it out not so long ago to look at it again, and that memo really was very good. It said what was going to happen if we didn't do certain things, and sure enough, we didn't do certain things and those bad things happened.

Anyway, the impetus for that memo was that we had a new governor who was going to appoint a new commissioner, and the rumors were running rampant about who the new commissioner would be. We were worried that it would be someone who didn't know anything about environmental protection, and those typical kinds of concerns. We wanted the governor to take the DEP seriously and its tasks seriously and to appoint someone who would be capable of trying to solve these problems.

So a group of us got together, actually I guess six of us, representing sort of the statewide or regional groups. We talked about what six issues we felt were the critical issues and agreed on what the six critical issues were, what their main points were, and what needed to be done, and where the state was failing. Ian put them together in a very brief memo, just six brief paragraphs or maybe a couple of paragraphs on each one,

Walker: and we sent it to the governor and spread it around, sent it to the press and so forth. It got a lot of attention because it pointed out that the department had failed in a lot of areas and was not really doing the job it was supposed to be doing.

Baruxis: Why? Mostly because of inadequate funds?

Walker: Well, for a number of reasons. The lack of resources, lack of personnel, poor management, you know, all those things. And the message that we got was that was the first thing that Governor Byrne had actually read on the environmental problems in New Jersey. I don't know if that's true or not, but that's what we heard from sources inside or whatever at the time. And that impressed him. It stirred up a huge controversy too because a lot of people liked the then commissioner very much. He was a nice fellow.

Baruxis: Richard Sullivan?

Walker: Yes. And some people, I think few people, but some people felt it was personally aimed at him, which of course it wasn't. You tell it as it is, or whatever, and the chips fall, and it did show that the department wasn't doing what it was supposed to do. But the intent was to get the governor's attention and for him to take it seriously, and he evidently did, and he went on a search to find someone. He did bring in someone who sort of picked up the department by the heels and shook the hell out of it, which it needed. That was David Bardin. He was not the best manager in the world; he drove people nuts in a lot of ways, but in a lot of ways it was good. A lot of people there really needed to be shook up and have demands made on them that they come up with good work rather than crappy work. But anyway that memo was useful, and, as I say, I've since looked at it, and it was quite prophetic in a lot of ways.

Baruxis: It was actually effective in getting action taken in some areas?

Walker: Yes. Not that the DEP has solved all the problems since then, but I think it served to bring the public's attention to the department in a way that people realized that government isn't going to solve the problem by itself, that we have to pay attention to what the agency is doing and be critical in a constructive way when it needed to be criticized and give it pats on the back when it needed to have pats on the back.

Walker: It was set up in 1970 in all the hoopla of Earth Day and all that and all these remedial pieces of legislation were enacted and everyone thought, "Oh yea! Everything's going to be hunky-dory," and when you scratched the surface and began to look at what was going on, you began to realize that it was not hunky-dory. We had the legislation, which was good, but it was not being implemented very well.

The New Jersey Solid Waste Administration

Baruxis: You mentioned the New Jersey Solid Waste Advisory Council. Can you go into any detail on that, on some of the individuals you dealt with? You mentioned they weren't very effective.

Walker: I don't remember dealing with any of the individuals on that, I don't even remember who was on there, but the councils that were set up by legislation were sort of like standing committees and they were given a charge to make recommendations to the department on particular issues. Solid waste for the Solid Waste Council, the Clean Air Council and the Clean Water Council, and so forth. For the most part they were worthless, and they still are.

Baruxis: Why?

Walker: Well, let's see, let me think about it now. Some of the people are just political hacks. Some of them are dedicated and really do want to help. But one of the difficulties is that the government itself and the agency didn't take it seriously; they had no staff, and so it was hard for them to accomplish anything. That's sort of in fairness to them. And the most that some of them did was to hold an annual public hearing, which they were required to do, then it would take a year for them or many months for them to put together the comments made from the public hearing and to make any recommendations, and as far as I knew or anyone else knew the recommendations sat on a shelf somewhere maybe. Nobody ever took them seriously enough to try to implement anything, and they themselves didn't try to do anything. They sort of had their hearing and mooshed around to get a report out and that was the end of it.

Baruxis: We'll talk about it later, but it seems lessons were learned, and those kind of things aren't happening as much. For example, in the hazardous waste siting, you made sure you had funds. Maybe we can go into it more later.

Walker: I think one of the things that I've learned from that is that these sorts of standing committees have a hard time focusing on something and doing something useful and for the other things that I mentioned. It seems to work much better if there's a particular problem. I mean you get a group of people together on solving that particular problem over a certain period of time. Once they've done their task they disband and go on to something else, rather than have a standing committee that has a sort of nebulous, you know, solve the solid waste problem.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Baruxis: Some of the other people you dealt with within DEP, for example, the director of the Bureau of Solid Waste Management, Mr. Richard Goodenough. I think he was pointed out as a good worker but very short on staff and funds and not able to really implement for these reasons. Do you want to go into Sierra Club's interaction, in other words Beatrice Tylutki, with the new Solid Waste Administration? I know there were problems there.

Walker: Well, the overall problems that the department had ever since it was set up was poor management. I came to understand this after a while and then talking with other people who had an understanding of this, too, because we would flounder around thinking, "That's a nice fellow" or "That's a nice woman in there in charge of something or other, and they mean well, and their hearts are in the right place, but what's wrong in there, I mean things aren't working right?" So then you begin to pick up bits and pieces, and I came to understand that it's a management problem. The fact that they're good people doesn't help if they don't know how to manage things. You know, they might be a dedicated environmentalist.

In Dick Goodenough's case, I think he is a nice man, his heart was in the right place, he ran an environmental organization, a watershed association or something, and we could certainly go talk with him. But when it came to managing a bureau or a part of that agency, he didn't know how to do it, and to expect that he would is unreasonable. He had no training in management, you know, how to get people to work together and to coordinate and to deal with civil service and to deal with the budgeting process and to get programs integrated and so forth. Dick had no idea of how to go about doing that. And that's a problem within the entire

Walker: agency. It's mostly people who are engineers, lawyers. In Bea Tylutki's case she was a lawyer, she ran the Lottery Commission before she came to the department. I mean, what the hell did she know?

Baruxis: Even technically?

Walker: Right. I mean she was doubly handicapped in that she didn't know anything about environmental stuff for one thing, and she didn't know how to manage for the other. So that's how the department has been set up. It was sort of split off from an earlier department, it was primarily sanitary engineers who knew how to put pipes together. It is difficult to get people to work together and coordinate the various programs. You know, water pollution has links to solid waste, has links to wetlands, has links to coastal. And if you don't know how to get those kinds of things set up and how to get them so they function together, of course things fall through the cracks. Things have been run on a crisis basis rather than on any kind of long-range planning and systematic, logical, sequential arrangements. Anyway, I came to understand some of this stuff, and I forget what we started on, how you got me to this wrangle.

Baruxis: Well, just some of the individuals you had to deal with.

Walker: Oh, right, okay. But that's been a continuing problem in the agency; there are good people there who are dedicated to doing the right thing, but they don't know how to do it. And then they're promoted into a management position, and the only thing that they've learned about management is by having watched their superior who also didn't know how to manage. So it's been perpetuating itself.

Baruxis: Improving?

Walker: Not improving. Another thing that happens in the agency is that good, dedicated, technical people become frustrated with having to operate and to work under those conditions and being managed by somebody who doesn't know how to manage, who's bad at working with people, who doesn't tell them what's going on.

I mean, a typical thing that happens is that there is someone in a management position, let's say an assistant director or something, to take a particular case in point. He has some understanding of program, but instead of getting all of the people who are involved in that program together and explaining

Walker: to them the program and having them a part of figuring out how to make that program function, that manager will say individually to Joe Blow, "Joe Blow, you do this." "Jane Blow, you do that." "George, you do this." "So and so do that," and so forth. None of them knows what each other is doing or how it all fits together on any kind of a basis. They maybe find out at the water cooler. Joe Blow will find out from Jane at the water cooler that they're working on a related problem or project.

But anyway, because things aren't put together like that people become frustrated, they don't know what's really going on or why they're doing what they're doing, how it fits into the overall thing, and they get frustrated and feel tromped upon or whatever, and something else comes along and they go take it.

A study was done of the Division of Water Resources a couple of years ago on the whole division's management. It was done by extensive, detailed interviews and written questionnaires of both staff people and what were called client groups, you know, consulting firms and legislators and environmental groups and so forth--anyone who had any dealings with any division or any bureau or program in the agency. It was more detailed in some ways for the people who were in the agency. This was called the TPM, Total Performance Measurement study, and it was done by trained people who know how to do this kind of stuff, a consulting firm hired by the Office of Fiscal Affairs or something.

Anyway, it showed that the problems weren't salary. I mean people always thought, "Oh well, we just have to raise salaries and everybody will be happy." That was not the case at all. It showed that there was deep resentment on the part of the technically capable staff on the way that they were handled and not told things and being left out and not understanding what was going on and so forth. Those were the kinds of things that disturbed people far more than salaries or the terrible parking situation or the way their desk was situated or any of that kind of stuff.

Anyway, one of the results of that study was that an inside team was set up as sort of a--what did they call it?--worker group or something where complaints could come; they would try to resolve the problems and so on and so forth. Anyway, the department, instead of taking that study seriously and seriously going about the business of trying to improve what was going on, they sort of took it as a personal thing, and said, "Oh well, it pointed the finger at managers and made them feel bad." They tried to pooh-pooh it and so forth.

Baruxis: When again was this?

Walker: This was in '78 and '79, I think. But they knew at the beginning, before they even got into this, it was going to point out problems. Why do it if you're not going to try to figure out what the problems are and then try to resolve those problems? So, as a consequence of that, a lot of people were very encouraged by the fact that the study was done. Their hopes were raised, and then they were dashed.

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Walker: It was almost worse that they had done this study at all. I mean it might have been better if they hadn't done the study than that they did it and then ignored it, because expectations were raised and people were encouraged, and they thought, "Oh, at last, things will be better." Then it turned out that they weren't better. They didn't necessarily get worse, but the fact that the expectations had been raised made it seem bad. So that was too bad. The department missed a real opportunity to really grapple with some deep problems, and the problems are still there.

One of the things that the study showed was that if things were not changed, 40 percent of the employees would leave. You know, how they figure out on these questionnaires what would happen. I think it was 40 percent, maybe it was 42. Anyway, a large percentage of the workers would leave and within two years. And sure enough, 40 percent did leave. In fact, in one of the programs it was like 67 percent; the turnover rate was phenomenal and has been phenomenal. What that means to the department is that they're forever having to bring in new people, green, out-of-school people, and train them, which means time away from dealing with issues to train the new people. They no sooner get themselves trained and begin to understand what's going on, than they get frustrated and leave. I mean it's a perpetual turnover thing, and it continues.

And this is the kind of thing that environmentalists, not only in New Jersey but elsewhere, you know, Sierra Club members who seriously want to solve problems in their state, need to be aware of. They need to know what the problems are in the regulatory agency so that they can better understand why things go wrong and why the environmental problems aren't being solved and why things fall through the cracks and so forth. Once they understand what the problems are they can begin to direct some of their attention to the agency's needs and talk out loud about the need for better management in the regulatory agencies. It's

Walker: not just salaries--it is salaries and additional personnel and all that--but it's also the way those people are treated within the agency and managed and all the rest of it that would make a big difference in what happens out there in the environment, on your favorite stream for instance.

Baruxis: What has the Sierra Club done? Have they evaluated?

Walker: In some cases, yes. Not always. I talk with people out around the countryside or at various meetings and so forth, and a lot of people just sort of blame government, "Oh, government. Oh, bureaucrats," in sort of a general thing, but without really understanding what the problems are and therefore not helping to try to solve those problems.

The Solid Waste Management Act

Baruxis: I want to go back to some of the problems with the Solid Waste Management Act that was signed in '76, such as no funding, which seems to have been a typical type of problem. Also, could you discuss the opposition, prior to that, from the landfill owners, and the Solid Waste Industry Council. Finally the Supreme Court overruled and ordered DEP to develop a management plan to implement. Could you discuss the sort of problems in implementing the regulations?

Walker: Well, my memory again is sort of hazy on that. I do remember the Solid Waste Industry Council fighting it, and our saying to the department, "That's their business to try to weaken the laws, they don't want to pay the extra money." I remember trying to keep the department at a higher level and to protect the public health, saying they couldn't acquiesce to the demands for more leniency or less strict standards and so forth. It was just sort of a typical fight with both ends of the spectrum pushing the department.

Baruxis: What about organized crime involvement in it? Not as typical a problem.

Walker: Yes, I think about that every now and then when I've seen reruns of "The Godfather," and when I first saw "The Godfather." I thought, "My God, here's ratty little New Jersey trying to solve this garbage problem with the Mafia in charge." Then I think, "And

Walker: here we are trying to solve it. Maybe we're all just crazy, there's no way in hell that we can." But you can't throw in the sponge and say, "We're not going to try to solve the problem just because the Mafia is in charge of it." We have to try to do it anyway, recognizing what you're up against.

One little incident, it was sort of interesting to me, it was fairly recent as time goes, it must have been a couple of years ago. Again, the Solid Waste Council, that statutory committee which still exists and still has its annual meetings, had one on siting of solid waste facilities. I hadn't really been dealing with solid waste stuff so much in the last few years--as you know, I've been dealing with hazardous waste--but I thought, "Well, I'll go talk about siting since I have some understanding of the problems with it from any hazardous waste stuff."

So one of the points that I made was, "Of course, it's difficult to site solid waste facilities, given the public's lack of trust in industry and its lack of confidence in government to protect their health." And cited all sorts of things that had gone wrong, and pointed out that the public is legitimate in its fear of these facilities. Somewhere in the context of this discussion I added in the organized crime, just mentioned it in passing, just another one of the public's fears.

After I completed my testimony, one of the members was very hostile and he came on like gangbusters and said something like, "What do you know about organized crime in solid waste?" Do you have any evidence of such a thing?" He was sort of saying that that's just nonsense, just not the case, and "unless you can give us absolute proof that there is such a thing, you ought not to say such things." I was really flabbergasted by that. I said, "I personally don't have evidence, but I did read the Rockland County Grand Jury report, which documented the fact of organized crime being involved in garbage in New York State and in New Jersey," you know, sort of trotted out my venerable source to throw at him, and something about press reports and so forth. He snarled some more.

I felt I really didn't have to say very much. I mean I thought, "This guy is off the wall!" And my immediate reaction too was he must be tied in with them. Then I sat down, but I thought afterwards I should have found out who that was. I expect he was a Solid Waste Industry Council rep!

Baruxis: It seems the problem is continuing with resource recovery plants. There may be some crime intrusion into the new facilities as well.

Walker: That's always a fear, and I don't know how they can be kept out other than through mechanisms like what is built into the hazardous waste law. Both now in the state's rules and regulations and also in the Siting Act, there has to be a disclosure statement prepared by the applicant which tells everything about all the officers, the subsidiary companies, past violations, compliance records, and so forth. That disclosure report is sent to the AG's office, and they do a study or whatever, an investigation, and prepare a report which is then given to the department and to the Hazardous Waste Commission for its review and also to the Advisory Council and to the town. So that's an effort anyway. Now whether that is sufficient to weed out the creeps in the world, I don't know, but that's what's on the books to try to prevent bad actors, not only Mafia but other corrupt types from getting into the business.

[brief tape interruption]

Baruxis: The Sierra Club opposed the proposed Natural Resources Bond Issue on the November ballot, feeling there was not enough planning involved prior to the vote.

Walker: Oh, I'd forgotten that. Did we actually oppose it or did we threaten to oppose until the department did something?

Baruxis: Well, they didn't do it, and the club did oppose. It would have provided money for resource recovery to local governments. You want to discuss that at all?

Walker: I remember that early on we were concerned that they had done a lousy job of planning for these facilities.

Baruxis: There was no public input.

Walker: Yes, as far as the public went. I think the plan as outlined in the Solid Waste Management Act was to have twenty-one districts and the Hackensack Meadowlands as the twenty-second district. I don't think we had any quarrel with that. It was in the implementation by the counties of those plans and the lack of help and oversight by the department in helping the counties or pushing the counties in some cases. They were approving plans and as far as we could tell from bits and pieces of information from the press and other people the counties were not doing a good job, they were not involving the public; then when they would try to site a facility, all hell would break loose, understandably so.

Walker: We could see the whole program going down the tubes and were worried that the department, instead of trying to remedy the problem, was ready to dole out some more money to pay for these facilities before it (the department) really knew what it was doing. At the same time we realized that resource recovery facilities were probably a reasonable way to go, in certain counties anyway, if the technology could be shown to be okay. I mean we had some questions on the technology, but the concept anyway made a certain amount of sense.

So it was one of those dilemma issues where the concept was okay, but the implementation looked to be pretty lousy. So I guess our view at that time was, "Why throw money down a rathole?" Better they should get themselves organized and get things off on a better footing before spending anymore money on it.

Baruxis: You felt that there should be some public input into a project?

Walker: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. I mean if there was going to be any chance of being successful in siting these facilities, the public had to be involved in order to be able to agree to anything. The public is not going to accept having anything crammed down its throat anymore. I don't know that it ever did, but certainly not in these days.

The Bottle Bill

Baruxis: What do you see as some of the reasons why the Recycling Act, for example, is not being implemented efficiently now?

Walker: One of my challenges as a Sierra Club person is to get other people to do things. So there's a guy who's been interested in the bottle bill and in recycling, and he has done a magnificent job in working on that and got it organized and got other people working on it, too. So I haven't paid that much attention to the details of the bottle bill other than to support the concept and to support what he's doing.

There are those occasions when I'm talking with someone down in the agency, when I can push them or try to push them or make a point or whatever, based on stuff that I've learned from Al Kent and his problems. So I've sort of kept my nose out of it.

Baruxis: On the bottle bill, the club did not get involved until 1980, although for several years there were efforts each year.

Walker: Oh, yes. I guess it started way back. I mean in concept we've been in support of the bottle bill; there've been efforts to try to get it passed, and then I guess it went somewhat on a back burner. There wasn't anyone in the club to be the club sopkesman on it. Again, I have learned to not try to do it myself just because nobody else will do it, to a certain extent.

Baruxis: There's only so much you can do.

Walker: Yes. So the Sierra Club wasn't involved in it. But now with Al Kent and some of the other people who wanted to make a big push and the time seemed riper now than it has been for a long time, they've really gone like gangbusters.

Baruxis: Do you have any opinion on what's happening with it now--in terms of statements that it would interfere with the Recycling Act statewide?

Walker: Evidently that's just a lot of baloney. The bottle bill and the Recycling Act can work in concert, and they should. So we're in disagreement with the agency on that.

Recycling

Baruxis: Do you think garbage recycling can be successful here as it has been say, in Europe? Ten years ago, I remember there was just so much general public hesitancy against the whole idea, considering it to be too much bother.

Walker: You're talking about garbage recycling?

Baruxis: Refuse recycling. Let's talk about the Recycling Act. Large facilities have been very successful in other areas, in Europe, for example. Do you think that can be workable here?

Walker: Well, way back we were sort of leery of what we called "the magic black box idea," of this huge machine that would do everything for us, that would separate all the materials and so forth. It seemed very expensive, for one thing, and fraught with mechanical breakdown for the other. We've always felt--and I'm not sure if

Walker: that's the way we still feel on these things--that generally the easiest, cheapest, and best way to do it is for people to segregate their wastes at the source, at their home, the newspapers, and bottles and glass, and then deal with what's left over.

I don't see why New Jersey's county systems can't also include putrescibles, or the garbage part of the recycling, too, in composting arrangements or feeding it to pigs or whatever. I mean there are demonstration projects underway, at Rutgers, for instance; I guess it has to be cooked or heated or something to a certain degree and then fed to the pigs or something like that. But I think that there has to be a far bigger commitment and effort to recycle that would reduce the size of the resource recovery facilities that would be needed, therefore less omissions, less problems with siting, and so forth.

Baruxis: And this would require actual laws to be passed?

Walker: Mandating certain things, yes. Well, one of the things that we have pushed on is for the counties, instead of having a discretionary thing for the towns to embark on recycling, just talking about newspapers and bottles and cans now, that it should be mandatory. It's worked in some towns in New Jersey very well, and if it's worked in some I don't see why it can't work in others. It may be harder in an urban area where people don't have as much space to store materials, and the cities themselves don't have the money to have additional pickups or something. But I think even those problems could probably be overcome somehow or another, if we wanted to overcome them.

Baruxis: Do you think more effort should go into minimizing waste at the source, say, improved packaging?

Walker: Reduced packaging, yes, sure. I do my own little personal thing, it's second nature to me now to refuse a bag in a store. You go into a store, you buy something that's in a plastic bottle, say, and inside a box, and then they want to put it in a bag. And I sort of make a point in a friendly way and say, "No thank you, let's save paper." There's always somebody standing there, and I sort of figure it's just my little, teeny, itty-bitty plug or awareness thing to somebody that maybe they'll think the next time. And I take my brown bags back to the grocery store and have the double bags I use for several trips to the grocery store. It takes a certain amount of training to remember to take the bags back to the store. We use them until they get too beat up, then I use them for garbage.

Walker: But it's so simple to do; it's an attitude thing I guess, an awareness thing or whatever, and if I can do it I don't see why other people can't do it, too. It's a small thing, but I suppose once that becomes part of the way you operate there's a lot less garbage. I have very little garbage. I compost the organic waste, the vegetable waste and so forth. Anyway, I don't know how you can get seven and a half million people in New Jersey all thinking of "waste not, want not," and all those good things that grandmothers used to say.

Baruxis: Yes, right, a throwaway society.

Walker: Yes, to get away from the throwaway mentality it would take a very large effort. We've been programmed, we've been conned into thinking that it's good to get something and throw it away, and it would take a policy change on a national and state level to try to get away from that.

And then I suppose people will say, "Oh, it means jobs," and, oh, gnashing of teeth and so forth, but I don't really believe that. I sort of think you don't have to make jobs by wasting stuff somehow or another. There would be better things to do or make better quality stuff that would take a little longer to make and make more jobs, but you'd have something better in the long run or something.

Ocean Dumping

Baruxis: Going to a slightly different kind of solid waste, I would like to just touch on ocean dumping and floods and other problems in that area, what you feel about it, what the Jersey Sierra Club feels about it. For example, the sewage authorities did not meet the '81 deadline, and many groups are suing EPA and the state. Do you want to talk about that?

Walker: Well, here again I've kept my toes in that issue to a certain extent. The Shore Group of the Sierra Club has expressed an interest in ocean dumping, and to the extent that I keep my hands off maybe they'll put their hands in.

Our view has been based in part on the view of Dery Bennett (actually, Derrickson W. Bennett, but he's called "Dery") of the American Littoral Society, who I work with. He's sort of in

Walker: charge of the oceans and coasts, as I put it, and he says, "Well, you're in charge of toxics and all those yukky inland things," because of my interest in sewage and that whole thing. We recognize that the industries have to stop putting toxics and heavy metals into their waste water, which then contaminate the sludge which then make it impossible to deal with the sludge on the land. Obviously, it is not a solution, much less a good idea to throw that contaminated sludge in the ocean.

So our effort has been to support and push for the Industrial Pretreatment Program, which hasn't gone anywhere in New Jersey, in order to decontaminate the sludge and at the same time to press for not dumping the sludge in the ocean, too.

You go full circle every now and then, and I realize that way back in the sixties--I may have mentioned this earlier--I had written to the then-Department of whatever it was called, Conservation and Economic Development, because they were piping sewage and the sludge out into the ocean at that time, just sewage outfalls very close to the beach, and that was bad enough.

The shift from the 12-mile dump site to the 106-mile dump site is another one of those bad, temporary solutions, but it may be better to do that--it at least helps to balance the cost. It will cost them a hell of a lot more to have to haul this stuff to a 106-mile site, therefore making dealing with it on the land seem more economically feasible. That's really my only reason for thinking that maybe going to the 106-mile site may have some benefit. Otherwise I think it's a lousy idea. But if that's the only way to get them to deal with it properly on the land, then maybe that's what we have to do.

Baruxis: Are you optimistic about land treatment or incineration?

Walker: Yes, well, optimistic is too strong a term. I believe that it can be done, I believe that industrial pretreatment can be done, at a cost, but I think not doing it is a much bigger cost in public health problems and all the rest of it, and we can't keep on dumping it in the ocean. We can't incinerate that sludge on the land as it is. Maybe we can, but here again at extreme cost with the pollution-control devices and mechanisms; better it should be treated at the source.

Baruxis: Pretreatment seems to be actually in a way at a statemate; the shift to state control and to permits without the regulations or standards having been made by the EPA makes it a bad situation.

Walker: That's right, that's right. The state has developed a "Request for Proposals--RFP"* on the pretreatment program; they've been working on it for two years or so. I won't go into my tales of woe on how I got involved in the pretreatment program.

But anyway on the ocean dumping thing, clearly the failure of the sewage authorities to meet the '81 deadline is understandable in some sense and yet it's not excusable. They should have been forced to get on a compliance schedule and get out of the ocean. That wasn't done. EPA didn't make them do it. I guess it was a policy decision on the part of the Carter administration and then the Reagan administration.

But the inland states, I don't know what they've been doing with their sludge, probably doing dumb, bad things with it too. They didn't have the ocean to throw it in so they've had to do something with it. Just because the coastal states have access to the ocean doesn't really give them the right to go throw the stuff in the ocean, and that's a bad idea.

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Walker: Since I wasn't that much directly involved in the issue itself, I wasn't dealing with the national club on it. I know that the club had a policy opposed to the not meeting the deadlines and to continue to dump in the ocean, but I didn't work with any national club people. I mean there are various entities in the club that deal with it. There's a Coastal Task Force that dealt with that as well as with coastal zone management questions. The American Littoral Society and the National Wildlife Federation were very much involved in this whole question, and the Sierra Club I think in New York City dealt with it some too, so I didn't have any direct connection with any of them. My feeling is though that if there was an entity in New Jersey that wanted to hammer away on that, that the club would have been helpful and supportive and supplied information and all that kind of stuff. The club does function like that.

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*An "RFP" is a document sent to consulting firms, for instance. It outlines a problem and request firms interested in the subject to sumbmit a proposal for working on a solution,

Lobbying Tactics

Baruxis: We've talked mostly about state legislation. Was the Jersey chapter involved in RCRA* lobbying?

Walker: Just I think to a fairly limited extent. I don't remember the particulars. I have a vague recollection of preparing a letter to the entire New Jersey delegation--I do this frequently on issues--in support of RCRA and making phone calls to key people and asking them what's going on. I did do that, had conversations with people that so and so had proposed an amendment which is bad and call so and so to oppose that amendment. And I would talk with the committee staff person and make a pitch for why that was a bad idea or whatever.

Baruxis: One thing I failed to ask you, on many of the laws that were passed--Solid Waste Management Act, et cetera--was Sierra Club involved in seeking out a sponsor or writing any of the legislation?

