Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

David Ross Brower

Reflections on the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and Earth Island Institute

Interviews conducted by
Ann Lage
in 1999

Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral History is a method of collecting historical information through tape-recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The tape recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The corrected manuscript is bound with photographs and illustrative materials and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and in other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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David Brower in Friends of the Earth office, San Francisco, early 1980s.

(Courtesy of Earth Island Institute)

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[End of Interview]

Interview History—David Ross Brower

This oral history with environmentalist David Brower was recorded in 1999 as the Bancroft Library embarked on a project to organize and catalogue the extensive David Brower papers.[1] It supplements an earlier biographical oral history conducted as part of the Sierra Club Oral History Project in 1980. By the time of this second oral history, Brower had written his autobiography, in two volumes,[2] and an autobiographical tract, *Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run.*[3] And as a frequent public speaker on environmental matters, he had honed his thoughts on his most pressing concerns and favorite topics.

My challenge as oral history interviewer, then, was to get new information and new insights on David Brower's life and work, as he reflected on his career at age eighty-six. I chose to organize our conversations by focusing on his relationships with the two environmental organizations that he founded, Friends of the Earth and Earth Island Institute, and on his return to Sierra Club leadership in the 1980s and 1990s. It was, however, a challenge to keep him to our scheduled topics, as we both acknowledge in the recorded sessions. Brower was often very present-oriented, focused on his current concerns and projects. At the same time, discussions of events over the past thirty years would remind him of friendships from the more distant past, sometimes difficult relationships and conflicts, and more recent reconciliations. Our long association as fellow members of the Sierra Club History Committee perhaps encouraged these reflections. While he lamented aspects of the Sierra Club's direction over the past twenty years, his deep attachment to the club of his youth and his friendships from those years, as well as to his vision of the club's potential, was always evident. (He resigned from the club board of directors in May 2000, saying the club was fiddling while the Earth went up in flames.)

Our six interview sessions took place in Brower's home in the Berkeley hills from March 2 to June 15, 1999. We ended the sixth interview fully intending to complete one more session. We planned, scheduled, and then rescheduled a final session, but were never able to meet again before his death on November 5, 2000, at age eighty-eight. I regret that I was not able to record his thoughts on the planned topics: more on Earth Island Institute and on his recent travels and projects. Mostly, I regret the opportunity to encourage him in a final session to reflect more deeply on Dave Brower, the complex man: so completely not an Organization Man, but one who was a founder and/or major figure in so many significant organizations; Dave Brower, with such a tempestuous and at the same time such an enduring relationship with the Sierra Club; and Dave Brower, so outspoken, but persuaded by his wife Anne, he says, not to publish a third volume of his autobiography: "The Way It Really Was." Although my hope that he would tell it as it really was is not fulfilled in this oral history, it does contain plenty of insights that shed light on this crucial figure in the environmental movement, as well as plenty of wisdom in his impassioned pleas on behalf of the Earth.

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1 The online finding aid to the David Brower papers, more than 125 cartons in size, can be found at http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/hb8g5011x4/.
2 *For Earth's Sake: The Life and Times of David Brower* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1990) and *Work in Progress* (Peregrine Smith Books, 1991).
3 *Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run: A Call to Those Who Would Save the Earth*, with Steve Chapple (Harper Collins West, 1995).

The transcripts from the interviews were never reviewed by David Brower. They were audit-edited by Judith Dunning and the interviewer. In the final stages, Tom Turner, a long-time Brower associate, now writing his biography, cast his knowledgeable eye on the entire transcript and corrected a number of errors. This oral history and others in the Regional Oral History Office's collection of interviews can be found online at http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/collections/subjectarea/index.html. Many of the people discussed by Brower have completed oral histories in ROHO's ongoing oral history project on the Sierra Club or as part of our many projects in the area of Natural Resources, Land Use, and the Environment. In addition to the Brower papers, the Bancroft Library holds the records of the Sierra Club and an extensive collection of Sierra Club members' papers. It is also the repository for the records of Earth Island Institute and Friends of the Earth, as well as the papers of many other environmental activists and organizations. Audiotapes of the two Brower oral histories are available for listening in the Bancroft Library.

The Regional Oral History Office was established in 1954. ROHO conducts, teaches, analyzes, and archives oral and video history documents in a broad variety of subject areas critical to the history of California and the United States. The office is under the direction of Richard Cándida Smith and the administrative direction of Elaine Tennant, director of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Ann Lage
Interviewer

Berkeley, California
February, 2012

Interview #1: March 2, 1999
[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

Lage: Let’s talk a minute about what we're going to talk about. Do you like the idea of ordering this by your major organizations?

Brower: That's all right. Whatever you do.

Lage: You have to have some way to organize things.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And that seems like it wasn't organized that way in your autobiography, so we can sort of get between the spaces there.

Brower: I guess I was always doing everything at once anyways.

Lage: That's right. I mean, I had noticed in the eighties, you were kind of in the center of three organizations at one time, so that's kind of exciting. Let me put the date on the tape. Today is March 2, 1999. We're embarking on an oral history with David Brower and I'm trying to be sure my sound levels are okay.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Shall we plunge right in?

Brower: All right.

Lage: We're trying to pick up from the last oral history, but keeping in mind that a lot of things have been discussed in your autobiography. I want to get between those spaces—try to get new information. I particularly like the description I saw in a photograph here in your room, complimenting you for "visionary history."

Brower: Oh.

Lage: And that's what I hope we get some of.

Brower: Well, that's over my head, but—[laughter]

Lage: Do you have a way you want to begin, or should I start us off?

Brower: You start it up because that will give it some focus. If I start it up I'll go on endlessly.

Lage: Okay. Well, in looking at the earlier oral history, with Susan Schrepfer and you [http://www.archive.org/details/environmentalact00browrich], one of the

things that wasn't discussed in any detail was the League of Conservation Voters—the idea for that, which you trace back to 1957 in the Sierra Club.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And I wonder how that idea came to you. Were there models for the League of Conservation Voters?

Brower: The name of the League of Conservation Voters was just a direct steal from the League of Women Voters. I thought we could just substitute conservation instead of the sex. And I thought that was going to be necessary because starting in the—well, as soon as I became executive director of the Sierra Club we began to get into trouble about legislative activity. And I tried to figure out *how* we were going to take care of that because up until a Supreme Court decision I guess in 1955—Harriss vs. the U.S.—the environmental movement was not worried about lobbying; they just lobbied when they wanted to. Then this decision came down, and the environmental movement got very timid all at once and they didn't want to lose their tax deductible status; it was too important. And by my term, then, they sought "cringe benefits." I wanted to get over that and find out ways we could be active legislatively and politically because that's where the important decisions were going to be made about the earth.

Lage: Right, and no one was really doing that for the environment.

Brower: Nobody was doing that for the environment, but when I suggested it back in 1953 in a meeting with the Sierra Club Council, somewhere near Monterey, it didn't go, it didn't fly. People thought it was a good idea, but just it never took off. So when I was fired from the Sierra Club staff, my first comment on what I was going to do next was to start a new organization that was going to include legislative and political activity. And I wanted to start the League of Conservation Voters, so I named it as such in my interview with the *New York Times* at that time. And it was picked up.

Lage: And so that was all it was, was an idea, at that point? That was '69?

Brower: Yes, but that was in May of '69, May 3.

Lage: Right.

Brower: And on July, I guess it was the 11th, Friends of the Earth [FOE] was started in New York City in the office of David Sive. And at that point we included John Muir Institute—you're familiar with that—

Lage: I'm familiar with that.

Brower: And the League of Conservation Voters, as part of Friends of the Earth. And so we set it up. So that was part of the original corporation.

Lage: And was the idea to be active in elections, or just to be a publicist for environmental records of candidates?

Brower: We wanted both: to be active in elections—League of Conservation Voters—but we also wanted to be legislatively active, too.

Lage: I mean, the League of Women Voters doesn't take sides.

Brower: No, theoretically they don't. But we did want to get the environmental issues covered. And at that time, the Internal Revenue Service had said that if there were any substantial activity, legislatively, there would be no tax deductible status. So we were trying to find a way around that.

Lage: Were you trying to have FOE be tax deductible?

Brower: No. I wanted it not to be tax deductible.

Lage: Yes, that's what I thought.

Brower: We felt that would go right along with the League of Conservation Voters. One would be legislative and the other could be political. And at the time that I was starting it, I got word from George Alderson, who was helping us in New York in the Washington office, that somebody named Marion Edey—he hadn't named her yet—that he had a friend from Reed College who had $35,000 she would like to put into this effort. And we were glad to have $35,000. [laughs]

Lage: That was a lot more then that it is now.

Brower: Yes, but Friends of the Earth started—incidentally, that was a direct steal from Friends of the Bancroft [Library], because Anne Brower came up with the idea of that. One of the first ideas we had was we would call the new organization Muir and Friends, and Anne didn't think that was very good. She came up with the idea of Friends of the Earth.

Lage: That's a wonderful name. I hadn't heard Muir and Friends before. So tell me how the League evolved and what was Marion Edey's role?

Brower: Well, my role was to have the idea. At least I thought I had. I hadn't heard anybody else come up with it. Marion's idea was to do something with it.

Lage: And what was her background, besides Reed College?

Brower: Well, the background is her mother, Dr. Helen Edey, was great on population, and her father was with Time-Life Books—Maitland Edey—and that's, I guess, where the money came from, but I don't know. Anyhow, there was money. She wanted to make sure that we did something, that we came up with a system, that we tried to have enough success in [helping] the people we wanted to get elected that we would be listened to. And we started right out with a 75 percent success ratio.

Lage: So you started right out endorsing candidates?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And did you have people who worked for their election, or was it more publicity related?

Brower: It was just publicity. The League of Conservation Voters started very soon after that to score people who were in office to see how well they'd done on the environment.

Lage: And you had a 75 percent success rate right from the beginning.

Brower: Yes, on those that we chose to support, 75 percent of them won, and I think that's been pretty close to the record ever since. But Marion Edey had the principles and she came up with the systems. And we finally found that we needed to have a separate legal entity [separate from Friends of the Earth], because the tax status would effect the two organizations differently.

Lage: I see.

Brower: So she went to work on that. She got the staff, she did the work. So we had this little difference. She said she thinks I think I founded it, and I do [laughter], which isn't contradictory: the founding is one thing and then the making it work is still another.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: The original idea was that we'd have people whose names were known in other organizations on our steering committee so that showed we knew what we were talking about. We had people from the main environmental organizations on that steering committee so that they knew the environment was being well cared for in our thinking, and that was important to begin with. The other thing was that Marion came up with the idea that we will not require somebody that we wanted to support to commit political suicide in order to be supported by us [laughs], that it will be that lenient, but [we would] still be as tough as we can be.

Lage: You mean you would take into account their local political circumstances?

Brower: Yes. We didn't want them to try to do something that just would not sell at all in their district. So I think that was a fairly sound idea, and that was her idea. And I think that that continued for a long time.

Lage: And how good was your representation from other mainstream environmental groups?

Brower: It was very good. I forget now what it was, but the principal groups were in it. And the principal environmental groups I knew fairly well from just the short time before when the Natural Resources Council of America had been an important part of my own activity.

Lage: Yes. How soon did the League split off from Friends of the Earth to become a separate organization?

Brower: It split off through a complicated situation where Marion Edey became quite fond of Joe Browder—and I think married him—and Joe Browder did not want Friends of the Earth to get in the way and announced that Friends of the Earth had closed. He closed the Washington office of Friends of the Earth, took a lot of the people who were in Friends of the Earth over to whatever he called his outfit, the Environmental Policy Center.

Lage: Environmental Policy Center. So, this does get complicated.

Brower: And that is complicated. But he neglected to get George Alderson, so George Alderson continued the Friends of the Earth activity in Washington out of his home address, which happened to have a one thousand number in it, so it sounded very official. [laughter]

Lage: Yes. Now who was Joe Browder?

Brower: Joe Browder—

Lage: He'd been around a while, hadn't he?

Brower: He'd been around a while, and we didn't get along terribly well.

Lage: He had been a part of Friends of the Earth?

Brower: No, he had *not* been. But he had said somewhere along the line that a friend of his who had put $10,000 into the effort, that we'd put him somewhere in Friends of the Earth and have him do something. But the person that he'd claimed had done that had denied having done it. He was assistant secretary of the interior, but—

Lage: Did Browder come out of another organization? His name is so familiar.

Brower: Well, he'd been working, I guess, with Audubon. He'd been working particularly in Florida.

Lage: I see.

Brower: And he'd had something to do with the [Florida] Barge Canal. He had some good activities, and then later he began to be less environmental. He was in favor of something that lost him favor in the environmental movement.

He was, for example, very strongly for Jimmy Carter at the time that I was supporting Mo [Morris] Udall for president. And I'd been at the meeting at his office building, at the Rayburn Building, when Udall made the announcement—and I was there before he showed up and there after he'd left. Then I went to a subsequent meeting at Black Lake in Michigan where there was an effort to get the labor movement involved in politics; and at that meeting Browder had said that Mo Udall had reported at this meeting in Washington that it would be better for a Republican to be president than Jimmy Carter. I said, "Well, Joe, I was at that meeting and he said no such thing." [laughs] I was there at the beginning, throughout it, and at the end, and he never said anything like that. And at that point we seemed to have lost touch.

Lage: Well, did Joe Browder become active in League of Conservation Voters?

Brower: Yes, he became active in that and a good many people who had been in Friends of the Earth deserted to the Environmental Policy Center. That included Gary Soucie, it included Brent Blackwelder—who is now the president of Friends of the Earth—but Friends of the Earth had essentially disappeared. And then when Brent Blackwelder came back into it, he said, "Well, what goes around comes around," and he's been very good as president of Friends of the Earth.

Lage: Was there an ideological issue that caused the Washington office to sort of desert ship, or was it internal politics?

Brower: I think it was internal politics: that Joe wanted to head something up, and he didn't want me to. That was part of that story.

And then somewhere along the line there was a slight difference—I'd been a supporter of League of Conservation Voters ever since, was on the steering committee initially, but then was dropped from that later—heavens, I can't remember what dates those were—but my concern was that the League of Conservation Voters was not involved in some of the efforts I thought it should be. They had not been able to make a decision on nuclear power or war. They didn't think that was environmental.

Lage: So they didn't rate people [candidates] on those issues.

Brower: They didn't rate people on that. And this is one of the things that I still think, we need an organization that has a broader scope, but I wanted to take the best advice we can get from the League of Conservation Voters, and make use of this. So to leap way ahead, later on I wanted to see an Earth Island Voters set up. I got just a beginning start on that, but nothing's happened yet.

Lage: And that would, in your vision, have a broader scope?

Brower: It would have a broader scope.

Lage: Now where did Carl Pope come into the picture with League of Conservation Voters? Was that later?

Brower: I'm trying to remember that. But I remembered that one of the first meetings I came to in Washington to talk population, Carl was there and he was coaching me from the cab on the way to wherever I was supposed to go next. [laughter]

Lage: And he was working for League of Conservation Voters?

Brower: I think that was what he was doing then.

Lage: I never was sure what his role was, whether it was just in California, or if he was national.

Brower: And he was later to apply for executive director of Friends of the Earth, but this was much, much later.

Lage: While you were still involved with it?

Brower: Yes, and then he became executive director of the Sierra Club.

Lage: More circles.

Brower: Yes, right.

Lage: Okay, so did the League of Conservation Voters—when you were still a part of the structure—take stands on the presidential as well as the congressional races?

Brower: Yes, they did.

Lage: Did they take a stand on that Carter election?

Brower: Again, I wish I remembered these things better, but that was only one of the things I was doing. When I did the earlier history I was a lot younger, and I have found out what Ansel [Adams] said, "When you get to be this age, what happened in the past is just all one glorious mishmash."

Lage: Well, I feel that way sometimes about just yesterday. It is hard to recall it all. Well, the parts you don't remember we will just skip over. I think what's most vivid in your memory is what we're most interested in. Okay, we probably have a picture of League of Conservation Voters and how it evolved. It's too bad that there's a controversy over who's the founder.

Brower: Yes, but I think Marion was willing to consider that I might be a co-founder. And one of the people who has the evidence of how it got started, says that she's just wrong. It was Stu Ingis. He was a student at Hamilton College, I guess it was, in New York. And he was an intern for Friends of the Earth for a summer and found at that point they knew nothing about their history, so decided he would write it. He undertook to put a history together on Friends of the Earth and in the course of that he came out here to talk with me and with some of the people who had been in Friends of the Earth here. Since then he's gone to law school and collected that and he's been all over the place.

Lage: And did he publish a history?

Brower: He's published a little history.

Lage: I hope we have that in the library.

Brower: I think you probably don't, but you should.

Lage: Okay, I will look for that.

Brower: He gets in touch with me every now and then. When he came out here, one of the things I did was put him to work immediately with no pay.

Lage: [laughs] You're good at that, Dave.

Brower: But we were trying to see what he could do about—this is to leap way ahead—

Lage: That's okay, we're going to be leaping around.

Brower: In 1995, we wanted a restoration fair at the Presidio and we worked pretty hard on that and I spent quite a bit of money on it. I took Stu over there, and they got him, since he could run a camcorder, to photograph our effort. So we did that [laughs] and we've kept in touch not quite often enough but pretty well ever since. And so he calls up and he doesn't have to announce who he is, I recognize his voice right away.

Lage: I would think that it's worth exploring a little bit how successful you are in getting young people involved and working. To me, that would be one of the keys to your success.

Brower: They're cheaper.

Lage: [laughs] So you both evaluate somebody's potential contribution and also draw them in—can you talk about that at all?

Brower: Well, I guess my best example is I just started out with David Phillips when I was busy with Friends of the Earth. An old friend of mine, Rick Bradley, professor of physics and a dean at the Colorado State University—called up to say he'd just been in touch with a student, been working with a student who was very prominent and I should do something about it. It was David Phillips. And I did nothing about it. And David Phillips reported to Rick Bradley that I hadn't done anything [laughs], so they plotted together and found out what my schedule was, and David came up to Montana when I was making a talk up there and I met with him. It was a very good conversation, and I finally said, "Well, come on down to Friends of the Earth in San Francisco, look at what we're doing, look at what we're not doing that you think we ought to do that you could do, and then let's go into, well, when could you, and how much would it cost, and do you know anybody with money?"

Lage: [laughs] The key ingredient!

Brower: So he became our wildlife expert at Friends of the Earth.

Lage: Now, when you asked him, "Do you know anybody with money?" we laugh, but is this part of it—do you ask?

Brower: Well, that's a standard question. We're always looking for funds, even as the Bancroft Library is.

Lage: But did David Phillips need to kind of fund his own job?

Brower: Well, it turned out that he did know somebody with money, his mother. But before I quite knew that, I said, "Well, all right, if this is what you can do, let's start you out on being the wildlife director," and he was. And shortly after that he was over at a conference in Washington and London about the International Wildlife Center and was good at that. And then in my departure as president of Friends of the Earth, I became chairman. The president was Edwin Matthews, and somehow he didn't get along with David Phillips and was all for firing him, but I wouldn't let that happen. That's one of the disagreements that Edwin and I had initially.

Lage: Oh, I see. I want to talk about that more, since we're talking about FOE, but let's finish up a little bit with this.

Brower: But so the main point was that here's a young man who was good, who had a large concern and was able to take the initiative and say what he wanted to do

and what we weren't doing, and that just seemed to me that that was exactly what was needed.

Lage: So you look for people who have their own ideas.

Brower: Yes. That was terribly important. I needed help at all times, and more help than I'll ever get. I need constant surveillance, as I put it.

Lage: [laughs] Of yourself, or of the earth?

Brower: No, of myself, so I'm not too scattered. I have just argued that being scattered is my method of weight control.

Lage: [laughs] Well, not a bad way to be. Now, did you have a wildlife program when you put David Phillips in?

Brower: No.

Lage: So that's why he could be the director?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: So you sort of opened a new area of concern.

Brower: Yes, this is something that we weren't doing that he thought could be done. The principal wildlife outfits were the American National Wildlife Federation and the World Wildlife Fund, but they were subject to compromise. That is, the hook and bullet people were in the Wildlife Federation and the World Wildlife Fund was pretty political and would not do things such as make a move to protect Tibet or that sort of thing, so we thought we could be different from the rest of them. They were not willing to fight to save whales and we were.

Lage: So, whales—and didn't David Phillips get into condors? Is he the one who led in the direction of saving the condors?

Brower: Yes, that was his book [*The Condor Question: Captive or Forever Free,* edited by David Phillips and Hugh Nash (San Francisco, 1981)].

Lage: So whales and condors.

Brower: Whales and condors and then marine mammals. And then he was the one who got Willy [the captive whale] from Mexico City to Iceland. And it wasn't his mother's money that did that, but it took nine million dollars to do it, and he found it.

Lage: Okay, maybe we'll save that story until we get to Earth Island [Institute]. That's a good illustration, though, of what I was hoping you would—

Brower: And so that's that. The people who helped me subsequently, for the most part, were—I wanted them to have something they wanted to do. I wanted all the help I could get, but I wanted it to be interesting enough that they were doing something they wanted to do, as well as something that I wanted them to do. I thought that was important.

Brower: This is something, I guess, I picked up in my Sierra Club work when I was leading Sierra Club outings way back starting in 1939. I thought it was important to give a lot of authority to the young people who were helping run the commissary. And when I went into the army I thought it was important to make sure that the enlisted men were properly honored and respected. I'd started as an enlisted man and then I went to officer's candidate school, and I became an officer and learned that you're not supposed to fraternize with enlisted men, but I ignored that.

Lage: Did that habit of mind or personality come out of experiences that you had had where you hadn't been given—

Brower: Well, there was a little bit of the experience in the Sierra Club that had been extremely useful in the army. I became immediately not a regular army person. I was teaching people how to climb rocks and some of the best rock climbers were enlisted men. They had not gone to officer's school. Some of the people who went to officer's school didn't know anything about frostbite or what it had to do with elevation or anything else, so it was important to use people who had the skill. I started doing that right at the beginning and never let go.

Lage: But in your own experience as a young person—prior experience—had you been fostered in this way by anybody, or held back?

Brower: I guess I was fostered in that way primarily by Dick Leonard, and by Ansel [Adams], and then by some older people like Art Blake. These are the older people—some of them not that much older. Ansel was only ten years older, but Art Blake was much more than that—about twenty-five years older. But they gave me the reassurance that you could think about some of these things yourself and take a hand in it, so I just got that habit.

Lage: Seems to me it's one of your significant qualities, I would think, and very successfully carried out.

Brower: Always worked, yes.

Lage: Yes. Now, let's talk a little more about Friends of the Earth, picking up about 1980 when your earlier oral history ends. You noted that by 1979 FOE had been cleared of its debt and then you resigned as president.

Brower: Well, it had not been cleared of its debt.

Lage: It hadn't been?

Brower: No, it has not yet been cleared of its debt.

Lage: Well, let's see, where did I get that? '78, I don't know where I got this note—in one of your autobiographies?—but [I noted] that it was in fairly good shape when you resigned as president. Why did you choose that time to resign?

Brower: Well, one of the things that happened to me was that we had already started the international effort: we were in London, Sweden, and France, and then we were going to the Frankfurt Book Fair. I'd been pretty aggressive at selling Friends of the Earth at the Frankfurt Book Fair. We ended up not with just one little stall, we ended up with names of people from the various countries that were involved and we got quite a bit of attention.

Lage: For the publications?

Brower: Yes, that this was an organization that was trying to save the earth, and we had books, and we had books that were coming out of various countries. And in 1978, I got wind that I was being rather bypassed. They felt that I had served my time.

Lage: People at FOE?

Brower: People—just as I was going [to Europe]—they were thinking of other leadership.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

Brower: I picked this up just a little bit—

Lage: You say they included Edwin Matthews. I'm just repeating a little bit because sometimes we lose some [in changing the tape].

Brower: Yes, Edwin Matthews was then head of Friends of the Earth in the UK [United Kingdom].[4] Nothing like that happened in Sweden, but I was getting

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4 Matthews helped start FOE in England, France, and Sweden, but never was head of FOE UK—ed.

that feeling in Paris, so I began thinking, well, it was time for me to cease being president. I announced that I no longer wanted to be president, and I'd go on being chairman for a while—something like that, which had not been invented yet.

Lage: [laughs] Chairman was a new position?

Brower: And my choice [for president] was Edwin Matthews.

Lage: Now why did you pick Edwin Matthews? Tell me a little bit about his background.

Brower: Well, Edwin Matthews, I ran into him in the Sierra Club when we had a lawsuit to keep Huntington Hartford from building a bar and restaurant in Central Park. The young lawyer who was working with us on that was Edwin Matthews. We had some meetings with him, and I was quite impressed. Among other things, he had Tiffany's and other people helping to save Central Park. It was a nice mix.

Lage: So he was from New York?

Brower: He was from Sierra Club, and he was from New York. He was with the law firm, Coudert Brothers. And then shortly after I lost my job as executive director of the Sierra Club—I keep saying I didn't leave the Sierra Club, I didn't leave Friends of the Earth, I don't leave Earth Island: I don't leave organizations, I just get bypassed. [laughter] But at any event, when he heard that we were getting Friends of the Earth started, that we were going to publish some books in Europe, actually, in Lausanne. He'd ride the train from Paris and came up to meet me in Lausanne.

And he was key to getting Friends of the Earth International underway. He knew the law of it. He was key to getting other publishers of other countries interested in the books we were doing. He was a busy lawyer, now, with Coudert Freres in Paris—one of the partners—which to him was a little bit difficult because among the things that they were in support of was nuclear power in France and Électricité de France. And a big law corporation sometimes has people who are not that good on the earth.

Lage: And was that disturbing to him?

Brower: He just kept fairly well compartmentalized and could handle both. Well, when it came around to the time when I thought it was time for me to be president no longer, he was my choice to be the president, and he accepted.

Lage: And the president, is that basically executive director?

Brower: No.

Lage: No, okay. What was the role of the president?

Brower: He heads the board.

Lage: I see.

Brower: And directs the board of directors. The executive director is the employee.

Lage: Okay, just like with Sierra Club.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Was the president a paid position then?

Brower: The president of Friends of the Earth had been a paid position. It was a rather modest pay. It was something like $20,000.

The way things worked out [for me], I picked up a great deal of my own expenses while I was president, and subsequent to that, also when I was president of Earth Island. And now that I'm chairman, I pick up a lot of my own expenses to the extent this is possible, because for the most part I was doing pretty well talking around the world and getting paid, oh, maybe as much as $50,000 or $60,000 a year. That gave me some leeway. And Anne had a little money from her family tree, and in the course of time, I was able to pick up something like $700,000 for Friends of the Earth, which they owed me for but never paid, and couldn't, so I'm not hurting now because I'm the only person who gets a pension.

Lage: From Friends of the Earth?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Oh, well, that's nice.

Brower: So I don't feel guilty about that, because I'm only getting back what I didn't get paid. [laughter]

Lage: So Edwin Matthews, in taking over the presidency, did he leave his job with the law firm?

Brower: No. He kept his job. And he was very well paid at Coudert. He returned to Coudert in New York and then they wanted to open a Coudert office in San Francisco and they moved him out here to be head of it. And that was a perplexing enough task that he had very little time to spend helping Friends of the Earth and couldn't get to Friends of the Earth during office hours; he had to wait until Coudert's office hours were over. Although we'd worked out

some agreements about what I would do and what he would do, it wasn't working out. And I was suffering from what I labeled as founder's syndrome.

Lage: What are the symptoms of founder's syndrome?

Brower: You just don't let go. Why, if you had an idea about what it ought to be, people should agree with you.

Lage: Do you really see this as a problem?

Brower: It was a problem, and it probably continued to be something like that, although I hadn't really given up. The fact that I founded the Sierra Club Foundation, the League of Conservation Voters, Friends of the Earth, and Earth Island—I just haven't learned how to let go. I've let go a lot, but not totally.

Lage: Right.You had your commitment to these things.

Brower: Yes, and when you're 86.7, you've got to let go of something. [laughter]

Lage: So was part of the problem with Matthews, do you think, the founder's syndrome?

Brower: No, it was my founder's syndrome which was part of his problem. He was trying to figure out how to deal with it. He'd want things done and then subsequent to him wanting things done, I would somehow end up in the way. And I was right, of course, but—[laughs]

Lage: I wonder if you're being overly modest as you're talking to me, Dave?

Brower: I don't think I'll ever have that problem. [laughter]

Lage: Well, okay. Now, who was executive director during all this time?

Brower: Well, that varied. But Gary Soucie was executive director, and when he wasn't, I'm trying to figure out—

Lage: Because you say he went on to the Environmental Policy Center?

Brower: Yes, and one of the organizations we haven't listed at all is the John Muir Institute for Environmental Studies.

Lage: I know. I didn't list it. I thought maybe it had been talked about enough in the last oral history, but I'm happy to revisit it. Did it continue up into the eighties?

Brower: It continued and it has not surfaced physically to my knowledge since, but it was active in trying to get Glen Canyon refought. And the head of it, the guy who dreamed it up, Max Linn, was the president when I was the executive director. Then we had a split—one of the things he wanted to do was—oh, well, he said, "I can be ruthless," he said of himself. And I've never thought that I could be ruthless—I didn't like that. And we'd get into various things and finally I left that position.

Lage: And that was in the seventies, was it not?

Brower: It was in the seventies. And then one of the people who had been there said, "Well, I think it will help our funding if Brower isn't here anymore." Because one of our funding sources was Robert O. Anderson [of Atlantic Richfield Company, ARCO].

Lage: Ah ha. I thought Robert O. Anderson was one of your admirers.

Brower: Well, in a sense, yes, but he is still, I guess, basically a very rich oil man. [laughs]

Lage: He did help fund your first oral history, I remember.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: His foundation.

Brower: And a lot of other oral histories, too. And he did some good things. I guess ARCO has been one of the best of the oil companies. He initially funded us to a tune of $80,000 in Friends of the Earth.

Lage: This question of funding comes up a lot and I think it's something that doesn't always get discussed enough, because it does affect the organization in basic ways.

Brower: It does, and as I point out, when Friends of the Earth decided to sue to stop the Alaska pipeline, which Arco was involved in, his sense of humor was stressed out.

Lage: [laughs] Oh, yes.

Brower: Suddenly he was unable to fund us further. And not willing to.

Lage: So let's continue with the story of what happened with FOE.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: You don't call it FOE. Do just other people call it FOE?

Brower: Well, they worried about FOE as they didn't like the semantics, but it was just play it for a game—friends of the earth, or foe of the earth's enemies.

Lage: Right. I think it kind of has a nice ring to it. How did this business play out? When you left as president, Edwin Matthews came in. He only stayed for a year?

Brower: Yes, then Rafe Pomerance, I think, came on next. And Edwin Matthews was not too enthusiastic about our publishing in the United States because we were not making money, we were losing it. And Rafe just killed it.

Lage: Oh, he did.

Brower: And that was hard for me to handle.

Lage: That was maybe one of your closest ties, publication.

Brower: Yes. Right, I thought that was one of the most important things that we could do. I had the number from the Sierra Club days—I'd got one reading where 40 percent of our new members came in because of the books and the rest was outings and trips and the conservation effort. But the books played a terribly important part; got a lot of notice. I had not yet given up on the books: I got to work on that with Friends of the Earth, and Earth Island I want to get into books, and I'd like Friends of the Earth to remember that it was very good stuff. And I'd like the Sierra Club to get back into the business. It's only partly there. And Carl Pope doesn't believe in it.

Lage: In Pomerance's view, was it financial or was it a sense of what the organization should be?

Brower: Well, it was financial. We were losing money, but we were not counting some of the gains. And my basic philosophy in budgeting and running an organization and thinking of what you want to do is what does it cost if you do it; but more important, what does it cost the earth if you don't? And there are very few people who want to think that way. But I want to think that way, I haven't given up on that yet. And we're trying to get corporations to think that way, environmental organizations to think that way, and foundations to think that way.

Lage: You see the big ledger sheet in the sky.

Brower: Yes. And that was just—the latest thing I've got on my brain now is they're coming out with an attitude about forests: they're just about where the industry is.

Lage: The Greens?

Brower: Yes, they want to make sure that they get good wood products. And my concept, to go way ahead now, is that I'd say that the marketplace is one of our biggest failures. It doesn't want to measure the cost to the earth. And the forest products are measured in pulp and two-by-fours, they care nothing about what happens to the carbon dioxide balance, the oxygen balance, the preservation of soil, the water, the habitat, the beauty. They're all off the scale. And that's ridiculous.

Lage: Have you discussed this with resource economists? I think there've been some efforts to build in those factors.

Brower: There've been some efforts and Hazel Henderson is one of the people working on that and of course jumping way ahead, Paul Hawken had been very good in that. And right now one of the things I'm working on is the book by Paul, Amory Lovins, and Hunter Lovins—*Natural Capitalism*.

Lage: *Natural Capitalism*.

Brower: And this ties in pretty carefully with the book that came out of Island Press, by Gretchen Daily at Stanford with contributors from all around the world. The title of it is *Nature's Services*. And this is hitting at this very point: what are we getting from nature? And the preliminary numbers that come out of this book are that we're getting $33 trillion a year free in nature's goods and services.

This enables us to put out a $20 trillion gross national product globally. But we have no obligation yet—we don't feel an obligation to pay anything back to nature. And you can't keep taking money out of the bank. It's a nice party until you run out. And we're still enjoying that party and so is Wall Street, so is Mr. Greenspan. They're not getting the word at all. They're not getting that what they're doing for this wonderful economy that they've got, what it's doing to the earth, what it's done to the land, air, water, sea, other forms of life. In the energy budget itself, everything that can make the world work, they choose to ignore.

Lage: Very short term.

Brower: And you can get away with that for a while but then that's leaping way ahead to what I'm up to now.

Lage: I know, you're a now person, but let's just pull back so we can finish this less pleasant discussion probably. How did the rest of the board of Friends of the Earth stand? We're talking now about the early eighties. It seemed like it was certainly a time of troubles in Friends of the Earth.

Brower: Well, the troubles began in part because I wasn't letting go of certain things. I felt that I was still on the board, that I had the fiduciary responsibility of a

board member, and that I was not going to relinquish that to the employees, to the executive director.

Lage: This is a reversal from your Sierra Club days [where Brower was a staff member, opposing the board of directors].

Brower: Well, what can I say there? Martin Litton, quotes me somewhere as having said when he was worried about what was happening to the Sierra Club—"Well, I've got the executive directorship and I'm in charge." I don't remember saying that. [laughs] I would never say that, at all, but I wouldn't be totally objective.

Lage: But anyways, as a board member at FOE, you saw that the staff was taking it in a direction that you didn't want it to go.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: The staff and the president?

Brower: Yes, and then I had this whatever you want to call it, this swinging of the pendulum, what I always feel about staff and board. I remember that, and I keep telling that, that when we started Friends of the Earth in the United Kingdom, that in the first year, the *Times* of London had listed us as the most important environmental organization in the United Kingdom: well informed, aggressive, a bit embarrassing at times.

Lage: That's a compliment.

Brower: Yes, but we were the first organization in the United Kingdom that had a staff! They were all run by volunteers, and we had a staff. The people were working for practically nothing, just almost hanging onto each other's desk. There was hardly any room, hardly any money, but they were working, they were thinking.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: And my favorite example is where—well, they were very good on nuclear, but one thing they went to work on was Schweppes and what was happening to the bottles. They brought a bunch of bottles to the Schweppes' doorstep, and you know, just bottles all over the place as a demonstration. And the funny thing about it was that Schweppes gave them a grant. [laughs]

Lage: So that really worked.

Brower: Yes. And when we started the Friends of the Earth in the UK, the founding meeting was at the Traveler's Club in London. Edwin Matthews had set it up, and we brought people from all over, including Amory Lovins and his

photographer and climbing friend Phil Evans, and then people from the environmental movement in the UK, all to this meeting.

The original thing was, "Well, why don't you join us?" And we said, "Well, why don't you join us, because we mainly want to do a lot of the international, a lot of the publishing, and we want to be politically active and legislatively active."

And right from the first meeting I was saying, "Well, maybe we should go along and take charity status so we can begin to get enough money to get started," and Graham Searle from England said, "No," and we didn't. He didn't want that status.

Lage: This is in UK?

Brower: In the UK And he was a very powerful member of what we were doing at the beginning, very helpful.

Lage: So would charity status have meant no politics?

Brower: Yes, similar to here. And he wanted to be political.

Lage: So he was a man after your own heart.

Brower: Yes, he was. I had caved. I was wondering, Well, to get started, let's take the easy way to get started, but he was right.

Lage: Yes, and they went on to be quite a successful group.

Brower: Yes, they're still quite successful.

Lage: Okay.

Brower: One of the things I lack now in Friends of the Earth is the knowledge that I've always wanted to know: what was the gross membership from all sixty-three nations that are members of Friends of Earth? How many members altogether?

Lage: At this point, or at the top point?

Brower: Yes. What is it now? Sixty-three is our latest number, and it was about fifteen when we got started around the world.

Brower: I'd just like to guess and maybe I can find out someday. I'd like to. But for example, the last time I was in Amsterdam, I knew that we had more people working for Friends of the Earth in Holland than Friends of the Earth U.S. has working for it in the U.S. This is a little dinky country.

Lage: But they went their own ways?

Brower: Well, pretty much. But also, that's where we put our Friends of the Earth International headquarters—in Amsterdam.

Lage: I see in my notes that in '89 FOE was in thirty-six countries and had 200,000 members.

Brower: That was a guess at that point, yes.

Lage: And full membership was 39,000 at its peak, you said, in the U.S.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Then it flagged.

Brower: Then it flagged.

Lage: Now, was that part of the problem in the eighties that the membership was dropping off?

Brower: Yes, that was what bothered me. I wanted to spend the effort to recruit, which costs money. And that's a hard thing in any of these organizations. When I joined the Sierra Club, for example, the drop-out rate was 5 percent per year. And when I was executive director it climbed up to about 12 percent because we were no longer requiring that you pay an admission fee, and we were no longer requiring that you have two sponsors. [laughs] So they came in rather easily and went out more easily.

Lage: But 12 percent sounds pretty good by today's standards.

Brower: Oh, that's very good now because then it got up to about 30 [percent]. And if you have a half million members and you've got 30 percent that you have to find again, that's a lot of members every year, and that costs you money. When I first started Friends of the Earth, our initial return was 6 percent, which right now if you get 1 percent, you're lucky.

Lage: You mean on a direct mail?

Brower: Direct mail.

Lage: I see.

Brower: So that's where I was willing to see what we could do—and what the book program did. And later on [to see] what we can do really making the most of these computers. We hadn't learned how yet. And nobody has yet, quite,

except Amazon.com. They're worth a lot of money, but they're not making any.

Lage: That's right, but if you can make members instead of money, that would be nice. So do you want to talk about what you seem to have not talked about in your autobiography in any depth, and that was all the unpleasantness around in '84 when they tried to push you off the board and the lawsuit and all that? Is that something you want to discuss?

Brower: Well, I didn't even want to talk about that fully in my first oral history.

Lage: Well, it hadn't happened in your first oral history, it hadn't happened then.

Brower: Anne didn't want me to talk about that in the autobiography and I didn't. It would be very easy: these guys are all rascals, they're bums, they didn't know what they were doing, and everything else. But that's no fun.

Lage: No, that's no fun in a reflective kind of way. And if you think it's not appropriate, that's up to you. I know there are several cartons on this subject in the Bancroft—which are not accessible right now, but once they get organized they will be.

Brower: As I get mature and mellow, I begin to think, Well, how did I manage to bug them? And I guess the most important question looking through my long history: [laughs] what bugged Ansel? Because I love to tell the story, he was the first person who wanted me to be executive secretary of the Sierra Club, and the first person that wanted me no longer to be the executive director. What happened?

He was really quite irritated with me, and he would not accept being an honorary vice president of the Sierra Club if I was. We got over that, and one of the things I pulled out for the record at Bancroft is a film made of Ansel, Ed Wayburn, and me, at Ansel's house down in Carmel, by Greg Bedayn. I've never seen it, and I want to get that.

Lage: Is it in the Bancroft?

Brower: No! You never heard about it, I don't think. I've never seen it, but I want to talk to Greg—and the Browers and the Bedayns are very close. Of course the Bedayns are both gone, but there's three boys and a girl in both families and they were just about at the same time. [laughs] We were just extremely close, and we almost consider them part of our family. We have a very warm relationship, and very warm relationship with Greg, who looks more like his father than any of the other children.

Lage: And Greg filmed you and Ed Wayburn, did you say, and Ansel?

Brower: Yes, and Ansel.

Lage: And did you talk about these things?

Brower: Yes. What we talked about I don't remember now, but I certainly want to see that, and that ought to be somewhere on the record.

Lage: Well, why don't you get Greg—

Brower: Well, I'll see what I can do about that.

Lage: Yes, I think that would be wonderful. That would be very historic and important.

Brower: And somehow the Bedayns have never ended up without money. Probably because he was Armenian. [laughs] He knew how to handle it.

The Armenian ski team—just before he died of cancer, he went on this trip up in Canada with his sons, what he called the Armenian Ski Team.

Lage: I never knew Raffi Bedayn, but I've read about him.

Brower: Yes, well, he was a very close friend—we climbed Ship Rock—and active in the Sierra Club and the American Alpine Club, and well, anyhow—

Lage: Anyway, that was another—well, the Friends of the Earth—

Brower: But why did I bug Ansel? And I finally saw the light. I had some friends that do what I did. They are never happy about what anybody does on anything, they're always grousing, they're always complaining, "Well, why is it so—" [laughter] Piss and moans. [laughs] And Ansel, I think, was extremely patient, but I think he finally got a bit tired of having to be my chaplain.

Lage: You mean you would unload on Ansel?

Brower: I would unload on Ansel.

Lage: I see, about your problems with the board.

Brower: With the Sierra Club.

Lage: Well, that's an interesting take on it.

Brower: Yes, it took me a long time to finally see that. And I see that—

Lage: Maybe he knew too much.

Brower: Well, I don't think so. He just got tired of constant grousing. Nobody else does anything right, and if along with that, there's the assumption that I do everything right, it gets tiresome.

Lage: Now, Dave, I think you're being hard on yourself. Well, do you feel that was a factor in the Friends of the Earth? Were you trying to work with the board to bring them around to your point of view?

Brower: The main thing I wanted them to do was to stop losing members and to recruit for membership. That 39,000 is good, but I wanted a bigger organization. Since it was not tax deductible, I wanted it to be big enough that it could have some political weight. But it was just numbers, it wasn't weight, and it was growing smaller. And you can't grow bigger if you don't spend money to keep up. And they didn't; they went down.

Lage: They cut back instead of—

Brower: Yes, so I put out this full page ad in the *Not Man Apart*, asking for help.

Lage: Which you paid for, in your own organization's publication?

Brower: Yes. And then before it got sent on, Rafe Pomerance heard about it and had it trashed.

Lage: Oh!

Brower: So it never got to the members.

Lage: It was an ad on behalf—

Brower: A full-page ad on behalf of the staff, [saying] that we really needed support from the members, yes.

Lage: Not to cut the staff.

Brower: Yes, and so we didn't cut. And not budgets and differences of opinion.

Lage: So was this a case where you had some of the staff on your side and some of the board?

Brower: Yes, I had almost all the staff, but I didn't have Rafe. Rafe was in Washington, and I had not enough members of the board. We had enough members to make some changes, though, and one of those changes was going to be to drop Marion Edey from the board because she was on the other side. We were going to have this meeting where we had enough votes to make the change, and Herb Gunther, who was then on our board, was blowing a fuse because the directors realized they didn't have a quorum. They didn't have enough to

win the vote, so they would deny us a quorum, so we couldn't get a quorum and do anything. So they went so they wouldn't come in the building.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

Lage: You thought you had the votes?

Brower: Yes, and we did.

Lage: And then they denied you a quorum.

Brower: So I didn't have a quorum; we couldn't get our vote. And so things got steadily rougher from that point. It got to the place where they wanted me to relinquish my rights as a director, to Rafe's wish. And I wouldn't do it. I was advised not to do it by my attorney, who is now on the board of Earth Island—Peter Winkler—whereupon they fired me from the board.