Walker: Not at that stage, and as far as that goes it's sort of a new thing. I mean the first piece of legislation that I literally helped write was the Hazardous Waste Siting Act. Prior to that there was not that regular a working relationship with legislators or the committee staff people, other than going and talking at a committee hearing, where you would talk about something that somebody else had already prepared. It's sort of a new thing for citizens to literally work on drafting legislation. I mean that's happened from time to time or you work on a particular paragraph on wording, and I've done that.

But mostly it's been, you get a copy of the bill and you review it and you tear it apart in some detail. I mean I have done that in the past and said that they needed to change the wording to such and such and suggested new wording and even punctuation changes, I mean down to really detailed stuff. But that's sort of an after the fact thing.

Baruxis: So we're in a new area now of political action.

Walker: Yes.

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*Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA, referred to as "Recra" or "wreck-ra").

III TOXIC AND HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The Cancer Rate in New Jersey

Baruxis: Well, really, right about the same time that solid waste was becoming an issue of concern, you were getting involved with toxic substances concerns. Do you want to just dive into how you got involved?

Walker: Well, again it sort of ties together; there was my earlier work on sewers and the Clean Water Act and the Construction Grants Program and water pollution control and then the solid waste stuff. And then I understood the problems that were caused by both, by the sewer outfalls and by leachate from solid waste landfills, and I knew that what was then called industrial waste was going into the landfills.

Then in 1974 or '75 the National Cancer Institute came out with the Cancer Atlas, and that pinpointed New Jersey as having the highest cancer death rate, and it showed by counties and so forth. So we began to ask questions. Why is that? Just on the fact of it it seemed sort of obvious in New Jersey where we've got all the chemical industries and we've got all this pollution and toxic substances. I guess I had been reading about toxics from way back, I mean as far back as Rachel Carson. She had been talking about pesticides and other toxic substances, you know, there was a certain awareness all along.

But the Cancer Atlas really forced all of us to look at that problem and begin to ask questions of the state, and the state didn't know anything. I was really sort of shocked that they had no information on toxics, where they were coming from in the air or in the water. I mean there were some obvious things.

Walker: Obviously stuff was leaking out of landfills and obviously stuff was coming out of pipes, but the regulatory agencies had just been dealing with such things as detergents and phosphates and suspended solids and the obvious guk, and the stuff coming out of the stacks was the stuff you could see. And we began dealing with the stuff that you can't see that's obviously causing problems. It was also very clear that the workers were like the canaries in the mines, they were our early warning devices in effect.

So when the Cancer Atlas came out and everyone was floundering around about what to do, my question was, "Well, what should we do? What should Sierra Club do in New Jersey? What could we do that would be useful to try to gain a better understanding or reenforce sort of what we were thinking of or whatever?" So I had been reading stuff about toxics in various publications, and there was a very familiar name to me, which was Dr. Sam Epstein.

Baruxis: This was when? When you contacted him?

Walker: When the Cancer Atlas came out, yes.

Baruxis: Back in '75.

Walker: Yes. So I found out where to reach him.

Baruxis: Where was he?

Walker: He was in Chicago, and he had an organization in Washington--I forget but it was a long name--of public interest groups. It was called the Commission for the Advancement of Public Interest Organizations. So I called Sam and told him that we wanted to do something useful here in New Jersey, and we had this huge problem. He said that his organization was having a meeting in three days, it just happened, it was just a nice coincidence, and they were going to talk about New Jersey in the Cancer Atlas and toxic substances, so he invited me to come to the meeting. So I did.

And that was very helpful to me in hearing what those people, many of whom I had heard about and knew through their national publications and stuff, and some of them I had met and known before, but to hear them talking about the problem of what needed to be done and getting his advice and their advice on what we might do to get organized and who to get in touch with in the labor movement, so that we could sort of get organized and work together.

Baruxis: That's an exciting development.

Walker: Yes, yes. So I contacted a bunch of people. There was some congressman who was going to hold a hearing in Newark. I called up to find out whether we could testify.

Baruxis: Who was the congressman?

Walker: Must have been Rinaldo or somebody up in that area.

Baruxis: Not Minish? Minish was active.

Walker: It may have been Minish. I'd have to look it up. I guess before that time I had contacted all these people, and had drafted a statement. It didn't say "whereas," but it was sort of like that, saying we've got this huge problem and what needed to happen was that the state set up some kind of a commission or task force or something to address that problem and the kinds of people who should be on that task force and so on and so forth. I had circulated it to a lot of people asking for them to make comments on this draft statement or suggest changes or additions or whatever, but also see whether they'd be interested in joining.

Baruxis: You actually wrote to unions?

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: Can you name the signers?

Walker: Well, the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union, the UAW, there was a Painters and something-or-other union.

Baruxis: AFL-CIO?

Walker: I don't think AFL-CIO signed. At that time that was headed in New Jersey by Charlie Marciante, and I guess it still is. I'm sure I sent him a copy of it, but there wasn't anything back. But anyway there were several unions that did join.

Baruxis: That's interesting because often there's a hostility toward environmentalists.

Walker: Oh yes. But on this it was clear we had a common interest, and the fact that I had somewhat of an entree from the union people who were part of Sam's group. There was "Shelly," Sheldon Samuels, a big union guy. And there was Tony Mazzocchi. Tony and Sam came up and testified for us on another piece of legislation later on.

Walker: They gave me names of people here, and so then I contacted them and said, "Tony suggested that I call you" and da, da, da, da, da, so that gave me some sort of credibility with them.

Baruxis: It must have been interesting to actually get talking with them.

Walker: Oh yes, it was, it was. And it wasn't a whole new idea to me either because I had recognized that sometime back that the workers were getting the concentrated dose; we were getting some of the same stuff, but they were at higher risk.

So I went down there, and then prepared this statement, circulated it, and got a bunch of people to join in it. Then about the same time a congressman was talking about having a hearing in Newark, and I felt like, "Hey, we're ready to say something. We have this group, this interesting sort of group is in agreement." But the congressman said, or his aide or whoever I talked with, that we couldn't testify because it was all filled up with, you know, the mucky-mucks talking, and that the only way we could testify is if I could convice an additional congressman to come to the hearing. There's some rule that if there's only one congressman they can only hold the hearing in the morning; if they had two congressman, they could have it all day, something like that. I forget why that was. It seemed sort of dumb to me at the time. That was what I was told anyway. So I called whoever the other congressman was and leaned on him pretty heavily and convinced him that it was really important for him to be in New Jersey and it was an important issue and da, da, da.

Baruxis: What was his name?

Walker: I'd have to look it up again, I don't remember. But again it was the two congressman who represent districts in North Jersey.

Baruxis: I see. North Jersey you felt--

Walker: Well, that's because the thing was going to be in Newark, and it was whoever the congressman was that covered Newark at that time, and I guess there were two of them that had parts of that part of the state. So the guy did decide to come, so I could go testify, so I read the statement.

Baruxis: This was in '76?

Walker: Must have been. I think so. The Atlas came out in '75. That wasn't the beginning of my involvement with toxics particularly, but it helped me focus more on toxics as a particular issue, and also it raised the issue of hazardous waste. I mean that was a natural for me to fall into and begin to talk about hazardous waste. I found something not long ago where I was talking about that in '74, you know, pointing this out as a problem even though I wasn't concentrating on it.

And when I say "I" I'm not saying that I was the only one who thought about it; there obviously were other people. I don't know that I ever had enough confidence in myself to bring something up without having it validated or verified or agreed upon by at least some of the people whose views I trusted.

Baruxis: Who else was spearheading the Toxics Coalition?

Walker: Well, I guess I sort of spearheaded it, if that's the right word, and got it sort of organized. Other people were in agreement, but like in anything else it takes one person or a couple of people to do something and pursue it.

Baruxis: You also testified before the Senate Commission on the Incidence of Cancer in New Jersey. I don't know if you want to talk about any of those experiences. And the Cancer Control Act was introduced by Senator Skevin, so if you want to go back to any of those.

Walker: I did haul down to Washington to testify. There was some conference or something at that time. I mean I sort of trekked around. Again it was one of those dumb things--or dumb maybe isn't the right word for it--but I sort of fell into this role of being perceived as some sort of leader or something on toxics!

It was scary to me on two levels. One, that people would think, "My God, we're in real trouble if they think _I_ know something about toxics." I mean I know nothing! Except what I read in the paper or something. When I thought about it, I thought, "That's a heavy burden. I mean I shouldn't be perceived in that way." But anyway, so I was, so I thought, "Well, if it can be useful for me to say something, I'll go say it." So that was sort of my thinking about it. On the one hand, I thought, "Ye gods! We're in worse trouble than I think we are." So anyway, I did trek around.

The Skevin thing was somewhat of a mixture. On the one hand it was useful for Senator Skevin to set up this commission to talk about cancer incidence in New Jersey and to hammer away at it,

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Walker: and have it in the public eye a lot, and we used that too in a sense that I think was useful. Every opportunity that we got we talked about the cancer mortality rate and why is that and what is it about New Jersey that seems to cause a problem. So anytime there was talk about air or water or anything having to do with the environment, we would throw out the words "cancer" and "toxics" and so forth to push our case why the rules and regulations needed to be more strict or whatever was the issue at the moment we used that. And I don't think we used it in the bad sense. It seemed like it was a logical and correct thing to do at the time. I guess that had been the advice, too, by those guys down in Washington to keep hammering away at it.

So Skevin introduced a Cancer Control Act, and the idea had certain merit to it. It didn't address workers, and we wanted it to address workers as well. We felt that it was important that the workers be given some protection. The unfortunate thing about it was that Skevin was not a good legislator; he was not effective. I know that his heart was in it. He meant well by it and his motives I think were all right, but he was just not an effective legislator. So it was partly that and it was partly he had his own concept of what he wanted to do, and in part that was all right, but then--I've sort of forgotten the particulars--he didn't listen very well, I think, to what other people were saying.

For instance, one of the things he wanted to do was to list a whole bunch of toxic substances that should be banned from New Jersey, ban the manufacture and use of certain materials. There were two things wrong with that. One was that to ban the manufacture would be impossible just economically. The other was that the list that he proposed was evidently an old list of things that were not the worse. I mean if you were going to ban anything, most of those fourteen or sixteen substances were not the ones to bother with, there were newer, worse things, or at least that was the case with some of the things.

And Sam Epstein came and testified and Tony Mazzocchi from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union in Washington. Both testified on the act and agreed that a ban--which was interesting--that the ban was not the way to go, too.

Baruxis: You were generally supportive, except you recommended some amendments to the act?

Walker: Oh yes. We supported the concept, but as I recall--and I've got to go back and dig out--I think we worked on quite a few admendments, including one to get rid of the ban, which was a major thing. And for the Sierra Club to oppose that major part of that act should have said something to Skevin, but he wanted to go with the ban, and he sort of stuck with that, and it was counterproductive on his part, and we ended up not having a Cancer Control Act.

And a Cancer Control Act may not have been the way to go, but at the time it made a certain amount of sense. I mean at that time the state knew nothing about what was in the air and water, and part of the act was to get that information, that would have been useful. Here again I'd have to go back and dig out the materials.

Baruxis: Byrne did end up establishing the Cabinet Committee on Cancer Control.

Walker: Right.

Baruxis: Which was criticized by the club for some of its inherent problems. Do you want to discuss that? Was that effective at all?

Walker: No, it wasn't.

Baruxis: Well, typically it was not given funding. DEP lacked the resources to carry out whatever suggestions were made. And the club stated that the cabinet committee was partisan--the appointees were political.

Walker: Yes, I think I've described it has having a fatal flaw or something.

Baruxis: Yes, exactly. [brief tape interruption] Yes, could you talk about Byrne's Cancer Cabinet Committee?

Walker: Cabinet Committee on Cancer Control. Somebody must have sat up all night to come up with that one, you know, the four C's. That was a real disappointment.

Baruxis: Not effective at all?

Walker: It was not effective. At some point they hired an executive director, I think. I tried to contact that person to find out what they were doing, and the scope of work, and to have some

Walker: involvement with it. My impression from talking with whoever I could finally get in touch with was that it was useless, and that it wasn't going to be effective and do much of anything.

Baruxis: What about the DEP Cancer Control Program? It seems they did get some funding.

Walker: Yes, at that time the toxics person was a guy named Peter Preuss who was very good, and I respected Peter enormously. He was straight; he made it very clear that the department simply didn't have the information, nor did they have the resources to get the information. And he came out with--some others were involved, I'm sure, but I gave him most of the credit for coming out with the report--Cancer and the Environment; A Report to the Governor, which analyzed the NCI Atlas specifically in New Jersey and made recommendations for what needed to be done and sort of mapped out a program that made a lot of sense. That was the beginning of the state's trying to figure out what in the hell was going on in toxics.

Here again, typical of the Sierra Club, you hammer away at something, and somebody finally comes out with a report that says sort of what you wanted to say, then you sort of snowball this whole thing and you pick out excerpts from that. The next time some hearing comes along or some occasion to publicly bring it out again, you quote from the report and you keep it going, keep that ball bouncing, as we say. And finally things do get done.

Baruxis: The Sierra Club and the Toxics Coalition had an actual action plan in their statement. Were any of those suggestions implemented at all?

Walker: I forget what the action plan said. I doubt that anything got done exactly as we said it should be done. You go into something like that and you sort of know that it probably won't happen just like this, but maybe something better will happen, or something more effective, or equally effective, or whatever. I don't recall that anything specifically such as we had suggested happened. But other things did, so we felt like we were at least making some progress.

Baruxis: And the failure of the Cabinet Committee just left you sort of helpless to do anything? Byrne was not open to hearing about changes?

Walker: That's right. As I recall we didn't get very far with that, and I think it became very clear very soon that there wasn't much point in spending a lot of time trying to fix it either. At some point we must have decided, "Okay, well, this big, overall scheme isn't going to work, so let's begin to pick up the pieces, let's begin to think of hazardous waste, ocean dumping, and whatever."

Kin-Buc

Baruxis: You were also active with Kin-Buc at that time?

Walker: Oh, yes. '76. Actually we weren't involved in the effort. There was a local effort to close Kin-Buc; there was a citizens group that was set up. I guess somebody called me and asked for Sierra Club's help on it or something. By the time we got involved in it, my concern wasn't so much to get it closed down; it was quite apparent that that was going to happen or it had already happened. Our effort was in to get it closed properly.

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Walker: There weren't very many environmentalists involved in all this stuff, but there must have been someone in addition to that guy at EPA who was helping me. It may have been Ian [Walker]. But I weaseled my way into working on the closure thing and reviewing the technical documents. I can remember looking at the plan for Kin-Buc. I think Grace Singer actually has my Kin-Buc box.

Baruxis: Actually, it was finally closed only on technicalities.

Walker: I think so. I forget the details of it now. There were several parts that were controverial. One was that the place obviously needed to be closed down, but there were a lot of people who were raising the question, "Well, if Kin-Buc is closed, where's all this stuff going to go?" And about that time we were saying, "Well, it's better that hazardous waste go to a place like Rollins, a treatment facility, rather than into a saturated sponge which was the way Kin-Buc was."

Baruxis: Next to a river.

Walker: Yes, next to a river and so forth. So we were beginning to emphasize then the treatment instead of the landfilling of hazardous waste and touting Rollins as the way to go. Then in '77, of course, Rollins blew up, but that's another story.

Walker: But the closure plan was an interesting project to me, working with the department trying to get them to force the Kin-Buc operators to close it properly, and we were dealing with the likes of Ted Schwartz, who was an attorney for Kin-Buc. He was formerly with the department, very smart, very capable, and a son of a bitch. He could twist the department about his finger. He was notorious; everybody knew Ted Schwartz. So that's what the department was up against in trying to close it properly. So I feel like we helped get them to do a better job of demanding that Kin-Buc do a better job of closing.

At some point down there I was interviewed on TV at the foot of Kin-Buc, just outside of the fence. Here again, while we were there and I was being interviewed, some people came down to a boat launch, which is right there at the toe of Kin-Buc, with their little boat and were about to launch their boat, and I was horrified. Here was their dog paddling around in the water, and they were playing in this water and they were going water-skiing. So I said to the TV crew, "Hey, maybe you'd be interested in talking with these people." So they scurried down there. They agreed that, yes, they would talk to the television, and while the TV was getting set up or something, I asked them, and I guess the TV people asked them afterwards, didn't it worry them that Kin-Buc was leaching all this horrible stuff into the water? They said, "Yes," and that whenever they go water-skiing, which was fairly frequently, they had ear, nose, and throat problems for several days afterwards, they had to go to the doctor. But they lived somewhere reasonably nearby, this was the only place that they could get to after work and go for a little toot on their boat and go water-skiing. That was their recreation, and they didn't want to give it up. And it was sad. One of the women there said, "Well, yes," she does really sort of think about twenty years from now and what the effect might be.

Baruxis: This is on TV also?

Walker: I'm not sure if that part of it got on television or not, I've forgotten. But it was so sad. Here's this recreation resource that is shot to hell, but people using it anyway. I think it's stupid on their part, but you can't order people not to enjoy their boat that they've made a big investment in. But I wouldn't let my dog go in that water. And that was another eye-opener, I thought about that aspect of it, the Raritan River.

Baruxis: I've been there, so I think about it! Dwyer and Assemblyman Froude banned landfills very close to river areas.

Walker: Oh, yes, a thousand feet I think.

Baruxis: Was that helpful in getting it closed?

Walker: The legislators at that time were doing everything, trying to get anything passed that would retroactively close it.

Baruxis: I'm going to get into siting in a moment. Is there anything you'd like to say about the superfund legislation around 1980? Were you involved in the efforts?

Walker: Just like on RCRA, writing letters to the New Jersey delegation and making phone calls and whatever.

The Sierra Club and Hazardous Waste

Walker: And here again I would rely to a certain extent on national Sierra Club. They would call and say, because they knew of my interests, "So and so needs to be pushed, or is sitting on the fence, or whatever." Through the club's National News Report we would keep track of what was going on.

Oh, and sort of an interesting sidelight, or interesting to me or part of the club--early on, the New Jersey chapter's leaders had been concerned because the national club in its annual priority-setting had really neglected the East and all kinds of problems, and had not really dealt with pollution problems. It had more emphasized the national parks and wilderness and those kinds of things which, you know, is understandable.

So a number of us, and I guess myself particularly, made a real effort to get the national club to have at least one of their four board meetings closer to the East Coast. So at some point, and I forget when this began to happen, I guess in the mid-seventies, they would have one of their four meetings in Washington, D.C. So we won that. All the East Coast people were pressing for that.

Then our next task was to go down there and lobby them, literally go to those meetings and push for a higher level of interest and resources put on pollution kinds of issues, including solid and hazardous waste and water pollution control and so forth. I mean, obviously they had an interest in these things, but they weren't among the ten priority issues.

Baruxis: It's everyone's issue now maybe.

Walker: But even then, just as recently as a couple of years ago, I had to stand up in the Sierra Club meeting and rail at them, I mean not really but push hard, that hazardous waste be one of the issues; it was not, even though on all their fundraising pitches and in all sorts of other things there was quite clearly an interest in hazardous waste. They would talk about hazardous waste as a problem: this is one of the things Sierra Club is working on, and yet it was not among the things they gave priority status. So anyway we just made it our business to go down there and push for that, and they did accede to that and put it as part of their high-priority things.

But a point that I made a number of times with national staff people particularly--and this I started doing early on, and maybe it was easier for us to see here on the East than it was for the more western-oriented part of the club--that is, here they were working like mad to save wild rivers and national parks and wilderness areas--thank God, they're doing it, because that's where my heart is too--but we could see here that unless we clean up the water where people live, there's going to be an effort at some point, because we've poisoned all the water where we live, to get the clean water from where we play, which means dams and reservoirs up there in the wilderness and national parks areas. So I'd point that out to people who hadn't thought about that, hadn't realized that if we don't begin to clean it up here, there's going to be huge demands by people drinking poisoned water to pipe it in from far away.

Dow Chemical in Bordentown

Baruxis: Before we get into starting with what you've really been mostly involved in, I want to touch on one issue the club dealt with. It was a proposed Dow Chemical plant in Bordentown Township. The club actually took action questioning whether it was appropriate to build there because of the chemicals that would be introduced to the area. Was that unusual as a political action for the club to oppose construction of a plant?

Walker: No, that was more usual, I think, in a lot of ways, although in New Jersey our effort had been more on legislation and those kinds of things at that particular time, rather than opposing a

Walker: particular project. I mean we opposed a jet-port in the Pine Barrens, for instance. That may have been one of the first things like that that we did get involved in.

Baruxis: Did that get built?

Walker: No, it didn't get built.

Baruxis: Because of the Environmental Impact Statement?

Walker: I forget the details, but I remember people in Bordentown organized to fight that off, and it was (one) of (that) same group of people that shortly after that called me. We had a long conversation, and I invited them to a Sierra Club Executive Committee meeting to make their pitch for some money to fight off a proposed hazardous waste landfill in Bordentown, and that was Rick and Cathy Gimello.

Baruxis: With DEP.

Walker: Yes, who are now at DEP, and have now split, but that's another thing. They cut their teeth on Dow, and then they came back to us on the landfill business. We gave them a couple of hundred dollars, I think, and helped them get going. They were a good group, those two were the prime movers. And now Rick, you know, is the executive director of the Hazardous Waste Commission. It's fun to watch things like that happen.

The Right-to-Know

Baruxis: As long as we're discussing environmental health in New Jersey, would you like to talk about the Right-to-Know Campaign, how Sierra Club actually became part of that coalition?

Walker: Of course, early on when the Cancer Act came out, one of the things that what we then called the Toxics Coalition talked about was right-to-know, and I guess that was part of the Cancer Control Act. The workers' provision in particular was for the workers to have the right to know what materials they're handling. So our history and the right-to-know goes back at least that far.

Walker: So when the right-to-know legislation came along, it was natural for us to support it. Fortunately, another guy on the chapter executive committee decided that he was going to concentrate on that, and so he's run with that ball, that's Jim Lanard, and I've just played sort of a background supportive role on it.

Baruxis: Any opinion on what's happening currently?

Walker: Well, it's on the governor's desk, and I just wrote the governor a letter and urged that he sign it. There are a lot of issues where someone else need play the lead role, like Jim Lanard on the right-to-know, but the New Jersey Chapter or me or whatever will play a supportive role in writing a letter when needed or making a phone call when needed or rattle somebody's cage some way or another; that's just the way we work. Other times I will be taking the lead, and somebody else will write an occasional letter.

Baruxis: It seems like quite a victory for that kind of a bill to pass in view of the opposition, the Chemical Industry Council's really strong opposition.

Walker: Well, there're so many things that are in its favor, you know, from an ethical point of view and from a health point of view, that it seems to me that it's like a motherhood issue for legislators to support. I think they would have a hard time going against it, and I hope the governor doesn't veto it. There's so much stuff going on in the state with hazardous waste, and the toxics, and drinking water, and wells closed, the time is very ripe, and relatively easy, you would think, to pass that kind of legislation.

Baruxis: How about labor people who were not traditionally with Sierra Club in the past? Are they going along with the coalition on that particular bill?

Walker: A lot of labor groups clearly are. I mean we have a common interest in this particular problem. Anything to do with toxics generally we can be in agreement. You know, that's understood by all of us; we talk about it out front, that there are going to be things we're going to disagree on, but when we can work together, good, let's do it.

There's an outfit called the Environmental-OSHA Network, which we're a part of. We had a meeting a few months ago to get everybody together and somewhat acquainted. It's a tentative kind of arrangement, but I think there's enough strong feeling and

Walker: background on it now that it will continue. I mean the Sierra Club was involved in the Shell strike way back whenever that was--I have to dig that out. So there's been a long tradition of Sierra Club trying to work with labor people when we could. I'm going to dig that out because it's sort of interesting. [looks through files]

Baruxis: That was 1973 for the Shell strike?

Walker: Yes. The Sierra Club joined in the Shell strike, and that was on health issues. I kept that stuff because that was of interest here in New Jersey somehow or another, even though we weren't involved in it.

Baruxis: As far as the Toxics Coalition goes, I suppose it's not--

Walker: Well, it's become a different thing. It's now the Right-to-Know Coalition; it's the same group of people, but things change. I've never felt a need to hang onto some original organization. Things change in this society and whatever seems to work or how things ebb and flow, you move with the tide whatever it is. I hope you'll take out all those--move with the tide--and all those cliches! [laughing]

Governor Byrne's Hazardous Waste Advisory Commission

Baruxis: So by the late seventies, the club was active in starting to consider hazardous waste siting?

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: And you were appointed to the advisory council?

Walker: Let's see, the Governor's Hazardous Waste Advisory Commission.

Baruxis: Well, I remember there was the council and the commission.

Walker: It's confusing. The thing that I was on was Governor Byrne's Hazardous Waste Advisory Commission.

Baruxis: It was different than the thirteen-member commission?

Walker: That's right. This was set up in 1979. It was set up as a six-month thing, and then Jerry cut us to only four months.

Baruxis: Jerry English?

Walker: Jerry English, yes. For a dumb reason. We completed our report, and it was produced in January of 1980. That was the end of that commission's work, but we recommended that there be a new institution set up and so on and so forth. It was out of that that the new commission and the advisory council grew.

Baruxis: What had happened with Jerry English? She had secretly drafted legislation at one point?

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: And you were rewriting that actually?

Walker: No, it doesn't matter. Let's see. I was appointed to the commission, I was the only environmentalist on the commission.

Baruxis: In 1979?

Walker: In 1979, yes. I saw my role on the commission as representing the public; I mean my role was to represent the environmental viewpoint. I saw that role as pushing as hard as I possibly could on things having to do with public participation, making sure that whatever institution we recommended, that there be specific recommendations on how the public would have access to and work with that commission and so forth. Do you want me to talk about this?

Baruxis: Anything and everything really--your personal interactions with people on the commission, how your report was received, hearings.

Walker: Okay. The first thing that happened was a sort of ceremonial meeting; then following that was an organizational meeting. We were told at that meeting by Jerry English, "Sorry, you only have four months to do this report," because she wanted the governor to be able to talk about the report in the state of the state message which he gives in January.

And I was very outspoken on that. I mean this was one of the reasons that I was not looked upon favorably by Jerry English; he knew my yammering on it. Given the executive order that set up the commission and the tasks as outlined in the executive order,

Walker: that was a lot to be able to accomplish in six-months' time, never mind four months. Also, in order for our work to be credible to the public, the public had to be involved in what _we_ were doing, and had to have time to comment on and discuss the kinds of things we were going to be talking about. Four months was just not enough time. I kept saying to the chairman and to the group and so forth that "it's not enough time and you have to get back at least those additional two months, if not more." And they all agreed! But they wouldn't do it. You know, they were playing the be-nice game and don't rock the boat and, "Oh, yes, we can do it." And there were some DEP people who also said, "Oh yes, we can do it."

There were some of the meetings that I went to on that commission that I would leave and I was just shaking! It was a combination of being in a position where I had to push very hard to get my points across and make myself interject.

Baruxis: Who were the other people on the commission before hearings that you would actually meet with and talk to? Other people on the commission with you? You say you were the only environmentalist.

Walker: Yes. There were two legislators who never came to any one of the meetings, except for the ceremonial. There were industry people. Well, hang on, let me see who they were. [looks through notes]

Baruxis: [reading] Commission of thirteen.