Lage: Hm. You mean, they wanted you to resign and when you wouldn't—

Brower: They wanted me to give up. That is, I'm not to get in Rafe's way, from what he wanted to do on publishing and then recruiting.

Lage: I see.

Brower: And then he was also anxious to drop a lot of staff and everything else, so they fired me from the board. But we then went to court, saying that they fired me by illegal means—and so the court said this firing had no force or effect. So I finally left the board, and I resigned from it.

Lage: But a few years later, wasn't it? Didn't you stay with the board?

Brower: I stayed a little while longer, but it just got very difficult.

Lage: And by that time you'd gotten Earth Island going.

Brower: By that time they'd shut down the office in San Francisco. And that, to me, was a great mistake because we had an awful lot of our bright people here.

Lage: So that meant loss of staff, experienced staff.

Brower: That's why we got Earth Island going, so that we'd have a life boat for the people who couldn't get jobs elsewhere when they got sacked by Friends of the Earth.

Lage: Were there tensions between the East Coast and the West Coast aside from just—

Brower: Yes. There were tensions.

Lage: Different ways of looking at things?

Brower: There were. That is, I guess they wondered, "What's an organization that should have a Washington office as its base doing in San Francisco?" And being a native Californian I knew that San Francisco is the best part of the environmental state of California, and a lot of things happen in this vicinity and I wasn't ready to see them stopped.

Lage: Yes, to be inside the Beltway.

Brower: Yes, right. When you look at what happened way back—just to skip ahead to the most recent Sierra Club board meeting—we had somebody come in from London and he was giving us the description of the Sierra Club *brand*. He had slides and everything else of the Sierra Club brand and what the Sierra Club needed to do. And I said if Hans Huth's book had been published and had been called "Yosemite, The Story of a Brand," I don't think we would have sold it. [laughter] He was selling the story of an idea, and this is what we should be talking about. This is not a brand. This is an idea, and the environmental movement is an idea, but this was—I was a little unhappy at that, and I talked to him about it.

Lage: Well, was he actually devising a line of merchandise?

Brower: Yes. It was just the whole idea—marketing a brand—and those sound to me a bit repulsive. That is, my prejudices run in a different direction.

Lage: Yes, well, that's a nice way of putting it. How did the board react?

Brower: Well, they're buying it.

Lage: They're buying it. Is Phil Berry on the board now?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Does he buy it?

Brower: Yes. I fussed about it.

Lage: I thought the brand idea was repugnant to Phil.

Brower: I think Phil and I maybe got a little bit closer this time than we've been for a while. [laughs]

Lage: But I thought that Phil had been, when you weren't on the board, that he was kind of the voice of caution about letting the club name be used in commercial ways.

Brower: He's spent an awful lot of his own effort—his law business has done pro bono for the Sierra Club in an enormous amount. But his mother wanted him to go into medicine and his father wanted him to go into law [laughter], so we got a different person.

Lage: What about Edwin Matthews—he was a lawyer—do you think that shaped his—

Brower: Yes, it did. We finally had a meeting—to leap way ahead, we had a meeting at Pace University and he came down to hear it along with David Sive and some other people and in that meeting we had a reconciliation, and that's the first we've had since way back.

Lage: Was that more recently?

Brower: Yes, just last year.

Lage: I see. Oh, that's nice.

Brower: At least I think it was last year.

Lage: Was David Sive still on the Friends of the Earth board when all this happened?

Brower: He was on there when it started. It started in his office, and I don't know that he's still on or not. He was also on the Sierra Club board for a while, and he was dropped from the Sierra Club board faster than anybody else. [laughs]

Lage: But did he take part in this—what shall we call it?—transitional time in the Friends of the Earth?

Brower: No. No.

Lage: He wasn't involved.

Brower: He wasn't involved in that.

Lage: And Stewart Ogilvy had died. [not until 1986]

Brower: He died. [pause] So anyhow, I managed to scatter everything, haven't I?

Lage: Well, that's reality. Everything is connected to everything else, right? We know that. I wanted to ask you about—you've talked a lot about Amory

Lovins, but how did he fit into this particular breakup? I guess I saw a letter in your papers—the ones you recently gave—if you can imagine trying to look quickly at two hundred cartons, you'll see I didn't look very carefully. [laughter]

Brower: Good thing.

Lage: It seemed that he was kind of turned out of FOE?

Brower: Yes, he was. He was pretty badly abused by Pomerance. He'd made an awful lot of effort with very little money to do things. He was a Friends of the Earth U.S. employee in Britain and they just couldn't quite understand it. They didn't get started the way I did. That is, I knew that he could write extremely well, and we got the book on "Eryri, the Mountains of Wales" [Amory Lovins, *Eryri, the Mountains of Longing* (Friends of the Earth, 1972)]. And because that succeeded in getting the national parks in Britain protected from Rio Tinto-Zinc, he felt that Friends of the Earth was a pretty effective tool and decided to work for us rather than to finish his doctorate on whatever it was. He was in a program, but he went to work for us instead.

Lage: And then he got—didn't he later get involved in energy? Wasn't he very much involved in energy?

Brower: He was involved in energy right away.

Lage: Was that his academic background?

Brower: That happened amid the nuclear struggle and the fossil fuel struggle because he was trying to stop an open pit mine in Snowdonia. He was worried about what Rio Tinto-Zinc was up to, and he got way up—

Lage: I'm not getting that name.

Brower: R-T-Z—Rio Tinto-Zinc. It's the biggest mining concern on Earth, at least it was. Maybe somebody's bought them.

Lage: So from there he got into alternative energy sources?

Brower: Yes, and then he became famous for his soft energy paths. The way you solve the energy problem is to stop wasting it—which is not widely known yet.

Lage: No, but it's certainly got people talking in an important way.

Brower: Yes, but you don't live in [inaudible], places like this.

Lage: Yes, right. Do you think there are any lessons to be learned for environmental organizations from the dissension within FOE?

Brower: Well, a lot of the tension came, I guess, from—it was triggered by economics. That is, we've got to have enough money to do what we want to do—and here's the way you get it, and here's the way you don't. So you get a major shift in the environmental movement where the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Earth Island, and Ralph Nader's group are all against NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] and GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade]. The other organizations collapsed under it and supported it. And it's an environmental disaster. And they collapsed under it, I think—just to oversimplify it—because their big funders wanted the transnational corporations to prevail and the big funders are—

Lage: So the funders call the tune.

Brower: They call the tune. And that's why we get into the legal bribery that we have here instead of democracy.

Lage: And it happens to the environmental organization, not just the politician, so what's the alternative? How do you get your funds?

Brower: The alternative in the Sierra Club, for example, is it never got dependent upon foundations. They were dependent upon getting [501]c4 hard money from their members: half a million members, they don't care whether it's deductible or not.

And that would be all just peaches and cream, but then there's another story on that, because then the Sierra Club had its centennial. I was on the board at the time and they were trying to figure out how to raise money, and make the most of it. They got people [fundraisers] and I'd ask the people—I was then on the board—"Have you any experience raising money for a non-deductible organization?"

"No."

I said, "Well, this is what we are, and you ought to know something about that."

But I wasn't listened to. No, all our effort was made to get deductible money and the Sierra Club Foundation is, of course, the avenue for that. And the last number I had, they raised more than $90 million and probably have gone on raising this kind of money, but that again is a strain on the Sierra Club because they say, "Well, we need money, so what can we do that still qualifies for deductible grants from the foundation?" And then by the time you start telling the chapters and groups what precautions you've got to take and whether this is deductible or this is not deductible, it gets very complicated: my joke to Carl Pope was, "When I see your instructions, I would rather commit suicide than try to adhere to these instructions. It'd be more fun."

Lage: [laughs] It is impossibly complicated.

Brower: We aren't out of that yet. So to leap way ahead, we're working right now on trying to get corporations to rethink. That's what Amory's working on, that's what Interface is working on, and I'm meeting with them. I'm part of their so-called dream team, as is Amory, as is Paul Hawkin.

Lage: Now, what is Interface?

Brower: Interface, yes, is the most progressive corporation on Earth. They want no pollution, they want to stop using fossil fuels, they want no waste.

Lage: And what do they do?

Brower: They make carpet. And they're just thinking every step of the way, "What does it cost?" If they're asking these questions, they're succeeding—not as much as some other people are, but if you add all the figures together, they're way ahead of everybody else. Everybody else is trashing the Earth, almost.

Lage: Now, if you add in the actual cost to the cost—

Brower: The cost of putting the earth back in shape.

Lage: In the eighties, did FOE get into what would seem to be political issues like anti-apartheid and the Central American—

Brower: Well, FOE was in that because we had environmental projects in Central America. That was one of our very active groups, and in our office in San Francisco you could hear a lot of Spanish spoken very fluently. When we had finally had our conference on the Fate of the Earth, down in Managua [1989], we were able to do that because we knew the language.

Lage: Who did you have in your office that was so connected?

Brower: Well, one of them was—he's done a book—Josh Karliner, with a K.

Lage: So he was a Spanish-speaker.

Brower: He's bilingual.

Lage: And was it mainly Central American environmental issues?

Brower: That's what they were concerned about. And we ought to get concerned and more. Certainly there were more concerns when we got into Rio. And we were concerned when we got aware of the interest in Chile of one of our big funders.

Lage: And what was that?

Brower: He wanted to buy something like 5000 acres or more of Chile and preserve it. He made his money in Esprit—and I'll think of his name in a minute. He started the Deep Ecology Foundation.

Lage: Was he with North Face first?

Brower: He started at North Face, yes. And his wife, Suzy is still, I guess—

Lage: Suzy Tompkins, his wife.

Brower: Yes, and he is Doug Tompkins.

Lage: Okay, so he was one of your funders.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And was it at that time that he wanted to buy five thousand acres in Chile?

Brower: Yes. You probably don't have the biographical card he sent on a picture that he'd taken, where he wrote me a note of what he wanted to do, all in hand[writing]

Lage: Now how did that go over in Chile? I mean, are there—does this get complicated?

Brower: It gets very complicated. There are a lot of Chileans who wanted to log the trees, the araucaria forest which exists only there. And it's not related to the redwoods, but some of them are maybe as old as redwoods. There's an enormous forest. I've never been there, but—

Lage: So has that been accomplished?

Brower: I think it's pretty close to being accomplished now, but it was just uphill work. He got bad press here, he got bad press in Chile, but he's just stubborn.

Lage: I mean, do the Chileans see it as a kind of imperialism?

Brower: Yes. And of course you run into that, but that's just—

Lage: So how do you feel about that, when these issues get very complicated?

Brower: Well, I think we should be feeling like imperialists. When you use the numbers that I use and see that, since World War II, the United States has used up more resources than all the rest of the world, than all previous history, that's imperialism.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: And we may like that, but nobody else does.

Lage: But then people complain that this kind of action [by Doug Tompkins] is also kind of imperialism under a different guise.

Brower: Yes, but he wanted to go, set it aside, pay for it, and then give it to Chile.

Lage: I see. He was not going to—

Brower: One of the things he wanted to do was to do it just for—not for people, not for tourists, he just wanted it for the place, for what lived there. I said, "Well, you're not going to get a constituency this way," and he didn't want to. He's purer than I am in that. There should be places where we don't think we're God's best ambassadors, because we're pretty poor.

Lage: Do you know how the details got hashed out?

Brower: I don't know quite what the latest is, but one of the people who used to help me, Jimmy Langman, is down there still working, helping when he can. But Doug Tompkins is very astute. I mean, he's not looking for a lot of help. He wants to do it his way.

Lage: Has he been a funder of your organizations over time?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: So you look for good people with money, also.

Brower: Oh, yes, you do. And I'll be looking for more money. I want to see if I can get him to match my gift to Earth Island when I took the Blue Planet Award money and gave it to Earth Island. Not that we couldn't use $500,000—but I didn't; that's not the sort of thing that would happen again, but we'll get by without it, the same as we would have gotten by if we never got it. Let's see what we can do with it, instead.

Lage: Did you put any strings on it, or—that's not a good word [laughs]—did you suggest how you wanted it used by Earth Island?

Brower: No. That is, they'll hear from me. I guess I'm part of the committee that decides what happens. And they have other people on that committee, including a couple of kids, and they're watching over it. The director is Mikhail, who directs the Brower Fund, so he started worrying about all this money, and it's not much fun. He doesn't have a chance to laugh much when you talk about that. [laughter]

Lage: I don't know. I think it'd be nice to direct the Brower Fund.

Brower: Well, he's thinking real hard about it.

Lage: And then whatever projects he comes up with, he'll put in front of the committee?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Sounds like a good way to go. Okay, I think we should try to look back at FOE. Is there more that you want to say that you think has not been said? We'll save for another day more about Sierra Club and Earth Island.

Brower: Well, I guess the thing I realized and even I guess better than Anne wants me to, that reconciliation can be very rewarding. I'm feeling pretty good about having reconciled with some of the people I didn't like very well. I didn't like what they were doing.

Lage: And this is Edwin Matthews?

Brower: Well, that was one. And I was just thinking about two weeks ago, three weeks ago, *Mercury News* had a front page story about Ed Wayburn, and it was a wonderful story. And I started reading it, I grabbed the telephone, and called the number I remembered from when he was president—Evergreen 6-4241—still works! And I got Peggy. And I told her, "Well, I just started to read this and I looked out the window, and there are the Marin hills." And I said, "You people left a mark. We've got those hills that Ed worked his butt off for." He worked hard on Point Reyes, he worked hard on the redwoods, he worked hard on Golden Gate [National] Recreation Area: probably one of the most important efforts made is his. And look what we've got. Anyplace else, it would be Los Angeles size. I mean, building, building, building—just what Willie Brown wants to do with Treasure Island. [laughs]

So Peggy said, "Well, you ought to call Ed." She gave me a number to call—it was at the Sierra Club. He's the honorary president, and he has a little office, and he can hang out there at the age of ninety-three.

Lage: Ninety-three. It's just amazing. So did you call Ed?

Brower: Well, I called Ed. And in the interview [conversation?] I said I love him! But remember that—I mean, in the Alaska pipeline, he was so interested in Alaska that he wouldn't let Sierra Club sue to stop the pipeline.

And [in 1968] I spent a quarter of a million dollars to get going on the Galapagos books, but he wouldn't let me run an ad in the November *Sierra Club Bulletin* telling our members about it so we could sell it. Quarter of a million bucks, and he wouldn't let me run the ad on the North Cascade, so it

had to be run by the North Cascade Conservation Council. And various other little bits.

Lage: Do you think this was a power struggle?

Brower: I think it was.

Lage: Or do you think it was a fiduciary—

Brower: Well, he wanted to keep on top of things, and I was on top as the executive director. And I saw that he also just wanted to be president *and* executive director, and so then when I ran my page and a half ad in the *New York Times* I didn't ask him. Because this was my attempt to sell books.

Lage: This was the Earth National Park ad.

Brower: Our list of what we'd done with our book program, what the legal problems are, what we need involving New World Heritage and all that, And so that's why he suspended me. I was not exactly pleased. But.

Lage: But have you gotten over it, is this what you were saying?

Brower: Yes, I think we've gotten over it. I can understand that I can probably be pretty exasperating.

Lage: Are you with him more than against him, as you've been back on the Sierra Club board?

Brower: Well, since he's the honorary president, he doesn't show up very much.

Lage: But in the earlier time when he was a member of the board?

Brower: I'm against him, on Yosemite. He got the wrong ideas on Yosemite.

Lage: Oh, really?

Brower: I don't think you can have the right ideas on Yosemite if you're born in Georgia. [laughs]

Lage: You have to be born in California? [laughs]

Brower: Yes, you have to be born—you have to have spent eighty years going to Yosemite to get an idea of what it's about.

Lage: Where did you differ on Yosemite with him? What issues did you differ on?

Brower: Oh, he wanted the employees moved out. And I didn't want the employees moved out because I'd worked there and I knew how important it was as an

employee, year in and year out, throughout the seasons there, day in, day out, to experience the valley. That was the most important part of my salary in Yosemite. And I think a lot of people feel that way.

Then you get into the other logistics—if you move them out, then everyday when work is over, they've got to go down the road and every day they've got to come back, so there are a thousand people going down and up. How much of that do you want?

Lage: It's a lot of traffic.

Brower: That's right.

Lage: Yes. Well, what about the basic direction of the club, say, things like the ancient forests issue—is he more cautious than you?

Brower: More cautious. He wasn't ready, I think, for the zero cut. But it got through. He wasn't ready to help us on the Northern Rockies effort.

Lage: Yes, I'm going to get you to talk about all this a little more later.

Brower: The Dave Foreman idea—whatever it is that he's got going—the names are beginning to slip. They'll come back.

Lage: They'll come back when we focus on that. So you still have different points [with Wayburn], or a different style?

Brower: Oh, certainly a different style, but different styles work in different places.

Lage: Yes. Now let's see, we're ending with reconciliation. Were there other reconciliations having to do with FOE besides—you mentioned the Edwin Matthews.

Brower: Yes, I think there's a pretty good reconciliation with Rafe. It's just a start.

Lage: What is he doing now?

Brower: I don't know what he's doing now. He was in the state department working under the former senator from Colorado. I don't know what's happening to him now with our new secretary of state. My one encounter with her, she was rude.

Lage: Oh, really. To you, particularly?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: When was that?

Brower: Well, I was trying to get to talk to her about restoration and she didn't want to bother with it. I forget how she turned me off, but—

Lage: What was the setting?

Brower: In New York at the U.N.

Lage: Well, that's too bad. [Madeline] Albright?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Do you think—some people have posited that women have a different attitude towards the Earth. Has that been your experience?

Brower: To a certain extent, but not that markedly. I'd think that there'd be a good attitude toward the earth if they had more chance to see it. I'm just watching what happens on the various boards I'm working with now, with Earth Island and Sierra Club, that the women are getting better and they're speaking very well.

Lage: When you say getting better—better at expressing themselves, or at thinking?

Brower: Better at thinking. Not enough of them are better at expressing themselves yet, and I guess I get scolded about that because if you want to have input, you have to be audible. It helps. And then also, just watching the women on television and some of these people who get some of these major programs on CBS, PBS: where the men are filling time, the women make sense [laughs], and so I just come to the easy answer that it's partly that women are supposed to be able to nurture, and men don't have to. And that has got to be a major difference from scratch.

Lage: But have you observed it in the people you've worked with?

Brower: I think I have. I think it's showing up.

Lage: But not with Madeline Albright.

Brower: Not with Madeline Albright. But then, I don't know what I did to bug her.

Lage: Well, she didn't want to listen about restoration, it seems. Okay, do you think you've had enough for today?

Brower: I think probably I have, because I'm supposed to pick somebody up.

Lage: It's close to noon. I think we don't have to have a stirring summation because we're going to pick up next time and go from here.

Brower: All right.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Tape 2, Side B not recorded]

Interview #2: March 31, 1999
[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

Lage: Today is March 31, 1999. I'm back with Dave Brower for the second session of our second oral history. After we talked last time I had a chance to go back and look through a lot of issues of *Not Man Apart*, and I think we just need to go into greater depth than we did last time with Friends of the Earth and all the issues of those times. To go back to that first oral history that you did, you talked about the organization of Friends of the Earth and you described it mainly as a staff-driven organization, if I understood it correctly, and very much organized around your interests. The other thing that's interesting is that there was a paid president but also an executive director—now how did this organization evolve? Did it reflect anything of what you'd learned from the Sierra Club?

Brower: Well, I was thinking of preparing a statement in advance to your question—[laughs]

Lage: Since [I sent you some notes for this session] in advance. [laughs]

Brower: Just simply that after our roughly fifty years of experience, Ansel and I—after a parting of a few years—had a reconciliation, but somewhere along the line, when he was ten years older that I was, for a long time—[laughter]

Lage: Most of the time, in fact.

Brower: Until he left much earlier than I had—he said that trying to remember what went on in the past, it was just a mish-mash. He had no longer the ability to do that. I think I share that problem.

Lage: Yes, it is a problem.

Brower: I'm older than he was when he left by five years, so that I can probably even forget more than he had forgotten. [laughs] With that advance notice, I'll try to remember as well as I can, being amazed at how much material sticks in one's mind. I don't know where we store it. Occasionally, I put it on a shelf that I can't find, but it turns up later.

Lage: Yes, it is an amazing thing—memory and how it works.

Brower: I was trying, for example, to talk with Mikhail Davis, who's managing me these days, about the use of words. And I was going to the biblical quotation from Isaiah, "For unto them that build house to house and join field to field, 'til there be no place where they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." And I said, as an editor, I was fussy about the editing where they used “place” and “placed.” They use them in slightly different senses, but I was thinking, let's work on it, find some word that would supply the alternative to

the second placed: "be placed alone." Let's have something else. Let's go back to Shakespeare who made verbs work—all the rest of the parts of speech were just baggage. If you wanted to know something, you had to go by a verb, and no mistakes. He used verbs well, so I began to try to think of two very good uses of verbs, and then I got into one of these blanks. Well, I wanted to remember what Loren Eiseley said, if I can remember it now, where he said, "We are compounded of dust, and the light of a star." Well, that use of compounded was a very important choice. If he had just said made or some little weak word, it doesn't go anywhere, but "compounded of dust, and the light of a star," that gets your mind really working.

Or when he said, "If there's magic on this planet, it is contained in water." And he used contained—not just *in* water, or something, but contained. He made a verb work. So I said, "Well, let's work on 'placed.'" [laughs] I've been playing around with that and I'll go see if Mikhail comes up with anything, or his girlfriend.

Lage: So you're rewriting the Bible? [laughs]

Brower: Well, actually, yes. We've got an idea now, we're going to add some other books of the Bible. So we have all these earlier people, but I think there are some people who paid much more attention to the earth than anybody ever did and also had a sense of humor, which the Bible totally lacks, utterly. I looked up the concordance—lots of use of the word joy. I got that in one of my favorite Isaiah quotes: "We have multiplied the nation, but not increased the joy." But it's full of "joy," so I said, "Well, let's look up 'laugh.'" Three places in that entire book use the word laugh—and none of them is funny.

Lage: Oh, that's an interesting comment on the Bible.