Walker: Yes, there were thirteen.

Baruxis: And then the commission that was later formed was thirteen?

Walker: No, the commission that was later formed was nine, but the Advisory Council was thirteen. It's very confusing. There were four particular industry people, and there were a couple of others who were business and therefore sort of industry. There was a person from Exxon, for example, but there was also New Jersey Bell. There was a mayor. [looking through notes and thinking out loud] Well, there was Exxon, a mayor, Linden Chemical and Plastics, a freeholder, Allied Chemical, Dupont, and a guy from Princeton Department of Economics, who was not helpful.

Baruxis: Originally it was to have been two economists, no?

Walker: I'm not sure what there was. But there was that economist and then there was New Jersey Bell. Oh yes, and there was another guy from Rutgers who was a professor of economics. And Rocco Ricci,

Walker: who was the chair and who was formerly with the department, was the commissioner and then was the chief engineer of the Passaic Valley Regional Sewerage Commission.

Baruxis: Was he sympathetic?

Wlaker: Well, Rocco was helpful up to a point. I had known Rocco from way back, from the Stony Brook Regional Sewerage thing. He and I went way back in working on things. So he knew where I was coming from as far as public participation goes, and he had been helpful, actually, way back in involving the public in the decision making, so he had some understanding and sympathies for this. He set up a little task force which included two environmentalists, Ian and me, actually. There may have been somebody else, too, and some local officials, and other people to work on the regional sewerage thing. That was when he was at EPA, and then he came to DEP and became director of the Division of Water Resources, and then he became commissioner.

Baruxis: For an interim period, I think.

Walker: Yes. And actually, even though I didn't always agree with him, I urged him at some point to please stay on as commissioner, because we didn't know who we were going to get and the rumors were awful. Of course, then we ended up getting Jerry, which was the pits.

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Walker: So I guess it was clear to the other commission members from the beginning what I was going to push for and that I was going to push, and as I said it was hard sometimes because I really felt like I was a voice crying in the wilderness or something a lot of the time. I felt very uncomfortable some of the time sort of repeating myself, feeling the need to keep hammering away at the need to involve the public. Because they would sort of sweep on with their technical stuff or whatever, and I could see they were not paying sufficient attention to the needs of the public. They would be in this gigantic flow this way, and I'd have to push myself into that flow to slow it down or whatever to get my point across. It was hard for me to deal with it.

Batuxis: Would you actually insist on being heard at meetings?

Walker: Yes. You know, Rocco would call on me, but I would have to make myself inerject or say, "But, wait a minute, we have to remember--"

Baruxis: Was being female part of it?

Walker: Part of it, I was the only woman on the thing, too, and as I said, my upbringing was to "not be controversial, my dear." To assert myself is hard anyway, and in that kind of a situation it was even harder.

Baruxis: The goal of the commission, was it only to evaluate siting criteria, or were you actually evaluating the entire toxic waste situation in the state?

Walker: It was to look at the whole hazardous waste situation and to make recommendations for how better to manage it. [looking at files] There must be an executive order copy in here. [reading] "Overview of the hazardous waste problem, for the state to develop an effective strategy for hazardous waste."

Baruxis: But was siting the commission's priority? Did they focus on that?

Walker: Yes. We recognized, and I recognized--I guess that's why I was on the commission--that this was sort of a given, that in order to solve the problem we have to site new facilities. We sort of started at that point. The difficulty was the public opposition to such facilities, so what do we do?

Baruxis: Was any or enough consideration given to reduction at the source, either by substituting materials, recycling toxics, or do you think the industrial members of the commission maybe skirted that issue and ignored it?

Walker: I'd have to go back and read the report. My recollectuion is that they did recognize that. I mean we did talk about that, and the recommendations included recycling, reuse, waste exchanges, and change processes, all to reduce the volume at the source. I I think the report said everything that I felt that it should say, including those kinds of things. As I said, I had a hard time getting my points in there or making sure that they were in there. But it was not that they were opposed to what I was saying or that they were up to doing typically bad things from our point of view looking at industry; that's not the case. I think they really did want to do the right thing. There were some of the industry people there who I disagreed with. I mean they felt very strongly that RCRA* was much too strong, for instance, and that New Jersey's

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*Resource Conservation and Recovery Act: A major federal law that regulates hazardous waste.

Walker: regulations should be changed to take some of the burden off them, too. So we had some real disagreements, especially on proposed RCR provisions. But for the most part there was more agreement than disagreement.

There was one little incident, one of the industry guys, it was the guy from Allied, who I liked and we had a friendly feeling between us, recommended some action by the whole commission having to do with RCRA. I forget now what exactly it was, but he wanted the commission to request the governor to recommend changes to the EPA that would weaken RCRA. And I wrote a letter to Rocco, and to the commission, saying, "If the commission is even going to consider or even discuss what this guy wanted to do, then they should not do that unless they also consider the amendments that have been suggested by the national environmental groups, Sierra Club included, on strengthening RCRA." So that totally laid the whole thing to rest, I never heard of it again. That was just one of the things that came up.

Overall, I felt that we were pushed to the wall on time, we had a lot of very intensive meetings. That was one of the reasons why I felt so intense about it, too; I could see that deadline rolling right at us. The commission members, and Rocco, too, wanted to complete it in time, the DEP people wanted to complete it in time to please the new commissioner, for whatever reasons, or to prove that they were right that we could do it, or whatever. They were sort of snowballing this whole thing and accepted that the public really would not have a chance to chew on things. As a consequence, I did write a minority report disagreeing with one of their major recommendations, which was to recommend that there be a corporation set up. I said, "We haven't had time to really discuss, to look at all the advantages and disadvantages of a corporation or commission or whatever the institution ought to be, to look at it in a systematic fashion, and for the public to have an opportunity to look at it in a systematic fashion and to come to some agreement." Again, we didn't have time to do it.

Baruxis: The Byrne administration did go ahead with the Facilities Corporation Act legislation?

Walker: Well, all right, so this commission came out and recommended a corporation. And again, in fairness to Rocco and the other commission members, at the point where they recommended the corporation--and I requested this when they carried through--they did carry through on my request that it be mentioned in here that there was one member who disagreed and to see the minority

Walker: report. I didn't want a minority report totally hidden in the back where nobody would see it; I wanted it mentioned up front. But anyway, what was your question?

Baruxis: Well, that caused you to resign?

Walker: On, that was another thing.

Baruxis: Later on?

Walker: Well, it was going on concurrently. Gosh, I'd forgotten about that. You did do your homework on all this, didn't you?

Baruxis: I think that's kind of a big incident when you actually resigned.

The Delaware River Basin Commission Study

Walker: Yes, it was a big thing, but that was a separate thing. So I continued my work on the commission until the report was published. In the meantime I was also on an advisory council to the Delaware River Basin Commission's study of hazardous waste management institutions. The DEP and the DRBC, Delaware River Basin Commission, had jointly embarked on two studies. One was to get the information on what hazardous waste was generated in New Jersey. The other was on the institution that would manage hazardous waste.

I guess early on, they had just an industry group that worked with the DRBC. At some point, that group completed an initial study, and then they expanded the study to include the institutional thing, and also it was something to do with siting, and they agreed to add citizens to the advisory thing, so it wasn't just industry. They asked somebody from the Delaware Sierra Club to be on this thing, and that person couldn't do it. Anyway, they came around to me and asked me to be on this thing. So I started in a little bit late on this other advisory group. And I was going along with that in good faith, reading the documents and going to the meetings and commenting and whatever. I forget how all that was. That was sort of going along concurrently with the governor's commission. This report was then finished in January.

Baruxis: For the siting commission?

Walker: This is the Report of the Hazardous Waste Advisory Commission to Governor Byrne, January, 1980. So that finished that commission, with Rocco Ricci as chair. And I continued on with this advisory group to the DRBC-DEP study.

Walker: At some point, a few months after the January report was released, I heard, through a source, that DEP had written a piece of legislation, a siting act setting up a corporation. Somebody gave me a copy of this draft thing that had gone to the governor, and I was very puzzled, not to mention outraged that this had happened in secret. Nobody knew anything about it. I read this thing which said in its opening statement, "This follows the recommendations of this earlier commission and of the January report." I read the law, it had nothing in there about involving the public. It sort of gave some lip service words, "the public will be involved at every step of the way," but then you read all the steps in the thing, the only mention of the public was to have a public hearing after the decision had been made, giving the public thirty days' notice. I mean it was absolutely hair-raising, stupid, outrageous, bad, and it had not been made public. Somebody literally slipped a copy of it to me, from the governor's office.

Baruxis: Is this what Jerry English had authored?

Walker: Well, she hadn't written it, but she had had her staff people write it. And I took it to some people in the department, I say, "What goes here? I mean what are you guys doing?" And they said, "Oh, don't worry about it, it's just a discussion document, it's not to be taken seriously" and so forth. And I raised some hell with them. I said, "What do you mean by doing this? You did this in secret, the public hasn't been involved in this, it goes totally against everything that was said in the commission report. How is the public going to have any trust in this corporation that you're setting up when they haven't," you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And they gave me the bullshit response and stuff.

So then I went to the DRB, and I said, "Did you know that this was going on?" They didn't know this was going on. It was clearly pulling the rug out from under the DRBC study, which was just getting underway. Well, it had been underway and was to complete its work several months hence. They hadn't had the discussions on institutions either.

Oh, I'll back up again. While I was on the commission, because I kept yammering and saying we have to have time for the public to be involved in the discussions on the institution that's going to decide in whose backyard these new facilities will go, I was given assurance, "Oh, you're right, but don't worry about it because the DRBC study is going to do that, that's where the public can go and have its input. If there isn't

Walker: sufficient time for input here, that's where the public should go," and that was one of the recommendations that came out of there.

So then I'd trot myself over to the DRBC study process, and tell the public and everyone, "Okay, the ball game is going to go over here to the DRBC, and this is where we will really have a study of the institutions and look at all the advantages and disadvantages from a fiscal, an environmental, and a health, and everything else standpoint, and analyze all these institutions and then come up with a recommendation for which one." So then we'd trot ourselves over there and put our eggs in that basket and start working on it over there, and then this piece of legislation comes out and says, "Here it is. We've got the institution, it's a corporation," and everyone says, "What?"

When that came out, at the next meeting of the DRBC advisory group, I had decided beforehand what I was going to do. I had decided that there were a number of things here that were wrong. It would be wrong to let the department get away with doing this secret number for one thing. It threw the DRBC thing into being a farce. I mean there was no point in going on with it. The ball game was now over in the legislature. I could only be in one place at a time; you know, there're only certain things that you can do. The action was going to now be in the legislature; that was where any of us who wanted to be involved in the action would go. Nobody was going to pay any attention to what the DRBC was doing if it was going to be in the legislature.

I also realized--and here again it was a painful recognition--that if I were just to quietly go away and pack up my bags, nobody would pay any attention. It would just slide by, and the department would get away with that kind of sneaky behavior. So I had to do something stronger than that, which meant to resign and to do it in some sort of a public way. I couldn't just sort of quietly write a letter and say I resign and say all the right things, but, you know, so what?

The reason for not letting the department get away with that is the hope it would change and not try to do that kind of thing. They wouldn't even think of changing if they thought they could get away with it in quiet, if nobody said anything public. So I thought about all these things, and I'd say I'm going to have to do something sort of noisy.

Walker: So I took myself to this meeting, knowing what I was going to do, and before the meeting got started I said to the chairman, "I would like to have a couple of minutes to say something." So I said my little piece, which was that I am resigning, and what had happened, and I'd enjoyed working with all the people there; it was nothing against what they were doing, but the action was going to now be in the legislature and that's where I was going to go. So then I stood up and walked out. And Jim Lanard also stood up and walked out; he said he agreed, and somebody else also stood up and agreed and walked out. So that hit the fan, and made the point in a way that couldn't have been made in any other way that I could see.

So then we took our game over to the legislature. And the department, typical of the department, tried to make the best of it, you know. "Oh, you know, it's just a discussion," and they did all this mumbo-jumbo stuff. I think somebody must have called the press and said, "Hey, call Diane, see what's going on," so there was something about it in the press, which was good. And, of course, that didn't endear me to Jerry English either. But anyway, that's what that was about.

I said verbally why I was resigning to the group, but then I wrote a letter and made it formal and clear and, you know, no wavering of voice in the letter! So then we went to Pat Dodd and started that whole process.

Baruxis: Okay, yes, talk about that process whereby S1300 was introduced.

Walker: So we were given all this garbage from the department about, "Oh, it's a discussion document," and the next thing we knew of course it was introduced into the legislature, so they lied. They did it in secret, and then they lied about it.

Baruxis: Who actually introduced it initially?

Walker: Pat Dodd did.

Baruxis: Before you were involved with contacting him?

Walker: That's right. And he hadn't paid any attention to the commission. He was one of the two legislators who were on this earlier commission; he didn't go to any of the meetings, you know. So what did he know? He was just given this secret legislation that Jerry English told him incorporated the things that were in the report, and he didn't know that it didn't.

Senate Bill 1300

Baruxis: Who was the other legislator on the commission?

Walker: Don Stewart and Pat Dodd were the two legislators, and they never showed up at the commission meetings.

Baruxis: And the bill of course had fatal flaws?

Walker: Yes. So Pat introduced it, and then sort of all hell broke loose, and we helped break loose the hell on it. He held a meeting on S1300, and at this first meeting he asked the commission members to come and express their views on it. So there were three or four of us from the commission who went to the meeting. And I said I thought it was a terrible bill, they had no public participation, et cetera. I don't think I read from the report. I assumed that he hadn't read it, but I had to pretend, like, of course he knew what was in the report, right? Because he was on the commission! But I said the report is permeated with expressions of the need to involve the public in developing the legislation as well as the whole siting process. I talked about that some.

So he asked me at the meeting to please write him a letter and explain what I thought he ought to do. So I wrote him a letter, and I said that he ought to have an open process for writing the legislation, bring in all the interested groups, have each of them hear what each other has to say. I went through this whole thing of how it ought to be, and that was the last I heard of that from him. He didn't respond to the letter or anything, he may have said, "Thanks for the letter," or something. What happened was that Mike Catania, who was his aide, and he, set up a process just like what we said.

Since then I've never said this in public, I mean it was like it was his idea, and he did it all, and it was great, and everyone patted him on the back, and rightly so. I mean he at least had the wisdom to see what we were saying made some sense. Mike Catania, of course, did it all, but with Pat's agreement. I give Pat a lot of credit for having gone along with it, and as soon as he began to go along with it and got the positive feedback on it, of course that just entrenched him further into carrying on with this process. So that's something that really worked, from our perspective.

Baruxis: Maybe he learned something from it, too.

Walker: Well, I think he did. In fact I know that he did. We all did. I learned that, or it reenforced my ideas on how effective or helpful the Sierra Club or any individual can be behind the scenes by being prepared. If you're prepared and give a legislator who you know isn't prepared a good idea, they'll run with it, and take the credit for it and so forth, and that's okay, too. I mean I don't care about that, just so long that it gets done.

So Pat Dodd set up this process. He invited the four major groups--the environmentalists, the hazardous waste industry, the chemical industry, and representatives from local officialdom, from the League of Municipalities, and so forth--and had a series of meetings. One day would be devoted to the hazardous waste people, and another to the environmentalists, and so forth. And he made it clear to everybody that we should all come to all of the meetings, so we all did.

Then after the last of this series he asked each of the groups to identify three members from each interest group to be on a task force to actually write the legislation. I was one of the three from the environmental groups. Then that task force began to meet, again on an intensive and heavy-duty basis. We would meet primarily with Mike Catania.

Our first meeting he sort of, as he put it, "winged" some concepts at us that he had picked up from the earlier meetings, and we would discuss them, and hone them down and so forth. Meanwhile, the environmentalists were meeting on a weekly basis. We put together what we called our ad hoc hazardous waste group.

Baruxis: You had started meeting before even?

Walker: Yes. Actually, when I was on this commission I had begun to get people who I knew were interested in hazardous waste and toxics and so forth together, so that I wouldn't be going off in a vacuum on my own toot, but would be getting feedback and ideas from other people.

Baruxis: So the environmentalists already had a clear platform?

Walker: Well, we had at the beginning. I mean we knew that siting new facilities was needed, and that the public had to be involved in the process and so forth. Before the series of meetings, we had gotten together a number of times and outlined the kinds of things we wanted in the legislation so that when it was the environmental group's turn to go make a presentation, we had a consensus on the major things we felt needed to be incorporated in the legislation.

Walker: We were the most prepared of any of the groups. I presented it for the group, but we all sat up there, a huge gang of us, and then we discussed it and had a free-flowing discussion for some time. Then following that series of meetings, the ad hoc group continued to meet and hone down and be very specific about the kinds of things we wanted. We had our overall goals and objectives and how to get there. And we worked very hard. Now that I think back on it, those were long meetings, and then after the meetings I would prepare sort of summary of the points, and then we would discuss those at the next meeting, we really went about it in quite a systematic basis.

Katherine Montague and I worked on this. Katherine got everyone's names on computer labels so we could mail stuff out, and we worked together on putting all this stuff together, coordinating it. So that we were well prepared for all the meetings with Pat Dodd and the task force. And, you know, we had our rationale for everything and we really knew what we wanted and why we wanted it, so we got just about everything we wanted in the bill. It may not have been exactly the way we had worded it or whatever, but the main things were up there. There were a few things that didn't quite make it or didn't quite get there to the extent that we wanted. We wanted more money for the grants to municipalities, for instance, and that was compromised down to less than sufficient, but the principle was incorporated and that gives us now something to work from.

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Walker: So then we had the draft legislation and the public hearings on it and the revision and then public hearings again. Pat brought the public into the whole process and agreed that he wanted the public to understand what was going on and to comment on S1300. He went out of his way to have public hearings, one was in Newark. and they were all over the place. So it was signed into law September 10, 1981. And none of us really knows whether it will work after all that, but so far so good, you know, in the implementation. Well, we could talk about that at another time, I guess. But the point on that is that as we did earlier, a step at a time and work it through, that's the way the implementation is going, and so far so good.

Baruxis: Maybe we'll just wrap this part up; it still could go on an hour, with meetings and the whole dynamics. Just for information, did Governor Byrne approach <u>you</u> originally to be on that commission, the original commission?

Walker: Oh, he didn't. Somebody called me up from the department I guess and said, "Hey, would you be on this commission?" and I said sure.

Baruxis: I was just curious how it came about.

Walker: Just as another sidelight, the legislation--re-written S1300--said that appointments to the commission and the advisory council, I forget which one now, but anyway should be based on recommendations that would come from the various interest groups, and I was one of the ones nominated for both, the commission and the advisory council. But because Jerry was still commissioner at that point, she blackballed my name, which we all expected, I mean we all knew that would happen because that's the kind of commissioner she was. Logically I would have been on the subsequent commission or the advisory council, either one. The advisory council would have been my preference actually.

And logically, given all my involvement with Sierra Club and da, da, da, da, it would be natural for me to have been on it. [laughing] But that was not to be, and we all knew it, and we all laughed about it. There was no point in making any fuss about it. I go to all the meetings anyway, and I have just as much input as I could have anyway, so it doesn't really matter. It's just one of those funny little quirks or whatever.

Baruxis: Just a final comment or question I have. Isn't the whole idea of sitting with the adversary or opposing view and reaching compromises and getting everyone's ideas put forth in a way something new for environmentalists in terms of their approach? I'm thinking back to, for example, Brower. I mean one reason there was so much controversy centered around him as he was so opposed to being involved, for example, in energy facility siting; he argued it wasn't the role of Sierra Club, it was their role to simply oppose the facilities which were poorly sited or environmentally unsound. And here we are deeply involved.

Walker: Of course that may have been on nuclear facilities, which was different.

Baruxis: The very idea of sitting and conferring with the other side and reaching agreements, is it a stage of maturity?

Walker: I think it is, maturity and confidence that allows us to do that and feel that we won't be overwhelmed by the views of industry and so forth.

Baruxis: Is that a realistic fear, though?

Walker: Well, it is. Back while I was on the commission one of the difficulties I had was being the only environmentalist for one thing, and not being a technical person. I know a certain amount of stuff, but I'm not a technical person. Here were those four industry people, not only that one person who was on the commission, but they would bring four or five technical people with them, from Exxon and from Allied Chemical and so forth.

Very early, in fact it may have been the first meeting, I said, "Hey, wait a minute. I want to have a technical person independent from the department, my own person to consult with" and so forth. I'd forgotten that, that I had pushed for that, and the department, to its credit, came up with some money to hire a person, and I inquired around and talked with national Sierra Club people about who would be a good person who could help me on this kind of thing, and found someone who did come and who was helpful.

Baruxis: Consulting?

Walker: Yes. So I had my own consultant! A legitimate environmental person, a guy who had worked on Love Canal and was a health person primarily, health and toxics. So he helped me push for the public health emphasis that's in here. And it not only brought in the public health emphasis, but it bolstered my confidence, too, in dealing with those other technical people.

But that is a disadvantage that we do have in some forums where it's a technical discussion, with the kinds of mixed groups that I tend to work with, where there's industry and environmentalists and so forth. Generally there have been DEP staff people at those meetings who I know and trust their judgment on things, so that it's not just me or two environmentalists as opposed to ten technical industry people, which does happen sometimes. I've just recently been on a group on hazardous waste with primarily industry people, but because I can trust the department people, that's okay. But there is a risk on occasion for environmentalists to be involved in some kind of a process with industry people and being at a disadvantage.

Baruxis: It's not only by being drowned in all the technical information that they tend to bring up, but also maybe being pulled into their assumptions. For example, is siting the way? Or should the focus be on minimizing the waste?

Walker: Well, it's both, and I know enough and have enough confidence in that to push for that and say, "Okay, we're going to help you in siting these new facilities, but there're certain things you have to do, too. You have to reduce the volume at the source. You have to help the smaller industries who maybe don't have your technical expertise. What are you doing, Allied Chemical and Exxon, to help out those smaller industries reduce their volumes?"

Baruxis: I'm wondering if they were successful in squelching that whole aspect of the problem of hazardous waste, or source reduction.

Walker: You mean industry was squelching it?

Baruxis: In the commission, yes.

Walker: No, they agreed, and they had to agree. How could they not agree, really?

Baruxis: But on the other hand there aren't any real laws being enacted yet on it.

Walker: Well, it may not be necessary to have laws because the economics are going to dictate it anyway, which was a point that they did make and I had to agree. The Princeton economist really didn't show up at those meetings, and when he did he was a waste of time.

Baruxis: We need a word in there for Rutgers!

Walker: Right! The Rutgers guy was Joe Seneca. He was helpful. But there seemed to be some understanding and agreement that the economics do dictate that industry reduce the volume.

Baruxis: It will be interesting to see if this comes about.

Walker: It's coming about. I mean it's already happening.

Industry and Toxic Waste

Baruxis: Well, I don't want to get off on a tangent. I do want to come back to implementing 1300, but as long as we're on source reduction, there's the Information Exchange, which the Chamber of Commerce has developed and which is just a clearing house, but it has potential.

Walker: Yes, it's a waste exchange.

Baruxis: Yes, Information Waste Exchange. But it seems DEP lacks resources to really go any further than that. I believe Ray Lesniak has proposed a bill for DEP to at least compile lists of materials available for recycling.

Walker: I'm not sure whether that makes sense or not. I mean the department is so overwhelmed with stuff already. Unless the legislature gives them the money to hire the people and the computer hardware and software and whatever they would need to do that, I would be dubious about imposing that on them, frankly; so I'd have to know more about what's in it.

But the idea of getting a better waste exchange going is a good one. There are a lot of difficulties I guess, as you know, with trade secrets and all that. I know industry feels very strongly they don't want government involved in the waste exchange idea. They wouldn't trust it, they wouldn't trust the department not to share their trade secrets or to allow somebody to get in the files and so forth. It would be too hard for the department to do that. That's one of the things where industry makes a certain amount of sense in its worries about that. So then, "Okay, you guys set it up."

Baruxis: Well, it might happen. At a public hearing I attended in New Brunswick, one legislator recommended that for the Spill Compensation Act that the tax be levied on waste produced rather than on the value of the product of industry involved, and that would be a better incentive for producing less waste. Do you agree that would be a good incentive?

Walker: Sure. The idea has been talked about for some time. I know that that earlier commission talked about that. The difficulty earlier, and I guess it's been overcome now maybe, was just the logistics of doing it. I forget all the questions, but there was some question on how to tax the waste because it changes so much, with the volume changes and the kinds of waste and so forth. I mean it would be logistically difficult to administer evidently. Now maybe they've figured out some way to overcome those difficulties, I don't know. But the idea is a good one, if it can work without being too fraught with headaches and snafus on the department's part, you know, then it could make some sense.

Baruxis: But you think industry will be making an effort to do this? I mean it would pay off for them, I suppose, in other ways as well, just by recycling materials.

Walker: Oh, for that, yes, but the idea of taxing the waste as opposed to the fair market value on the raw product. Yes, I'd have to read the legislation. On the concept of recycling, reusing and reducing the volume, there's no question that's the way to go. How best to do that? Taxing the waste may not only do that but also can give the department better information on what kinds of waste. I mean there may be a lot of good spinoffs from it. And if they've overcome whatever the difficulty was, and now I forget, on how to administer the tax on the waste as opposed to a tax on the raw product. Evidently, it was easier to get accurate information on the raw products than it is on the waste.

The Siting Act

Baruxis: Well, if you want to continue on siting!

Walker: Siting. Where were we on siting?

Baruxis: Implementing.

Walker: Okay, implementing the siting. You mean specifically the Siting Act?

Baruxis: Yes, and also the goals and what you think is going to be happening, what is happening, and your feelings on it.

Walker: Okay. Well, there were some immediate obstacles on the Siting Act. One was the governor getting around to appointing people to be on the commission and on the advisory council, and that took some time and some pains, I guess. And then of course there was a change in administration, and we suddenly had a new governor, and the old governor hadn't completed his task, and so then the new governor had to come in and learn all the ropes, so there were a number of delays in getting the whole process started.

In writing the legislation, we had all agreed that it was important that things move forward speedily because there was a need for the new facility sooner rather than later. So we put some time limits in the act, in part as incentives to the governor to quickly appoint people. We recognized at the time that that was really risky because governors are notorious for not paying attention to deadlines and taking their own sweet time in making appointments and so forth. We gambled in a sense on that and lost in a sense too because maybe he did do it faster than he would have done otherwise, but it was still too damn slow.

Walker: Consequently, some of the deadlines that were outlined in the law were passed. For instance, we said that as of enactment the department, with the advisory council, had to adopt within a year's time, siting criteria. Actually, we narrowed it down even more. We said as of six months they had to circulate preliminary criteria and hold public meetings throughout the state, then revise the criteria, circulate draft criteria; there was a time set for a public hearing, then rewrite again and then the adoption. It was spelled out in the act very purposefully to keep the nose to the grindstone.

While the department and the advisory council were developing siting criteria, the commission, also within a year's period, was to develop a facilities plan. Also they were to have established within ninety days of enactment a public information program. A public information program was spelled out in the legislation too, to make clear that it was not propaganda, but that it was to provide the public with sound information on the dimensions and nature of the problem, why facilities are needed, and their opportunities for being involved in the whole process.