Brower: Yes, there is no humor in the Bible somehow. And so what happens if we get some of our people? So I want a book according to Eiseley, a book according to Muir, according to Thoreau, according to Rachel Carson, possibly Hazel Henderson, Terry Tempest Williams. There are views here of the earth that could be very helpful.

Lage: Are they going to have humor?

Brower: Yes, because these people all wrote with wit. Some of it wasn't belly laughter, but it was good wit. I think that it's a good project for somebody to start going through these works and pick out lines. And then I'll do the foreword. [laughter]

Lage: Now, are you thinking of this—when you use the Bible as a model, is there something significant about that? A religious . . .

Brower: Now, what's significant about it is that it's my own prejudice; that is, religions weren't here until there were people, and they are fairly recent people—just a few millennia—who did any of the work on it. There's an awful lot of work orally, going on for quite a while before that for which there is no history, except for what the geologists and anthropologists can come up with, so the Bible is lacking. And my standard joke is that really what I would like to do is get Moses to go back up the mountain and bring down the other tablet, as if the—

Lage: The one that saves the earth?

Brower: Yes. The ten commandments speak only about how we deal with each other and whether we should sin or not, but there's not a word, not a whisper about the earth and what you do with—you know, what makes life possible. It's just one of the great misses, and holes, I think, in our religion. And so I'm worried about what we can do to help religions recognize that when they were put together there was nothing like the problems we have now, and we better address them and just put a companion volume in [laughs], or an extra interpretation.

Lage: Have you worked with any religious groups or leaders to influence their thinking?

Brower: I have talked with quite a few, and of course, my most valuable talk was with the Dalai Lama [1999]. I had two sessions with him and got onto the question of restoration. He had a very good view of what restoration could do, and when I asked him, "How do the Buddhists feel about all sensitive things, all living things. How do you feel about rivers and glaciers and mountains?" And he likes those, too. [laughs]

Lage: How about Christian religions? Have you had any dealings with Christian religions?

Brower: Well, of course I'm a drop-out Presbyterian myself. And I have read the entire Bible. I did that when I was eleven, and I found out how many “begats” were in it. [laughter] It got kind of dull by the time you were through with it, but there was awfully good stuff in it. I've forgotten practically all of it, but I've had an occasion to go back into the concordance to find out—what can I find out about justice? Justice, there's some good justice in there, but there is no humor.

Lage: No humor. That's a good observation.

Brower: And I don't think you can operate a culture without some humor.

Lage: Now, I'm not sure how this follows from the question about the Friends of the Earth organization.

Brower: Yes, this instance explains how screwed up I am.

Lage: The memory question.

Brower: I even have to go back to the concordance to remember what was in the Bible.

Lage: I see, okay, so I think you're trying to tell me you're not quite sure why Friends of the Earth was set up the way it was with a paid president, and an executive director.

Brower: Yes, I do. It was my idea. One of my basic problems is that I like to give authority—or let's use the horrible word “power”—away, but I don't like to have anybody take it from me or assume they had power over me.

Lage: But you do delegate a lot of power.

Brower: I do delegate, but I don't delegate authority over me to anybody.

Lage: Ah.

Brower: That's what I guess is my biggest problem.

Lage: That a nice way of describing it. It sounds very right on.

Brower: There's one exception. I did delegate authority over me to my wife. [laughs]

Lage: Yes. She did a good job.

Brower: Yes. [laughs] It was a good idea. Almost fifty-six years ago.

Lage: Yes, interesting. Okay, well, anyway, you ended up paid president and you had an executive director.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Was there a clearly defined role for those two?

Brower: I guess nothing was ever clear enough if it dealt with me and my trying to get people to understand what I had in mind. My clarity has not been my strong point. I'm working on it.

Lage: Okay. [laughs] How was the board chosen? Was that sort of handpicked by you?

Brower: It was pretty much handpicked by me, initially. Much later on some of my handpicked people revolted.

Lage: Yes, they probably didn't like to be told what to do, either.

Brower: Yes, I think that was the problem. [laughs]

Lage: You pick strong people, it seems. You had annual meetings, I notice. Can you remember what some of those annual meetings were like? And I don't even mean when they started to get troublesome, but the earlier ones.

Brower: As I remember the earlier ones, they have just a good glow around them. And I'd wished that we'd ever had meetings like that—at least in the later years—in the Sierra Club. Some of the earlier years seemed to have a great deal of good camaraderie and then that got lost in the Sierra Club even before I was on the board. It was pretty good when I was on the board from time to time and then at times it wasn't. But again, there were people with strong minds, and we needed them, but my feeling always was that they needed to agree with me.

Lage: I like your candor here.

Brower: I feel much more comfortable when people agree with me.

Lage: Yes, of course. Don't we all.

Brower: And so I go on—it took until I was in my eighties before I got this statement which clarifies my thinking now. It came from a recent president of Earth Island Institute, Carl Anthony, an African American, one of the best environmentalists I've ever seen, and a former friend of Martin Luther King. He was a very good man, and he had a little struggle with the board, and he finally ended up with this beautiful statement where he said, "I can handle disagreement, but not disrespect." If I'd learned that, oh, in my twenties, I don't know what would have happened. It would have been a very good thing to have gone through life with, and not to wait until the tail end of it to pick up. Some people are faster on the uptake.

It's a wonderful concept. Disagreement is productive. It inspires, it gets creativity going. Disrespect is just a bummer.

Lage: But the line is sometimes drawn in a different place, you know, by the different people involved. Maybe that's part of the problem.

Brower: But if they would just think about those lines. I use that in every speech I have to say now. I just bring that up and give Carl credit for it, because my own feeling—and when he resigned I refused to accept his resignation, but he went ahead and resigned anyway. I felt that if we finally have somebody of color who has taken on this—and it turned out to be a rather disagreeable job to begin with, and there were lots of squabbles going on that he cooled down!

Lage: Within the institute?

Brower: He could run meetings far better than I could and he wanted to keep them cool, and keep the subject sort of on track. But to have a man of color—and he was very aware of that—with this grasp; seemed to me, if we didn't agree, we better do some rethinking because we are a minority color on this planet.

Lage: Right.

Brower: And we better learn the beauty of the other colors.

Lage: Well, since we're talking about it, let's talk about it more. It's not on our list for today, but nevertheless, when you say, "We better look at it again," did you try to urge the people who opposed Carl Anthony's view? I understand it had to do with logging policy in the Southwest.

Brower: It did.

Lage: Did you try to persuade the people who maybe weren't so sensitive to the feelings of people of color?

Brower: I guess I was doing there what I've begun—it deals with a number of problems we had at Sierra Club and other places right now on immigration. And I point out there's this distinction: overpopulation is one of the most important problems we've got, and overmigration is an important part of it. We can deny neither and must address both. And addressing both doesn't mean we solve it yet, but it means we say, “Let’s rethink: among the many mistakes we've made, this is one.” And if you don't, if you want to really attack the people who are hostile to immigration, go after the INS [laughter]. That’s like going head to head with the IRS.

Lage: Are you saying that you think—here we're going to another issue that's further down the line—did you think that the club should address the issue of immigration?

Brower: Oh, absolutely. Carl Pope right now doesn't, but that's leaping way ahead in the story.

Lage: Yes, we'll talk about it in more detail when we get there.

Brower: Yes, that's one of the things, since I am running for president of the Sierra Club again in May. I came awfully close a year ago, and I helped get the youngest president we ever had in office. He called me his campaign manager, but he was doing a lot of it himself. But I thought we'd go from the youngest to the oldest, just for the hell of it—

Lage: Yes, that sounds like a great idea.

Brower: And I'd quiet down.

Lage: Okay, now, I'm going to take you back, I'm going to keep pulling you back here—these things may be too far in the past to address well, but let's do the best we can.

Brower: Also, I'd say that one of the things that I suppose happens, and it happens just because of the way I scramble things into the shelves in my mind, that if we go from the current [time], I can find other shelves where the current came from.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: But I'll take orders from you now.

Lage: We might do better if we just let you go.

Brower: It'd be hopeless.

Lage: I'd just like you to talk, if you can, more specifically about the people who were the board members and how your relation with them changed over time. [There is] a name I didn't know—Alan Gussow, is it?

Brower: Gussow.

Lage: Who was president of the foundation, the FOE Foundation.

Brower: I learned about Alan because of his art. He's a very good painter. And he was the one who brought our wonderful book, *A Sense of Place: The Artist and the American Land* [San Francisco: Friends of the Earth, 1974], together. So I said, "All right, that's a good start. Now let's do *The Artist* and fill in with other lands. This could be an extremely valuable book for our understanding the beauty of the culture of the planet." Alan thought that was a good idea, and then he got into other things.

We got into some disagreements. Finally before he died, he told me he was dying of cancer and he was trying to get that book back in print. And the people who were going to do it wanted grants of money to make it possible, and what the hell, we got it out in the first place—no grants of money, we just did a good book and it paid for itself. But Gussow did that.

And he was extremely good on the Hudson River and he could speak extremely well.

Lage: Was he a New Yorker?

Brower: He was a New Yorker—upstate New Yorker. His wife is awfully good on food. But also, in addition to his work in art, one of the things he did, which is pretty spectacular, was in various cities he'd paint on the ground duplicates of

what had happened in Hiroshima—the people who had just disappeared in the heat.

Lage: But just kind of the outline—

Brower: But the outline was there. This was to remind us of what we had not got over yet and still haven't gotten over. It was a very powerful move on his part, and he never had to go to jail for it, but he certainly woke some people up.

Lage: What did the foundation do within Friends of the Earth? Was it a separate entity?

Brower: What the foundation had to do was to get done what we wanted to do. We wanted Friends of the Earth to start out being non-deductible, which Sierra Club had become and which is very important to the Sierra Club. And that's the way we started out Friends of the Earth: no foundation, we had to go for the hard money.

Well, the hard money was hard to get, and so we said, “Let's try a foundation.” It'd be easier to get money, the deductible money. And then we cleared with the Internal Revenue Service what was required to make the distinction [between the foundation and FOE]. We could have enough directors on the two boards to have a similarity of goal, but we had to have enough differences to have an independence of finance.

Lage: I see.

Brower: They said as long as they did that, we could have these two together, and there could be an overlap in the boards. And there was some overlap, and we had differences on that.

Lage: Differences on how—

Brower: On that question, well, what can you spend that will qualify with the restrictions of the Internal Revenue Service.

Lage: I see, on monitoring.

Brower: Yes. And this is—just to jump ahead—I think the most important job I've got right now, is to reform the Internal Revenue Service. I'm going to ask them what legislation they would propose to make it possible for them to be responsible citizens of the planet.

Lage: Well, you'll have a lot of allies on your side on that one.

Brower: I really do. I can ask any audience around, "Is there anyone in the audience who loves the Internal Revenue Service?" There will be no hands.

Lage: I hear that this year we'll be making out our checks to the U.S. Treasury instead of to the IRS., a little public relations change. Now, I'm going to look way back to the Sierra Club lawsuit against—the controversy with the IRS and the Gary Torre's representation. We've interviewed Gary Torre. His remembrance was that you and he differed on how the Sierra Club should be described.

Brower: Well, what I remember primarily was that I did not want our deductible tax status returned to us. I'd already gone by the other route, as I think we lost our tax deductible status, about 1966. And I came up with the idea—anticipating something like this, in the 1960s—for the Sierra Club Foundation. Anne and I made the first contribution. Dick Leonard was against it and was made president.

Lage: I guess I hadn't understood it that way, or haven't refreshed my memory—I thought you wanted to fight for deductibility but only on your grounds?

Brower: No.

Lage: That the club was an active lobbyist.

Brower: I wanted them to be active as they had been from the beginning. Then it was in a later year that they came up with the fiction that they were not—they only incidentally got into legislative activity.

Lage: Yes, and Torre was trying to describe the whole range of club activity.

Brower: And that was a complete cover. It didn't fool anybody. It certainly didn't fool me. And I had no intention of the Sierra Club retreat from what John Muir founded it to do.

Lage: So you were afraid that if that passed, if that was accepted by the IRS, then you'd really be reined in?

Brower: I wanted more organizations to follow the Sierra Club record of losing its tax-deductible status and setting up a subsequent entity for deductibility. And not very many have done that yet, but it's still what ought to happen.

Lage: Okay, well that—you and Gary Torre have different recollections.

Brower: Well, we disagreed way back in the beginning.

Lage: I know you disagreed on it.

Brower: So he was fighting to get our tax status restored, and I was fighting to not. [laughter]

Lage: Okay, let’s go back to this list of FOE board members. This is going to be an incredibly jumpy interview.

Brower: Yes, all right.

Lage: That's okay, that's the nature of the beast.

Brower: That's what happens if you get contact with an old person.

Lage: No, it's your creative mind, is the way I look at it. Okay. This list is from 1984, sort of at the time you were having your difficulties with the Friends of the Earth board. Here's who they were, if I can read this: David Andrews—

Brower: Never heard of him.

Lage: From California, David Andrews. Harriet Bullitt?

Brower: Oh, sure, from Washington. Yes, I haven't seen her for a week.

Lage: Raymond Dasmann.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Was he active on the board?

Brower: I think from time to time. He was certainly was one of my principal coaches, and once he gave up on being an advocate of growth, we got along fine.

Lage: Had he been an advocate of growth originally?

Brower: Well, growth in the use of the word development, which evolved in the IUCN—International Union for the Conservation [of Nature]. The way they'd been talking about conservation wasn't understandable to people who were more concerned about developing than saving.

Lage: Like developing nations?

Brower: And so we got into a half century of development. Then we moved from developed to sustainable, and we moved from conservation and preservation to environment. And those changes of names have not been helpful.

Lage: You don't like the change to environment from—

Brower: It's lost something. I don't even like conservation the way I did, because conservation is really as was understood in the Roosevelt days—Theodore Roosevelt days—as an orderly budgeting of the use of resources. It had nothing to do with nature's system and making sure that nothing is wasted.

They were perfectly willing to waste, they just didn't want to waste too fast. And that's one of the things we're trying to get over now, and it's a big job.

Lage: So conservation as a word fell out of favor.

Brower: Well, it fell out of favor, but it was better than preservationist, because preservation—and Muir was a preservationist: wanted to save things. The Forest Service—you've heard what I've said before—wanted to consider that everything in a national forest was for sale. That was Gifford Pinchot's outlook, and for Muir, nothing in the national parks was for sale—it was for admiration and celebration.

Lage: Now is preservation a word that you would still want to endorse?

Brower: I think preservation is one of the words we're still strong on. Conservation, in the new sense—and that's a long story that could go on indefinitely. Preservation is simply that you preserve what you can't replace—species—

Lage: What's wrong with environment or environmentalist?

Brower: Well, it's become so joined, so that everybody's an environmentalist without actually carrying out the role.

Lage: I see, so the word sort of lost its—

Brower: It's all right to save the environment as long as it doesn't cost you anything.

Lage: What would you call yourself then?

Brower: The best is a preservationist. We still need some better words.

Right now one of the new systems going, came out of Sweden—the Natural Step. They've gone at it a different way, one of the requirements is first, that we don't take from the earth things that we can't handle once we've taken them from the earth, and we don't put back in the earth the things the earth can't handle, and we preserve what we can't replace, and we take a shot at equity. Considering that, possibly Bill Gates and the rest of us [might] end up in an equitable situation.

Lage: Okay, now back to these people on the FOE board back in 1984.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Well, Harriet Bullitt—you say you do see her on a regular basis?

Brower: Well, I just did. I was up at a conference in Wenatchee [Washington] at a place that she built. She's one of the [Bullitts] of the Bullitt Foundation, who

spend their money, if possible, on the Pacific Northwest. We've borrowed a little from her; she helped finance one of our documentaries.

Lage: Did she help finance Friends of the Earth?

Brower: Yes, she was on the board. And she was also on the publications committee and was very helpful.

Lage: Would you consider her an ally?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Mark Dubois.

Brower: Yes, very good, but he didn't want to make anybody unhappy—you don't make a child cry and you don't embarrass anyone, and if you got into a major confrontation with somebody, he just didn't like that.

Lage: What was his background?

Brower: Six feet eight.

Lage: Am I wrong to connect him to the river?

Brower: Oh yes, he was the river man, and very good at it.

Lage: A river runner?

Brower: A river runner. And he was very much interested in ETC, the Environmental Traveling Companions—people who were handicapped. And he made himself famous when he hid in the impoundment area of the New Melones Reservoir and they couldn't find him. And they left him in it—they were not going to raise the level of the reservoir and drown him. I point out that there's no danger in six feet eight. [laughter] He was well known from that time on.

Lage: Yes, but as a board member, he didn't really stand up for—

Brower: There are just two types of people: those who confront, and those who don't. And he would rather not, but he's still very strong in wanting the right things saved. I got to know him very well on a two-week river trip down the Grand Canyon.

Lage: That's a good way to get to know people.

Brower: Because we were all in boats—oar-powered boats—and he was operating what I call the offal boat. We took everything away that we took into the

Grand Canyon except urine. And the offal boat is what carried the everything else.

Lage: And he operated that. When was that trip?

Brower: I guess that was '77.

Lage: It wasn't the first time you'd been down the Grand Canyon.

Brower: No, this was the second. The first two times were both oar-powered and the third time was with John McPhee. We had these great big baloney boats with motors, and it was quite a different experience.

Lage: Didn't you go on a sort of historic trip down the river recreating the Powell—

Brower: No, that was Charles Eggert, who was in New York, who made the films *Wilderness River Trail* and *This is Dinosaur* on the Dinosaur National Monument controversy, which were very good. Then he also made a film on travelling down through the Colorado from Wyoming, filming the river all the way from Wyoming to Lake Mead, and made a film of that.

He took part of that film apart to make a film to help us save the Grand Canyon from dams and he's now in a process of putting the film back together. And I'm paying for it out of the money we got from Japan.

Lage: The Blue Planet award?

Brower: The Blue Planet money. But he's eighty-one, so and he has—

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

Brower: So I put together footage that I'd taken a lot of and other people had taken some of for the North Cascades, and I'd put a rough idea of film together. And Charlie Eggert couldn’t stand it. [laughs]

Lage: Who couldn't stand it?

Brower: Charlie Eggert. He redid the film, *The Wilderness Alps of Stehekin*.

Lage: Oh, yes, I know that one.

Brower: And made it a very successful one.

Lage: I think a copy of that is in the Bancroft.

Brower: And that and my documentary by John de Graaf [*For Earth's Sake: The Life and Times of David Brower*, Bulldog films, 1989] which I went up to Wenatchee to watch—I'd seen it all before.

Lage: Okay, I'm going to keep going on this list [of Friends of the Earth directors] here. Marion Edey we talked about. Henry Esbenshade from California.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Who was he?

Brower: He was another who was supportive. Then he changed. Marion Edey changed.

Lage: Yes, we—

Brower: Alan Gussow changed.

Lage: And he was Californian, so it wasn't—

Brower: And Mark DuBois didn't vote. [laughs]

Lage: He didn't vote at all?

Brower: Not on this question.

Lage: Now when you say this question, is this the question of—

Brower: What's going to happen with Brower and Friends of the Earth?

Lage: Okay, the pretty crucial question. Cheryl Holdren from California.

Brower: Yes, her husband was here in Berkeley.

Lage: John Holdren?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And how did she stand?

Brower: I think she wavered a bit. Everybody started wavering somewhere along the line. [laughs]

Lage: Yes, emotions got pretty high, I understand. I'm not really trying to find out just where these people stood, but what they contributed. Richard Hubbard. Do you remember Richard Hubbard from California?

Brower: Forget him.

Lage: Celia Hunter, she's a familiar name from Alaska.

Brower: Yes, she was from Alaska.

Lage: Was she active?

Brower: She was active, but not very—I don't recall her being present. This is what year?

Lage: This is '84—July/August '84, the masthead from *Not Man Apart*.

Brower: Yes, was this time you said—when we were about to move to Washington?

Lage: No, it was a little before that. It was when they were about to kick you out as chairman.

Brower: And did, but the court said they didn't do it legally.

Lage: They didn't kick you off the board, yes.

Brower: Well, they couldn't do what they did because it wasn't allowed in the bylaws.

Lage: Yes, so this [list of directors is from] right about that time.

Brower: Yes, they tried to get rid of me by telephone. There was—

Lage: A telephone meeting?

Brower: Yes. And there was no provision for doing that.

Lage: Who was the moving party in all of that?

Brower: I think there were quite a few at that point, but I guess at that point Rafe was very anxious to have that happen.

Lage: And he was the paid president.

Brower: He was the paid president, and I was the—

Lage: You were chairman of the board.

Brower: I was chairman of the board—the unpaid chairman.

Lage: But you were defending against cuts then?

Brower: Yes, I was using my authority on the board—fiduciary responsibility—and they wanted that given to Rafe. And I wouldn't do it.

Lage: Oh, I see, they wanted the fiduciary responsibility to go to Rafe rather than be held by the board or the chairman of the board.

Brower: Yes. That was the advice I got from my lawyer, Peter Winkler, who's still very active in Earth Island. He's a member of our board and he's our legal advisor at all times.

Lage: Okay, let's just take a few more on this list to see who you had here. Wes Jackson from Kansas.

Brower: Yes, well, Wes liked everything I did but decided that we didn't need any ecostars. [laughter] He disapproved—I was just mentioning this to Mikhail yesterday—Mikhail is doing a piece on—

Lage: What is he doing a piece on?

Brower: The question of out to lunch. Brower is out to lunch. Wes Jackson didn't like my going out to lunch if there was staff there and alcohol. I felt that what I did at lunchtime and such situations was almost the most important thing I did. We would not have more than seven people, because if you get more than seven, you get two conversations. It's very easy to get more than one even with seven, so you've got to watch it a bit. But it was most important to have this opportunity to get a chance to eat, to relax, and to think freely, and talk freely. And I still do that, and I still believe that if it's not lunch, then I'll have to go to the extreme and close the bar at night. I haven't done that since last week—since Wenatchee.

In Wenatchee they were going to close the bar at ten, but I got there at eleven, so and then friends came, and the conversation got so good that the bartender came over and joined it. It turned out that the bartender had sent his son of thirteen, who was not succeeding in school, to Nepal to the Annapurna area, and it's changed his life. The guy says he's writing. I said I want to see what he's written. Let's see what we can do with it.