So because the governors were slow in making the appointments, the whole thing was delayed, and the most damaging thing was the delay in the public information program. That was through no mal-intent, it's just that the commission got started a lot later than the advisory council. The advisory council and the department began work earlier than the commission. They were set up sooner than the commission was, so they just went ahead and started working on the siting criteria. They came out with their first preliminary criteria, which was like a rough draft criteria, before the public information program was even put down on paper, much less established. So they were handicapped by that and have continued to be handicapped by not having a very good public information program going.

The commission now has also started its work including the public information program, but one of the major snafus on that was at their January of 1983 meeting they selected a firm, a consultant, to do the public information program. It took them some months to get to the point to do that. So then they did that, that was in the minutes, the governor has veto power over the minutes, he vetoed that section of the minutes in which they made their selection. Instead of picking up the phone and calling the executive director and saying, "Hey, how did this happen? What's this about? Explain it to me. Where's the money coming from?" and so forth. Rick Gimello could have explained to him in ten

Walker: minutes on the phone that they already have the money. They went through a whole process of screening consultants and hearing five presentations or seven or whatever it was, I forget now, and made their selection based on demonstrated expertise in doing what needs to be done. That didn't happen; the phone call wasn't made.

Instead the vetoed decision sat over there in the governor's office for months, and there were phone calls back and forth, commission members went to see the governor, commission members went to see Lou Thurston, who was the dummy who sat on it all this time, who's since left. Anyway, it wasn't until, I think it was last month, June, six months later, that it was finally squared away, which is just outrageous. You know, I go to every meeting and I say [lets out small scream], and nag them to nag the governor. Everyone felt like they had to go on tippy-toes around the governor because if you acted a little bit out of line with the governor's people, their noses would get out of joint, and they would do something equally stupid.

So there's that to contend with, and that has already hampered the implementation, needless to say. Without the public information program, the public really doesn't have all that much awareness of what is going on. And without the public information program, people came to the public hearings on the siting criteria to talk about their own backyard interests rather than understanding that it was about the siting criteria and understanding their role in dealing with that and being able to comment on that. I mean there were public comments on it, but not to the extent that there would have been had there been a really good public information program.

So that's one of the disappointments. But all is not lost, so you have to accept what is and try to make the best of it. That program will be getting underway shortly; the firm is working on it. There's a group of us that went down and met with them again recently to go over again what it was to do and why and wherefore and so on and so forth, and I have a lot of confidence that they'll do a good job.

Another fly in the ointment is that the development of the siting criteria and the development of the facilities plan, not to mention the public information program, are somewhat out of phase. But it's going to work out all right. I feel that it will work out. The siting criteria, the bulk of them have been adopted. There was a hearing the other day, and I testified in support of an amendment to the criteria on the population protection section, and there's another hearing tonight which I'll

Walker: go to, too, up in Jersey City, and chances are that that will be adopted and they will have siting criteria as of next month or whenever.

The facilities plan is delayed because industry doesn't want to fork over the information on the kinds of waste that they generate and the volume and so forth. It's critical to the plan to know what kinds of facilities and what sizes and capacities and so forth are needed. So to the extent that industry is recalcitrant, that will delay that part of it, so if it's in their interest to not delay you've got to wonder what it is with them.

But, again, my role is going to all the commission meetings and all the advisory council meetings, because I know the legislation so intimately and better than most of the rest of them do, and the intent behind it, too. And even though Pat Dodd understands the intent, he tends to be a fellow that wants so much to solve a problem, to site a facility, he goes from here to leap way out here, and he forgets that you have to do each of these steps along the way in a systematic and sequential and logical and timely fashion in order to get to that point; if you skip any one of these, or slip over it, or cut the public short, or whatever, it's not going to fly.

So my role in going to those commission meetings is at every occasion where I see them making a leap over something is to say, "Hey, wait a minute. If you go forward with this facilities plan before you have the information that you need, or if you do so and so before you do such and such, it's not going to work, and the public is going to not trust what you do, or you're not going to be credible in their eyes, or whatever. So I'm the nag!

Baruxis: Jerry English hasn't kept you out?

Walker: No, no, indeed. In fact, in a way it maybe is good. I mean I would have done the same thing on the commission or advisory council. That's my role as Sierra Club anyway, to sort of play the nag or the gadfly, or I think of it as the two-by-four or whatever on occasion, and I see that as useful.

Baruxis: Keep them in line.

Walker: Yes, and it's not that they're getting out of line, it's that some of them in their eagerness tend to forget. It's not their role, they're the industry or the whatever people. There are environmentalists on there, and part of what I do is bolster or

Walker: back up or support or encourage or help give them confidence, you know; I can talk with them at breaks or something and say, "That was good, that point that you made and that you did it so forcefully," that will encourage them to be forceful the next time, too.

Baruxis: You're in touch with some of the individuals?

Walker: Oh sure, sure. But I know how important it was to me when I was on the commission that Katherine was there and Ian was there to encourage me or pass me notes, or I'd look back and they'd say, "Yeah, yeah," or make a gesture or whatever. That's important.

Baruxis: Is the League of Women Voters one of the groups?

Walker: Yes. You want to know who's on the commission?

Baruxis: We can skip anything that can just be looked up. Were there any individuals who were especially supportive or especially opposed to environmental interests that you think would be good to discuss from your personal standpoint?

Walker: They're both interesting groups. The advisory council has got industry people on there who have their own views and the environmentalists who have theirs and local officials and so forth. That group, though, functions very much as a good working group, and it's in part because they have met intensively for six or so hours at a time and had dinner breaks together, they've gotten to know each other and trust each other and they really work very well. It's a fun group to watch and sort of work with, and they get a lot of work done. They feel comfortable enough to wing ideas out, you know, sort of free-associate or however you want to put it, and just put ideas out there and look at them and say, "Well, that's dumb" or "That's good."

The commission is much more formal and has had a harder time to get going.

Witco Chemical and the Siting Commission##

[Interview 3: July 29, 1983]

Baruxis: Well, I might as well mention this is now three days later. It's July 29, and we're continuing discussing the Siting Commission. If we can continue discussing some of the dynamics of how the

Baruxis: commission operates, some of the individuals involved. I'd like to specifically ask you about one commission member, Mr. Polzer, who's vice-president of the Witco Corporation, and discuss some of the controversy about that. You had asked for his resignation?

Walker: Yes. Actually, I found out that he's vice-president of Witco, and I guess there are quite a few vice-presidents, but my information came from the press, too, and he let me know that that was not the case.

Witco Chemical, through some mechanism or another, has contaminated their property and the sewers leading from their property throughout Perth Amboy with PCBs. I don't know all the details of it, but in talking with department people it was very clear that it's a serious problem, and Witco Chemical has not been cooperative in cleaning it up or in even agreeing to clean it up or whatever.

Anyway, never mind all that part of it; the fact is that Witco Chemical is in litigation with the department, or the department is taking legal or administrative actions against Witco Chemical, at a time when the commission is trying to maintain its credibility with the public. It's extremely important that that commission throughout its endeavor have high credibility with the public. Anything that taints is going to be used, rightly or wrongly, by the forces that want to oppose whatever it is that the commission wants to do. They'll use it, and they'll put attention on that kind of taint and divert the attention and the energy, and the press attention, and everything, from the real issues.

So it's with that in mind we felt it was very important for Polzer to get off the commission. The hope was that he would see that light himself and resign, and DEP people expressed that, too. I mean it was quite clear that they felt that he should get off. But he didn't want to do that, and I talked with him and talked with everyone I could think of about it, in the first place to see whether my reaction was way out or was a common reaction, and it was a common reaction. Not everybody, in fact only few people were willing to say out loud what they said to me in private, that he should get off. So it sort of came on me to be the one to say it out loud. So I did. And again, it makes me squirm all over again to do that, to say it in public. And I have nothing against George Polzer, he's a perfectly nice fellow, he's okay on the commission and everything else, it's just the situation.

Walker: So there was a hearing on the draft siting criteria, and I read a statement calling for his resignation, and that sort of forced the hand of the commission to deal with it. Up till that time they had sort of murfed around on it, and this was one of the reasons, again, why I said it out loud, forced them to have to talk about it on an official basis. And again, the hope was that Polzer would do it. Also another reason I did that was because there had already been some angry, sort of derisive, and very negative calls for his resignation, or fingerpointing at the commission already. It hadn't become an uproar, but the potential was there for it to become an uproar. The feeling was that it would be far better for the Sierra Club to call for his resignation and sort of get out in front of the mob and perhaps defuse that action somehow.

So we called for his resignation. At the next commission meeting they talked about it, and it was sort of funny, because it was like the good-old-boy club. I could understand that, you know, that their first reaction is to rally behind one of their own, and pat him on the back, and talk about what a good fellow George is.

Baruxis: How about the environmentalists?

Walker: One of the environmentalists, Ann Auerbach, who's the League of Women Voters person, did speak out and made the same points that I had been talking about, and she voted in favor of asking for Polzer's resignation. The rest of them did not.

Baruxis: Pat Dodd? or all of them?

Walker: That's right. And that was a disappointment, and I was really surprised, and I think a number of people were surprised because they thought that they would stick to their guns on it.

Baruxis: Who within the commission would you have expected to support resignation and did not?

Walker: Well, there's a little difference between "expected" and "hoped" somehow. I had a strong hope that Pat Dodd would, but thinking about it and knowing Pat, he can be wishy-washy. Now, this is not something I would say in public! And Sandy Milspah, the other environmental guy on there who's an attorney.

Baruxis: With any group?

Walker: He's another environmentalist; he doesn't represent a particular group. Although I guess he's a trustee of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, I'm not sure that he is acting as a spokesman for that organization. But he made a rather strong pitch in favor of George, and I was surprised at that. So anyway, that's the way that went, and there were no hard feelings between George and me on that, and he understood that I was doing what I felt I had to do. So that's the way it went.

And what happens next we don't know. It may be that it never will be an issue, or it may be that it will be an issue. We really won't know until something happens in Perth Amboy that the people there are desperate for anything to pull out of the hat to throw at the commission and that's still there on the table. But in the meantime, on to other things.

At-Sea Incineration and the Newark Environmentalists

Baruxis: From the one public meeting I attended recently at Rutgers, there were many Perth Amboy people there, and it seems they are on the brink of desperation.

Walker: They could be, and it will sort of depend on what the commission does and what happens with the PCR application when it comes out. As you know, they can't make a formal application yet. So we'll see.

Baruxis: Yes, another group in the Ironbound area in Newark has been quite disturbed over the proposal for At-Sea Incineration and the Newark Storage Terminal. Do you want to discuss any of the public meetings that have been happening there, and whenever you can go on to any other areas? Newark may or may not be typical, and I don't want to try to characterize public response by talking about one group.

Walker: It may be typical in the sense that's it's a community that has, if not a formal proposal, at least a discussion of something or other. They know that At-Sea wants to apply to have this facility in their midst, and they have organized. What may not be so typical is that they are already a together group, together in adversity, or whatever. They have fought things for some time now, so they're organized. They know each other; they've got their leaders; there are several organizations that already exist. So

Walker: when something comes along it takes very little to rally together and oppose it or whatever, in most cases it's to oppose whatever is happening.

They're a beleaguered area. They've got awful air, and their quality of life is certainly not the best. It's an old community, as I've said, that is very much together. They've worked together, they know each other, and probably adversity as much as anything has brought them together.

So they have been opposed to an expansion of the hazardous waste facility already in their midst, SCA, they have been vigorous opponents of that. There's been a proposal for a resource recovery facility in their midst, and they've opposed that. They've tried to get Newark Airport to change its flight pattern because the planes fly right over them and the noise and the fumes and all the rest of it. So the At-Sea Incineration thing is just another sort of awful thing. Now, since the At-Sea Incineration thing was proposed, they of course take every opportunity--which is exactly what I would do if I was in their shoes, I mean that's good Sierra Club tactics--you take every opportunity to go make your case and say, "We don't want it" for these following reasons. You organize and you get everybody up there, and you have what I used to call our "kick line," when there was some issue to oppose or work on or whatever, each one of us would take a different aspect of the same thing and say, "This is bad because." Then Jane would stand up and say, "This is bad because," and Joe would stand up and say, "This is bad because," and so forth. And they did sort of the same thing, and they do it very well.

In the meantime, they know that they're being poisoned one way or another. They've got the dioxin thing now, and I can absolutely understand what they're up against and why they oppose these things, and I think they're right to oppose them. But I don't know that you want to get into the specifics of At-Sea Incineration plan.

Baruxis: Well, you have brought up population density as a factor in fighting.

Walker: Yes. Now, for the advisory council and the DEP, they've been almost hounded by the Ironbound people to come up with a population density factor, and they really have worked very hard to try to come up with something in part because legislators have proposed legislation, stating that you can't put a hazardous waste facility

Walker: in a town of 10,000 or 15,000 or 5,000 or 20,000 depending on which legislator and which district. And when you begin to really look at using numbers like that, you realize that the numbers don't work. Let's say you have a community that's 10,000 people but they're scattered loosely all over the area so they're not really very dense in that sense. You have another community that might have 8,000 but they're all clustered together in one lump and all the rest of it is open space. You see, if you can't put it in a community of 10,000, but right across the line, there's another community of 9,999, how do you justify that?

So anyway, using the numbers they found, after trying various formula and various ways to do it, they couldn't figure out how to do it, but they did try, they honestly did try. Then they came up with these six factors that have to be considered by the commission on both a proposal for a site and a proposal for a facility, and the factors are things that relate to high population densities. Now, someone at the hearing the other night suggested that they do it in concentric circles, the number of people in a ring, and maybe there's some way to do that, although my recollection is that the advisory council and the department already looked at something like that.

And actually, I don't think it's necessary, I think that those six factors are sufficient, if they're properly enforced, and that's a big if. But if they are enforced and everyone can have a say, that should be sufficient to keep it out of a place like Newark. In fact the people at Newark, it was sort of funny, because they would say, "If you take this factor and that factor"--you know, they read off the six factors--"into account, there's no way you can site that facility in Newark." I said, "Yeah! That's right. So why are we here? Why are you still yelling at midnight when we could be home?!"

Baruxis: Has the Sierra Club, as an organization, had any dealings with the Ironbound people?

Walker: Not directly, no. I mean I've talked with some of the people there who've been at conferences or whatever, but not really, and our role has been different in this case, and I think they understand that. They probably don't agree with us because we've been supportive of this whole process, and they're been very skeptical of the whole process. But that's all right. They're playing their role, we're playing our role.

Baruxis: It would seem that At-Sea Incineration might be one of the best options; the Europeans are doing it.

Walker: Well, the concept has some merits. Once it's at sea, where the incineration takes place, it's away from people, 150 or 160 miles, so if something goes wrong it's not going to cause acute effects or kill people or whatever. There are a lot of problems. One of the problems, of course, is the transfer facility or the port facility in that densely populated area bringing lots of hazardous waste and storing it in big tanks right there, poses a big risk. If everything always went absolutely right, then there would be no worry, but nothing ever does work entirely right all the time.

So there's a problem with the port facility itself and transporting the material there through that densely populated area of New Jersey, then transferring it on the ships, and then the ships wending their way through a rather contorted pathway down out into Raritan Bay and out to the ocean. And those are some risks there.

Then there are the other risks. How can we be sure that it gets out to the burn site without dumping it overboard, without an accident with a supertanker, without a sudden storm that tosses it about or whatever. That's one concern. Once it leaves the three-mile limit, it's in international waters, and who really is in charge of it then? The Coast Guard supposedly is in charge. The Coast Guard doesn't have enough enforcement people, or boats or whatever it takes, to do what they're supposed to do now. There are some real questions. There are some questions about the technology. Do you want to talk about the technology?

Baruxis: If you have any personal feelings about it, but it's not necessary to go into detail on that. Just whatever your personal views are, if you feel there's anything you really want to make mention of.

Walker: Well, all right, since we're talking about At-Sea and the Port Newark thing, there's the other proposal in Perth Amboy which has some of the same problems and questions; however, it doesn't have the contorted waterway transportation difficulties that the Port Newark does have, so that's sort of one thing in its favor, but all the rest of the questions would still need to be answered.

But it's difficult, and it's difficult here in New Jersey. I guess if I had my druthers I would say, well, maybe there's a certain logic to having one small port facility and one ship or two ships at the most hauling, if everything else was proper, to incinerate the at-sea incinerateable stuff in New Jersey. The difficulty is in keeping tons of other stuff from trucking through New Jersey with spills and accident potentials and so forth. But

Walker: to sort of distribute the port facilities up and down the coast or wherever they're needed, to maybe have one small one in New Jersey and another one further north and another one further south and the Gulf Coast, wherever there seem to be some high density of the kinds of waste that could be incinerated rather than have it all come to one facility. Now, economically that may not fly, I don't know. However, the PCR proposal is, supposedly anyway, much smaller than At-Sea. So, I don't know.*

Transportation of Hazardous Wastes

Baruxis: You mentioned transportation of the waste, that's something that concerns you, your confidence that the regulations are adequate.

Walker: You mean the truck transportation?

Baruxis: Yes.

Walker: No, They're much stricter than they have been. I think that they may on paper be as strict as they can be. The difficulty is in enforcement, and in just inevitable accidents. Even if all the regulations are followed to the letter, there's still the potential for accidents because of some other, drunk driver or whatever, crashing into one of these trucks.

Baruxis: Rail problems also.

Walker: Yes, although there's not that much hazardous waste that is moved by rail, very little or not at all. There's some raw product that goes by rail, but not hazardous waste. They've looked at it, and it's not worth talking about. But that's a worry, it's a worry wherever the facility is going to be, whether it's on land or a port facility or if it's an incinerator on land, there's always going to be some trucking to that facility. That's one of the reasons why the policy is, and we're in agreement with that, that the shortest distance between generators to the facility is good, is something to aim for. But then that very often gets to be a population question, because the shortest distance is right there. You know, if it's mostly generated in Newark, then the shortest distance is in Newark. But maybe it can be a few miles down the road somewhere where it's not quite so densely populated.

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*Since taping this, I've been working with a national Sierra Club committee to develop a comprehensive hazardous waste policy; we agreed that marine incineration is too risky and the club opposes it; the policy was adopted last month.

Baruxis: Aside from accidents, how about the manifest system to ensure that the materials go where they're supposed to go. Are you confident about that, that it will be enforced in New Jersey?

Walker: No. You know, again, that it's better than it was, step by step they're improving it, they have now put the whole system on the computer, so theoretically it's relatively easy to check and make sure loops are closed. Whether that's done enough is another question. Whether once they find something wrong they pursue it as quickly and as avidly as they ought to is another question. When their attention is diverted by the dioxin business in Newark, you got to wonder, "Well, what isn't being given attention these days? Is it the manifest system? Is it what?" I mean, you know that they're not cleaning up other dump sites. I don't know how that goes. I would never be wholly confident that the department is doing everything it possibly could, that could be done. It maybe is doing everything they possibly can do, given their limited resources. But that very often isn't enough.

Organized Crime and Waste Dumping

Baruxis: Do you think with the enactment of more stringent regulations that we've overcome the organized crime input, you know, the nighttime dumpings out in fields, that sort of thing? Do you think that's still going to be continuing or can be really dealt with?

Walker: I worry about that, and I don't know the answer to it. Theoretically, the rules will make it much harder for organized crime or any illegal operator to function, but again it gets to be an enforcement thing. Now, for new facilities they have to provide a disclosure statement and give the names and addresses of everyone connected--the officers connected with the company, subsidiary operations, past compliance records, any violations have to be revealed and explained and so forth. That disclosure statement is sent to the department and to the community; it's sent to the attorney general's office; the AG does an investigation and issues a report. Obviously one of the reasons behind that is to keep organized crime out of it. Now, whether that's sufficient to keep organized crime out of new facilities, I don't know. They evidently have their hooks into some of the old facilities.

Baruxis: New Jersey's Hazardous Waste Strike Force, federal and state levels, are both involved. You have criminal investigations, that sort of thing. It's the first active one in the United States, and

Baruxis: it's there to deal with organized crime's involvement. But I've read about administrative problems, people claiming it's not really operating that efficiently. Do you want to comment on that?

Walker: I read the same report, and I must say I was disappointed because I had thought that the strike force was doing a better job than evidently they were doing. I think nevertheless it probably certainly helped the overall effort to put at least a crimp on criminal operators in New Jersey. But when I think about it, it's not a surprise that they have management problems. All state government has management problems, and that gets into a whole other discussion.

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Walker: When I said earlier that organized crime was maybe into the older facilities as opposed to the new facilities, I'm not sure that organized crime is in the old facilities, but they have been operating in the transportation to facilities. It's more in the transportation part of it, I just want to clarify that.

The New Jersey Legislature and Waste Disposal

Baruxis: In addition to the siting, I'd like to go into some of the other legislation that's been enacted to deal with the problem of chemical waste, and before we even talk about any bills, would you like to discuss some of the legislators that you've been personally involved with? What comes to my mind first of all is politicians who have been at the forefront. I'd like to hear about any personal conversations, interactions you had with them that have resulted in some of the laws that have come about.

Walker: I don't know that I can take any credit for having talked with them which then resulted in legislation, but I've known Jim Florio from way back, from when he was in the New Jersey Assembly. He had a good environmental record at that time, and I know that I talked with him about different pieces of legislation then, and he was always responsive. I don't remember any particular details. He was very good on the Pine Barrens, of course, when he went to Congress. Ray Lesniak, I don't remember Ray particularly before the chemical control thing in Elizabeth. I don't remember his being involved in environmental issues particularly before that time.

Baruxis: That'll get you started!

Walker: So, yes. And to his credit, he learned everything that needed to be learned about the issue, and understood it, and wanted to do something helpful, and made it his business to concentrate on trying to solve the hazardous waste problems through the legislative route. There were times when we felt that he went off in a cock-eyed direction, but even when he did that there was usually some legitimate reason behind his idea. In one case fairly recently he introduced legislation that would have amended the siting act or done something to negate a part of it, I've already forgotten the particulars on it. I called him and talked with him in the halls and shook my finger under his nose and said, "That's really bad" that you had done that. We agreed to sit down and talk about it, and we got a bunch of us together, and he backed off. He understood. It was a sort of spur-of-the-moment thing, unthinking, he tends to do that sometimes, he just sort of shoots from the hip, but with good intentions. He hadn't quite thought it through, or maybe it was that he was under such tremendous pressure from his constituents that he felt he had to introduce this legislation. I guess maybe that's what it was.

Baruxis: What exactly was it?

Walker: I guess it was maybe something we came to call site-specific legislation in prohibiting the siting of a facility in his town or in a legislator's town.

Baruxis: That's happening in a lot of areas?

Walker: Oh yes, it happens all over. But given that Ray should have a better understanding of the issues and know that that was not the thing to do, and know its adverse affects on the siting act, we were surprised and disappointed and chewed him out some that he would do that. And he understood, and he agreed that he wouldn't push that legislation, and he backed off on it very nicely. But he started to do that, and in fact Pat Dodd said something publicly about Ray's having done that, and Ray said something to us about, "It was a strike at my manhood!" or something like that! It was just ridiculous.

Baruxis: Was he joking?

Walker: No, he wasn't. He was in a sense. But it was one of those political things: if a fellow politican steps on your political toes, then you feel like you have to pounce back or punch back or

Walker: something or other, otherwise you look weak-kneed and lily-livered, I don't know; it's all sort of dumb, and juvenile even. But to his credit he did back off, and with a certain amount of good humor and wit about the whole thing.

But anyway, I feel like I could go talk with him and chew him out or commend him or whatever. And we've supported him, wearing my other hat as Environmental Voters Alliance, in his re-election to the Assembly, and in his recent election to become a senator and he understands that and appreciates that, and that has furthered our favored ear with him.

Baruxis: What personal dealings with Congressman Florio?

Walker: Of course, I've supported his work on Superfund, and talked with him and his staff people and written him--all those things that Sierra Club people do normally anyway. But I've always felt free to call down there, and obviously you don't talk with the congressman from here very often, you mostly talk with an aide or whatever. But when he's been to New Jersey, or we've been on various panels together, I've spoken with him. And we supported him, too, during the campaign, and so he came up to press conferences that the Environmental Voters Alliance held to give our endorsement of him. He considers that important enough to "haul" to Trenton, or wherever, with a very small group of reporters, and no big deal. We've always found him helpful and cooperative. And I know other Sierra Club people in dealing with him, for instance on the Pine Barrens, have found him very helpful and cooperative and willing to go to bat and push hard in Congress.

Baruxis: What about Sierra Club's involvement in some legislation, for example the bond issue that was on the ballot in 1981?

Walker: Our role for things like that very often is simply to talk about it in our newsletter, talk about it at our executive committee meetings, and get the word out to our local groups, so that they, in turn, can urge the members in their areas to support or oppose, or whatever the case may be. It depends on the timing and on our financial resources what we do. We used to be able to get mailing out to our entire membership on short order, first-class, enviromental alerts. These days that's just prohibitive. Our membership has doubled for one thing, and the postage has also doubled, so we can't do that anymore. We're handicapped in that sense. Our newsletter is no longer a monthly, it's now a bi-monthly, so there's a lag time in getting hot issues to members; it's not always that easy. If we know

Walker: something in advance and can get something in the newsletter that we know will get into their hands in time for the election, we do it. We generally try to do that for what we call our election issue, our September-October issue. If we can make sure that the November-December issue gets into people's hands the end of October--but that's a little tight. Generally our September-October issue is the election issue.

Baruxis: So primarily you've been involved in expressing support of the bills? But maybe you're underestimating. I think the club has been involved with getting things proposed to begin with, lobbying the League of Conservation Voters legislation.

Walker: Oh, yes. That's true. To help get the bond-issue legislation through the legislature, we have on occasion testified if there were hearings on it or gone down to committee meetings and talk with legislators or rattle the cage one way or another down there.

Baruxis: In reviewing materials, over the years there've been a few occasions where Don Stewart has made some good moves.

Walker: Few, yes!

Baruxis: These moves seem to sharply contrast with a lot of his anti-environment attitudes. Maybe you should mention him.

Walker: I can't think of a good thing that he did, but I'm sure over time by some fluke or other, he may have done something good, or he may have voted right on somethings. Generally, he had a lousy voting record. He was chair of the committee that the Hazardous Waste Facilities Siting Act had to go through in the Assembly, and he refused to move it out of committee until he got his amendment attached, which was to prohibit the siting of any hazardous waste facility within twenty miles of a nuclear power plant that stored used fuel rods on its premises. That's been referred to as "the Don Stewart amendment," and the only way to get it out of committee, you had to accede to it. And the only reason we could sort of accede to it is that it didn't look to become too much of a problem. I mean in New Jersey there are only two areas with nuclear power plants, and within a twenty-mile radius, they would fall into the Pine Barrens anyway or in an unlikely area. You know, the Oyster Creek area for instance. Just looking at it on a map you would figure it was unlikely.

Walker: But mostly he's been anti-environmental. We did oppose his being named chair of that committee. I forget what we did now, but I remember talking with whoever to see if there was some way he could not be appointed as chairman. It seemed sort of ridiculous, given his attitude.

The Spill Fund and the Superfund

Baruxis: It seems money has been appropriated for the cleanups, but there've been some obstacles. At one point, back in '81, it seems cleanup of sites in New Jersey actually had come to a stop, because New Jersey funding through the Spill Comp Act was being held up by the industries that were opposed to the tax. And also the Superfund was being help up. Would you go into that, how funding was delayed at the state and federal level?

Walker: Yes, the industry felt that they were being double-taxed and double-jeopardized because there was the Superfund on the federal level that they had to pay into, and the spill fund in New Jersey. So I think they had to continue to pay, but it went into an escrow account and couldn't be used, or something like that. I forget the particulars. And then the courts decided that it was fair for them to have to pay into both funds. So they did. But the spill fund in New Jersey was limited. The amount of money that could be used for cleanup was severely limited. In fact, I described it in testimony as "pitiful." It was $1½ million per site, per year, and $3 million for the whole state per year, which is ridiculous. There were efforts, and I forget whether they were successful, to increase both those amounts.

And then, as you say, the Superfund was delayed in getting going. And then the money had to build up. Then everyone had to figure out how to apply and what system will be used to put things in priority order. There were some problems with that system, the Mitre system, and so there were delays and so forth. Plus it was a new ball game, and the DEP didn't function very well even in the old ball games to get its act together in order to be eligible for the funds and so forth. It takes some management skills that just aren't there.

Baruxis: DEP has done a relatively good job. Aren't they getting more money than any other states?

Walker: Well, yes, but if you use a scale of one to a hundred and say that New Jersey was at minus fifty-five in dealing with hazardous waste and getting its act together, and it's improved itself so it was plus fifteen, sure, they've done a lot, and they're way ahead of all the other states that are still down at maybe minus forty. They're way ahead of the others, but if they're at plus fifteen and a hundred is where you want to go, they have a long way to go. Now, maybe my numbers are somewhat unfair, but you get the picture. To New Jersey's credit, it did move ahead faster than the other states, but New Jersey _had_ to move ahead faster than other states. I mean look what _it's_ got to deal with, with the dense population and poisoned wells all over the place and dump sites all over the place. It had to get moving.

Ian Walker and the Chemical Control Controversy

Baruxis: You might want to discuss Ian's experience that prompted him to resign?

Walker: It was the Price's Pit controversy. He was also involved somewhat peripherally in the Chemical Control thing. But Chemical Control is useful in the sense that what happened there shouldn't have come as any surprise to anyone. In watching what was happening there, and talking with people, and seeing how things were managed--it was mostly decision-making by what's on the front page of the _Star Ledger_ today, this is while Jerry (English) was in there--and given the other management problems in the DEP, it's not too surprising that there was bad news on the Chemical Control.

From my perspective, I knew the guys that were in what I called "the cleanup squad." I knew they were a bunch of cowboys, meaning that they're macho-hero types, which is what it takes. That's good, in that sense, that here are a bunch of guys that are willing to risk their lives and their health to clean up impossible messes. They're the only kinds of people or personality types or whatever that will be willing to do that. But given that _I_ knew that they were a bunch of cowboys who are willing to do that kind of stuff and also not very good at keeping records and doing those kind of administrative and management kinds of things. I mean if I knew that, surely the people in management positions at the department had to know that, if they thought at all.

Walker: So to expect those guys to not only put on the protecting suits and do all that technical cleanup stuff and also to keep good records, that's ridiculous. They're just not going to do it. I can just see Karl Birns and all those guys there saying, "Oh yeah, sure go do that" or "Oh, well, if the weighing maching doesn't work too well, that's all right" or deciding to hire a subcontractor because "that guy works well." I mean I can just see how it went. And somebody sitting down and scratching off some very hazy notes at the end of the day. So that when the investigation was done they just found chaos as far as recording-keeping went.

It was symptomatic of problems within the management structure itself. There was not only the Chemical Control that investigations showed was poorly managed and so forth, there was also the Plumsted thing, where the AG's office wrote really a scathing report that documented how again the cowboys went in there like gangbusters and mucked around and made things worse than if they hadn't gone in there at all. They had not coordinated with the guys in the groundwater section. There was probably something in the press, and Jerry said, "Oh! Go clean it up. I don't care what you do, I don't care how much money you spend, just go clean it up, and we'll get some good publicity." I mean that was the way she thought. So that's what they did, and they were touting it as a model operation and so forth, and it turns out it was just el stinko.

Now, Ian's role, back on the Chemical Control, this is just sort of another little interesting sidelight. It may have been after the fire, I guess it was, Ian was then chief of the Office of Public Participation, and having a hard time with Jerry anyway because Jerry's idea of public participation is, "You get the public to come and support the decision I've already made," rather than what <u>we</u> consider public participation. But anyway, Ian was in an executive staff meeting in which Jerry had said she wanted to make a park out of Chemical Control and asked if trees would grow there. And Paul Arbesman said, "Oh sure, no problem." And Ian immediately recognized that there were some real problems with that. But he wasn't in a position to contradict Paul in that kind of a setting, so he said something to someone else after the meeting, "Hey, wait a minute, since it's contaminated on the surface and with all the water and all the fire business and explosions and everything, there's bound to be subsurface contamination. You need to know that before you decide to go plant grass and trees." And the other question that he raised was that the cost of preparing that site to have a park on it should not be a high priority, as opposed to using that money to clean up some site that was threatening people's health.

Walker: So he commented to this effect to somebody. Somebody else came back to him later and asked him to "honcho," or manage, the subsurface investigation, to take charge of the finishing of the cleanup. So he consulted with people, talked with various people and so forth, and prepared a memo saying if that was to be done, here are some things that would have to be gotten together before anyone could have a chance of making that work. He was not going to get into something himself that he could see had no chance in hell of being successful--the way the department usually goes about it. And also, given his role as chief of Office of Public Participation, he knew that going over to the groundwater guys--I mean that wasn't his role to do that kind of thing--and they would be unlikely to cooperate without a clear mandate.

So he prepared a memo and said, these are the kinds of steps that have to be taken, the kinds of arrangements, the kind of organization that has to be gotten together, and the kinds of people that have to get together to figure out what kinds of investigations have to be done, and how to go about doing that. He gave it to his boss or whoever he was supposed to give that to. They came back to him in a couple of days and said, "Oh, never mind," and that was the end of it.

They just didn't want to hear the kinds of effort that had to be made in order to do it right, you know. They just wanted somebody to go say, "Oh, okay. We'll scrape off the topsoil." Arnie Shiffman's, who was then Water Resources Division Director, response to that memo that had been circulated, or to some question about the park, was, "Oh, what you do is you just bring in some topsoil." [laughing] And of course since that time they were unearthed buried drums and all sorts of crud in there, and there's PCBs all over the place and so forth.

So it wasn't very long after that that Ian had the opportunity to go over to the Geological Survey, and he very quickly bailed out of the commissioner's office operation. But it was sort of interesting, the way they thought in the commissioner's office at that time. It's no wonder that Chemical Control is a management mess.

Baruxis: Now, the commissioner at the time--I'm trying to remember.

Walker: It was Jerry English.

Baruxis: Throughout that.

Walker: Yes. Well, here again, I don't think there was evil intent. Jerry, when she came to the department, had no concept of the way that department ought to be run, and she had no management training either. She was an attorney. Her values and way of operating were different from other people in that department. The people in the management positions were not managers in an educated sense. They were managers just by position and by having moved up. They had had opportunities to get some management training, and it hadn't really taken hold or they hadn't taken it seriously.

Ian Walker and Price's Pit

Baruxis: What happened with the Price's Pit that you mentioned? Where did Ian go? To USGS and come back?

Walker: He went to the New Jersey Geological Survey as administrator. He's a geologist. That's a whole other story what happened over there, sort of a strange one. He'd been there for a while and then he moved over to Water Supply. He had been in Water Supply for a few months as a Project Manager. He was in charge of several water supply projects. He was looking into them and getting them organized so they would be prepared for the next step in the process.

One day he was asked to review the consultant's report on a proposed new site for the new Atlantic City well field. He looked at the consultant report, and the consultant was saying, "No problem, it's okay to move the well field over here." From what was in the report, Ian could see that there was no basis for that confidence.

Baruxis: Who was the consultant?

Walker: It was somebody hired by EPA. I don't remember. The consultant talked with the base engineer, for instance, and asked him, "Do you have any problem with waste?" and the response was, "Oh, we truck it all up somewhere, we take it away." And that was sort of the extent of the inquiry, which is hardly adequate. I mean most everybody knows that most military bases are heavily contaminated, particularly air bases with solvents and all sorts of stuff; they wash the planes down, and the stuff just slops into the ground. Maybe in recent years they've been collecting stuff and trucking

Walker: it off somewhere, but what about all the past activity? What things are buried on any kind of military base or adjacent sites? These are some of the questions that came to Ian's mind, and then he talked with staff people about it.

So he looked at this problem that he had been asked to look at, and it raised some real red flags. He also knew that on the same day he was asked to look into it, they were making the announcement down at Atlantic City about this move to the new well field, with congressmen and all the hype about how they were going to solve the Price's Pit problem.

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Walker: As an example, here you have in Price's Pit, a "dollar" problem. Ian was asked to look at a "nickel" portion of it, and he recognized he needed to at least look at the "ten cent" portion of the problem around it. So he saw the problems with the proposed new well field, and he decided he would look at the file on Price's Pit and see what information there might be there about other areas near the proposed well field. Anyway, in reviewing the Price's Pit file, he found a number of memos dating back for sixteen months or so raising questions about the consultant's report and other consultants' reports on the Price's Pit business.

Baruxis: Was this last year or this year?

Walker: It was in March of this year. The memos were saying that the plume of contamination has not been defined, that there's no contamination in the lower aquifer, that the plume has not been defined in the upper aquifer, and that some of the monitoring wells have been poorly installed and poorly located. They raised all sorts of questions. They have never been responded to. There were memos raising these questions up until just a short time before Ian was looking into this. And he thought, "Ye gods, here they are down there making this big announcement, and the commissioner is out there with all the hype on Price's Pit, and how awful it is, and they're getting ready to spend $6 million to move the well field and spend all this money to deal with Price's Pit." It seemed quite clear that something was wrong.

But Ian's first instinct was to ask whether the commissioner knew about this. He felt that the commissioner ought to know this since he's in the out-front position of making announcements. So he explained what he had found to his boss, who's John Gaston,

Walker: the new division director of Water Resources, and John agreed. John was meeting with Paul Arbesman, who's the deputy commissioner, later on that morning. This was on a Friday morning that Ian told John.

So John was meeting with Paul Arbesman and said he would explain it to him. They were traveling somewhere or another. So Ian figured, well, the message will be taken and something will happen. On Monday, after an executive staff meeting on the high levels, the message came back to Ian, keep your mouth shut, the plan is going to go forward as arranged, keep your mouth shut. And there were other messages from other people in effect saying that anyone who says anything would lose a job. That was a very clear message.

So Ian is not one to take that kind of thing lightly. He also knew that because he had always been connected with citizens groups on the outside--I mean he came from citizens groups, and he was connected with me--there were people who probably didn't trust him to not say something outside. Even though he wouldn't and had never done anything like that, they just have that in their minds and once they get something in their minds, it's hard to change it.

He also knew that, given the message that came, the only way he could get to the commissioner--I mean he couldn't do an end run around his boss and around Paul Arbesman or any of these people--would be to resign. He also didn't know at that time that Bob Hughey, the commissioner, was out of town on vacation in Florida or something. So Paul Arbesman was technically in charge.

He got that message on Monday morning, keep your mouth closed, and he called me from work, and he said, "My stomach is churning, I'm leaving, I'll explain it to you." So we talked that afternoon, about what in the hell to do. And I think he consulted with a couple of people and drafted a resignation letter. A couple of days later he sent a very brief letter to Hughey resigning. Then he was called into a meeting with Arbesman, George Tyler, and I guess Gaston, I forget who else was there. Arbesman's questions were not on the merits of the questions he was raising, but do you have any information that we don't have. It was sort of strange. Anyway, they accepted his resignation. So it was very peculiar.

Walker: At that point Ian was not planning to release anything because he wanted the commissioner to have the chance to do the right thing. We've felt all along that if the commissioner had been here that he would have responded in the correct way. There were several things he could do. He could have said out loud, "Hey, wait a minute, EPA!" He would have called Ruckelshaus, who was just in at that time, and said, "Hey, Ruckelshaus, here's an example of how EPA has screwed up with the pulling back of resources and the cuts in the budget and so forth. They have done these lousy consultants' reports, and you can rectify that, and on the department's behalf to save face." He could have handled it in an out-front way.

So anyway, the commissioner wasn't there, and Ian wrote a much longer letter explaining in detail what had happened and the conversations that he'd had with Arbesman. He sent that to Hughey and hoped that would get some kind of a response from Hughey. There was no response from Hughey. I think at that point we got his home address and sent that to his home. We also were somewhat suspicious whether or not Hughey had actually gotten the first letter with his explanation in it.

Baruxis: But he simply did not respond?

Walker: He didn't respond, no. We had hoped that he would call and set up a meeting and try to understand what was going on and do the right thing. [brief tape interruption] So that was sort of the logistics of what happened.

The thing that Ian pointed out to Hughey that was very disturbing to him was what was happening in the department. Here were technical staff guys risking their health in doing the monitoring and taking tests down around the Price's Pit. They were in the department's own health protection program, getting their blood and urine samples taken on a routine basis, having reviewed the consultants' reports, found them flawed, and sending warning memos up the line to Marwan Sadat, John Gaston, and to all these other people, and having no response to their memos, and finally saying, "Why am I doing this?"--risking my health?" And the morale, as you can imagine, was not very good. It showed such a lack of communication between Marwan Sadat and the groundwater guys and further upstairs that something was clearly wrong.

At the same time I had gotten the booklet that the department had put together describing in glowing terms how all these programs were going to be integrated and how it was supposed to work. And it clearly wasn't coming close to working like that.

Baruxis: You're scaring me!

Walker: Well, but there were a number of purposes in Ian's resigning. That was the only thing he could do for one thing, and his hope was that it would result in their really looking at what the problems were and trying to rectify them and get things coordinated. He was concerned that Price's Pit is symptomatic, that it wasn't just a fluke that these memos were sitting in the file unresponded to, that there may also be similar potential disasters in these other Superfund sites. He described to Hughey that there needs to be some sort of process to go back and look at the early consultants' reports and not go forward with these plans until somebody validates or checks them out to be sure that we're not going to be throwing money down a rathole. These were some of Ian's concerns.

At some point along the way, the press got wind of it. We suspect somebody in the department. There were a lot of unhappy people in the department when Ian left, and somebody tipped off some reporter. Once the word got out he was then deluged by calls and was on television and all the rest of it. So then that has cooled somewhat now, although he had a call the other day from a reporter.

Baruxis: Do you have any inside information on what the department's response was at the higher levels after it hit the press?

Walker: Oh, a typical department response, cover your ass, make the best of it, keep cool. So one of the responses was, "Well, scientists will disagree." Well, they had never gotten the scientists together to see where they disagreed, if they disagreed; there was no disagreement. It was a matter of somebody having prepared a report and somebody else having found fault with the report. They had never gotten together. Nobody had gotten together to see where the problems were.

Marwan Sadat would then say, "Oh well, if you had just called me." He was on the tube saying, "Well, Ian is my friend, why didn't he call me?" Well, Ian's message was you don't interfere. Calling Marwan could have been perceived as interference. But in any case, Marwan had been getting those memos, and he hadn't done anything. His response was, "Well, we have now hired a world-renowned person." What's his name? George Pindar at the Princeton University.

Walker: There were two things. Marwan had earlier been on the tube, and by a fluke we had recorded it on our VCR because Katherine (Montague) was going to be on the tube the same night! It was sort of family night on television! So we had this tape of Marwan talking about Price's Pit, saying he was satisfied with the consultant reports on Price's Pit. And here we were a week later or whatever, and he was saying, "Well, we have a few questions about it so I've hired George Pindar." This was after Ian had resigned, Marwan was on the tube saying, "Well, we've hired this world-renowned person to review the reports or do a study" or whatever it was. So that was another one of their putting a better light on the picture; you know, "We have some problems with that, too, and all along we've had some problems so we're looking into it." But if they had all along been looking at it, why didn't Paul Arbesman say to John Gaston, "Hey, we're hiring George Pindar." It just showed another link was missing, that either Arbesman didn't know that Marwan was going to hire Pindar--either Marwan hadn't told Paul, "Hey, we have some problems with the consultant report, you better cool it upstairs," or he had told Paul he was hiring someone, and Paul chose not to tell his own division director, John Gaston (Ian's boss), what was going on.

So however you look at it, the communications were just not there. And in a subsequent letter to Hughey, Ian outlined all these questions pointing out that there was no integration and no communication. He also knew that Marwan and Haig Kasabach were not on speaking terms. So rather than try to resolve that problem, figure out why they're not on speaking terms, what the problem is. And I know one of the problems is that Marwan will say out loud and in public that he knows geology, he knows how to make these decisions, when he doesn't, and those guys over there in geology will scoff. Both of them are hard-nosed, hard-headed--

Baruxis: Haig Kasabach?

Walker: Haig is in charge of the ground-water section. And he's a hard person to get along with. I can understand that, and I know the way Marwan operates, too, and I can see why those two guys wouldn't see fit to work together very well. But that's what managers are for. That's what Paul Arbesman and George Tyler are for, to see that there's a problem there, figure out a way to resolve it, bring in an arbitrator if necessary, to figure out what's wrong, or figure out some way that those two shops can communicate rather than ignoring the problem. What they then proposed was to find someone who would then be the coordinator. They have actually gone to find someone within the Division of Water Resources who would be

Walker: willing to be the coordinator between Marwan's shop and Haig's shop. And the last thing I heard they hadn't any success with that. I mean nobody in their right mind would take that job. You would be like a ping-pong ball. But in any case that's another kind of Band-aid rather than in really solving that problem. I'm going beyond the business with Ian's resignation, but the whole thing points out the inherent problems that they've got over there.

Now we had hoped, and I still hope, and Ian hopes, too, that Bob Hughey would pay attention to those kinds of problems and try to solve them. But we don't see the evidence that he really grasps that and is grappling with it. I gather there's been a huge flurry of meetings and head-bangings, or whatever, over this to try to remedy it, but I don't know that they've gone about it in a way that really will solve the long-term problem, as opposed to sort of a surface chewing on it. I don't know, you might find out once you're in there!

The Superfund

Baruxis: This may be true even perhaps at the federal level, the way EPA has administered the Superfund. There was some sort of controversy about a monopoly and who they hired as a consultant.

Walker: Oh, yes. Yes, crazy.

Baruxis: And just stalling the spending of Superfund money.

Walker: That just adds to the problems. It adds to the public's distrust of government; that's one of the problems. It makes it harder for the state. Even if the state were doing the proper thing--and I believe that they're trying to do the right thing--it makes it that much harder for them to function. They don't know whether they're going to get the money or how much money they're going to get. It puts the state in the role of playing games with EPA. I don't know that they have to play games with EPA, but that's what they do. They want to be nice to EPA; they don't want to criticize their consultant reports. This relates back to the Price's Pit thing, because if they criticize the consultant reports then maybe EPA won't give them money on another project. I mean for adult men and women to be playing those juvenile games is disgusting,

Walker: but that's what it has come down to, in some fashion or other. I may be exaggerating, but there certainly is an element of that in all this.

Baruxis: Other efforts to secure more funding include the idea of the infrastructure bank. Does that fit in with this now in terms of funding being a limitation? Do you think it's an innovative idea?

Walker: It is an innovative idea. I don't know enough about banking and bonding and all that to know. I gather there are a lot of people who feel that it has some fatal flaws and that it can't work. I know that the sewer authorities don't want the infrastructure bank because they may not get all the money that's been promised to them from the construction grants program and the Clean Water Act. That money will then go into that fund, and they may not get the amount of money that they want. There are certain things about it that have appeal. I mean having things on a low-interest loan basis and a revolving fund as opposed to outright grants has some real merit, I think, in making people think more carefully how they spend the money. We have the example of the construction grants program throughout the seventies overbuilding and wasting a horrendous amount of money.

Baruxis: Well, I think we've covered everything on the cleanup. Do you want to just mention anything else, any other sites around the state, or wrap-up with a statement? Do you see any change in the trend as to how it's being dealt with.

Walker: Right. I just worry about it. It's very important, needless to say, that Superfund go forward and that these dump sites be cleaned up or contained. There are some real problems though. And I worry because they are talking about containment rather than cleanup. I understand that; they don't know how to clean up, or in some areas it probably will be impossible to clean up no matter how much money there is, so containment may be the only way to do. We really don't know what that means in the long term. I mean we worry about spending a little bit of money now, relatively speaking, to contain a site, and we don't know that ten, fifteen, twenty years from now that containment will break and then who's going to pay, and then what happens. So there are a lot of questions.

Baruxis: Just before we'll completely finish hazardous waste--

Walker: [laughing] There's no end, there's no end!

Baruxis: I just want to touch on other efforts in that area. We already did talk actually about minimizing waste and the idea of reuse; let's briefly go back to it again. We discussed the chemical exchange program that the chamber of commerce proposed.

Walker: The waste exchange.

Baruxis: The waste exchange, yes. Do you see that sort of approach as necessary in the future?

Walker: Oh, yes. Unfortunately, it's such a minimal operation at this point. Here again, the chemical industry people don't trust each other, much less government. So it's not working nearly as well as to be hoped. Here again, there are problems. We think that the idea of recycling, such as solvent recovery operations, which is a recycling operation, is a good one, but the solvent recovery company's history has been pretty lousy. There were compliance records, and they've been bad actors. So that's a worry. But the concept certainly is correct, and I guess the hope is that more of the generators will figure out different processes and ways to keep the volume reduced to begin with and maybe not produce some things if the waste is just impossible to deal with.

Nuclear Waste

Baruxis: All this is related to water quality, which is the subject I'd like to touch on next. No, there's one other thing I must touch on in waste--nuclear waste. We'll go into it in as much depth as you want to.

Walker: The low-level?

Baruxis: Yes, the low-level waste, and any other aspects of nuclear waste that you might want to address.

Walker: I haven't played in the radioactive waste game very much. It's been very peripheral. The Sierra Club has a policy on a national level, which of course we're obliged to follow, and I'm in agreement with it, which is to call for no further licensing of nuclear power plants and to phase out those that already exist. In dealing with the waste, I know that the effort, by the environmental people and the anti-nuclear people is to oppose the temporary, away-from-reactor sites. There's the effort nationally

Walker: to deal with low-level radioactive waste, and there's the CONEG, the Coalition of Northeast Governors, to try to get agreement among the Northeastern states as to a process for siting a low-level radioactive waste dump, which is what it would amount to. Here again, in New Jersey, up until recently we haven't had a Sierra Club person to concentrate on it, and I was prevailed upon by a number of people to testify at the hearing on the state legislation.

Baruxis: For the Northeast Regional Compact?

Walker: It was on the legislation that would put New Jersey into the compact, that New Jersey would agree to this sort of model legislation.

Baruxis: For the low-level waste disposal.

Walker: Yes. For the process that would identify sites. And we had some real problems with it. The reason I had a certain amount of comfort in presuming to talk about it at all was because it is a siting question, and I have had experience on the hazardous waste siting, and it certainly should be a smiliar kind of process. So I did testify. Fortunately, another woman, who's been involved in it far more than I have, in fact is on an advisory group with the Policy Working Group.

Baruxis: In New Jersey.

Walker: In New Jersey. Anne Morris has agreed to be Sierra Club spokesman on it, so she'll be playing in that game. Just as a personal sidelight. Ian again, way back when he was working for the state geologist, this is in New Jersey in the sixties somewhere or another, was hired as a consultant to look at Maxy Flats in Kentucky. They asked Ian to do a subsurface study and make a report on the conditions there, which he did. He told them, based on his findings, that that would not be a suitable place for a low-level radioactive waste dump, and that if they did put it there it would leak and cause problems. Whoever it was who made the decisions chose to put it there anyway, and of course since then it's done exactly what he said it was going to. They have just recently closed that as one of the six radioactive waste dump sites. It's sort of interesting. Ian has a technical background as well as a facility for seeing ahead and putting things together.

Baruxis: It must be frustrating to have your information ignored!

Walker: Well, he's had it accepted enough times. But it's sort of interesting that on a couple of these big sorts of things, they saw fit to look the other way. The response people give to him sometimes is, "Well, that's very logical; that's the way it should be, but, oh, it can't be done, you know, it's not going to happen." They don't even <u>try</u> to make it happen.

Baruxis: Well, the way the proposed bill was put forth for the regional, low-level waste was really criticized by the chapter. There was no public input, and it was hastily put together. Do you want to make any comments on that and where that bill is going?

Walker: After the hearing, the committee, of course, voted in favor of the legislation as it was, but they did say that they would make a recommendation to the Policy Working Group that the Policy Working Group put together a package of proposed amendments and send that around to the other states. As somebody else said, "Well, there's no leverage now. Once the state has passed the law, there's no leverage to get anyone to pay attention to these suggested amendments." So I don't know where that is.

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Walker: Anne Morris, as the new Sierra Club spokesperson, will follow it very closely, and I'm sure when something needs to be said she'll say it and bring the two-by-four to bear.

IV WATER QUALITY, ENERGY, AND OTHER ISSUES IN NEW JERSEY

New Jersey's Vanishing Options

Baruxis: Okay, thanks very much. I think we can wrap up for now on hazardous waste and go on to water quality, a state-related issue. We'll be going back in time again. Perhaps we can start with the Musto Commission report [Water Quality Management: New Jersey's Vanishing Options]. Do you think that's a good place to start?

Walker: Yes. I guess I was involved before that in the Stony Brook Regional Sewerage Authority business. And actually, gosh, I'd forgotten that. Yes, I had been involved earlier. When I heard about the Musto Commission reports and saw some early drafts I knew what it was about, so I know that I had been involved earlier. There were some earlier drafts which named names even, and those of us who were involved in it were worried that, since the final report deleted names the whole thing would be a whitewash.

Baruxis: Of polluters?

Walker: Well, of polluters and of bad actors in the DEP and what was happening; it was companies and sewer authorities and people's names. But I understood they had to take the names out, and the final report was not a whitewash, but it wasn't quite as juicy in that sense. It was a very valuable report. We all sort of knew that things were wrong and falling through the cracks and not functioning very well, but it was very helpful to have somebody do the research and put it all together and explain exactly what it was that was wrong and why it was wrong and how to fix it and make recommendations on legislation as well as organization and functioning.

Baruxis: Did you have any input into the report?

Walker: No, I don't think I did.

Baruxis: Or any interaction with the commission?

Walker: There may have been some staff people there who I talked with, but I'm sure I didn't know enough to give them any help. It may have been more that they were helping me see some light or whatever on some other legislation or something.

Baruxis: This is back in 1973, and around then too the budget, limited funds,was as usual an issue. There was the threat of losing federal funding if the state didn't get its program together. A memo that went to Byrne mentioned that.