Lage: Wonderful.

Brower: So you never can tell what will happen at a bar if you stay sober.

Lage: Was Wes Jackson—did he object to drink, by chance? Was this part of it?

Brower: Yes, he objected to drink.

Lage: Just in general?

Brower: In a sense he's a Baptist minister. He sounds that way, but he's terribly good on agriculture. That is, he's one of our—

Lage: Was he a writer?

Brower: He's not, but he's one of our best people on agriculture anywhere. And The Land—as he calls it—that's The Land of Kansas—is a wonderful example of what ought to happen. I've been there I guess two or three times and I'm still in touch with him. And I'm supposed to go there soon. I hope I can.

Lage: Maybe you can take him to lunch.

Brower: Well, I don't need to take him to lunch because he got the MacArthur Award.

Lage: Oh, that's why it's a familiar name!

Brower: Yes, right. And he deserved it. So he's an ecostar.

Lage: [laughter] Yes, so you can tweak him a little.

Brower: [He has] a wonderful sense of humor, and he quotes from the Bible rather—oh, I'll get some stuff out of the Bible from him. He'll quote some awfully good things.

Lage: He does have a sense of humor?

Brower: Oh, he does. And he had to have one once when during my first appearance at The Land, he was showing the people there what he had been doing, and in a sense he said he was growing granola. He didn't want monocultures in crops, of annual crops, he wanted polycultures of perennial crops. That's his big thought and that's the way essentially the world works.

We've gone to single-crop species—monocultures—and it's one of our big mistakes and it won't work. It's worked so far, but anyhow, that's another long story. But he was telling this little group of about, oh, ten people, "No society, no sub-civilization has succeeded without the use of grain." I said, "Wes, have you checked that with the Eskimo?" So he dropped his hat, and he came up about a year later with his answer: "Well, they didn't really have a civilization."

Lage: Oh! [laughs] That's cheating. Now you've mentioned The Land [Institute]—was that an organization?

Brower: That's what he calls it, yes, and he puts out a paper and it's a very good one. *The Land*. It's a newsletter. I get it, I support it.

Lage: So you've mended fences with Wes Jackson.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Tom Jorling, from Massachusetts.

Brower: Yes, he was on it briefly, [but] we never really got to know each other.

Lage: Dan Luten. Now there's one we should talk about.

Brower: Yes, we can talk about Dan for a long, long time.

Lage: Well, let's talk about Dan. You've known him for ages.

Brower: Well, most recently he broke his hip. I think he's three or four years older than I which means he's awful close to ninety, if not.

I called him again and again a coach. He was the guy who straightened us out—including the Browers, themselves—on the population question. He was a Shell chemist, and after World War II he went over to advise MacArthur on conservation.

Lage: In Japan?

Brower: Yes, and he had some awfully good advice. I quote him quite often—you know, "A man would rather die than change his habits," and things like that.

Lage: You're quoting Dan?

Brower: Dan Luten.

Lage: Not MacArthur.

Brower: Not MacArthur, no. [laughter] I've used quotations from him quite often.

Lage: So is he an old friend from Berkeley?

Brower: Yes, he lives across the street.

Lage: Oh, right across the street.

Brower: And our story goes back to 1934 when with Hervey Voge I did my trip across the Sierra. And in the Muir Hut register, Muir Pass, when we registered there, Hervey and I put in quite a long list of where we'd been and what we'd done. Dan Luten came along later and observed—I didn't see him do it, but I learned about it later—"All this mountaineering could have been achieved on the energy containment of a pint of Texaco gasoline." [laughter]

I didn't meet him until I was building this house on Stevenson. He was across the street and we had got along pretty far. And I decided, well, we didn't have any basement, so I started digging a basement and it was getting a lot dusty

here and there, and I hadn't finished yet, but we're working on it, and so he told me I could come over to his house and take a shower.

He lives just up the street across the way. And the family relationship went on. He had three children—two boys and a girl, and the youngest, Tom, [laughs] when he was about one and a half or something, was crawling out across the street on Stevenson, and Anne brought him home—went out in the street and rescued him.

So we were just very good neighbors for a long time.

Lage: Did you introduce him to the ideas of conservation and the environment, or did he discover them on his own?

Brower: No. I didn't have anything to do with it, except to give him a chance to quip about my climbing. [laughs]

Lage: He was active in the Sierra Club, wasn't he?

Brower: He was active in Sierra Club but particularly active in Friends of the Earth.

Lage: Did he help you organize it?

Brower: No, he didn't. He may have at that point because I got Dan's help on about everything. And he was pure gold back then—not only on population but on growth. And the business of mixing up growth and progress was something that I got from Dan. He was right.

Lage: And where did Dan get it?

Brower: And the world was wrong. [laughs] I don't know, it was just his thinking.

Lage: You wouldn't expect it out of Shell Oil.

Brower: Well, because he was a scientist, I guess, he must secretly worry about what Shell was doing to the world. [laughs]

Lage: Was Alex Hildebrand also connected with Shell Oil?

Brower: No, Standard.

Lage: Standard Oil. Okay, now, we've got to talk more about Dan Luten.

Brower: All right.

Lage: So he was helpful on Friends of the Earth.

Brower: He was terribly helpful on Friends of the Earth. He liked the books that I'd done in the Sierra Club and what I was doing later. He was a neighbor for fifty-plus years—that is, I was building this house—building the basement—in 1946, so that's when we got in touch and we're still in touch.

We got into some disagreements that we can discuss later, but he was always worried about how we were going to pay for things, and that's where I guess I got into figuring out that I was more concerned with a green earth than a black bottom line.

Lage: A green earth and a black bottom line. Okay, I got it.

Brower: Yes, I thought a green earth is more important than a black bottom line, and the world doesn't agree with me yet, but they better hurry.

Lage: So is that where you and Dan Luten parted company on Friends of the Earth?

Brower: Fairly early on, financing. "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" I wanted all these things in. "How are you going to pay for it?" So I developed the general philosophy on budgeting: what does it cost if you don't do it? And we haven't learned that yet. We're paying a frightful price. And I can go on—anytime you want me to put this into the story! It's costing a prohibitive amount—like a livable planet—not to do the things we should do because they cost. They don't cost nearly as much as failing to do it will cost, and is costing.

Lage: Did Dan Luten have any role in trying to raise money for Friends of the Earth?

Brower: He did, and at one point he gave them a $25,000 gift. But that didn't compare very favorably with $700,000 I gave them.

Lage: That is quite a gift.

Brower: That was over the years. My expenses were not reimbursed, I just picked them up—Anne and I picked them up.

Lage: Yes, and that adds up. Well, was the break with Dan Luten a personal break? Was it rancorous like some of the—

Brower: It was just our finances. He didn't see how we were going to finance it, and I didn't see how we were going to finance not doing it. The big final rumpus came over the question of should Friends of the Earth accept moving from a membership that maxed at 39,000 down to numbers around 7,000.

They were doing that because they were making no effort to recruit new members. It costs money to do direct mail, or to do any of the other things that

have to be done. The Sierra Club got a lot of its membership from its outing program—we had none; from its chapters—we had essentially none; from its publications—and my one number was we got 40 percent of our membership from the books! And we started trying to do books in Friends of the Earth.

Lage: Well, you did quite a few books.

Brower: We did ten exhibit format books, and then we did about twenty Ballantine paperbacks. But Ballantine had lost his company because of his financial success. He could not find enough funding to keep up with this growth, which to my knowledge of it moved from something like $2 million a year to $17 million. In the course of that, he had a big problem getting the funding to handle inventory and the book sellers sending the money [books?] back, so he lost his company. And when he lost that, he lost the ability to do what he had intended to do with Friends of the Earth books—which is what he had done with the Sierra Club—exhibit format books.

Lage: To turn them into—

Brower: We did twenty of those in the full ten by thirteen size, and we reduced those to roughly six by nine in the Ballantine paperbacks, which sold millions. Ian Ballantine said it made him rich.

When he'd lost his company he also commented he thought the environmental movement had become vandalized. And I quipped, "Well, let's publish Ballantine books," [laughter] but he didn't go do that. He continued to succeed without his company, but he never got into the environmental movement the way he had been, nor has anyone else. And an enormous amount of our success was the genius of Ian Ballantine and how to know what book sellers' buyers wanted before they knew.

Lage: When you say part of your success, did he help you choose what books to focus on?

Brower: No, no.

Lage: Or he just made it possible.

Brower: No, he helped me choose which books he wanted to make paperbacks of.

Lage: Now when you said he thought it had been vandalized, did he mean the books were not of as good quality?

Brower: No, we had Earth Day, and one of the things he was doing was that [poster]: "The survival of the seventies depends upon you being informed". Said Ian, "That poster gives us a participle—depends upon *your* being informed," so we redid the poster. But in any event, that worked. And for a while, he just

couldn't make books fast enough, and so we got to just essentially a million copies of *In Wildness is the Preservation of the World* [selections and photographs by Eliot Porter (paper back edition: Sierra Club, Ballantine Books, 1967)], and the book by Paul Ehrlich, *Population Bomb* [a Sierra Club/Ballantine Book, 1971] sold three million.

Lage: Did Ian feel the market had dropped, the mass market?

Brower: Well, it hadn't yet. Because we went on. We did the book *On the Loose*, by Terry and Renny Russell [San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1967], and that sold a million. And the Sierra Club had told me that that's not a book for the Sierra Club.

But Ian—when I did the first paperback, I agreed to let him make paperbacks of two of our great titles, *This is the American Earth* and *In Wildness*. I was scolded by the [Sierra Club] publications committee for letting a cheap paperback come back and get in the way of the hardback, but it added to the sales of the hardback.

Lage: It did?

Brower: Yes. Anyhow, those three were the big sellers. The others sold quite nicely. But then when he lost his company and stopped coming out with these little mass market paperbacks, the smaller ones, not the 95 cent ones, it began to slow down.

Lage: Did he do any small books for Friends of the Earth?

Brower: Twenty.

Lage: Small ones?

Brower: Yes. That's in my oral history—it's in the list of things in volume one [appendix to 1980 Brower oral history]. In any event, that was one of the terribly important things, to get back to your subject of the membership of Friends of the Earth.

Rafe Pomerance was distressed, and so was Alan, so was Edwin Matthews, about publishing. When I moved out of the presidency, I put in my stipulations of what I wanted the president to do. This was not followed, and this became one of our problems.

Lage: Now what was the stipulation?

Brower: One of the big things was books, publications.

Lage: That the president would continue the books.

Brower: Yes, and Rafe wanted to quit publishing. And they did—everything except the newsletter. So then they dropped opportunity for profit. And the books we still had an inventory of were sold at a remainder cost, so we had nothing to go out to the public with to gain the kind of attention and membership the Sierra Club had been getting from its publications.

And the whole question of going after members with direct mail is a frightfully expensive operation.

Lage: Yes, it is.

Brower: The post office makes money, but very few other people do. In essence, it costs the first year's dues or substantially more to get a new member. And then if you don't have a good renewal rate, it doesn't take you too long to lose [money]. And we didn't have a good renewal rate in the Sierra Club or Friends of the Earth. The Sierra Club continued to use direct mail. Friends of the Earth ceased, and the membership plummeted.

Lage: Did Friends of the Earth have an advisor on the direct mail program, or did they do it on their own? A consultant?

Brower: We had a consultant, who wasn't very good.

Lage: [laughter] Not good enough.

Brower: No.

Lage: So did you want to continue the direct mail?

Brower: Yes, because I wanted—

Lage: Because you thought it would pay off.

Brower: I thought it was because you had to do that. I just claimed that the Sierra Club grew as long as what it was doing caught public attention—its actions, its deeds. Its confrontationality was one of the things that got public attention and kept it.

Lage: Especially during those Reagan years.

Brower: That, plus the outings—because people did like to go on trips.

Lage: Had you hoped that Friends of the Earth would have outings?

Brower: We had something like that, but I was not anxious to get in direct competition with the Sierra Club. What I wanted to compete with the Sierra Club is on the

ideas. If they thought my ideas were bad, I wanted to continue with them and show them!

Lage: Right. [laughter] How did you see Friends of the Earth in relation to the Sierra Club?

Brower: I wanted a complimentarity above all. That's one of the reasons I avoided outings and avoided chapters. We had something like that; we had a few branches, but nothing like—Friends of the Earth still doesn't have anything like chapters. Audubon does, and Friends of the Earth could use it, but they have something else—to jump way ahead, they have an international program that is incredible.

Lage: Yes, that's what seems the distinguishing thing.

Brower: Seventy-three organizations around the world are in Friends of the Earth.

Lage: It's quite amazing. Let’s go back and finish with Dan Luten. After the unhappiness with Friends of the Earth, did you have a reconciliation with Dan Luten, or was that ever necessary?

Brower: Yes, well, it took a little reconciling. I think my children would grant that when I would make any overture toward him that he was delighted by it. And I was delighted to make it. That's one place where Anne and I disagree—that I don't like to hang onto enmities any longer than necessary.

Lage: Right.

Brower: With a few exceptions.

Lage: Did Dan Luten go on with Friends of the Earth?

Brower: Yes, but he isn't now.

Lage: No.

Brower: He was for a while.

Lage: For a number of years.

Brower: At one of the points where he was president and I was chairman, we disagreed on what should happen on incineration. He was for it and I was against it.

Lage: Incineration of—

Brower: Garbage and things.

Lage: Ah. So there is an ideological component?

Brower: Yes. Well, we had this disagreement and then we disagreed on in print, in the city election.

Lage: He was for it and you were against it.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Was that an issue that Friends of the Earth got involved in, or was that just a city—

Brower: Well, we didn't really get involved in it, but I don't know what would have happened if we had. At that point I wasn't getting the support I hoping for. Not at all.

Lage: Okay, now I'm going to go back to this list, if you don't mind. [tape break] To me this is productive. I don't know how you feel about it. Well, we talked about Edwin Matthews.

Brower: Yes, I got to know him in Sierra Club because he was the lawyer who was handling our case to protect Central Park from Huntington Hartford Bar and Restaurant. And we won the case but made bad law. And I don't know quite what Edwin meant by that, but he might have meant Huntington Hartford doesn't have any damn restaurant in the park, in Central Park.

Lage: That's an interesting thing for the Sierra Club to get into.

Brower: Yes. At that point Edwin was working for Coudert Brothers in New York and so I got to know him. I thought he was a good friend. Then when Friends of the Earth got started—I think I may have mentioned that part—I ended up trying to get a book printed in Lausanne, and he learned that I was there, now working with another co-publisher, he got on a train and came to Lausanne, and we had a good meeting and began to plot on what could be done with Friends of the Earth internationally. So then our first international meeting was in Paris, and things went on from there on the international effort and in the international publishing effort. Looking at what we would do at the Frankfurt Book Fair—how we would have not just one little counter, we had three in one place.

Lage: This is you and Edwin?

Brower: Edwin and I worked on that, and Eric Schindler from Germany, from Switzerland. He was born in Frankfurt so it was easy for him. So we would have the Friends of the Earth and the books that were coming from various parts of the world from the various Friends of the Earth groups as they developed. And I was very sorry to have lost that. But Edwin is an attorney

now for Coudert Brothers in Paris and was enormously helpful. We wouldn't have got an international program really underway except for Edwin.

So my age was telling me—and I was nearing the retirement age anyway—and I thought, well, this is a good time to get him to be president. He was my instant choice and accepted.

Lage: Now who was telling you, you said, that you should retire as president?

Brower: I was sensing that, and also finding out that people were looking for advice, but not always asking me, in some of these other countries. And I thought, well, I think I've lost it, or something. We need to keep it—whatever it is—going. And his energy and his devotion were just enormous.

Lage: So that, when he became president, did that give him a role internationally?

Brower: Oh, it did. But also what had happened when he became president was that he moved from Paris back to New York. And Coudert Brothers then opened up a San Francisco office and put him in charge. The president of the Friends of the Earth and the director of Coudert Brothers San Francisco were in Coudert's offices, and that new job for Coudert was a very tough one for Edwin and very demanding, and he couldn't get over to see what was happening at Friends of the Earth until about six o'clock or later. Things began to fall apart. And there were things that I could have done—I don't know what they are now, but I might have helped that. I was still so anxious to hang onto the criteria that we'd agreed upon: this is what I'll do, this is what you do—and that exists somewhere—I don't know whether you've got that paper or not, but—

Lage: It's probably in one of your two hundred boxes.

Brower: But that led to a meeting of the Friends of the Earth board, where one of the members of the board, who was also then head of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, was in charge of the executive meeting where he said, "Well, the partnership has soured." And Edwin was not reappointed as president.

Lage: I see.

Brower: And I didn't vote for him, and that more than soured the partnership, it built an enmity. And we didn't get over that 'til I guess a year ago.

Lage: Wow, that's a long one. But he continued on the board, just not as president.

Brower: He continued for a while and his new wife—his second wife—I think is on it now.

Lage: Hold on a minute.

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

Brower: But Patricia came out not too recently—about two years ago—as a member of the Friends of the Earth board, or as an opponent of it, not an advocate of what they were doing, because Edwin was not at that point on, and wanted to know if I'd be interested in being on the advisory board of Friends of the Earth. I thought that was a fine idea, I liked it, but nothing's happened.

Lage: That would be a nice kind of reconciliation.

Brower: It would be nice—well, in any event, I had a chance to talk at Pace University. Dick Ottinger arranged it. He was a member of Congress on our board, and he arranged it because he's at Pace University. At that meeting, among the people who showed up, were David Sive and Edwin Matthews. And for the first time since he lost his presidency, we hugged.

Lage: Oh, that's good. How about you and David Sive, did you remain friends?

Brower: I think we stayed pretty close. He's had to do some things that some of our friends are not happy about because law firms do that.

Lage: That's right.

Brower: And Edwin had that to deal with many of his Coudert Brothers—Coudert Freres. One of their chief clients was the nuclear industry in France, which we were fighting.

Lage: Yes, that must have created some difficulty.

Brower: He compartmentalized that.

Lage: You mentioned the books—the international books. Did the books put out by the various Friends of the Earth internationally follow in format what you had started?

Brower: Well, a little bit, but there have been very few things done like the original books.

Lage: You mentioned that a lot of the foreign Friends of the Earth published, also. Were they of a similar—

Brower: Yes, so we had different publishers—in France, for example, in Germany, in Sweden, in Britain—

Lage: Were they exhibit format-type, or issue-oriented?

Brower: No more exhibit formats until about three or four years ago—one. But a lot of them—I guess what's happened is that there's a lot of imitation of that kind of book, but they didn't imitate what Ian Ballantine thought we were doing that worked, that is, to get people to fall in love with the place, particularly with either the prose or specifically with the photographs. Let them know in that book what the hazards were and what they could do about it. And it was those three steps that were important, and they're now missing in the publishing industry. And I want to get it started again.

Lage: Is the part that's missing the "let's do something about it" part?

Brower: Yes, and again, it is not understanding the finances of it. We quit publishing effectively in the Sierra Club because of the expense. And the Sierra Club has a co-publishing arrangement now with Random House which has a co-publishing arrangement with Bertelsmann, and they'll let us do a little tiny bit of books that we want to do for [the] cause, but then they have to see something that will succeed or they won't do it.

And one of the examples I have right now is a book, *On the Loose*. The surviving brother wants it back in print. We sold a million copies of a book Sierra Club said wasn't a book for them. But it was and it worked.

In the later editions they changed the cover. We had a cover that gave this story not just in the title but in the photograph—here was young Renny with his guitar, looking out, to see him play and—oh, I've got to get it—just a wonderful quote about youth. And it worked. And they changed it to just one of the photographs of the book: Renny holding a World War II helmet, which had nothing to do with the book; it was just a joke that he would be wearing anything like that: he didn't believe in it! And they just destroyed the book with that cover.

Lage: It's like they didn't understand it.

Brower: And so then when I wanted them to come back with it, I've been trying—but well, it just didn't sell, or it didn't sell because they destroyed it. I said, "Let's do it right, and particularly right now when we're trying to restore Grand Canyon, because an important part of that book is in it."

Lage: And also to connect with the young.

Brower: Yes, and that's why I'm running for [Sierra Club] president, to straighten this out.

Lage: Now does someone—now here I am leading you astray, but does someone like Adam Werbach, who has a media interest and has a connection with young people, does he think that book would appeal now to young people?

Brower: I don't know. But Adam was working, staying in the office, and under the constant—just leaping ahead—influence of Carl Pope, who saw only that the publishing was lost because [phone]—I think Anne will get it, or will she? Maybe I'd better get it.

Lage: Okay, we'll pause it here. [tape break] Okay, we're back on. So you were saying Adam was under the influence—

Brower: So he was under the influence of Carl. Carl saw publishing as a loser. One of the things that he didn't really quite understand is how important the books were to our program. If the books had been entirely an expense item—that we're getting people to do what we wanted—that would have been worth it, and that was good enough, for example, for Resources for the Future. We worked out a system that I was lucky, thanks to Ian Ballantine and others, where we got people to spend money to buy our propaganda.

Lage: Yes, right. [laughs]

Brower: And it got members, it got work done, it just had an enormous effect. It got editorials, it got commented on, and it worked. And they haven't continued it. They're still doing little things, but they're just not going in the Friends of the Earth book thing. And Friends of the Earth has got some very good programs going in the Washington office.

The Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Earth Island Institute, and the Nader group are four that are working very closely together, as are some of the new groups you've barely heard of. The old ones have become pretty thoroughly bureaucratized.

Lage: The old ones—are you including the Sierra Club?

Brower: The Sierra Club a bit. Quite a bit of bureaucracy—just an incredible amount of bureaucracy—but that can come on later.

Lage: Yes, we'll get into that more. We didn't need to—

Brower: Yes, but the combination of bureaucracy and requirement of finance—because most of the organizations are dependent upon big foundation grants, and the big foundation grants come from foundations that don't want to see the boats rocked. And then we get into the whole question: we don't have a democracy now because we are operated by legal bribery.

Lage: Now, you're leaping ahead.

Brower: And that's leaping ahead, so we'll get the legal bribery later. I've very good at it [leaping ahead].

Lage: Right. [laughter] I know. Now, let's just go on to a few more FOE board members on this list, see if anybody's important for you to comment on. W. Mitchell.