Walker: Right, they would not be eligible, and they would lose a lot of money, yes.

Stony Brook and the Clean Water Act

Baruxis: What input did the club have in the state's clean water program?

Walker: Well, it was in different ways. We made a contribution to NJPIRG [New Jersey Public Interest Research Group] for its stream-walker's program, which we felt was very good. I guess my involvement in the Clean Water Act was through my work on the Stony Brook, on the sewer construction program and getting some understanding of that. Actually that project, the Stony Brook, was somewhat of a precedent-setting case. I mean we didn't know at the time that it would end up that way, but we recognized the implications of what the sewer authority was proposing, which was a huge, trunk pipeline out in the countryside, opening up the countryside to development. It was subsidizing development, and we pointed that out. Again, this was Ian's work and his understanding of it primarily. The rest of us were sort of rallying around his understanding and in agreement, but he was really the group's leader. We trekked down to Washington and had a meeting with John Quarles, who was then, I forget his title at EPA, but he was a high-up mucky-muck at EPA. A bunch of us went down there and sat around the table with a bunch of EPA people and explained it to him. We used Stony Brook as an example, pointing out the secondary impact of regional sewer systems, that they were like highways, they open up areas to development. We explained the secondary effects of that on municipalities, the huge costs that would be imposed on them.

Walker: Anyway, so we talked with him about it, and I can remember John Quarles saying that he understood what it was we were talking about. But he also understood that we were ahead of EPA as well as the rest of the country. He said, "You're on the crest of the wave on this," that was his expression. So that was where a lot of our attention went. And sometime along the mid- to late-seventies the Department of Community Affairs came out with a report, which was very useful, called the Secondary Impacts of Regional Sewerage Systems. Of course, we waved that around and quoted from it, not only on the Stony Brook, but on other sewer systems. The Ocean County sewer system, for instance, was just a huge extravaganza, and right now they're beginning to have to pay the piper on that.

So I got in on the ground floor on a sewer construction project and came to understand an aspect of the Clean Water Act and what was happening in New Jersey.

Baruxis: You were successful in shifting away from the "big pipe" approach.

Walker: Yes, to a certain extent, through our work. I mean not just mine, but Ian's work leading a number of environmental groups, other watershed associations, and the club and beating on the regulatory agency. We pointed out every chance we got, through every forum, what was happening and the amount of money that was being wasted and what the implications were.

The Industrial Pretreatment Program

Baruxis: Two things I'd like to touch on, one is industrial pretreatment and the other is the shift in administration of the Clean Water Act from federal to state level, which was difficult because neither the federal nor the state levels really had their act together, it seems, in terms of resources--neither funding nor personnel. Standards hadn't even been promulgated by the federal agency by the time state had to take it over.

Walker: I haven't played so much in the water game lately, once the Stony Brook thing had been resolved. Through that effort my attention was diverted into other aspects of water, toxics in particular, and hazardous waste. So I'm not tuned into the details of it.

Baruxis: Pretreatment?

Walker: I did get involved in pretreatment because of the hazardous waste thing. Do you want me to talk about that and that RFP [Request for Proposals] that we looked at and tried to fix, or improve?

Baruxis: I think it's an important issue.

Walker: It must have been a year and a half or so ago, maybe even two years ago, that we knew that there was a pretreatment program that had been assured $6 million of federal money to come out of the Clean Water Act, I think out of old 201 monies. (Section 201 is the part of the Clean Water Act that provides sewer construction grants.) Then there was the effort to get $2 million from the state and have a package of $8 million to embark on this grandiose pretreatment program.

Now we're in strong support of the industrial pretreatment program, so naturally we were interested in what this $8 million project was. We learned that Marwan Sadat was in charge of it, and I've always been an admirer of Marwan's. Given his warts, I recognize he's a smart fellow and a go-getter kind of fellow. So I called them at some point, and said, "Hey, Marwan, what's with your $8 million project?" I guess we had been following it all along, but hadn't made much headway with them. One time when I accosted him in a hall, or asked him about it, or phoned him or something, he said, "Well, we're about to send out this RFP," and I said, "What RFP? What do you mean? We were supposed to be involved in all this?" Marwan said, "Well, if you want to review it--we have to send it out on Monday and it's now Tuesday of the week before--you can have four days to review it and make comments on it. But you have to do it in our time frame." So I said, "Okay." So Katherine Montague and I and a couple of other people agreed to review it. I guess we put together quickly an advisory group, and it included Georgia Hartneff of the Business and Industry Association, and maybe one other person, I forget.

Baruxis: Was Georgia somewhat supportive?

Walker: Not necessarily in the pretreatment program, but she's a lobbyist generally for the other side, she's for industry. But I've known Georgia for a long time, and we respect each other's viewpoints. We don't always agree, but we agree more than we disagree, actually.

Baruxis: So you brought her into it?

Walker: Yes, I guess Marwan said you have to have a business viewpoint, too, and so Georgia was a natural to bring into it.

Baruxis: What is the RFP?

Walker: Request for Proposal, sorry. So we agreed, and we got copies of this thing, and we went over it. And of course we were concentrating from our knowledge of it on hazardous waste, what was going on in the Siting Act and those kinds of things. There was no way we could be critical, or correctly critical anyway, of a lot of the details of it. We were interested in the public participation aspects of it and the hazardous waste stuff.

We read through this rather lengthy document, knocking ourselves out, making a lot of notations in the margins, and we found a lot of just absolutely glaring errors. We prepared, and we went down on that Monday, or whatever day it was, and spent all day down there with a couple of DEP people. We went over it, literally line by line, page by page, pointing out at least what we could see was wrong with it. The guys we worked with down there--George Caporale and Ken Goldstein--were very responsive and understanding and even interested in what we had to say.

Then it was revised. We reviewed several documents. I guess they put together a new RFP with our comments and some additional changes. They may not have put in everything the way we said it, but they made changes. Then time passed and time passed, then we heard that, oh, something was going to be changed, and about that time Hughey came in, I guess, I think that happened about then. I remember asking him about his views on the pretreatment program or something, and he had some strong reservations about it, but he was also sort of vague.

Then we just kept hearing bits and pieces about the pretreatment program going nowhere. It was then pulled out from under Marwan and given to Ed Marra, who was in the Division of Water Resources, but then he was pulled over to the commissioner's office under George Tyler. And when that happened we were very dubious about how serious the department was taking the program. Ed Marra is a good fellow, but he in no way had the power or authority that Marwan had. So what we saw was that it was George Tyler making a grab for this $8 million project; he could exert power and control basically over Ed Marra, and therefore he would be in charge of this $8 million project. We saw it as a power play as much as anything.

Walker: And there it sat, and there it's been sitting, bouncing up and down. I don't know to this day where it is really. Somebody said that somebody from legislative services had raised a question about it because that person knew that money was hanging around waiting to be used, and it wasn't being spent, and he was puzzled. At some point he called me, and I suggested several people for him to call. And to this day we don't know exactly where it is, except something came in the mail the other day, not from DEP but from Ted Shelton, who's at Rutgers in the extension service. He has a bimonthly or some kind of a newsletter that goes out on water resources on the pretreatment program. And he said in the newsletter that the RFP has gone out or is about to go out, and he sort of outlined what it was to do. No, I think Ted keeps on top of these things, so presumably this RFP has gone out, but after all that business way back, and then hearing this sort of vague business about its not going anywhere, there was nothing to pay attention to.

Baruxis: It is strange, I mean from industry's standpoint.

Walker: That's right. And meetings were going to be set up. And it's also confusing to me because there are some sewer authorities that have begun to impose pretreatment requirements on their industrial customers, and they are requiring industries to tell them what they're sending them or to pretreat or whatever. So I'm confused about the whole thing.

Baruxis: It sounds like something that would be from the top down. Maybe the EPA has started to waver?

Walker: That's entirely possible. I just don't know, but I do remember asking those kinds of questions, you know, given Gorsuch, are you assured of the $6 million? "Oh, absolutely, there's no way we can not have that. It's for sure. It's out of old money that's set aside." You know, it sounded like it was practically in a Swiss bank with DEP's name on it. But that's as much as I know. I told the guy who called me from legislative services when he found out what was going on to please call me back and let me know! In fairness to the department or whoever, I could have taken it upon myself to regularly call Ed Marra or whoever, once a week and say, "Well, what's doing with the RFP or with the pretreatment program," and really pursued it in some active way. I could have made a nag of myself and gotten the documents and known what was going on. I don't know if I would have gotten any further than I got without taking it on, but I really haven't made it my business to do that, so I can't fault everybody else but myself.

Baruxis: There's only so much one person can do.

Walker: That's right.

Drinking Water Programs

Baruxis: All along from the early seventies on, the Sierra Club has been stressing that the lack of funding and budget restraints prevented an adequate drinking water program or clean water program. Do you want to make any comments specifically on what efforts the club and DEP made in spite of the limitations on funding? The club wrote to even the governor saying salaries should be increased, more funding should go to the department.

Walker: I feel that all those things have helped in persuading the governor or the legislator to at least maintain the budget as requested by the department. I wouldn't pretend to take any credit that they got more, but all that's bound to help I think. If nobody paid any attention to the DEP and their budget hearings, then it conceivably could be worse off. So I feel that that has been a help.

Baruxis: What about the role of bond issues for supporting the water projects? At one point the club, in '75, was holding off on endorsing the bond unless there were a water supply plan, a statewide plan, developed because otherwise the money could be squandered.

Walker: Right, I had forgotten all that too. Well, you said it. We had seen the squandering in the construction grants program and could see it coming down the pike of water supply, too. You get a bunch of engineers slavoring at the trough, and money can just disappear.

Baruxis: It seems the same issues come up, shifting programs to the state when regulations haven't been established or funds are inadequate. I don't know if I should site each instance. So the NJPDES* program, you really have not been involved in that?

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*New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (pronounced "Nuh-gyp-dees"). NJPDES comes from the federal Clean Water Act. Every discharge pipe has to have a permit.

Walker: Not really. But in concept I can agree with--

Baruxis: More local enforcement?

Walker: Yes. Theoretically anyway it should function better on a more local level, but there needs to also be the minimum regulations and standards on a federal level, so that all the states are required to meet a certain standard or do certain minimal things. So there has to be that federal role and that federal oversight and federal enforcement, too, to bolster what the states do. Because we know the states aren't going to be perfect.

Baruxis: As a result of a suit filed against EPA by environmentalists the federal government was suppose to develop standards for certain categories of industry by the late seventies. But not all the standards are yet developed. So what will happen now that it's at the state level, industries can start to squabble over what the discharge standards should be.

Walker: Oh, sure.

Baruxis: And Reagan has been speaking about changing the basis for standards from technology-based to water-quality-based. Have you any opinions on that?

Walker: I don't, but I know that the environmental people who have been paying attention to that think that that's a bad way to go. I forget the rationale.

Baruxis: Actually, the industries are pressing for decentralization and a shift to the state enforcements.

Walker: Yes. They can wield bigger influence on a local level. Just as it's a benefit in one sense to have things run on a local level, the industries in a given state can exert influence through the political process. So there are pitfalls. And that's why certain things should remain on a federal level.

Baruxis: At least until standards are developed.

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: The club has been pressing for many years also for the statewide water supply plan. Again and again they kept insisting that it come about, which it finally did. Do you want to discuss your involvement in that at all?

Walker: Here again, it's peripheral. Way back, I guess, one of the reasons why we got involved was because of Tocks Island dam. We recognized that if the state didn't take the necessary steps and go forward on a rational basis with alternatives to Tocks Island dam, we could end up with the dam. We believed that there are alternatives--conservation being not by itself an alternative--such as water conservation measures and other water supply measures, whether it's dams on tributary streams or whatever. Unless the state looked at the whole state and figured out a rational water supply system, it would be hit and miss and mostly miss. Then twenty years from now, and we still worry about this, the state would say, "Oh well, gee whiz"--wringing of hands--"we really have to have Tocks Island dam because we need the water and we haven't done this and that and the other thing." So clearly there needs to be a plan, and now we worry that they implement the plan properly and go about getting agreement on alternatives and putting them into effect so that we don't end up having to have Tocks Island dam. It's not just Tocks Island dam. The state needs to be organized on water supply aside from Tocks Island dam, but Tocks Island dam was a motivating force on it for us.

Baruxis: Are you basically pleased with the statewide plan?

Walker: I think so. I think it's finally come out far improved over what it was; it's got a good water conservation section in it. There are still some flaws in it, but overall I think the environmental groups that have been concentrating on it recently felt that we have something to hold onto that warrants support and seeing that it is implemented.

Baruxis: Was there adequate public input when it was being developed?

Walker: It was sporadic. There was an effort on the part of the Division of Water Resources to get public input on the development of the plan, and there had been complaints that it wasn't very well done, but I think in their faltering fashion they did make an effort to involve the public.

Baruxis: The Sierra Club opposed the natural resources bond issue, and the Water Supply Bond Act in '81, again because the master plan was not adopted.

Walker: Yes, we've been getting all sorts of lip service and garbage out of the department that they wouldn't put their money where their mouth was on some point or other, I forget what it was now. So, translated that means, "we don't support your bond issue."

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Land-Use Planning

Baruxis: What it all comes down to for the club is again a whole policy for growth, land-use planning, and transportation. And that's what I'd like to get into now, a national plan for accommodating the growth of population. It relates I guess again to your involvement with sewer construction and how the construction of trunk lines out into the suburbs result in uncontrolled sprawl. You've referred to that a lot, and I was wondering if there was anything else we should touch on with that, such as how closely it was related to water resources planning and the Stony Brook-Millstone area.

Walker: You mentioned the land use; there have been efforts for a long time and discussions and conferences on the need for land-use planning, and, you know, that seems very good, but when you begin to look at it, I really wonder what it means, or how it can be done. I think what has really happened, I mean what we've done, is to play the land-use game in a sense where the action is. Now if land-use planning or land use is being dictated by highways, then you deal with those highways. Or if it's being dictated by sewers, then you deal with those sewers, and you redirect those sewers so that they're not directing the growth or development or whatever, and water supply the same way; water supply can induce growth, too, helter-skelter.

You know, I hear people talking about land-use planning, and it sounds very good, but my worry is that planners come up with these lovely plans in books that end up on shelves. And I don't know the answer to that. It certainly would make sense for the governor to enunciate some sort of a growth policy, what _is_ his growth policy, should growth just go any old where? If it should be directed, where should it be directed and so forth?

But what has actually happened is that land use has been directed on a piecemeal basis, and maybe that's not so bad. I mean we have a Coastal Protection Act that protects the land use within the coastal zone; we have wetlands protection and flood plains protection. There are certain programs where areas are now controlled. The Pinelands is a whole big area, the Hackensack Meadowlands is an area, and open space and recreation areas. So it's been done on a piecemeal basis, but it has been done. If we hadn't gone about it in that way and said instead, "We _have_ to have a land-use plan for the _whole_ state" and plan for everything in this gorgeous plan" or something and had some great pie-in-the-sky plan, I don't think it ever would have happened. There'd be

Walker: too many political fights. It would be just too big a thing to do. That's not to say that the governor shouldn't enunciate some sort of policy and have discussions on them. But when it comes right down to it, I just don't see a grand and glorious land-use plan for New Jersey.

Baruxis: So particular aspects have been touched on, such as planning highways and farmland sectioning.

Walker: Yes, yes. That's another on, I didn't mention that.

Baruxis: Are there any of those that you want to mention anything more on?

Walker: I think it's good that legislation has been enacted to give at least a certain amount of protection to all those areas. And new schemes are being tried, too. I don't know whether they'll work, but transfer of development rights, and the development credit thing that happened in the Pine Barrens now--I can't really explain it because I haven't played in the land-use-planning game--and transportation routes, and the hazardous water facility siting is a kind of land-use planning in a sense. We're saying both facilities shouldn't be in certain areas and they can be in other areas, which comes in from a public health and environmental protection aspect. But that is planning for a certain facility as opposed to the whole state.

Baruxis: This is something national Sierra Club has been concerned with also, planning. By the way, you were talking about John Quarles and meeting with EPA in Washington, where he was the EPA deputy administrator. Very soon afterwards the New York Times had an article on the front page about the EPA curbing sewer trunkline subsidies. The reason I'm bringing it up now is at that meeting with him someone from national Sierra Club was there working with you--Linda Billings. Do you want to talk a little bit about the interaction with national?

Walker: Yes, I'd forgotten about that. I guess we got the idea to go talk with them. I forget how it went about, but Linda Billings was a person who had been in touch with us from time to time in the club; she was one of the club lobbyists. At that time I guess she was maybe on the Clean Water Act. She ultimately became the toxics person, too, and then she went to EPA and was in some toxics role. Maybe it was Linda who helped set the meeting up for us with Quarles, because she knew the people at EPA at that time. So, yes, they were helpful.

Baruxis: Another thing the club supported was the income tax, which would provide more funding, and also remove incentive for towns to have companies that would subsidize growth.

Walker: Over property tax?

Baruxis: Yes. I thought it was interesting that the club got involved in an issue like that since politically it might be touchy.

Walker: Oh, it was. I mean, in the discussions I don't think there was a unanimous decision on the part of the chapter. I don't know what the votes are from the chapter executive committee, but, yes, we did have a lot of discussions on how appropriate it was for us to get involved in it. There were a number of us who felt that it was appropriate for the related impact.

Baruxis: With the Capital Needs Commission?

Walker: You really have done some digging, haven't you!

Baruxis: Back in '75 you spoke at hearings, expressing again there was no growth policy.

Walker: And the secondary effects of regional sewerage, we talked about that. You know, I forget all those particulars. I still have that Capital Needs report, though, because when it came out it was quite useful for us. You know, we play our typical game when we go testify to the Capital Needs Commission and talk with their staff people hired for the hearing. To get our points in the Needs Commission report we used other reports as our venerable sources. I'm sure we must have cited the Secondary Impacts of Regional Sewerage Systems when we talked to the Capital Needs Commission. Then the Capital Needs Commission said some of those good things in <u>its</u> report, and so then next time some legislative hearing comes along, or whatever, we quote from the Capital Needs report <u>and</u> the Secondary Impact report and whatever else! We add to our venerable sources.

Baruxis: Newark's Mayor Gibson was there also supporting the Sierra Club. I'm interested in what interaction you may have had with him? And also when the club developed an urban policy, what personal interaction was there?

Walker: It wasn't direct. However, there still are some guys on his staff who are environmental people, and Vivian Li at that time was working for the city of Newark, but Vivian wasn't all that active

Walker: with the chapter at that time. So there was Vivian there and two other guys, Frank Sudol and Walter Janicek. Both Frank and Walter are still with the city of Newark and working on hazardous waste, and they are guys who wrote Ken Gibson's environmental speeches and such and wrote testimony. So Ken Gibson, to his credit, understands and agrees and values the environmental viewpoint. He may not prepare his own remarks but anyway he has it done. So there wasn't a direct connection with Ken Gibson, but it was as direct as you can get with a big-city mayor like that, with the people who work for him.

Baruxis: Do you want to talk about your views on other environments and problems? We've talked about health problems.

Walker: Well, we could see that one of the effects of the sewer system was not only opening up the hinterlands to development, but in the course of opening up the hinterlands it bleeds resources from the city. You can see that's what's happening in New Jersey. They opened up the hinterlands with the interstate highways, and you can practically see the move out the highway from the cities. And rather than concentrating the resources in the cities, the sewer construction program was "bleeding" the cities. We supported an urban policy to rehabilitate the sewer systems in the urban areas, and put some money there, rather than subsidize developers out in the countryside, where it not only subsidized developers, it obliterates farmland and threatens water supplies and everything else.

Baruxis: Mass transit and sewer rehabilitation?

Walker: Yes. I mean the whole thing ties together; it's like all environmental things, everything is hitched to everything else.

Baruxis: On City Care (a conference), national Sierra made it one of its priorities some years back; in '79 it was one of their main campaigns. Is anything happening now? Are there any organized programs?

Walker: Not in a concerted way. I don't know if Vivian has been concentrating on urban things. There's a guy in New York City who's concentrating on urban things and helping volunteers focus attention on it, and without that focus or rallying situation it's harder to make it a concrete effort. But it takes form in different ways. In my work on hazardous waste, I'm familiar with and understand the problems in the urban areas and I can understand

Walker: what they're up against and support them in the way that I can support them, through making sure that the siting criteria aren't going to impose on an already beleaguered area.

Baruxis: The chapter is experiencing such an increase in its membership this year. You're projecting 10,000 members?

Walker: Well, that's what the hope is. I don't know that it's going to get that far.

Baruxis: I wonder if more now than in the past it's going to be coming out of an urban environment?

Walker: I don't know. I haven't seen a breakdown on membership. It would surprise me if the growth would be in Newark, for instance. The membership growth would be in Morris County or something. I would think it's unlikely that it would have happened. I think people whose instinct is to join an enviromental group, now in urban areas have their own environmental group, their own issue-oriented groups as in Newark and the Ironbound community. They're primarily focused on health, even though they call themselves environmentalists, which is interesting. The Greater Newark Bay Coalition calls itself an environmental group. And GREO* is another group; Madelyn Hoffman is the woman up there who's organized it. They call themselves environmentalists, and they're the ones that are opposing the At-Sea Incineration. So what I'm saying is that people who live in Newark and have an instinct to join an activist organization have one right in their home town now, but they may not have had before. So I would support the efforts and the resources and the interests that are there.

Mass Transit and Air Pollution

Baruxis: It's been so difficult to get mass transit in a real, viable reality here in the state. Have you worked for this?

Walker: We have supported it, but it's not something that really holds the chapter galvanized. It's not the kind of issue that people are all that excited about.

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*Grass Roots Environmental Organization (pronounced "gree-oh")

Baruxis: Oh, you don't think so? It's one of those fundamental ones, I thought.

Walker: It is, it is, but it's like sewers; there aren't very many people involved in sewers either. There are more people interested in open space and natural areas and those kinds of things.

Baruxis: So they see a highway being paved and they get excited.

Walker: That's right, and then they come out of the woodwork.

Baruxis: There was the Transportation Bond Issue again back in '75 that got the support of AFL-CIO leaders; Charlie Marciante put pressure on the legislators to have it equally divided with highways.

Walker: Oh, I'd forgotten about that.

Baruxis: I don't know if I should bring out all these anecdotal examples, but it can reveal some of the dynamics of how decisions are made. Do you want to talk about that?

Walker: Well, I don't remember the particulars, but we had had some kind of an agreement with the DOT (Department of Transportation), and at that time we were meeting regularly with DOT.

Baruxis: Would that be Alan Sagner?

Walker: Yes. He was the first DOT commissioner, as far as I know, who had a real understanding of it and was in support of mass transit. So we had sort of an agreement that mass transit would get a higher percentage of money. I mean forever before that they had only been highway bond issues. I don't remember when the first bond issue came around that had any money in it for mass transit. As I recollect, we said, "Look, enough highway stuff. Give mass transit its due and give it more money." Anyway, Marciante got his troops together and they did their dirty work, and I guess we ended up opposing the bill because it was equally divided. And the equally divided, as I recall it, really was <u>not</u> equally divided because it would have brought in so much more money for highways from the federal government that it wasn't fair on any account. And again we leafleted the railroad stations and did the whole bit.

Baruxis: What other efforts at the federal and state level have been made to fund mass transit?

Walker: I don't remember. It seems to have been again in bits and pieces. We pushed, when there was development in the Hackensack Meadowlands and Atlantic City.

Baruxis: And they bus senior citizens to Atlantic City for gambling. We could give you ten dollars for gambling! [laughter]

Walker: Yes, I saw the headline about all the buses, the thousand buses a week, or whatever it is, that go to Atlantic City.

Baruxis: At one time, in '76, the construction industry really was pressuring for more highway works, which the government gave into. Do you recall anything about this?

Walker: Not specifically, but I do know that there were people working for DOT under Sagner who were very much mass-transit people, you know, a couple of young hotshots. Well, I don't mean that in a derogatory sense, I mean it in the good sense. They were dynamo kinds of fellows. That was one of the reasons; in fact, there were several reasons why we connected with the DOT for a change. You know, that was a novelty number for environmentalists to sit down and talk with DOT people. But Alan Sagner himself and his aides really wanted to change that department and made it far more mass-transit-orinted than it had been in the past. So that's sort of my overall recollection. They were up against it within that agency because there were entrenched bureaucrats there who were highway people and whose buddies and pals were highway builders. So it was really to their credit, and I've been an admirer of Alan's ever since.

Baruxis: What about currently?

Walker: I haven't pursued it since then.

Baruxis: Okay. So any general perspective on where we're going in terms of mass transit, if anywhere?

Walker: Well, the money just isn't there to fix the railroad beds and to do all the things that need to be done. There are some new buses that are pretty nice to ride on. I worry whenever the costs go up that ridership will go down, but it's not an area that I've paid that much attention to.

Baruxis: DOT did come out with a transportation master plan including mass transit. Did you get into that?

Walker: Not really, not in anything recent anyway. There's an organization called CBT, Committee for Better Transit, that has concentrated on mass transit, and I guess we've been supporters of that group for some time.

Baruxis: DEP has had good relations with the Sierra Club over air quality in the state?

Walker: Really there's no definite relationship. Here again, this is Vivian's area, air. It's through her that Bob Hughey worked very hard to keep the inspection maintenance program and to change it from the biennial, or whatever it is, program that they've tried to get in, recognizing the link between malfunctioning cars and air pollution.

Baruxis: And most recently the environmental lobby sued the state?

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: And it was a successful action?

Walker: Yes. And on a personal level, I for years of course have gone to get my car inspected, as everybody else, and I have never had to wait in line, you know, there was only one car ahead of me, and I said, "Well, what is this?" Of course I'd time it in the early part of the month and midweek so there was nobody there. Everybody else I guess waited till the last of the month, and I think to change the whole program because people are stupid is stupid.

Baruxis: So supporting the Clean Air Act throughout the last decade and fighting efforts to weaken it have been a priority for the national Sierra, and I guess the state has been involved.

Walker: Well, actually, again through Vivian and through the Lung Association, the club worked very hard to convince the New Jersey delegation to get the act reauthorized and strengthened. The Lung Association set up a network. They had really quite a well-organized Clean Air Act campaign going in New Jersey.

Baruxis: Do you recall any other instances when club lobbyists tried to introduce other legislation? This is not your area.

Walker: Yes, it's not my area. I know that that did happen but I don't know the particulars.

Baruxis: Do you recall anything about any particular DEP commissioners?

Walker: Well, the first DEP commissioner was Dick Sullivan, who came from the Bureau of Air Pollution, so that was his strong point. He was particularly good on the Clean Air Act. So he was the one that concentrated on air. Then the next commissioner, David Bardin, said what a disaster the Division of Water Resources was, and tended to put some more of his concentration on that division to try to rectify that. And air was sort of going along on its own; it was in pretty good shape. At that point Paul Arbesman was in charge of air, and he was pretty good. The air program generally has been considered pretty good in New Jersey.

Energy Issues##

[Interview 4: August 1, 1983]

Baruxis: The final environmental issue I'd like to touch on with you is energy. The club testified at hearings as far back as '73. You testified also in following years. National Sierra Club presented statements on various aspects of energy. Do you want to just talk about it in a general way, and then I'll discuss specifics?