Brower: Yes, he was the—

Lage: Why only W?

Brower: Well, that's just the way he does it. He's the mayor of Colorado—not really. He was the mayor of Crested Butte, and he was a man who got into an accident on a motorcycle. He got tangled up with a truck, he got badly burned, and then they got into an airplane accident after that.

Lage: Is all this before he was on the board, or after?

Brower: Yes. [before] And he goes around in a wheelchair. And he's said, "I was going to do 1,000 things, now I can only do 999." [laughter]

Lage: Wonderful.

Brower: So he was just an incredible figure, and a wonderful example of just a hell of a handicap: "If you think I'm handicapped, watch!"

Lage: Did he contribute to the board? Was he an active member?

Brower: Yes, and he's very good, and I still encounter him from time to time and he seems to get around with the wheelchair and all.

Lage: Does he have a name other than W?

Brower: No, that's all.

Lage: He just calls himself that? What do you call him, Mitch?

Brower: Mitchell. He's been down the Grand Canyon.

Lage: Good for him. Toby Moffett from Connecticut?

Brower: Don't remember him.

Lage: James Murray from Ohio.

Brower: Good.

Lage: Was he a supporter?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: David Phillips, we've talked about. He was on the board even though he was a staff—or was that part of the set up, to have some staff on?

Brower: It was part of the—I don't know, but he's on the board?

Lage: Yes, and on the executive committee. Then we have Natalie Roberts. Was she staff, also?

Brower: She was staff.

Lage: Was she staff that you worked well with?

Brower: Most of the time. She got into the debacle between Matthews and Brower, and she sided on the Matthews' side and on Rafe's side, too.

Lage: Okay, so Ann Roosevelt. Is she part of the Roosevelt family?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: How did she get on the board?

Brower: Well, she was a good conservationist. I think she wavered a bit near the end because people had been—when I was not selling very well.

Lage: Okay. Timothy Such.

Brower: Who?

Lage: Timothy Such.

Brower: Tim. No, he was on the board, he was totally supportive and we owe the fact that Mono Lake is recovering more to Tim Such than to anybody else.

Lage: So he was the moving party on the Mono Lake?

Brower: Yes, he was. He was not the one who got Morrison and Foerster to spend half a million dollars pro bono in saving it—that was Andy Baldwin who was on our staff, the lawyer—but he was a non-lawyer who had done legal reading who did the creative thinking for Morrison and Foerster.

Lage: How did you get Morrison and Foerster to give that much pro bono?

Brower: Andy Baldwin conned them into it and then came up with the results that made it work.

Lage: Do you know who the person there was who spent the most—

Brower: I've forgotten the names.

Lage: That would be interesting. We do oral histories with their firm, but I don't remember that this has come up, and that would be an important thing to talk about.

Brower: It would be and they might not like it. They finally had to make a settlement of something like $28,000 with Tim, for which they hadn't quite followed through with for him.

Lage: Oh, I see.

Brower: So, they would not be happy.

Lage: But they could talk about why they gave this much to save Mono Lake.

Brower: And one of the disagreements I had with Dan Luten was that while he was president, without my knowledge, he authorized the payment of something like $29,000 to Bob Chlopak and Jeff Knight—his severance that was not authorized by the board or anybody else. And they wrote the checks after they were no longer authorized to do so.

Lage: And this was when you were in such a crunch, financially.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And they were former executive directors?

Brower: Well, Jeff Knight was executive director and Bob Chlopak was the FOE PAC head.

Lage: What was that?

Brower: The Friends of the Earth PAC [political action committee].

Lage: PAC, okay. So he did the political work?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Now, I think that [going through the list of FOE board members] was instructive, because you brought out a lot of things.

Brower: Mostly digression. This is the backflash route of getting anything out of Brower's confused mind.

Lage: It helps your memory, I think.

Brower: Oh, it does.

Lage: It's hard to think linearly about the past.

Brower: But it's fun to think about what happens—like when I had my little stroke whenever it was, four years ago—I was very lucky. I couldn't remember the town—I couldn't remember the name of Lone Pine where I was hospitalized. And while I was there I tried to begin to piece together where am I, can I remember any name—I can remember Sierra, all right, then I got to Mono Lake. I got to Mammoth, but I couldn't get to Big Pine or Lone Pine. I finally did. I finally got Big Pine, then Lone Pine, but I had to go down through the geographical route.

Lage: So you actually tried to create a map in your mind.

Brower: Yes, and the only thing that I've lost since then—I have to think a little bit where things are placed on the shelves—is in spelling. I was a very good speller; now I have a hell of a time with it. I'll say, “well, how to spell this?” when I'm trying to write stuff up. How do you spell—when you get a piece of paper—now try this, ah, that's it. But it's recoverable—it's still there.

Lage: Well, you were lucky because—

Brower: Oh, brother.

Lage: It must have been scary. Was it frightening?

Brower: It wasn't frightening, I just didn't like it. And Ken [his son] was pleased when he found that the process I was going through—just the review, just as I'm going here—that I'm getting things back by going from now to where it came from.

Lage: That's right, or talking about people helps more maybe than trying to follow a chronology. That's hard to—

Brower: I have had an awful lot of trouble with the years.

Lage: Well, we can fill those in. Now, I'm going to see if there are some more things we have to talk about. Well, one question I put in this forewarning note to you—how would you compare the break that occurred with Friends of the Earth with the one that occurred with the Sierra Club?

Brower: Well, the Sierra Club's—as Anne pointed out, there were tears, grown men were crying, and it was at the Drake Hotel when this happened. And I wasn't crying, but I was really not quite delighted. But I was very sure it was going to have to happen. And I didn't do anything about severance, but David Pesonen came down and said, "You ought to get some," so we finally got a settlement of $25,000.

Lage: I see. Did he represent you on this?

Brower: Yes, he represented me and got it. And they spread that over maybe two years, because there wasn't any big push. So that, and then I was certainly feeling better when they named me an honorary vice president. And I didn't object to their giving me the John Muir Award. Then finally when I felt—well, somebody suggested that I try again for the board by petition.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: Then the first question I asked was to Ansel and Dick Leonard—would they sign the petition? And they did. And I remember that Ansel said, "Will you behave?" And I said no.

Lage: [laughs] He signed it anyway.

Brower: He signed it anyway.

Lage: That's nice.

Brower: Well, that was the Sierra Club, and with Friends of the Earth—

Lage: Was it a similar kind of break?

Brower: Well, of course they fired me from the board, but that was cancelled by the court, and then I was finding out that we didn't get the election. I'm pretty well convinced that we lost the election because there was skullduggery in the Washington office.

Lage: Oh, really. Now, let's talk about that—with a little background. Describe what the election was.

Brower: Well, we were electing new directors and we were trying to change those who had been hostile. And we had a side that we were advocating, and they lost. They didn't lose by much, but the ballots were managed in the Washington office, which was nothing but hostile at that point.

Lage: And they didn't have an outside agency [to manage the election]?

Brower: No, and the best people we had on the staff were in San Francisco, and they all had to find other things to do. Earth Island was going to be the lifeboat for some of them, and [some] found other things to do without that, but the best people we had—the heart of the organization was in San Francisco.

Lage: I know.

Brower: Which has to be true of any major conservation organization.

Lage: Right. [laughter] Well, did you have anything beyond just suspicion about the skullduggery in the Washington office? Any reports?

Brower: There were just enough reports and not enough to have gone after anybody.

Lage: Didn't the Sierra Club hire someone [an independent organization to count ballots]?

Brower: There was no security—except the Friends of the Earth.

Lage: Yes, but I'm wondering, they did their own counting? They didn't hire an independent group to count ballots?

Brower: No.

Lage: That does make one wonder. Okay, now, when the break within FOE occurred, even the staff of Friends of the Earth seemed split. Who were some of the people who were your allies on Friends of the Earth staff?

Brower: The San Francisco office were the allies that remained so.

Lage: The whole office?

Brower: The whole bunch.

Lage: And it was mainly the Washington office who opposed you?

Brower: We had some problem, and you'll get into that later with Wendelowsky and Jeff Knight.

Lage: Yes, talk a little bit about those executive directors. It seemed like there's quite a succession of them. Natalie Roberts was for a bit. Jeff Knight.

Brower: Well, Natalie was fine until she was pretty much co-opted by Edwin and Rafe.

Lage: While they were president.

Brower: Edwin was president and Rafe was—we thought that would be the right selection.

Lage: What was the balance? I'm still trying to figure out how the paid president and the executive director divide up their roles.

Brower: Well, in the Sierra Club, for example—

Lage: But they don't have a paid president.

Brower: I think they paid Adam. I don't know how much, but—

Lage: That's right, that's true. There have been some that have gotten a stipend.

Brower: And I don't know what kind of allowance there is for Chuck McGrady—

Lage: That's true, there have been [Sierra Club] presidents who've gotten a stipend, but it doesn't seem—Do you think it is similar to having a paid president?

Brower: Not quite similar, but it's—on Earth Island, the executive director's on the board; Sierra Club, they're not.

Lage: No, and were they for Friends of the Earth?

Brower: Yes, I think they were. But again, I'd have to piece that together.

Lage: I'm just looking to see if they were. This is very hard to read. Well, we'll look that up later, instead of interrupting here. Now, were there—okay, we have Jeff Knight, Natalie Roberts, Bob Chlopak.

Brower: Chlopak—he wasn't executive director, no.

Lage: He wasn't? For even a short time?

Brower: No.

Lage: Okay, and then Karl Wendelowski [1985]. Those are the names I've found in here. Maybe I've missed some. What was Karl's contribution?

Brower: Karl I met at the Appalachian Mountain Club and was impressed with what he had been doing with them at [Pinkham], and what he'd also done in Antarctica, but I guess he wasn't ready for the kind of organization we were, and it didn't work.

Lage: Was there any strong executive director over a period of time, or was it just sort of a revolving door?

Brower: The nearest, who I think was the administrative director, we had was Tom Turner.

Lage: Oh, was he administrative director as well as editor?

Brower: Yes, he was editor. And then I wanted to get going on the whole idea of sabbaticals that the environmental movement wanted to start. Tom thought there'd be nothing like what we could do in Friends of the Earth with people. With Friends of the Earth organization in so many countries, we could switch around and it'd be very helpful, so Tom and Trish were the first. And they were not married, but they were very fond of each other. That relationship

broke up, and Trish found somebody else in New Zealand. *Not Man Apart*'s editor became Stephanie Mills.

Lage: Oh, yes.

Brower: And then Tom came back. He wanted to be on *Not Man Apart* again, and I don't think Stephanie's forgiven me yet.

Lage: But you let him go back?

Brower: Well, he did. It was my decision. She was good, but I didn't want that to happen. It would not work. The whole idea of having sabbatical is that you go on sabbatical and if your job is gone [when you return], that doesn't work. So we tried—he came back and tried administrative director, but he didn't like doing that. And being the administrator and the program person is for two different kinds of people.

Lage: Absolutely. Yes. Where did you come up with the idea for sabbaticals? Was that your idea, or somebody from the staff originated it?

Brower: No, I came up with the idea of sabbaticals for all. I wanted that to be part of our civilization, that everybody should have a sabbatical—not just these people who are already too lucky—[laughs]—or university faculty. The whole idea of having that time out just to rearrange your thinking seems to me an extremely important thing to do. And if you've got one pass on the planet, don't just stop in one place for the entire period. I thought it was a great idea, and I thought it would also be wonderful for the ecotourism business. It was very energy-intensive if you start people running all around the world.

Lage: When they went on sabbatical, was it just a vacation, or did they go and work at another Friends of the Earth organization?

Brower: Well, I think we only had one example.

Lage: Oh, Tom Turner was the only one.

Brower: Yes, that was the one example. We had just started in 1984—I went over to New Zealand to this conservation meeting and we got Friends of the Earth New Zealand started. And I got a head start on Australia, and then it was very easy for them in New Zealand—a very nice place to go for a vacation. The equivalent in area of California with a tenth of the population.

Lage: A beautiful place, I understand.

Brower: There's a place to park.

Lage: Yes. [laughs] Now, Tom Turner went on to Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And have you kept in touch? Are you still good friends?

Brower: Oh, yes. Pretty good. And, well, if you want to find out how things are happening, Tom will give you a very good example of what's happened in the foundation when he thinks it's time to talk—

Lage: The Sierra—

Brower: The Sierra Club Foundation. He's well aware of that. And the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund then changed names to the Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund—which I opposed.

Lage: Oh, you did? Yes. At the time of your first oral history, Susan Schrepfer interviewed him, also, as a background interview. And that eventually made its way into the Bancroft.

Brower: And Stu Ingis also interviewed him. That was one of the reasons he came out here—to interview me and Tom and some of the others.

Lage: Yes, to really get the history of it. Let's follow up on getting that. Okay, now you resigned from the FOE board after your candidates did not win.

Brower: Yes, but not from the organization.

Lage: No.

Brower: That's one of the things that people always get wrong in the Sierra Club. So I left the Sierra Club? No, I left the Sierra Club staff on request. [laughs]

Lage: Yes, you stayed as a member.

Brower: I'm still a member.

Lage: And the same with the Friends of the Earth? Yes, okay. Now, were there any issues that divided Friends of the Earth ideologically, or was this all finances and books?

Brower: Finances and some of the people. We had a very strong nuclear position. It was dependent largely on Amory Lovins and Jim Harding and me.

Lage: You mean you were the moving parties on that.

Brower: Yes, and Rafe was not part of it.

Lage: Okay, so he didn't have that commitment.

Brower: Jeff Knight was part of it. He was good on that. And that's my favorite story about Jimmy Carter and me—that I gave him a letter that I signed and Jeff Knight had written—one page, two lines over—telling him why he should veto Clinch River Breeder program. And he had explained to a bunch of environmentalists why he couldn't do it—and I was there—all the reasons it wouldn't work, he couldn't do it. I gave him that letter and he did it. And it worked. Jeff had written that.

Lage: Yes. It must have been a good letter.

Brower: And now at the present we're out of touch, but that letter I'm very happy to point out that that was where it came from. So Jeff had been supportive of Rafe, but on nuclear Rafe was not strong. Rafe was politically astute, and I think that he sensed that that was a loser.

Lage: It didn't have popular support, or wouldn't get members?

Brower: Something like that. But it wouldn't get support in Congress.

Lage: Did you agree with that? Oh, I see, a loser politically.

Brower: Yes, because the first recollection I remember of Rafe is just exploding when James Watt was in the Interior Department. And Rafe is very good, and we had a pretty good rapprochement, but for a while he wouldn't even shake hands.

Lage: What about on the board on the nuclear issue—of course this [tape] is about to pop off, so let's hold.

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

Lage: I don't know that there's just one nuclear issue. Because there was nuclear war and there was nuclear power.

Brower: The key people on our nuclear position were Amory and Jim. And Rafe abused both and that didn't go well with me.

Lage: Were there discussions on the board or in staff meetings about how much time and money should be devoted to these issues of war and peace?

Brower: I think there were. I don't remember enough about that. I should. It's very important.

Lage: It's interesting because you think that that was key in [your dispute with] the Sierra Club board—the division over nuclear power?

Brower: It was a different division, because in Friends of the Earth, the international view was anti-nuclear. I had not been as strong on that as we became at our first international meeting in Paris.

Lage: Which was what year, do you remember?

Brower: Yes, about '70.

Lage: Early on.

Brower: There were three women who were at that meeting and all of them are bilingual, and they'd switch to their native language now and then without knowing what they'd done [laughs]. But there was just no doubt in their minds that this is the way not to go.

Lage: And that made you stronger.

Brower: That made it very easy in Friends of the Earth International. We never wavered from that internationally.

Lage: Now are you talking about nuclear power, or nuclear war?

Brower: It was just nuclear.

Lage: Everything. You see a merge then.

Brower: Well, I said that with nuclear, in the atom, the fist and the glove are inseparable.

Lage: That another good line.

Brower: And that was mine. I didn't steal that from anybody else.

Lage: Do you think that this difference of opinion had anything to do with people becoming unhappy with you in FOE?

Brower: Yes, I think so. That is, that difference between what I thought was our most important thing—and right now the Friends of the Earth is essentially doing nothing. The Sierra Club does nothing adequate on the nuclear question. They're just out to lunch with no drinks.

Lage: Yes, with no drinks. Were there any other divisive issues or discussions about where to balance?

Brower: That and publishing.

Lage: Publishing, yes. What about ideologically?

Brower: The one thing that Friends of the Earth and I didn't disagree on was the international thing and the need of being politically active and legislatively active. That was the main thing I wanted to make sure, that we were international, that we were politically active, and that we published.

Lage: Okay.

Brower: Because the Sierra Club was wavering on all those, and I didn't want them to.

Lage: So those are areas where you see a difference and that you succeeded in, except publishing.

One thing that looked to me as if it might be controversial, but maybe it wasn't, was an article you wrote—or was it a letter—in *Not Man Apart* after the Korean airliner was shot down. You suggested that there may have been CIA involvement.

Brower: The only fuss I got out of that was from a man who knew a great deal about Russia, whom I met somewhere along the line. I'll have to think for a while to remember his name, but he was very good. He'd written an awfully good book about conservation in Russia and pollution, and he thought it was just ridiculous to suggest that the CIA had anything to do with it, but I'm still convinced they did.

Lage: What makes you convinced that they did?

Brower: Oh, that nobody would be as stupid as those pilots had to be unless they'd been instructed to go there. Airplanes don't go that far astray.

Lage: Did that get a lot of comment?

Brower: No, I got this one hostile letter from a guy I admired very much, and we haven't been in conversation since, but every now and then you pick up the paper and there are few more clues.

Lage: Oh, really. Some day maybe it'll all come out.

Brower: I think so.

Lage: Freedom of Information Act or something. Okay, another controversy that there seemed to be was endorsing Mondale for president quite early on in the campaign in 1984. Do you remember anything about that?

Brower: I don't.

Lage: It's just something I picked up in the letters.

Brower: I wanted to get the Sierra Club to go for Nader. [laughs] But earlier than that I wanted them to go for Dukakis and at the Sierra Club meeting, whatever we called the private meeting in the East somewhere, they were commenting that this would be very difficult for the funders.

Lage: Dukakis? But he wasn't considered that great of an environmentalist, was he?

Brower: I knew him only because I'd been on a TV program on the Alaska pipeline when he was the judge pretty much, and I liked the way he handled things. I thought that he was liberal, and I was ready to support his campaign. And I was going to make a speech in favor of him in San Francisco attended by other people, including Barbara Boxer and that TV guy, the one from Cheers, Ted Danson.

But at any event they wouldn't let me say what I wanted to on liberal. I said liberal was a good thing. In fact, I went to the dictionary and pointed out that every meaning of liberal in the dictionary except one is one of the things that's related to liberty, which we ostensibly are for in this country.

Lage: Now who wouldn't let you say what you wanted to say on liberal?

Brower: The managers of Mr. Dukakis.

Lage: Oh, of Mr. Dukakis! Because they were really afraid of the word.

Brower: They were afraid of the word.

Lage: Yes, I remember that.

Brower: And Mr. Dukakis came out in favor of the word about, oh, three or four weeks later, but it was too late. Some things could have happened, I think, earlier.

Lage: It just shows the effect Reagan had on the discourse, as they say.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Okay one more question—I'm holding you so long, but I wanted to just try to finish up Friends of the Earth.

Brower: You have a lot of questions. Go ahead.

Lage: I noticed—

Brower: And I don't give a quick answer, I give a long answer.

Lage: That's good. That's what we want. I noticed the controversy over the name *Not Man Apart.*

Brower: Oh, yes.

Lage: Do you remember your reaction to that?

Brower: Oh, of course I do. I had total fits from feminists. And there was this—

Lage: Did feminists write in, or feminists within the organization?

Brower: Yes! They were fussing about it, and I said—here Ken and I agree and Anne and I agreed that when literature has certain words in it and you're trying to take those words and do something with them, you don't mess around. But here was the word, and it was just a part—and the original origin, as far as I'm concerned, of deep ecology was Robinson Jeffers: “The greatest beauty is organic wholeness," and so on. "Love that, not man apart from that." The wholeness. And that was just—"not man apart" is just terribly important. All right, so "man," of course, got too much attention. I've gone through earlier writings and where I'd say man, his, son, he, geez—.

Lage: They don't count. But in this use of it—

Brower: But in this case, Jeffers had used it as it is used in the Bible, that is, "Man does not live by bread alone," man, or woman either. But just, again, is this the abuse of women? It's totally wrong that we've done that, and I'm very much against *that*. And I'd say again and again as I watch television or watch various things come on, it's the women who are making sense. The men are all caught up in testosterone, I guess.

Lage: [laughter] Right.

Brower: And can't get there. But on that, there was no change. Then, I had a wonderful long argument back East with a guy who had knocked down a tower near a reactor once—I forget his name, but we went on from the evening into the early morning, and it was about about two-thirty in the morning where, "I'll give up,” I say. "I'll give up on *Not Man Apart*. I'm going to call it, [laughs-sighs] let's see, *Father Earth News*."

Lage: Fonder Earth?

Brower: Father. Not Mother Earth.

Lage: Father Earth! [laughs] He didn't like that!

Brower: So he went to bed. But he wanted it. He didn't like that use of name, *Not Man Apart*. And I didn't have very many *men* taking that position, so that's why we went on and on and on. It was a friendly argument all the way.

Lage: So this was an argument you had face to face with people, not just on the pages of *Not Man Apart*.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: How about on the staff? Were there women on the staff that wanted to change the name?

Brower: Yes. I don't think there were very many, but then of course Friends of the Earth finally changed it. They just call it *Friends of the Earth*.

Lage: For that reason, do you think?

Brower: Yes! And Friends of Earth is certainly a good title—I can't complain about it because that was—it comes directly from Friends of the Bancroft.

Lage: Right. [laughter] We won't complain.

Brower: From my good wife.

Lage: But *Not Man Apart*—I've always loved that name and that quote.

Brower: I think that that book has done extremely well and it should be republished. [*Not Man Apart: Lines from Robinson Jeffers*. Photos of the Big Sur coast by Ansel Adams and others (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1965)]. It's one of the deathless books. I have quite of few of those that are not going to wear out, and that's one of them. But their latest edition, they went to cheap offset.

Lage: Now who published it in cheap offset?

Brower: The Sierra Club!

Lage: The Sierra Club, itself?

Brower: You'll have a kick out of the Ansel Adams and Brower and Adams on that whole subject [in the Bedayn film?]. They got onto books and what they could do and what photographs to do and it's pretty good I think.

Lage: I hope you can get a copy of that [for the Bancroft]. I think we should stop today and start afresh next time, because I think we've covered pretty much—well, we haven't covered the wind-up question: what difference has FOE made, or did FOE make while you were with it? What would have been different without it? You don't call it FOE—I should call it Friends of the Earth.

Brower: No, no, I can go either way. Foe of earth's enemies.

Lage: Yes. What were its most important contributions?

Brower: Well, they did what the Sierra Club wasn't: they were international, they still thought publishing was a good idea, and they were right on reactors, and they were right on the importance of the politically, legislatively active as well as they could.

Lage: Do you think they pushed the Sierra Club and other more entrenched organizations?

Brower: I think so. And I want to keep doing it. And I just want to keep that little rivalry going—that is, Earth Island, Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, Nader's—essentially since they agree on all questions of trade—we were in total agreement with Nader's. We were very good on that, all of us. This is the environmental disaster of the Clinton administration.

Lage: The NAFTA?

Brower: Gore included. NAFTA and GATT. There are all kinds of examples on that.

Lage: Okay.

Brower: Coming up in the next few days, I'm going to be meeting with the steel workers. Of course, they are in agreement on this, and labor is in agreement but has not really done what they should do. They've done enough to stop it so far, and it's got to be stopped. Just up in Eugene we had a very good meeting—two closings of the bar with the steel workers [laughter], and we're going to be working together.

Lage: Well, that's good. It's not that often that the labor unions and the environmentalists come together.

Brower: But it's all business. Here I am: these are my Chinese shoes. And if there had been a fair—if there had been *equity*—that was my best pun when I was working for the University of California Press, was when we worked on the book *Wartime Shipyard*. My quip on that was: it was the din of inequity. [laughter] And I used that later and will continue to use it because we've still got it, and we've got to get over it, or we're not going to have a society.

Lage: So, you do see equity and social justice as key—

Brower: Yes, there are 300 billionaires in the world that have more money—more control over finances—than the bottom half of the world's population. And I don't think that's equitable.

Lage: Okay. I'm going to stop here, and we'll start up again next week.

Brower: All right.

Interview #3: April 6, 1999
[Begin Tape 5, Side A]

Lage: Today is April 6, 1999. We're on our third session of the second oral history with David Brower. What I thought we'd do today—we talked about Friends of the Earth last time and I wanted to go back and pick up some of the events in your life in the seventies and early eighties—some of the ones that Mikhail [Brower's assistant] listed.

Brower: So long as you remember the dates, I'll try to fill in what happened.

Lage: One of them was the USIA [United States Information Agency] trip to Japan he had mentioned, in 1976.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Is there something you'd like to say about that—how it came about?

Brower: Yes, I use that and I reminded him of that when I went over to get my prize [Blue Planet Award] this last year.

Lage: Yes, I would think that would be important.

Brower: I can't quite remember how they picked on me to go from the U.S. Information Agency, but they did. They wanted me to talk about pluralism in the United States. Pluralism was not in my vocabulary [laughter], so I just made my usual speeches.

Lage: Now they picked you to talk on pluralism?

Brower: On pluralism in the United States.

Lage: Not environmentalism in the United States.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Do you know what they had in mind?

Brower: Well, I guess they wanted me to show what a nice bit of variety we have here because we don't all belong to the same state or the same religion or speak in the same accents.

Lage: I see. Do you have any idea why the USIA chose you?

Brower: I don't, but they chose me later on so they hadn't forgotten me. Of course, to leap ahead as I do in all of these [interviews], one time they chose me to go

into various parts of Germany, and that was the day Anne and I ended up on the train, in Berlin, the day the wall fell.

Lage: Oh, my goodness!

Brower: Yes, so that was planned very well.

Lage: Yes, and that was a USIA trip?

Brower: Yes, that was USIA.

Lage: Well, so you gave your usual speeches, you said, on environmentalism, in Japan, then?

Brower: Yes, I was working primarily on my concern about growth, which is still one of my concerns. It still hasn't caught on nearly well enough, but I was using the figure then—"If you keep on growing at your present rate," and it was an 8 percent growth per year in GNP, "then by the time a child in Japan is old enough to vote, you'd need thirty times the resources you have. And when that child is old enough to retire, you'll need about 100 times or more," I forget now. "And where are you going to get them, because you're already short of resources? I just saw in a paper here in Japan, while here, the claim that the world does not have enough forests to provide Japan with its needs for forest products. So, what are you going to do when you need thirty times as much or 100 times as much?" And they were very polite.

And I had heard ahead of time that there'd be a long silence in the question period because they're waiting before there are any questions, because the audience knows who is supposed to ask the first question. And nobody else will talk until that happens. [laughs]

The answer was, "Well, they didn't intend to grow at that rate all along."

I said, "Well, why don't you stop this growth while Japan is still beautiful."

Then I'd go on to the next town. Altogether I talked in seven towns, cities.

Lage: And what kind of audiences? Who were the people who came?

Brower: I don't know quite who they were, but the USIA picked people to listen. The audience would be about forty or fifty or something like that.

Lage: But they weren’t a business group or a particular interest group, as far as you know?

Brower: I think so. I was treated kindly, and I think that happens.

Lage: Did they seem responsive to the idea of less?

Brower: No, that didn't catch on at that point. And they haven't even caught on yet. They're getting close, because one of the people I talked to in Japan when I got my prize just this last year, in 1998, was an executive from Mitsubishi Electric, who was fully aware of the importance of moving into the Natural Step. And that can come in later sessions. I'll be talking about that the whole afternoon today when I go to Earth Island to give a little talk there.

Lage: Okay, now another thing that was mentioned that we don't want to overlook was the Nobel Peace Prize nomination in '78. And then I saw you were also nominated in '98. Is this correct?

Brower: Well, '98 was the third time.

Lage: The third time! Well, tell me about '78 and then—

Brower: Well, they were all—the person responsible for all of them was Ron Dellums. [laughs] He got the habit.

Lage: How did Ron Dellums—do you know anything about how he—

Brower: Oh, well, I've known Ron Dellums for a long time but not very well at all. I knew him when he was on the Berkeley City Council and so on.

I guess he'd been quite aware of us after the two first nominations. They had him speaking at our 1982 conference on the Fate of the Earth in New York City, and he was one of the best speakers. He was one of the best informed. By that time, the *Yodeler*—thanks to Steve Rauh, who was with the San Francisco Sierra Club Bay Chapter and who edited the *Yodeler* [SF Bay Chapter newsletter]—which I was the first editor of, way back—was extremely good on these global issues including population and peace and a few other odds and ends, in addition to just the ordinary Sierra Club diet. So we had an extremely well-informed paper.

Lage: Did Steve Rauh have some role in—

Brower: He knew Ron Dellums, and he knew what Ron Dellums was doing in the [Congressional] Black Caucus. He is one of the most talented and most useful members—most concerned about saving the planet—in the Congress of the United States.

Lage: And also those issues of war and peace.

Brower: Yes, so he's just terribly good on all of that.

Lage: Well, he must have thought you were terribly good to put you up for the peace prize.

Brower: Well, he was helped to know about how good at whatever I was through Steve Rauh. When I got that first nomination, I remember that it was a surprise to me, but he'd put together a whole series of things that were persuasive to Ron Dellums so that it happened. Then they had a little celebration when I came back from lunch at Friends of the Earth on Spear Street. Everyone was saying hooray for the nomination, so that was enough credit, I didn't need the nomination, I got all that honor at home!

Lage: So that was '78. And then another time, which I won't expect you to remember.

Brower: Well, it was about two years either before or after the one you just mentioned.

Lage: Okay.

Brower: I think after.

Lage: And then the most recent one was '98, along with Paul Ehrlich.

Brower: Yes, it was a joint nomination.

Lage: And was that also Ron Dellums?

Brower: That was Ron Dellums again. There was a very nice letter about all I had done. And when we didn't get it, I made the complaint, the trouble is that Paul Ehrlich has received so many awards, and the Nobel Prize is tired of him. [laughter]

Lage: Well, I don't know about that. The competition is fairly stiff.

Brower: Yes, I think it is! [laughs] That is, Nixon, Kissinger—they made it.

Lage: Right. Kind of ironic, isn't it?

Brower: Bishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama.

Lage: When you get nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize do you do anything on your own behalf?

Brower: No. No, they rather discourage that. At least that's what I hear. They don't want you lobbying for yourself.

Lage: Right, so you either get it or you don't. Okay, the other thing that seemed to be a nice honor was the celebration of your fifty years in conservation in 1983.

Brower: That was actually my fiftieth year of being a member of the Sierra Club.

Lage: Oh, was that the fiftieth year?

Brower: Yes, and I guess as a Sierra Club member, I was concerned by conservation. I think at the beginning I think I was more concerned about rocks.

Lage: Right. [laughs]

Brower: But not wholly. Before I had become a member of the Sierra Club, and I was I guess eighteen, I was a summer guide and secretary at the Berkeley Echo Lake Camp. And one of the people I helped said I should join the Sierra Club, so I went over to the Sierra Club office to check it out and got some back issues of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*. And then I got some more, and Virginia Ferguson, who was in charge of the office at that time, knew me as a young man who came in to buy *Sierra Club Bulletins*. [laughs] I bought them because I liked not just the pictures and the climbing, but also the stories, the articles about what Muir and others were doing in those early issues.

Lage: So did you buy back issues?

Brower: Yes, I bought as far back as I could get. I couldn't get the very early issues because the earthquake got rid of most of those copies in 1906, but I finally collected them and had the full issues [reprinted] when we were doing the annual *Sierra Club Bulletin*, which, alas, has now been forgotten. I'll see if I can get it remembered again.

Lage: When you were executive director, didn't you have all those early issues reprinted?

Brower: Yes, I had the first five volumes reprinted by offset, and it's a very nice set. We didn't have a huge sale, but we had enough to make it pay. What I remembered there in binding those, was we had to have all the early ads and covers, so I left the entire issue in, and it was just quite amusing to go back and look at the ads in the early twentieth century.

Lage: Very historically important.

Brower: It was quite a set. It was pretty impressive. And of course by that point I'd read all of what they had to say and never got over being impressed with what the Sierra Club did from the very first year, when they were immediately into legislative activity.

And that, of course, was something I was refusing to forget as late as 1959 when Dick Leonard wrote for the minutes that we were not doing any substantial legislative work. That was, I guess, to make the IRS feel better, but it didn't make me feel better!

Lage: Right. Yes. Well, I hoped today—I know we had on our outline that we'd talk about your returning to the board [in 1983], but I thought if you were ready for it, as background we should talk about your first service on the Sierra Club board [1941-1953], and maybe even a little bit about the [San Francisco] Bay Chapter, because I find that in your earlier oral history it's not really covered that thoroughly—the story you just told about how you joined the club. Would you want to do some of that today?

Brower: Sure, if I can remember any of it.

Lage: Just start with the Echo Lake Camp. Tell me about what you did there and how you got—

Brower: Well, I forget the name now of the man who was a member of the Sierra Club who said I should check them out and see what they were doing. He thought in my concern for running around Desolation Valley and up the peaks and finding the ways and the wilderness trails, that I would like to know about what the Sierra Club had done for that area and the rest of the state of the Sierra. And he was right.

Lage: Was this a summer job that you had at Echo Lake?

Brower: Yes, I worked at Echo Lake Camp two months a year from 1931 to—'30, '31, and '32.

Lage: I see, and that was a Berkeley City camp even then.

Brower: Yes, it was a Berkeley City camp. It was even then. It isn't any more, but it was a very nice one. And the headquarters of where we had the camp was on just the edge of the bluff looking over to Lake Tahoe, so from our lodge you could see Lake Tahoe and then you walked a little distance into Echo Lake. There was a dirt road into it.

Lage: Did Sierra Club members have their cabins at Echo Lake then?

Brower: The cabins were there—a good many of them. I know certainly there were a good many Sierra Club members there later. Some members had one: the Farquhars had one, the Bedayns, and I don't remember who all else, but quite a few. Robert Sproul [University of California president] had one, and it was the place to be—Echo Lake. Those cabins were just a very important part of early Sierra concern.

I still use that example of what that looked like then, and what it looks like now, and it's essentially the same. There's one little bigger lodge, and I guess there's more to the store and more boats, but not many—and just one little pier. And look what has happened meanwhile over the same time to the south end of Lake Tahoe—which is the lost metropolis.

Lage: Yes, creating smog and everything else.

Brower: And polluting the lake, so the edge of the lake on the south side has nothing like the clarity I remember from 1918 and on.

Lage: So you went to Lake Tahoe during summer vacation.

Brower: Yes, my first Sierra trip ended up at the south end of Lake Tahoe. I tell the story that at that point there was a pier that the steamer came to everyday to bring the mail. There was a little combination store and post office and a camp. That was all.

Lage: And the lake a lot clearer.

Brower: And the lake totally clear. My brothers and I, at that time—our minds were really more on the minnows than the clarity.

Lage: Yes, that's right, at that time. So anyway, someone suggested that you join the Sierra Club. And at that time you had to have someone sign your application?

Brower: No, at that time I didn't [join]. I just bought the *Bulletins*. And that was 1931 that I started buying *Bulletins*, but I didn't join until '33. And I did that because on my first big backpack trip in the Sierra with George Rockwood in 1933 I encountered Hervey Voge.

He was going south with his brother but his brother had abandoned ship, so Hervey was alone, and he, George, and I met at Golden Trout Lake just over Piute Pass in the Sierra and had some nice conversations. And I talked about some of the climbing I was doing, and he was climbing, too, and he told me I should check with the Sierra Club and join up and learn how to climb safely. So that was the immediate instigation, and I went home from that trip—which took seven weeks—and very shortly after I got home I joined the Sierra Club.

Lage: And who was your sponsor?

Brower: My sponsor was Dick Leonard.

Lage: Oh! Now how did you meet Dick Leonard?

Brower: From rock climbing. See, I went up to try the rocks at Cragmont [Park, in Berkeley].

Lage: I see, at Cragmont.

Brower: And he signed me up.

Lage: Very good.

Brower: So he was my first sponsor, and he led the campaign to get me out of the Sierra Club [executive] directorship. [laughter]

Lage: Right, many years later.

Brower: Many years later. And then I think I was a bit sad about that.

We had reconciled before he died. But Dick Leonard was the one, remember, that came up with the line that when it was time for me to join up with the troops for World War II—he was sort of criticizing my faults. But one of my faults, he thought, was that I was only interested in doing things that were easy, interesting, and glamorous.

Lage: He said that pre-World War II?

Brower: Yes, so I used the EIG [easy, interesting, and glamorous] as a description of myself.

Lage: Did you feel that was a fair description?

Brower: No.

Lage: What made him say that so early on?

Brower: I guess he thought that. [laughs]

Lage: Was it in reference to work with the Sierra Club, climbing, or other work?

Brower: Well, at this point he'd helped me when I was in between jobs after I lost my job in Yosemite. There are a couple of things that he helped me get a little bit of money out of in a period in which he also helped them arrange to get me a job at $75 a month working a little bit in the club—at the office. Then it was he who got me to be part of the leadership on the first [Sierra Club] High Trip I was on. Then I did that from 1939 to 1957.

Lage: Okay, you have some dates well in hand here.

Brower: There was a time when I could remember where we went on each of the Sierra Club High Trips in that period from '39 to '57, but I'm a little fuzzy on those now.

Lage: But you could find them all in the *Bulletin*.

Brower: Yes. [laughs]

Lage: You still have your *Bulletins*, I hope.

Brower: Oh, yes, I do. Yes.

Lage: Was that the $75-a-month job?

Brower: Well, I don't remember how long or how much I was supposed to work. It was just part time, but I put in a lot of time.

Lage: In the office?

Brower: In the office. And I was helping from very early on with the *Bulletin*. It was after my first trip that I wrote a mountaineering note for the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, which Francis Farquhar ran. And the next year when I went on my ten-week trip with Hervey Voge, I wrote "Far from the Madding Mules", which he helped edit into a pretty good article around that.

Lage: Francis Farquhar did.

Brower: Yes, and then named me to the *Sierra Club Bulletin's* editorial board, and from there on the Farquhar influence on what happened with my subsequent life was fairly important.

Lage: Yes. Yes, indeed, in many ways, I'm sure. And you were editor of the Bay Chapter newsletter?

Brower: Yes, when we started the Sierra Club *Yodeler*, we called it *Sierra Club News* for the first two poorly mimeographed issues, and then Charlotte Mauk came up with the title, the *Sierra Club Yodeler*. And I was the first editor and did that, of course being also one of the chairs—I chaired the Bay Chapter briefly in 1939. Now we're about to celebrate the old timers [at a Bay Chapter event].

Lage: That's partly why I'm asking you about this, because I have to talk about the history [at that celebration]. But you know, Dave, there aren't a lot of people left who remember those days.

Brower: That's right. I can say anything I want to, and nobody can deny it.

Lage: Well, not only that, but I get calls a lot asking about people or things that happened, and there are not a lot of people left to refer them to.

Brower: Yes, that's right. Yes, when we had our services over at the Brazilian Pavilion [Tilden Park], for Marjory Farquhar, I went there, and we had about 200 people there who'd remembered Marj, either friends of her children or whatever. But there was a long list, and quite a few people who weren't there that I knew I was missing.

Lage: Right, and a lot of people who remembered her were friends of her children rather than her age—except Doris Leonard and yourself.

Brower: Yes, but even the children remembered Marj, because Marj was somebody you couldn't forget! [laughter]

Lage: Right!

Brower: She was always Marj Farquhar. She was really always Marj Bridge, but never got over that. She and Francis were married I guess a little bit late in life—not as late as Anne and me, but they hadn't been married when I first met them.

Certainly they had an enormous influence on me. It was Marj who gave me my first Sierra Club job—not job, but assignment on the committee—and that was to record all the routes on the rocks for our Berkeley climbs: Cragmont, Pinnacle, Grizzly, Indian, and Tamalpais, and so I was keeping a list of all those, and that was one of my first duties.

Lage: And were those published?

Brower: No, I've not published—but I think you probably have those notes in the Bancroft Library already.

Lage: I hope so.

Brower: If anybody ever wants to look.

Lage: Did you ever climb with Marj, aside from locally?

Brower: I never did, no. She got in some very good climbing very early, that is, up the East face of Mount Whitney and so on—before I had done anything that difficult.

Lage: Really.

Brower: And she was the first woman to climb the Higher Cathedral Spire [Yosemite Valley]. I have one of her pictures, the big one, with that spire, out in the garage. It's a very good one. She was a good photographer.

Lage: Yes, she was. Do you recall at that time that it seemed remarkable that she was a woman climber?

Brower: A little bit, but not too because we had other women in the Sierra Club rock climbing section of the Bay Chapter.

Lage: Who were good climbers, respected?

Brower: They were climbing very well. The only one who didn't climb very well was Sue Atkins. At Devil's Slide she fell. I had to hold her fall, and I kept her out of the ocean. [laughs]

Lage: Do you remember other women who climbed in the Bay Area?

Brower: Oh, another one was Olive Dyer, and then I remember some others—

Lage: Harriet Parsons? Did Harriet climb?

Brower: Yes, she did. And then Blanche Stallings did. Helen Le Conte did a little bit. There weren't a lot of women, but there were some. Of course, Doris Leonard climbs.

Lage: Was Doris a good climber?

Brower: Pretty good. Now Dorothy Marquad—and then she became Dorothy Kincaid, and now she's Dorothy somebody else.

Lage: She was also a climber?

Brower: She was a climber, and she was very good.

Lage: Was there an attitude towards women climbers that you'd be able to describe? Were they just equal people, or were they patronized?

Brower: Oh, I don't think they were patronized at all. We just figured that the women being not so strong, it all depended upon balance to get where they wanted to go, which was awfully good. That's the way to get up the mountain with least effort, and that's what I became good at, being a good balance climber.

Lage: So the technique had to be maybe a little bit better if you didn't have the strength?

Brower: It does. That is, you do everything else right if you can't wrestle your way up the mountain. You step your way up and touch your way up, and they could do that and do it very well. And of course later on they became terrific, and men or women, they scare me now, what they're doing.

Lage: But there seemed to be a time after this generation of women where women didn't climb so much. Maybe in the early fifties.

Brower: Well, we always had women going up to climb. And I forgot Patty Adam and few others. But we were always glad they were there and enjoyed doing it because it added to the fun. And we did enjoy the skills that they did demonstrate.

Way back in the very beginning of it, Beverly Blanks was one of the climbers and he always made a point of just really celebrating every fortunate move anybody made in a climb. He made them feel awfully good about having achieved something.

Lage: Beverly Blanks?

Brower: Beverly Blanks.

Lage: That's a name I haven't heard.

Brower: Yes, he goes way back in the early rock climbing section. I've encountered his name since, but I was never able to follow up to see if it was the same Beverly Blanks. But I don't think there could be more than one. [laughs]

Lage: Yes, and he was sort of one of the—

Brower: He was the cheering section. He was a fair climber, not a great climber, but he certainly believed that the thing to do was encourage people. And it worked.

Lage: Now safety was a big concern.

Brower: That was Leonard's concern. He would tell the story that in the Alps if the leader fell it was his fault, and leaders aren't supposed to fall, but he wanted to get something to make it possible for a leader to fall—more than once. And he worked on his dynamic belaying and everything else, so he really taught an awful lot of people.

Lage: Did he invent dynamic belaying?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: He actually invented it.

Brower: He just was a very good analyst of what was needed in climbing. When he was in law school, he'd keep his muscles up by walking around the campus squeezing tennis balls. [laughter] But the dynamic belay was his idea, and we got that and got into climbing. Somebody should remember it was through Francis Farquhar, who brought his friend from the Appalachian Mountain Club, Bob Underhill, Robert Lindley Murray Underhill, who got us interested and introduced rock climbing with ropes in the Sierra Club. Nobody had done that really well before. And he came out and they did some good stuff. I wasn't part of it.