Walker: Okay. Yes, the national club has been interested in energy for a long time, and some of the old chapter leaders early on were more energy-oriented than some of the newer leaders. I've had a sort of personal, peripheral interest in it. I guess, obviously, environmentalists who pay attention at all understand the connections between energy exploitation and the digging up of coal or the exploration for oil and the oil spills in Santa Barbara. It has been very apparent to us that getting energy is very destructive to the environment, and we've seen that also this society in general wastes energy in the extreme. So there's been a big effort to try to bring to people's attention the need to conserve energy in all sorts of ways. And every time we testify to save something from exploitation, it's pointed out you can generate, in a sense, as much energy by conserving as you would by exploiting it.

The environmentalists and conservationists have said that from way back. There have been so many cases when we could have said, "Well, we told you so. If you had paid attention and conserved way back you wouldn't be in the mess you're in right now." Again, my role has been somewhat peripheral, with somebody saying, "Would you please testify," and usually I've done that.

Walker: I don't think I've done that much on my own. More recently, again by default, I've testified on the low-level radioactive waste thing.

It's interesting that a year or so before Pat Dodd, then Senator Dodd, got involved in the hazardous-waste facility-siting question, he had been the sponsor of the Energy Facility Siting Act, which had gone down the tubes in large part because there was no public participation in it, and that was one of the key points that environmentalists made. I may have testified on that point, I forget, or gone to committee neetings on it anyway.

Designing a Passive-Solar House

Walker: On another level or side note, because of my general, underlying interest there came a point in my life when I was ready to bail out of the big house that I was in. And I started off by looking for small houses that would be oriented right that I could at least have solar hot water in them. But I couldn't find a small house that would lend itself to retrofitting or that served my purposes. At some point I said, "Well, why don't I build myself a house that suits my purposes?" So I embarked on a new project, which was to build a passive-solar house, earth sheltered, and with a greenhouse that generates heat for the house, and all sorts of good things, water- and energy-conserving.

Baruxis: You took part in designing it?

Walker: Oh yes, I was the primary mover of it. In fact, I had trained my architect, in a sense, in the principles I wanted to incorporate. I mean I hired her as my architect because she was responsive and interested in working on it even though she'd never done anything solar before. Then she and I together trained the builder; it was a whole new thing for him. Then we had to beat on him and he'd say, "Why do you want to do that?" and "You can't do that." So we'd tell him, "Well, we want to do it, and you figure out how it can be done." Anyway, he'd come around. And the result is a house that is very comfortable. It's heated by the sun in the wintertime, and the backup is the wood-burning stove. We burn less than a cord of wood each heating season, and that's staying comfortable and warm. And in the summer it keeps its cool. I mean in this hot weather we're having now it stays very cool inside.

Baruxis: How do you insulate it?

Walker: It's insulated on the outside with three inches of styrofoam. The construction is concrete blocks, filled with concrete, and so that provides a thermal mass. In the wintertime the heat comes in, the sun comes in, and heats up that thermal mass and it's kept in with thermal shutters on the inside, which we close at night. And in the summer it's in the reverse. We cool it off at night with an attic fan and keep it cool.

I think most environmentalists have an underlying interest in energy even if they don't participate on an active level in energy things. They realize that there are all sorts of strings or connections between energy and all our other problems--air pollution, acid rain, power-plant wastes, toxic pollution, and water pollution from mining operations; they all interconnect.

Nuclear Policy

Baruxis: Yes, the Sierra Club's policy on energy seems inseparable from conservation because it is connected to so many things like resources and peace.

Walker: That's right, that's right.

Baruxis: The club did come out, both national and state, with a statement on nuclear energy.

Walker: The national takes the lead on that kind of thing. They called for no further licensing of nuclear power plants and a phasing out of existing ones, and of course their policy on nuclear waste.

Baruxis: Yes, concerned about waste disposal. Did the state executive committee develop their policy statement right from the national?

Walker: Yes, chapters are obliged to not diverge from the national club policy. We can help in development of that policy, and I think we may have had some input on that way back, in fact I'm sure we did. That's the way the club operates. They'll come up with a proposed policy and send it around to all the chapters, and the chapters chew on it and discuss it and send back whatever our thoughts are, and then they put it together.

Coastal Oil Drilling

Baruxis: Another area where national worked with state was the outer-continental-shelf oil drilling, and perhaps I should have discussed oil drilling when we were discussing coastal areas.

Walker: Here again everything connects.

Baruxis: Do you want to discuss that a little?

Walker: I'm aware that that's going on, and what I do is to count on Dery Bennett of the Littoral Society to call me and say, "Hey, we need Sierra Club to say something about this at such and such a hearing or write a letter to so-and-so," and then I will do that, instead of my following it on a day-to-day basis or going to meetings on it. I just don't have the time.

Baruxis: Any personal feelings about oil drilling?

Walker: Well, I worry about it.

Baruxis: I think we feel it's a compromise, but maybe we can't fight it.

Walker: Well, that may be. Some time ago when the state was developing its coastal policy, we worked on that, and I participated in those discussions on if or when oil comes ashore what's going to happen to it.

Baruxis: Secondary impacts?

Walker: That's right. Also, that pipelines don't come in across Island Beach State Park, for instance, or through the Pine Barrens. We are concerned that where it comes to shore not be just left to the whim of the oil companies, that the state have policies and plans so when that happens they know what to do and what to not do. And that's as much for oil as well as gas. It seemed even more likely that they would find gas out there, at least at that time. So I worry about it; I worry about the potential for oil spills and so forth, but I haven't really been an active participant.

The Club's Nuclear Policy

Baruxis: Regarding nuclear energy, the New Jersey chapter did come out with a policy statement after the national did. Was there any opposition from the membership? Are environmentalists divided on that issue?

Walker: I know that there is some controversy. In fact, within the chapter executive committee there were a number of hot and heavy discussions on the issue of if we don't have nuclear power then we have to go with dirty coal or dirty oil, or use up oil, and that argument does have merit. There was a guy who was on the executive committee who is a physicist who felt very strongly, not that he was so much pronuclear, but he was anticoal-burning and felt that we couldn't keep it as clean as necessary. There were some other views that he had on nuclear power, and at some point he resigned. But he was sort of trapped because he was a life member in the Sierra Club, and he was somewhat galled by that I think. But we've remained friends at somewhat of a distance, and he's into other things now.

Baruxis: When was this?

Walker: Oh, this was in the early seventies I think, or mid-seventies, I forget. And even now there'll be discussions on the antinuclear rally in Washington or whatever, and there are some people now on the chapter executive committee, or new people on the executive committee, who are not as antinuclear as some of the rest of us, or as the club's policy. But they sort of go along with it; I mean they recognize that that's the club's policy. They're more in other things, and they don't feel strongly enough about it to fight it or whatever. So it's not as clear-cut an issue as most of the rest of the issues.

And we also get into discussions on nuclear weapons, and the war, and the freeze. With the freeze campaign, I sort of thought, "Well, everyone is going to support that, I mean who could be against it?" That was in the back of my mind, I suppose, and I was somewhat surprised that there were some strong feelings among the members of the chapter executive committee, people who didn't think we should get into any such thing that's not strictly an environmental issue. The rest of us feel like, "Well, that's like the ultimate environmental disaster, for God's sakes."

Walker: So some people wanted to have more information on it. So I called Ann Martindell, who was a former state senator, who was one of the honchos in the freeze campaign in Princeton, and she came to one of our meetings and explained what the policies were of the group--it's the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament--and how environmentalists fit into the picture--can get involved. That didn't dissuade a couple of people. Then we had a vote, and we voted to support the freeze, but it was not unanimous, as most of our decisions are. So it seems that on anything having to do with nuclear there is not a unanimous feeling about it, there are some people who feel differently. So, you know, we have a vote and we discuss it, and then we go on about our business.

Baruxis: Well, I'm sure that endorsing helps because it shows that people do support it.

Walker: That's right. You asked earlier about our general membership. We hadn't heard anything from anyone else saying that that was a bad thing to do or "cancel my membership" or anything like that. Whether that's because most people don't bother to read the newsletter in the first place or just why I don't know. But anyway that's the way it is.

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Energy Facility Sitings

Baruxis: You earlier mentioned briefly the bill that Senator Dodd had sponsored, which didn't pass, on energy-facility sitings. Was there any public input, and did it give extensive powers to the commissioner?

Walker: Yes, it gave the commissioner the power of eminent domain with no safeguards built in, as opposed to the more recent Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Commission, which also has the power of eminent domain, but it can't use that power until a number of steps have been completed in a sequential arrangement. So when the energy-facility siting thing came out without any public involvement or relatively little and no safeguards, everyone opposed it. It was too much power to give to some group.

Now the only other peripheral involvement I've had with the DOE [Department of Energy] was when they developed an energy master plan, and I did review a draft--I'm not sure how many

Walker: drafts they had--and commented on it. I'm not sure if I testified at a hearing or sent in some comments or called a staff person or just how it was, I forget, but I do remember reading the draft and commenting particularly on the energy conservation part of it. But that's again been my sort of peripheral kind of involvement.

V THE SIERRA CLUB IN NEW JERSEY

The Office in Princeton

Baruxis: Is there anything else you want to mention on other topics that we reviewed.

Walker: [laughing] I don't remember what we have or haven't talked about! We've talked about issues; I don't know whether you want to talk about this office. One of the main roles that I play in this office is people will call up and they've got a backyard problem, the bulldozer is at their door, something bad is going to happen, they've got well contamination or a nearby woods is going to be developed, or there's a contaminated stream running through town, or whatever. And it's been interesting to me over the years that when people call up, they don't have a clue as to how to go about solving that problem. I've generally faulted the school system ultimately for having supposedly educated people, and yet when it comes to something happening, they don't know how to go about solving the problem.

They call up here, and they think the Sierra Club can kind of go charging off on a white horse and save the day for them. Part of what I do is to help them understand how to go about solving their own problems. I mean obviously we can't go solve everyone's problems. We do a lot of that in here. You know, depending on the issue, to get the people to contact their local board of health. "Oh? You mean there's a board of health?" Or the engineer's office or whatever seems to be appropriate as a first step to find out what's going on, to see if there's an environmental commission in town, to contact the neighbors and see if the neighbors also have an interest, and really help them understand how to go about getting the information they need, both on the local and county and state level.

Walker: I tell them who to call, how to organize, how to go about getting in touch with the other people who might also have an interest. If it's a water problem, for instance, who uses that water body? Do fishermen use it? Do people canoe on it? Is it only that people live on it and care about it from a property value or just what? I tell them how to go about bringing it to people's attention, contacting reporters, understanding what laws apply to whatever it is, what other environmental organizations in that area might help them, and this sort of thing.

Most of the people who call are not Sierra Club members, and I don't know whether they ultimately join, but it's sort of one of the pleasures really in my work is in talking to these people. Their initial call is just frantic generally. They're bewildered, they're angry, or whatever, and I can be helpful to those people, and I enjoy doing that. That's been one of the sort of fun things that I do. Just sitting here in the office and making that kind of contact with people.

Baruxis: You're here pretty often. You're a full-time Sierra Club volunteer.

Walker: Yes. It's one of the varied aspects of the job, the kinds of calls that come over on the phone. One of the most recent ones was an anonymous call, some woman was very concerned because a family member worked in a warehouse where transformers and capacitors leaking PCBs had been stored, and she was very worried about exposure to a family member and other workers. She worried about fumes--vapors, and dust contaminated with PCBs. The transformers had been moved to another place, but she wasn't sure if the spills had been cleaned up sufficiently. So I helped them by calling some people without revealing anything about the caller, other than the place, because they were fearful of losing jobs and stuff. I pursued that, and the EPA checked it out; I talked with several EPA people, and I called her back. I called her "Betty Boop," that was our name! Because of my continuing work here I know who to call and who can be helpful.

Baruxis: That's true. I think people see Sierra Club as a resource they can use.

Walker: Yes, and I think they get over their initial disappointment very often that we can't come and solve their problems, and they understand that we don't have twenty-five people to go around the state and solve problems. They come to understand that they themselves can do it; it'll mean some work. They learn they care

Walker: enough to want to do it once they have some understanding of how to go about doing it. And I feel that if there's someone else out there who will gain some experience and some understanding and some confidence in themselves in solving a problem, then they'll be a better citizen for pursuing that, however they solve the initial problem.

Baruxis: It's a way of getting them energized.

Walker: Sure. Understanding how government works and what <u>their</u> responsibilities are as citizens.

Volunteers and Staff in the Sierra Club

Baruxis: What are your feelings in terms of being a volunteer? Do you feel that perhaps we should make some provisions for more staff people, especially when people put so much time in?

Walker: I worry about that in a sense. It would be good if ideally there were more volunteers who could spend time and help. That's the idea behind the club, that it is a grassroots organization; that's one of its main strengths. But given what's happening in the society in general today with more women going back to full-time jobs, other kinds of demands and interests and our mobile society, there are fewer people who have the time to even put in a few hours a week, much less full-time or a good hunk of time.

Most public interest organizations are finding that is a real problem. Many of them have gone what I call the grantsmanship treadmill route in the last few years. Once on that grant treadmill they spend a lot of time proposing a project for a grant. They get the money, they hire a person, the grant runs out; now they have this person who they've come to depend upon, and that person is dependent upon that job. Then they have to spend a lot of time and effort to get another grant in order to continue the project and continue that person in the job. In some cases it's worked out and it's been very helpful to have the grant and to have the person hired to work on the project. In other cases, organizations have extended themselves beyond their real capabilities, and have spent more money than they can afford to, and are in desperate struggles to raise money.

Baruxis: I wonder if membership fees should be increased to pay for staff. What about the club's regional conservation committees, such as the Northeast regional conservation committee--the NERCC--is its funding covered through membership fees?

Walker: Through contributions and they have a fundraising drive. The NERCC gets some money through the national club, which comes out of dues and fundraising that they do. I mean the club does a lot of fundraising. The New Jersey Chapter has a fundraising drive once a year, and that's what helps pay the salary of our part-time staff person. But here again, having gone the paid staff route--and we _had_ to go that route because the increase in membership put more demands on the volunteers--people who didn't have the time to do all the membership logistical stuff that needs to be done, you know, the welcoming letter that goes out to everybody, keeping a record of what's happening. You get this computer list from the club, and here you have 150 new members; that's a big job for somebody to sit down and say, "Dear Mary: So glad you joined the Sierra Club," and to deal with treasury business.

Baruxis: Is that what Nancy [Nancy Bowman] is taking care of?

Walker: Nancy's taking care of that. Again, it's a volunteer job, and it's a burdensome job for the volunteers on the executive committee. And they didn't do it very well. They did it the best they could, but Nancy is an accountant, a bookkeeper anyway, so she understands how to do that better than the other people do.

But a lot of the chapters are finding that they have to go the way of staff, and I worry about it in the sense that at some point I'm going to be moving to Maine, not anytime soon. I realize that somebody else can do what I do, a lot better than I do, I don't know! I figure when somebody moves out, when there's a vacuum, somebody else will fill in, but I also know that, as you're saying, nobody is on the horizon at the moment that we can see anyway, and I do provide a certain amount of continuity with the comings and goings of everybody else. I have that in the back of my mind as a worry.

Baruxis: What about additional staff? Have you ever considered abandoning your volunteer status for a staff position?

Walker: No, I don't have any desire to do so. This sounds presumptuous somehow, but they couldn't pay me enough! We don't have the money to pay me what I would be worth, quote, on the marketplace or

Walker: whatever, on the one hand. On the other hand, I don't need the money, and I don't need it to make me feel like I'm doing something worthwhile either. So I figure why should I do that? So the other chapter leaders and I have developed sort of an understanding over the years.

Strategies in Conservation

Baruxis: One could argue there has been a big change in political action strategy over the years. But actually in the very beginning there seemed to be a lot of politically astute members who took part in testimonies and lobbies, so the club and the New Jersey Chapter has been doing it all along. But have you seen sort of a change from traditional environmental activism to being involved more and more with committees and agencies?

Walker: It's true. As we have learned how the agency works, and doesn't work, and gotten to know the people in the agency, there's been more and more working with the agency--DEP. DEP has also changed in that it has opened up its processes and established advisory committees. Now, some of them are a mechanism to co-opt, in a sense, the time and effort and opposition or whatever of the environmental community. But for the most part it's been a genuine effort on their part to get the views of the public and of their constituency--environmentalists--on particular policy matters and in developing regulations and so forth.

Baruxis: That's come about because of environmental pressure?

Walker: Well, yes, it's sort of a two-way street. The environmentalists pressure for being allowed to participate in these decision-making processes and also we've hammered at them. But there were things with that, that they would be far more successful if they provided for public participation, the public would get to know them better and understand what it's all about and develop trust and all those other good things. I forget which came first, it all sort of came about at the same time, and in part it was a demand by us for an attitude change on their part, and to their credit they saw the light and did involve us in these things. But at the same time that also brought about a change in our perceptions, too, in that over time we began to work with the "enemy," with the business and industry people.

Baruxis: You worked with the chemical industry representatives on hazardous-waste siting and on other issues, too?

Walker: Sure, on task forces and so forth. One of the first mixed task forces that I worked on, this was in the mid-seventies I think--well, one of the early ones anyway--was on the Oil Spill Compensation bill (the original bill was just on oil). I worked with them on revising the rules and regulations which had been proposed by the department, and I came to understand why the oil people objected to certain things, why they objected to the department saying, "you have to have a bolt this size in order to do that, and the valves have to do this" rather than giving them performance standards. And I came to understand that there's a legitimate need for industry to be given simply performance standards on some levels, and then they have to meet those performance standards, but <u>they</u> figure out how.

Baruxis: You worked with industry people?

Walker: The oil people primarily at that time. So it was a learning process for us, too, to have a better understanding of how they worked. I think they learned about us, too. I think the entire environmental movement has evolved from being simply a conservation movement, and broadened itself to the whole environmental spectrum. Also the whole movement had become far more sophisticated in its approach to everything, understanding connections, and working with industry on issues, so we can work together.

Baruxis: I read a thing by Commissioner Hughey where he said that citizen involvement with the commission actually made possible its progress.

Walker: I think so.

Baruxis: How well have the environmentalists cooperated between themselves?

Walker: Yes, people have raised that over time. In fact, some environmentalists themselves have charged that we're so fractured, or people say, "You don't work together." I think by and large people who have really looked at the way the New Jersey environmental people work, realize we pretty much do work together. We don't all work on the same things at the same time. As I said, there's Dery Bennett with the American Littoral Society concentrating on ocean things. When he needs help or support, then we all jump in and are supportive. The same way with my work on hazardous waste or toxics. Very few of the rest of them pay much attention to those issues on a day-to-day basis, but if

Walker: we need their support they'll join us in signing testimony or whatever it is. Sure, we're off doing different things and we operate in different ways. Some of the organizations are what I consider to be somewhat timid in their political action. That's in part because of their tax status, and they can't do a lot of lobbying. Or they have conservative Republican trustees on their boards, or whatever, that pull the strings and that provide the money.

The Sierra Club is much more of an active organization because we don't have those strings and those constraints on us. We don't have the tax constraint or any of that, so on some of the harder questions we do take the lead and we stick our necks out. We <u>can</u> stick our necks out, and so we do. Just as an example, on the question of a new DEP commissioner and the hearing on a dubious nominee, all of the rest of the environmental groups say, "Go do it, Graves!"--when I was Graves. "We agree, we think it's just a disastrous nomination," or whatever. And I'd say, "Well, why don't you guys testify, too," and they'd say, "Well, you know, we can't do that," and they'd back off a little bit. They'd claim why they can't, "but you go do it!" [laughing] "You have our support." And so I'd say, "All right," and I'd go play the "goat," and that's okay.

But I think overall the groups do work together. At least the statewide and regional groups knew each other and work together. And also there has been the question of an umbrella organization primarily by people who are not day-to-day involved in it, who come and say, "Well, why don't we have an umbrella group, and we also put money into the pot and we hire someone and that person is going to be our full-time regular spokesman and set up the networks, and keep us always informed as to what's going on."

You look at that and it has a certain merit, but when it comes down to actually doing something like that it's really not necessary, for one thing, and it has a certain danger in it, for another. So all of us maintain our independence and stick to what we know best and feel comfortable in doing, and provide numerous targets rather than one target, for one thing. So I think it's maybe healthier the way it is, but it does have its problems, too. I think it seems to work all right.

Baruxis: Was there a change in how the legislature responded to environmentalists' demands between 1970 and 1983?

Walker: That's hard to say. In the early seventies there was a real climate for getting all the legislation enacted. There were some struggles and fights on the Coastal Protection Act, for instance, but there was a real climate for getting legislation passed, and there was a lot of hoopla about doing that. A lot of people went to Trenton and lobbied, and it was a whole new thing for us. We began to keep records of how legislators voted and set up another organization actually, the Environmental Voters Alliance, and prepared voting charts and rated and ranked the legislators. That worked very well up until maybe the late seventies, maybe all the way through the seventies, and the environmental people did have a certain amount of influence on legislation.

Now--and we haven't analyzed it to figure out why it is--but in the last few years we haven't been able to prepare voting charts because for one thing most of the legislation that is enacted is what we call sort of motherhood legislation; I mean who can be opposed to cleaning up hazardous-waste dumps? The Siting Act was supported, except Senator Zane, who was the only one who voted against it. So when we began to look at all the environmental bills that had been enacted and then to look at the voting tallies on them, they were practically all unanimous. Most of the work is done in committee for one thing, as opposed to on the floor. The committee meetings are now open, so you can go talk rather informally at a committee meeting and get things changed at that state. But even the committee votes, which are now recorded, too, for the most part don't tell us a whole lot, or they might have just about the five members of the committee, but that doesn't tell too much about the whole legislature. So the whole legislative scene has changed somewhat, and as I say we haven't really analyzed it to understand why that is; we have our suspicions or suppositions or whatever, but no real understanding of it.

Baruxis: What are some of the ideas you have about it?

Walker: Well, one idea is that even the legislature, which is a typically mediocre bunch of people [laughing], you know--I mean they really are, there are some outstanding people amongst them and there are some real nerds, but generally a typical zoo--but somehow or another they have some grasp of environmental issues themselves. Now maybe that's because within each of their districts there are dump sites and people yelling at them to have them cleaned up. The environment is important. Legislators have read those polls, which say the people want clean air and clean water, so maybe it's

Walker: become institutionalized enough, too. They also have to wrestle with the economy and the jobs question. As an example, the can and bottle bill--we've not had a lot of success, as you know, on that. But by and large they seem to understand that there's a need for environmental protection measures.

I mean we do live in New Jersey after all, and it would be pretty hard for anyone to not understand the environment in New Jersey. That's why, when campaigns come along, it's no big deal for any legislator or congressman to say, "I'm for the environment." I mean, so what? You come from New Jersey you have to be. So in a sense things have evolved to that situation.

The Environmental Voters Alliance

Baruxis: That makes sense. Well, one interesting development was when the club actually got involved in political education and campaigns. In '76 the national Sierra Club Board of Directors voted to become more politically active. They decided you could publicize candidates' voting records but not endorse individuals. But by '81, the club was actively campaigning, right?

Walker: That's right. And of course in New Jersey we have had the beginning of all that political process through the Environmental Voters Alliance.

Baruxis: Can you talk about that? When Environmental Voters Alliance was formed, the club was not involved at all in political education.

Walker: That's right.

Baruxis: About '73?

Walker: '73, yes. There was, on the national level, the League of Conservation Voters. I forget how it started off. I've been a member of that organization for some time. Marion Edey, who's from that organization ever since it began, may have called me in and said, "Hey, what about a state LCV?" Or perhaps I got in touch with her, because there were people here who decided we wanted to do that, I forget. But in any case I was in touch with Marion, and she came to New Jersey and met with several of us to talk about how you go about setting it up and what's involved--by-laws, geographic distribution of board members, fundraising--and so we did that. That may have been in '72 actually, but our first voting chart was in '73 and we were established in '73.

Baruxis: The New Jersey League of Conservation Voters?

Walker: I forget the reason again why we didn't call ourselves the New Jersey League of Conservation Voters. We called ourselves the Environmental Voters Alliance or EVA, and just did the voting charts.

Baruxis: Did the EVA work with the Sierra Club?

Walker: Yes. But EVA is a different organization, but then here again things have all been changed. Since Sierra Club allowed for EVA for instance, we could put the EVA voting chart in the Sierra Club newsletter, which we couldn't do before.

Baruxis: Oh, because you checked it out with national Sierra Club?

Walker: Yes. At some point we were allowed to do that because of their change. Then the LCV, at some point, in '80, '81, established an LCV in New Jersey. Then the '81 campaign, an off-year election--New Jersey was one of two states with off-year elections--was an opportunity to train a lot of people for national campaigns. There were a number of opportunities to train more people to be involved in the political process and to do actual campaign work--phone banks, targeting, getting-out-the-vote.

Baruxis: How well do politics and environmentalists mix?

Walker: Well, there were always risks in one sense or another. There are some members who--and I include myself in that in some fashion--really don't like politics, or they think politics is a dirty, boring, whatever kind of a game to play. Actually in the early seventies I got connected with the reform Democrat group in Princeton and got some familiarity with that. So there was some reluctance on the part of some members for the club to get involved, and I think there still is. On the other hand I think there's a lot more support. There's a lot of recognition that legislators, congressmen are working hard for environmental protection measures and racking up good records, and when we can pat them on the back, we let them know how much we appreciate it. Also, one way to make sure they stay in office is to support them in their campaigns through our volunteer work and donations of money. It seems like a legitimate thing to do. It's a lot of work.

Baruxis: How does EVA function?

Walker: Well, EVA has always worked on the basis of, here again, getting all the environmental people together, all the leaders or whoever. We send out notices for meeting, whoever we thought could possibly be interested to come and talk about just that. There are several people on the EVA board who really like politics. They understand all the ins and outs and how to count the numbers, how to analyze prior campaigns, what kind of campaign organization to put together, and all that kind of stuff; it's important, too. So it was a consensus to get a political campaign in operation. We also had the help of the national group, which came in with money and people skilled and already trained in campaign work. They sent people to run workshops to train us and to organize and establish a professional, but mostly volunteer, campaign. So it was an exciting thing to do.

Baruxis: What campaign activities did it do directly?

Walker: You mean what did the Sierra Club do at that time? I'm not sure what the Sierra Club did as opposed to what everybody did all together.

Baruxis: Which organization was in charge?

Walker: It was under the auspices of EVA. Sierra Club people generally thought at that early stage anyway that it was better for EVA to do it.

Endorsing Florio for Governor##

Baruxis: I have one question, if you recall, on the decision to endorse Florio for governor rather than Kean. Kean had done some good things in the past. I mean he was responsible for legislation creating DEP and the right to sue polluters way, way back. Of course, since he's won, do you think it was a mistake perhaps to have not endorsed Kean, or to have gotten involved in it at all?

Walker: No, I don't. I think we did the right thing. It was difficult, and we had a lot of heavy-duty conversations. However, there was generally agreement that, all right, Tom Kean _was_ good as a legislator, but again it was back in the early seventies when the climate was ripe for getting a lot of remedial legislation enacted, and it was relatively easy. It was easy to set up a DEP, I mean that was no big deal. The right-to-sue legislation, we worked hard on that. As it turned out, it hasn't been all that

Walker: useful; it was amended in the legislature to such an extent that it really isn't all that good. I don't know that anyone to this day used it, or it's only been used a couple of times.

But in any case, we gave him credit for having been a good legislator at that time, but Florio was also a legislator at that time. He didn't have maybe as splendid a record as Tom Kean did, but he had a good record. But we based our decision more on what was happening now or at that time. Tom Kean had been in the legislature up until I guess the late seventies. Then he had sort of disappeared off the face of the earth as far as any environmental things were doing. And that was at a time when it was harder, things were getting more complicated and complex. We were beginning to deal with toxics; with the implementation of all those earlier laws, we began to realize that things needed to be amended, and we'd gained experience with those laws, good and bad.

And Tom Kean was not around. Jim Florio, on the other hand, was, and was playing an active role in dealing with these really difficult issues, hazardous waste being one of them. On the Pine Barrens, Florio had been very active and very helpful. Tom Kean was, you know, nowhere to be seen. So that was why we went for Jim Florio. We felt that he was a much stronger fighter than Tom Kean, and he was around and making it his business to try to help solve those problems, and Tom Kean wasn't.

Now, there were a lot of what I call the traditional conservation people who had not been dealing with environmental issues on a day-to-day basis, who were sort of the old-guard-type conservation people who remembered the friendly feelings they had for Tom Kean way back then. I sort of put them in the sentimental environmentalist box, or sentimental box, as opposed to the more activist people, and it was those people primarily who wanted to go for Tom Kean and were mad at us for supporting Jim Florio. And not everyone who was even in support of Jim Florio particularly liked him; as a person he's a little harder to get to know, and he has that way of speaking that sort of puts people off somehow or another as opposed to Tom Kean's friendly overtures.

Membership Growth

Baruxis: It hasn't cost you membership. I mean the membership has been growing by leaps and bounds.

Walker: Right.

Baruxis: Do you want to talk about the membership? In ten years it's more than doubled, and this year you're hoping to hit ten thousand.

Walker: Well, that's the hope. I would be very surprised if we got that far. I think we're more around nine-thousand-and-something-or-other. To add another six-or-whatever-hundred between now and the end of the year would be pretty hard.

Baruxis: It seems in the last few years membership has really increased, and perhaps in response to the faults of the administration.

Walker: Oh, for sure. We call them all the "Watt babies" because it's been primarily the Reagan administration, that is exemplified by James Watt.

Legal Actions and Relations with the Press

Baruxis: We've talked about how testimonies and letter writing and lobbying have been ongoing activities; how about legal action as an issue?

Walker: You know, we hardly ever think of legal action.

Baruxis: It's never been necessary?

Walker: No, it's been necessary, and we have done it a few times, but not that often. I mean primarily we go the legislative or administrative route, and of course that's the club's policy, too, on the national level; they can't take on every problem that comes along and sue somebody. So I guess the most recent one was over the casino that was proposing to ruin a very small cove; it was a matter of an acre of wetlands, or maybe a little bit more than an acre, but not a lot more. We did everything we could, and then we went the legal route through the national club, and we won. It was a precedent as much as anything; if you let them screw up a patch of wetlands, even if it's a little patch and relatively insignificant, then bit by bit the wetlands will be gone. So we decided this is a precedent-setting and attention-getting case, too.

Baruxis: Education. The club has been wanting to identify and expose problems. As you mentioned before, it would suggest means for action, take action, and change public policy. In terms of

Baruxis: identifying and exposing problems, has the newsletter been a useful vehicle? Are there ever attempts to get into the press otherwise?

Walker: We have rarely gone the press-release route. There have been occasions in the past when we've sent out a press release, but for the most part it's sort of the day-to-day slogging along with really very little newsworthy activities in that press sense. I mean it's all-day discussions on a task force with the regulatory agency and the industry groups or whatever to pound your way through, to get our views across in a rule-making process or something like that. But you don't issue a press release saying, "Today the Sierra Club beat down industry attempts to weaken the regulation system."

Baruxis: You don't think that could be helpful?

Walker: Well, it's conceivable that it could be, but I don't think about that, and I don't know that any of the rest of us do either. You do it, and you keep watching them and make sure that the department in the revisions gets that point in there, or whatever. I don't think in terms of press releases. Now, on the other hand, in large part because of the work that we have been doing, reporters call the Sierra Club a lot. Whenever something comes up, they'll call us. So I rarely call reporters, but they call me, or they call Vivian, or I refer them to somebody. They'll call here very often. There will be some new environmental reporter or some reporter who's been assigned something on an environmental thing, and they'll think to call the Sierra Club. Very often I don't know much about it, but I do know three other people that they can call who will know, so I serve that kind of function. And they call because I suppose the press thinks of the Sierra Club. I mean the Sierra Club does have a reputation for being helpful and being involved in certain issues.

Baruxis: Are there any particular reporters, for example Gordon Bishop, you have dealt with?

Walker: Gordon Bishop! Oh gosh, you would pick him! Gordon has a reputation of being just dipshit. He does a lot of good, you know. I corrected him once. He wrote an article and he did something wrong; he said something that was just beside the point or so self-serving or something; I forget what it was. I know you don't fight reporters, but on that particular occasion I called him up and I said, "Hey, Gordon, you really missed the boat on that one. Here's a whole other perspective or aspect of it that you

Walker: maybe would be interested in knowing about." I tried to be as tactful as I could, of course. He was very defensive. He used to call me all the time, and then after that he didn't call me anymore for a long time.

Then he wrote an article in which he quoted me as saying something, and he hadn't even talked with me. So I called him or wrote him a letter or something, I forget what now, and got no satisfaction from talking with him. I wrote a letter to his boss at the Star Ledger and didn't get anywhere. But anyway, I had this envelope sitting here one day two months after that had happened, and I hadn't seen or talked with Gordon in ages, but I came up the stairs and here was Gordon sitting in your chair and staring him right in the face was that: "Gordon Bishop Phony Story." [laughter] He was very subdued that day, and I didn't realize until after he left that that was sitting there looking him in the face. I thought, "Oh, that was really great."

Baruxis: What a story!

Walker: Anyway, I don't have a lot of conversations with Gordon. Every now and then his articles will be on the mark, but a lot of the time he's just grossly inaccurate. And he swallows the pap coming out of the DEP or other people's press releases or whatever without doing any real follow-up. There are other reporters who seem to do more digging, more investigations.

Baruxis: Herb Jaffe, the man who reported on Ian's situation. Do you think he's pretty good?

Walker: He did a lot of investigative reporting on Chemical Control, and I think he served a very good purpose in bringing that all to light and bringing it to the attention of the public and forcing the state to have to address the problems that he raised. I've heard within the department, among people whose views I respect, that they thought he was inaccurate in a lot of what he wrote about. That may or may not be, I don't know, but I thought he served a good purpose. On Ian's story, his write-up, as I recall, was a fair article, he gave both sides or something.

But it is interesting, when you really know a story, the inisde and out of a story, to see how inaccurate and how ill-informed or misinformed reporters can be. A reporter on the Star Ledger who is generally very accurate is Tom Johnson, who's a young fellow, and he works on hazardous waste and on the siting thing. For some reason, either he's sharper to begin with, or he makes it

Walker: his business to check around, there's rarely even a minor mistake in his stories; I've been interested in that. But for the most part, reporters are just like everybody else; they're not too careful sometimes.

There's a guy, Joe Donahue, in the Atlantic City Press who has a very good reputation in South Jersey, particularly on the Pine Barrens thing. He wrote a very good article on Ian's thing, and there again that was something that we knew the ins and outs of it, and he did a very fair article, both sides--if you can call them sides--were put out there and explained so that people could understand.

I guess one of our main complaints of reporters is that there're too few investigative reporters who really go behind the scenes and who give the public a real perspective on the problem, whatever it is. They might hit the hot story of the day, but without going behind it sufficiently. And we understand that, too, I mean they have deadlines to meet. Most reporters are assigned something on the spur of the moment; there're very few of them who take the environmental beat on a regular basis so that they really understand what the issues are, as opposed to being on school problems and school boards one day and crime another day and environment thrown in every now and then.

Baruxis: I hadn't intended to even talk about reporters!

Walker: Well, maybe you can wipe the whole thing off!

Baruxis: No, I'm glad we did!

Walker: Well, it's funny that you hit on him because he's a real sore point amongst all environmentalists.

Baruxis: And the other side, too!

Walker: He is sort of the state environmental reporter, and yet he's the one that everyone expresses the most derision or anger or disgust with.

Baruxis: People on the other side, too, though.

Walker: Oh, I'm sure; he's inaccurate. And it serves nobody's purpose to have inaccurate information out there.

Baruxis: I think on ocean dumping people were very critical of him.

Well, finally, on political action I just want to touch on coalitions that the club has been involved in. We have talked about them when we were discussing the Littoral Society and the Pine Barrens. But are there any other groups, such as the League of Women Voters, insterested in working along with the club a lot.

Walker: Yes. We do work regularly with LWV people and many other groups, too.

New Jersey Environmental Commissions

Baruxis: Do you want to talk about environmental commissions and their significance, how they came about?

Walker: There was enabling legislation that must have been in the early seventies--I've forgotten--that allowed and encouraged towns to set up environmental commissions. They are volunteers appointed by the mayor. So as you would expect there would be some that are political hacks, cronies of the mayor, and are worthless, or even worse, as far as being helpful on environmental issues. I think that's sort of unusual. For the most part they fall in between that kind of a set-up, and those that are really dedicated to understanding and being helpful on environmental issues, such as: prepare natural-resource inventories for the towns, give critical reviews of project proposals to the planning boards and to site-review boards, recommend actions to township committees or councils or whatever, and they've been a mixed bag. But having those commissions around the state, even if there are only two or three hundred of them out of the 567 towns in the state, has to be helpful; there at least is a resource for the town to give the environmental viewpoint. And it's a resource for people in the town if they knew they exist and they can ask them questions.

Then, having a staff organization with those resources to refer people to is also very helpful. They have a good resource center; it's run by knowledgeable people. The executive director of ANJEC [Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions], Candy Ashmun, from the beginning until just recently, was very knowledgeable. Again, she was among those who would pull back on certain things because she ran an organization that was quasi-governmental, and they couldn't tread on toes and had to chicken-shit around on occasion. We all understood that, but overall it's a useful organization to have in the state.

Baruxis: And it's just one of the groups that Sierra Club has from time to time worked with.

Walker: Oh, it's more than from time to time, it's on a regular and continuing basis.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Baruxis: Anything you'd like to say on working with agencies, DEP or others? We've talked about DEP a lot, specific examples, but anything else you'd want to say about commissioners or comparing them?

Walker: Well, I guess I just continue to hope that this governor and future governors will take the department more seriously and give it the attention it needs, give it the kind of direction it needs, the kind of commissioner it needs. There needs to be a discussion on how that department is set up and run. I think it's a disadvantage to the department to have new political appointees brought in at the high levels on a regular basis; it loses the continuity. On the other hand, there are some real problems with civil service until it is reformed so that better people are brought in and willing to stay in, and move up in the ranks, and get the management training they need. I would hate for a Dirk Hofman to move up the line, for instance, and become a commissioner; that would certainly not serve the purpose of the department or the state.

But there needs to be some sort of discussion and planning and changes so that the department can function better and have better people who are going to stick it out in the long haul. It's conceivable that Bob Hughey could serve that purpose, but he's handicapped, too, by the lousy civil service situation. He's a lot better than a lot of the commissioners that have been there. One of the handicaps has been that the department has existed for, what, thirteen years, and it's had eleven or something commissioners. I mean that tells you something right there, that it can't function all that well with that kind of turnover. There's that kind of turnover in the commissioner's office. As I mentioned earlier there's that kind of turnover throughout the department.

Walker: And unfortunately turkeys like the Kirk Hofmans within the agency, and those who stay, and it rewards them. They're in there more for the job than because they are dedicated to environmental protection. They're just going to make their pensions and their whatever, and that's too bad.

The Sierra Club Structure

Baruxis: All that's left for us to talk about is the club itself, how the club operates.

Walker: You mean in New Jersey or national?

Baruxis: Well, at all levels really, your perspective on all levels and what you've experienced. I'm interested in the regional conservation committees and meetings that take place and how decisions are made. I guess you attend those meetings.

Walker: Yes.

Baruxis: Is it quarterly that the regional meets or annually?

Walker: I guess maybe it is quarterly and then there's sort of an annual kind of a retreat type meeting up at Colebrook, Connecticut, which is the one that I regularly go to. I've gone to some of the other NERCC meetings, too, but those are the ones that I've made a point of going to.

Baruxis: Have you been a delegate for it?

Walker: Maybe I was at one time, I don't remember. Here again, since I go anyway it's always better, as far as I'm concerned, to make a delegate of somebody else so we have more people getting involved.

Let's see, the functioning of the club. You know, obviously I feel pretty good about the club overall at the national and the chapter levels and the regional basis. The national organization allows the chapters to function on somewhat of an autonomous basis, although we have to go along with their priorities and their policies. I don't have any problem with that, with either one of those.

Walker: The club is unique as an organization set up to involve volunteers, and I think it tries to help the volunteers to the extent that it can. I know that there are volunteers within the club who wish for more help, and I wish that that could be too. But I also know that the staff people on the national level are dedicated people who work like dogs for relatively little pay; they have certain things that they have to do, including serving the volunteers, and sometimes the volunteers get short shrift. But for the most part I think they will be helpful; when you really need it they'll help.

On the chapter level, here again the groups and the chapter itself and the executive committee struggle to find people who are willing to take on those responsibilities. There are six groups, and there's another one that's in the process of being formed down in the Atlantic City area. It ebbs and flows, and the groups sort of come and go. It depends on who decides to go back to school, or who moves to some other state, and so a group will flounder around for a while, but then somebody will come along and decide they want to make it work again, so then it gets picked up again. And we all trek around and try to help them figure out how to do it. We could probably do that more. I'm a little reluctant; I don't want to impose myself on groups. I sort of let them know that I'm available and can come and talk with the group about how to organize or about an issue or whatever, and sort of let them know that. So I do some of that.

Baruxis: So educational workshops are valuable?

Walker: Yes. And I could probably do that more, but they have to struggle around themselves and figure out whether they need someone. Then they'll come around, and they'll decide, well, maybe they need me or they need Vivian or someone to come down and help them, but first they have to understand that, they have to figure that out for themselves, rather than my saying to them, "Hey, invite me down" or "I'm going to come down and lay a number on you or do a workshop for you." Well, I don't want to do that. Maybe that would work, but I would rather that they figure it out for themselves, and I think some of the rest of the people feel the same way. So that has some disadvantages in that they sometimes maybe feel that we're not paying attention to them or whatever.

And the RCCs serve a useful purpose, too. It's always impressive to me to go to those RCC meetings and see the thirty-five or forty people that show up; those are a lot of well-informed,

Walker: active, dedicated people, and that in itself is sort of rejuvenating to reconnect with that group of people scattered up and down the eastern seaboard. It's encouraging.

Baruxis: It must be great to have a lobbyist also who has helped on New Jersey issues.

Walker: Yes. There's an occasional lobbyist for the NERCC.

Baruxis: Yes, well, Wilma Frey, and she has worked on the Pine Barrens for New Jersey.

Walker: She's not a full-time lobbyist for them.

Baruxis: No, it's part-time.

Walker: It's periodically that they have hired Wilma, yes. And that's been very helpful. They also will give us two thousand dollars for a particular project or five hundred dollars or something from time to time, and that's helpful. And they work hard, too, people who do the RCC thing.

Baruxis: Have there been feelings where a project or a need was presented by a New Jersey Group, and they decided it should not be a priority? How are decisions made? Do you usually feel pretty good about them?

Walker: I think so. I don't recall feeling disappointed or put out by something or other. I think all the groups or the chapters are supportive and understand that that's not an endless, deep pot of money up there, and that you don't propose something on a frivolous basis; you have to have it well thought out, and you can't go to that pot five times a year. So generally it's a reasonable thing. They understand that, and so they will try to help out. That seems to be the way it works. It's pretty informal in a lot of ways.

Baruxis: That's probably why it works!

Walker: Maybe so, yes. But it does have its structure, and that's important. A lot of times it gets in the way. And the Sierra Club has its own bureaucracy they have to deal with, but given its size and the diversity of the people and the issues, it has to have that framework to be able to help people. Without it it would be chaotic, nobody would be helped, so it's better we have our bureaucracy.

Walker: Actually--this relates back to the department--bureaucracy generally has a lousy connotation, but it's only because it hasn't been made to function right. I mean the bureaucratic structure and process serve a purpose and provide that framework. It's only because it's been poorly managed in the government sense or whatever that it has gotten a bad name. But there's nothing really wrong with bureaucracy.

Baruxis: So you see the club as a successful bureaucracy?

Walker: Well, in a way. I mean people have complaints about it, but that bureaucratic structure or bureaucratic process is necessary.

Baruxis: So people can operate together.

Walker: Yes, right. And I've come to understand that through my understanding of the bureaucratic ineptitude in the department, or the poor management that doesn't allow the bureaucratic process to function the way it ought to function.

Baruxis: I think I'll finish my outline off with perspectives on the future or anything you'd like to say, your hopes, this will give you a chance.

Walker: [laughing] Oh, gee whiz! Well, my local hope is that some of the people that are now beginning to feel their way into the chapter structure and processes and issues will stick with it and become more and more involved and that the chapter will continue to function. I mean that's my hope on that level. As far as solving the problems--

Baruxis: There're some big ones.

Walker: Yes. You know, I feel like the club can help solve those problems, and we have helped and will continue to help. I'm basically an optimist, or I'd go away and cry or something. There are some days when I feel like all we've done is kept our fingers in the dike and that the deluge is inevitable. But, all right, so if the deluge is inevitable the longer you can put it off maybe the more capable we'll become and more problems will be solved or whatever, so maybe the deluge won't come; the Ice Age comes along and scrapes it all off, and we start all over again!

Baruxis: And you've done your job!

Walker: Yes, yes. Well, that's more facetious, I suppose. There are specific things that I hope will happen. I hope in New Jersey that the siting act that we worked on is successful in properly siting decent facilities that will help solve the problem, and that it won't blow up, and that the Pine Barrens will not become grossly contaminated, and that the development that we see happening down there won't do it in.

I don't know about New Jersey, whether it's just a hopeless case. I really can't think of it as being a hopeless case. It certainly is a challenge for anybody who wants to get involved, that's what I tell everyone. I had a call from a woman in Florida who was moving to New Jersey and was freaked out at the idea, she was really practically crying on the phone she was so upset.

Baruxis: People hear the worst.

Walker: Yes, sure. And she wanted to know what towns had the dumps, and I sent her material. I tried to lighten her load a bit. I told her that there're all sorts of things going on and opportunities to get involved and New Jersey is a challenge and there's no place to escape anyway so you might as well come here and help try to solve the problem!

Baruxis: Wow, that's a positive outlook.

Walker: Well, it sort of is, I mean it's part of how I think about it anyway.

Baruxis: And that's a very positive note to finish on.

Walker: Okay.

Baruxis: Thank you very much, it's been great. [brief tape interruption]

You know, I wanted to mention during our talk that you had won the award. EPA awarded people who were outstanding environmentalists. You and Ian won in the same year, in 1975.

Walker: It was the first year they did that.

Baruxis: I hope before you move to Maine that DEP and EPA can acknowledge you again before they lose you!

Walker: Well, I'm not going to hold my breath, that's for sure! [laughter]

Baruxis: Okay, thank you.

Transcribers: Sam Middlebrooks, Joyce Minick
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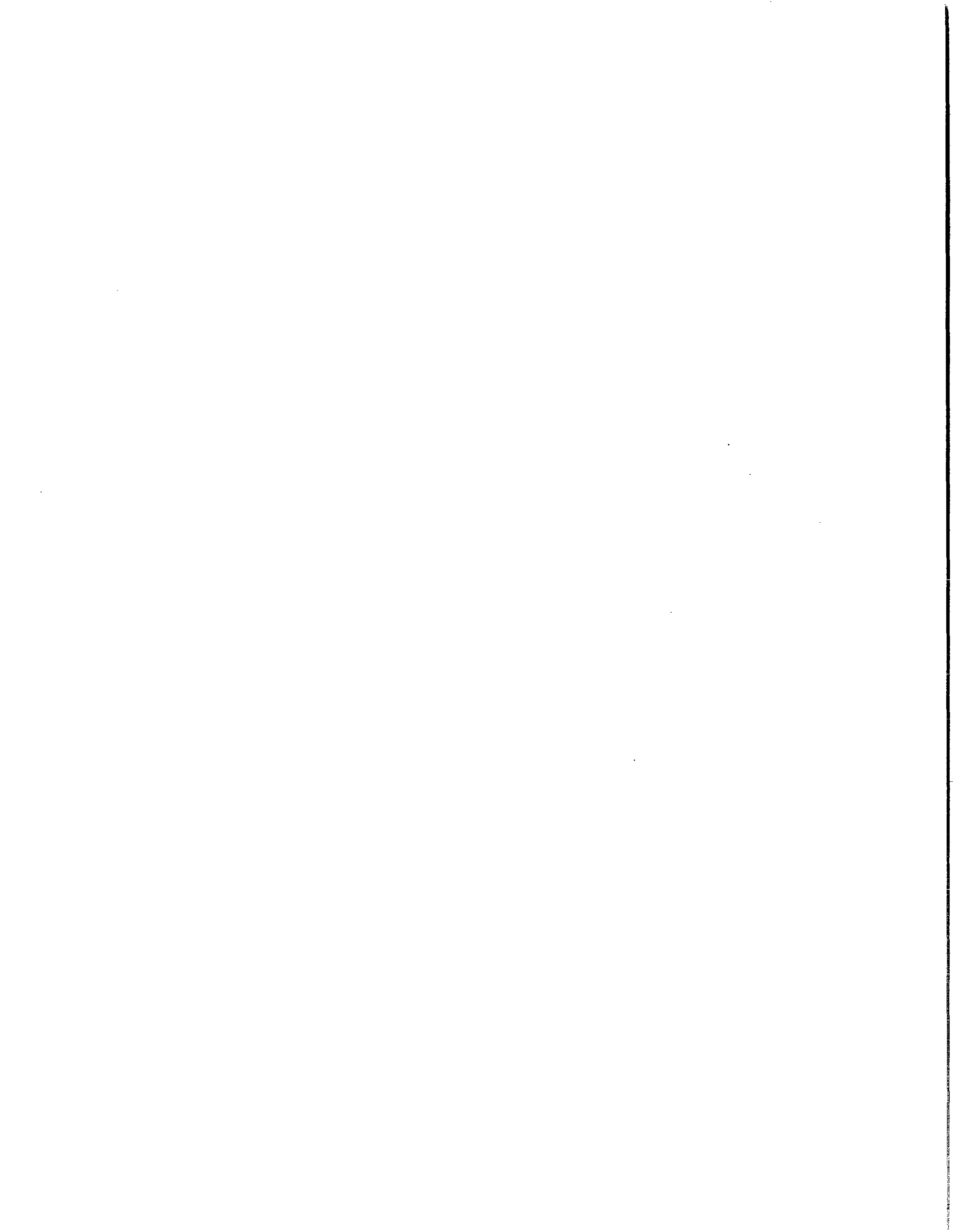

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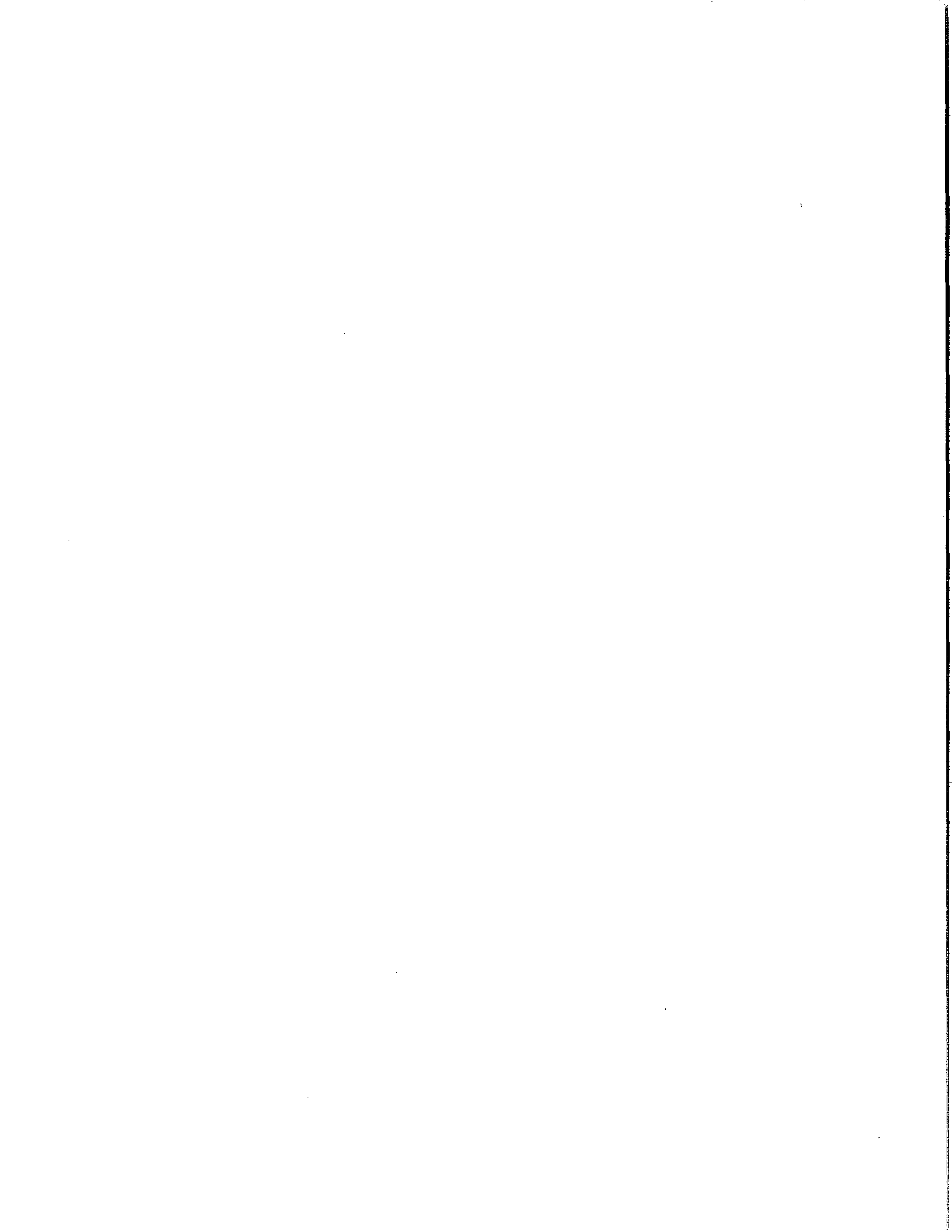

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