Lage: You weren't active yet. I think that was '31.

Brower: Yes, that was '31. I hadn't been active yet, but I certainly—I was in correspondence with him and I was watching—I began collecting Appalachian Mountain journals, too.

Lage: You were in correspondence with Underhill before you became a member of the Sierra Club?

Brower: Yes, just notes, nothing more. So anyhow, that was how it started. And he and Norman Clyde and Jules Eichorn and Glen Dawson and Marj were on some of this early climbing.

About that time was when the Sierra Club had a trip down Muir Gorge [in 1934]. I got some movies made of that trip by Bestor Robinson with the very young Francis Farquhar on it. And a lot of people I just couldn't identify. I got the movie from one of Bestor's sons, his middle son, and looked through this to see what I could find. I was looking for movies that Bestor had taken of the ascent of Mount WaddingtonI never found those.

That was the first color, and I knew that it existed somewhere, probably still does, [but] had faded. I couldn't find it and I haven't been able to find it since. And that was [made in] 1935 when color film was pretty new.

Lage: I wonder if it held up. The color would—

Brower: Well, this one turned all magenta. I think not until two years later did they find out how to make Kodachrome last longer.

Lage: Hold on one second. We'll turn this over.

[End Tape 5, Side A]

[Begin Tape 5, Side B]

Lage: I think it's important to get this from you even though it's a little off what we said we were going to talk about.

Brower: Yes, right. [laughter]

Lage: So you got the movie of going down Muir Gorge. I think Marj shot some of that, also.

Brower: I think she probably did.

Lage: They may still have that, her family.

Brower: Well, I got this from Bestor's son, from Merritt Robinson.

Lage: And you couldn't recognize the people?

Brower: I couldn't recognize the people except for Francis and Bestor and one or two others. But the others I didn't know, and I found out that we were getting down to the place where if we didn't recognize somebody, we would ask either Marj or Virginia Adams, because Virginia knew pretty well who

everybody was. But as they got into their early nineties, they couldn't remember either.

Lage: And you didn't go on that trip.

Brower: I wasn't on that trip.

Brower: I did Muir Gorge later, in 1937, I think, with Jack Tarr, who was my roommate when we worked in Yosemite.

Lage: I thought it was sort of an unusual event to be able to go down the gorge.

Brower: Well, we thought it was, but it was not all that unusual, because we went from—

Lage: Because the water level—

Brower: I guess it was summer and so the water wasn't doing all that much. We went all the way down from the top of Tuolumne Meadows, and then when we got to the gorge itself, I got to the rock and the waterfall—that I've seen in the movie since. And we just jumped over with our knapsacks and swam with our knapsacks through the gorge, not very far, and then went on down to rappel out. That day, all in that day.

Lage: All in one day! That's always seemed so romantic to me to do that. [laughs]

Anything else you remember about the Bay Chapter? Did it have an identity of its own, being right [in San Francisco] by the club headquarters?

Brower: It did and it had a conservation committee. From my days on the chapter committee I remember very little disagreement, but I don't remember a great deal of scope. They were mainly worried about Mount Tamalpais. They weren't worried about the Sierra particularly—that was up to the Sierra Club board.

Lage: So they focused on the local area.

Brower: They focused on the Bay Chapter area: Mount Tamalpais and our rocks in Berkeley, a little bit on Diablo, a little bit on Pinnacles, but that was about it. And we included Devil's Slide, when you could climb there. They don't climb there anymore. It's too dangerous.

Lage: Was there conservation interest around climbing even then? I mean, were the conservation and climbing tied?

Brower: Yes, we had some good climbers, and when we jumped into World War II, quite a bit of our Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter climbing experience carried into the U.S. mountain troops.

Lage: Right, and I think you've talked about that in your other oral history. And Dick Leonard has talked about it, so—but I'm wondering, when you chose conservation issues—like you said you focused on Devil's Slide. Was that because it was a climbing spot?

Brower: No, all we were doing was climbing there. We didn't worry much about the conservation. The only conservation I remember very actively was when we were trying to save the little park at the junction of The Alameda, Marin, and Monterey [in north Berkeley]. They had a little park there, and they wanted to build a firehouse and we wanted them not to. They just wanted that because it was cheap property—they wouldn't have to buy anything—so we fought that and lost. And so the firehouse was built.

Lage: Right now they are remodeling the fire station.

Brower: Yes, right now. They haven't finished. And the Bay Chapter isn't concerned—it's too late. [laughs]

Lage: When you say you fought these things, that particularly—what methods? Going to city council or—

Brower: No, just finally that's really why we started our newsletter, the *Yodeler*, so that we could get some news out, Sierra Club news, of what was happening. One of the first things we started doing was getting into the Kings Canyon National Park battle in our *Sierra Club Yodeler*.

Lage: Even in the *Yodeler*.

Brower: Yes, because we only had two newsletters—the *Yodeler* was preceded by the *Mugelnoos* down in southern California.

Lage: Right, which was more oriented towards outdoor activities.

Brower: Climbing and ski mountaineering. But we got quite a bit on Kings Canyon and about the California Mountaineers, the Forest Service troop. It was Forest Service people who were fighting [turning] Kings Canyon [into a national park,] even though Franklin Roosevelt had said, “Don't do it.”

Lage: And they were called the California Mountaineers?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: That's what I didn't know.

Brower: ”Who are the Mountaineers?” I asked in the *Yodeler* in one of the piece busting their cover. [laughter]

Lage: So from the beginning the *Yodeler* had this conservation focus, not just climbing, although you must have written quite a bit about climbing activities.

Brower: One thing I don't have is a set of the *Yodeler*. I guess the Bancroft does.

Lage: Yes, I'm sure they do.

Brower: I do have a bound set of most of the early *Not Man Aparts,* and that had an awful lot of material in it.

Lage: Oh, yes. When did you go onto the *Sierra Club Bulletin* editorial board?

Brower: 1935.

Lage: '35. And you went onto the Sierra Club board in '41?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: How did that happen? How did you go on the Sierra Club board?

Brower: Well, for one thing, one of the political forces in the Sierra Club was the Sierra Club High Trip. People came from all over to go to it. We'd get up to, say, 175 or slightly more people going on the trip. And it was more than that because there were four-weekers and the first and second two-weekers and out of the total, the aggregate total, there'd be over two hundred almost all the time. But starting out on the High Trip in 1939, just to assist as an assistant leader, I had quite a bit to do with the climbing and began to learn to talk before an audience, and that served me pretty well.

Lage: Yes. Was that the first opportunity you'd had to talk before an audience?

Brower: Except for the rock climbing group itself. I mean, these are people from all over. And that included older people because that was one of the purposes of the High Trip—to make it possible, physically, for older people to come along—to have their luggage carried and their meals cooked up. So we had people—I've lamented that lately, or later, that we've lost that [the High Trip], and should not have lost it, because that gave people the idea of what wilderness was. You had to have a pretty big wilderness not to repeat yourself in the course of a month. And so we could go in the Sierra for, say, four years without repeating ourselves. And by the time you did that, you began to realize the importance of big wilderness, not just a postage stamp around the corner.

Lage: Right.

Brower: We had people who were able to do that who were old enough to have some political knowledge, and that's where a lot of our strength came. John Muir had foreseen that, and he was right. And [William E.] Colby followed it up and so did Leonard and so did the others—they followed this all up—and Ansel did, that this was a powerhouse for wilderness. It made it possible for us to have a lot of people around the country who knew a lot about it because they'd been in it here with us.

Lage: Right, and traveled for such a long time—for two to four weeks.

Brower: Yes, so four weeks means that you're traveling on the average every other, say, two days or two days and a half, and then you'd stay in a camp and check that place out, and then move onto the next place, so that the traveling trip was the important element.

Nobody else did it as well as the Sierra Club. Nobody had the range to do this in. We did it not only in the Sierra, but we went on into other places, including Canada. That was a terribly important part of the Sierra Club's development—the first ecotouring that anybody knew of or that I know of.

It was extremely effective and we've almost forgotten it, even though we have all kinds of trips now all over the place, but they don't have this focus. And of course, this is partly the result of the size of the club at that point. I remember when I joined we were not quite two thousand members—just under. There are rather more now.

Lage: So close to 10 percent or more of them were going on the High Trip.

Brower: So a lot of them were going on the High Trips. And these were the people who knew somebody when it came time for an election [for the Sierra Club Board of Directors], and they'd vote for the people they knew, so I lucked out. [laughs]

Lage: When you gave talks on the High Trip, what kind of talks did you give?

Brower: Well, it was essentially the John Muir idea that you're here because we need people who understand this place and know what it's about and I didn't use the words, "fall in love with it,"—I probably did—and then we'd start talking about some of the problems we had and what we needed to do.

Lage: So there was that conscious educating.

Brower: Yes. I remember one of the trips—I couldn't go on all of them—I asked Joel Hildebrand would he ask members to make some contributions for the Kings Canyon battle, and they did! Just this was automatic in those days.

Lage: Yes. Okay, so then you went on the board, and you were on the board from '41 to '53.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: During the war even. You didn't leave the board.

Brower: Well, yes, I did leave the board.

Lage: You did?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Oh, maybe the handbook that I looked at was not correct. [laughs]

Brower: Well, it should have had an asterisk or something or other because I couldn't be on the board when I was in the service—that is, I could be on 'til 1942, that's when I—and then I did not run for the next elections: '43 or '44.

Lage: Okay, and then you came back on—

Brower: Then I came back—what year—'45, '46? '46. I couldn't run in '45 because we didn't get over the war until V-J Day. That was August and the election was already over.

Lage: So it was probably '46?

Brower: '46.

Lage: Well, the handbook is wrong. It did show some people having a break in service, but it shows you going right on. Well, tell me what the board was like in those years. I have names of people who were serving at that time if you need a refreshment.

Brower: Well, even before I was on it, one of the regulars there was Francis Farquhar, who always had to defend the expenditures necessary for the *Bulletin*. That is, it's true, publications always get short shrift, and he saw to it that they didn't. And his loyalty to the *Bulletin* made it an important part of the club's budget.

Lage: And the club was willing to fund it.

Brower: And the club as willing to fund it.

Lage: Did he have to fight for it?

Brower: He had to fight for it because people said, "Oh, we've got to save some money." What was the budget back then? About—I think my first year the budget was $8,000 for the club, [laughs] not forty million.

Lage: Yes. Incredible, isn't it? Let's see, Ike Livermore was on the board in those years.

Brower: In part of the time he was, yes.

Lage: I just wrote down people who overlapped with you during those years. Did you get to know him well?

Brower: Oh yes, and still do. Ike and Dina, and some of the children, some of his brothers. I didn't know his mother very well—Caroline Livermore—but she was certainly a conservation force in Marin County. Angel Island's highest peak is named for her. It's Mount Livermore, but it's Mount *Caroline* Livermore.

Lage: Yes, that's pretty wonderful. Dick Leonard: he was concerned about climbing safety—I mean, I know everyone was concerned, but this was his big thing—was he a cautious person? I mean, did this carry over to his concern about your activities in the club and the IRS?

Brower: On the IRS, I think he was upset by that but you probably have a better record of that than I. Some people were and some people weren't.

Lage: When you said that he was careful to put in the—

Brower: At that point, things were beginning to happen—that was in 1960—because of his record in the '59 *Bulletin* about what we weren't doing in the Sierra Club. [laughs] This is just for legal purposes. They were beginning to talk about my tendencies to be, as Paul had said, a little bit shrill at times. They were trying to calm me down. They wanted it all to be done in a gentlemanly way, and I wasn't ready for that. Not yet.

Lage: Well, we're leaping ahead because I want to [concentrate on your years on the board of directors]—maybe it's hard to remember the different phases, but before you became executive director, is there some way you can characterize the club—how it was operating, what the nature of the leadership was, or just recall some of the people who were on the board? Do you remember some of the southern Californians, like Stanley Jones?

Brower: Stanley Jones I just remember—I can recall his face all right, but I can't remember any particular stance on his part on the board. Phil Bernays was vigorous.

Lage: He was a long-term member of the board [from southern California].

Brower: He was.

Lage: Did he have a particular interest in conservation?

Brower: Yes, he did. Not great, but enough. Some of the earlier ones, it's too hard [to recall]. Ansel, of course, from way back, was concerned about the mountains. He didn't want his pictures spoiled by having a bunch of stuff in them. [laughter]

Lage: Did Ansel's concern grow out of his aesthetic interest and his photography, or did he have a deep tie to conservation and environmentalism?

Brower: Well, I think he must have picked that up way back in 1916 when he went to the [LeConte] lodge to see what was happening at Yosemite. He never got over being concerned about what happened to Yosemite Valley.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: And that came from I think his first trips.

Lage: His was tied to that experience, too.

Brower: And my principal concern for the Valley was—well, I guess it didn't start until 1918.

Lage: [laughs] You don't date quite that far back.

Brower: I was just annoyed by having been expected to climb mountains.

Lage: By your father?

Brower: Yes, my father wanted to climb Gaylor Peak—near Tioga Pass—and he wanted me to go up Sentinel Dome, and I just didn't want to do it. [laughs]

Lage: Well, you weren't very old at the time.

Brower: No, I was six.

Lage: [laughs] Do you remember Leland Curtis?

Brower: Yes, of course. I remember him because of his painting. He'd been one of the people with Byrd in Antarctica, so he was one of our well known members, but his paintings I thought were just extra good.

Lage: And would he go on the High Trips and paint? I know the club library has a lot of his paintings.

Brower: Yes, he'd paint on the High Trip.

Lage: And he was a member of the board [1943-1946]?

Brower: Yes, I think he was.

Lage: Was he an active member?

Brower: I don't remember his activity in particular.

Lage: Okay, how about Glen Dawson? I know he's known for climbing and, of course, for books.

Brower: We weren't doing much with books in Glen's time.

Lage: No, well, I mean his bookstore is what I was thinking of.

Brower: But he was primarily interested in climbing and I guess still is. He doesn't still climb, but I hear about him every now and then. I'm in touch with him, I guess, because he has been a Sierra Club member longer than I have. And remember, Aurelia Harwood wanted to give him a membership in the Sierra Club to [his brother] Muir Dawson because of his name. And Ernest Dawson, the father, said, "Oh, no, Glen is the older son, so he gets it," so Glen became a member of the Sierra Club at the age of nine.

Lage: Ah!

Brower: And he's a couple of years older than I am, now, so that he's got me—Jules has me just a little bit, too.

Lage: Jules Eichorn?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Walter Starr—did you get to know Walter Starr?

Brower: I got to know Walter Starr, yes. I got to know him really quite well. And I can still—his face is gone, everything else, but I can hear his voice on the telephone. "Is that you Dave?" About that tone. Yes. [laughs]

Lage: What kinds of things would you be talking about?

Brower: He was, of course, very much interested in conservation, even though at that point he was with Soundview Pulp and Paper—and later, Scott—so that he was making money out of trees but fighting to protect them. And he was the one when he was president of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company—

Lage: Oh, he was president of it?

Brower: I say president, but he was at least on the board.

Lage: Okay.

Brower: And he also saw that we got a $2,500 grant to help get moving on the showing of the exhibit: "This is the American Earth"

Lage: Oh, he did help with that.

Brower: Again, I was particularly interested in what he was doing because here he was a capitalist, I guess, a staunch Republican, who was in the tree business, but wanted to save trees. And that was quite important. I got to know him indirectly through Sierra Club, through Francis Farquhar when he, Walter Starr, was working on the book, *Starr's Guide*, to publish his late son's work on the trails of the Sierra.

Lage: Did you work on that at all?

Brower: I didn't have to. Pete Starr had already done it. When I say Pete, that was Walter, Jr. I never met him, and even though I was in the Sierra when he died, not very far away.

Lage: Oh, you were.

Brower: Not very far from the area where he fell to his death.

Lage: But you didn't get involved in that search.

Brower: I didn't know about him yet. I didn't know about him until I wrote my notes—mountaineering notes—for that trip, and didn't know anything about him. But then Francis Farquhar had the whole Farquhar era of my life—Francis, Sam, children, wives—

Lage: We have to talk more about that, but recently I've been called numerous times and maybe you were called also by a man who's trying to do a biography of Walter's son, Junior. Were you called by him?

Brower: Yes, oh, yes.

Lage: He was looking for the journal. And the journal is no where to be found. I don't even think he knows that there is a journal.

Brower: I just want to know what happened, and why aren't they in the Farquhar papers? Did Francis send some of his papers to somewhere else, to the Huntington or something like that?

Lage: No.

Brower: Everything came to the Bancroft.

Lage: I think so. You think they should be in the Farquhar papers. So they were notes from Pete's original journal that worked into the guide?

Brower: Yes. I just don't remember—in some of my meetings I think I saw the manuscript and they were going over that—just handling that, but not copy editing.

Lage: I can't imagine tossing it.

Brower: But that was important to me. I always wanted to know about the High Sierra. The Desolation area around Tahoe is fine, but I wanted to go down and see the big stuff. And my father would talk about Mineral King: "We should see Mineral King." Well, he never did, but that sounded like that was a very nice name—Mineral King.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: It has a nice ring to it, [laughter] even though it was mining. But—I guess that's the end of that sentence. [laughs]

Lage: But to think about that Starr journal, you don't have any idea about where it is?

Brower: I just don't. I can just vaguely remember seeing some galleys later on or something of the sort, but I didn't participate in it. I was just there in the Farquhar library on Garber [Avalon] Street, which I was there quite often.

Lage: Is that where the work was done on the *Bulletin* and other books?

Brower: Yes, the *Bulletin* work was there, and whatever Francis was up to in his library—which just impressed the hell out of me; it was a wonderful library.

Lage: Now, a lot of that did go to UCLA, the mountaineering library. I guess the Bancroft didn't want the books, or maybe he gave it to UCLA because he got an honorary degree down there.

Brower: He may have. [laughs]

Lage: Let's see, anything else to say about those early years? Or do you want to talk more about Francis?

Brower: I will, anytime. I can keep talking about Francis and—

Lage: How may he have shaped your life, or your approach to books?

Brower: Well, by putting me on the editorial board and showing what changes he wanted to make in my major piece—that is "Far from the Madding Mules"—I learned something about editing. I'd already learned about his insistence on good photographic reproduction and on good design. And on Taylor and Taylor—

Lage: Were they the printers?

Brower: They were the printers. The building then was only three stories, and I guess it's over twenty now. I don't think they know where they put the presses, but it's a very impressive building right now on Mission and First.

Lage: So that was your first exposure, through Farquhar, to editing and books?

Brower: It was. I can't remember quite how I happened to end up with Francis. It must have been at his instigation that I ended up there.

Lage: Putting you on the [*Sierra Club Bulletin*] editorial board?

Brower: On the editorial board, because I guess he liked what he'd done with my piece!

Lage: [laughter] He must have. Now, where did Francis get his interest? He was an accountant after all.

Brower: He was, but then anything can happen when somebody goes to Harvard.

Lage: Did he like to let you know he'd gone to Harvard?

Brower: A little bit, but not much.

Lage: Not too much.

Brower: No.

Lage: Sometimes I had that feeling.

Brower: I guess I never got over being impressed with somebody from Harvard who'd come out and choose to live in San Francisco. It had that aura, I guess, even back then. And he was extremely patient.

I guess he dropped me from the editorial board in about '37 when I hadn't done something right. I hadn't finished some reviews or something of the sort—got them in late—then put me back.

Lage: So he was a stern taskmaster, it sounds like.

Brower: I guess he wanted people who would produce something and not just pretend. And I was going through my—well, I should have done better by him when I was in Yosemite, but I was far away. But then immediately when I returned [to the Bay Area]—I had lost my job [with Curry Company in Yosemite]; Stanley Plumb, who was my boss in Yosemite, had decided, or Don Tresidder decided, they didn't need me as publicity manager anymore, that they were abandoning the position.

Lage: They just did away with the position?

Brower: That's what he said. And then of course it was given to Ben Tarnitzer [sp?] whose wife, Gail, is my assistant now.

Lage: Oh, this gets complicated.

Brower: [laughs] Yes, very complicated, but Ben was six years older than I and since I was, what, twenty-five when I lost the job, that's pretty young.

Lage: Yes, so then what happened?

Brower: But then Stanley Plumb said, "Well, why don't you make some pictures for us?" So I started printing pictures, which I'd done in the Curry darkroom when I was whatever I was—publicity manager. So he paid me for doing some, and I did that work in the Farquhar darkroom on Avalon Street. Marj was the engineer of that, so it was her darkroom, not Francis's. He didn't mess with that stuff. He just edited.

[End Tape 5, Side B]

[Begin Tape 6, Side A]

Lage: Okay, we're back on. We're in Marj's darkroom.

Brower: Yes, Marj's darkroom, right. It was a good darkroom, and she was extremely patient, very generous.

Lage: Did she teach you how to develop, or did you know how?

Brower: I knew how. So that was a very handy darkroom. She was very generous, very kind. And that was good.

Then I did a little other work. Dick Leonard helped me do some investigative work—going into various city halls and looking up old records for law purposes.

I'll have to remember what job he was on, but I got paid a bit for that. I got paid a bit for that, and I'd take my old ’35 Plymouth and go sleep in it overnight because there wasn't very much money floating around. [laughs]

Lage: Yes, this was the depths of the Depression.

Brower: Then I got help from working for the Sierra Club, later.

Lage: With that $75-a-month job?

Brower: Yes, for part time. And I put in a lot of time, because there wasn't anything else to do and there was an awful lot to do there.

Lage: Was there payment for helping run the High Trips?

Brower: Oh, yes, there was. I think for the summer I got $1,000 or something like that, and that was very helpful to have. And that was something that was important enough to my income that when I got the job at the university press, I wanted to have the chance to go on the High Trip for the additional income I could get from it.

Lage: Just for the income, not for the fun?

Brower: No, the fun and everything else. That was the glamour.

Lage: Now how did the job at the press come about?

Brower: The job at the press came about because Francis knew the manager of the press—his brother Sam.

Lage: Right.

Brower: Samuel Thaxter Farquhar. He suggested that I go over there and try out to seeHarold Small, who was the editor in chief, to see if I could get the job that was available.

Lage: And when was that?

Brower: That was in May of '41.

Lage: '41—the beginning of the war.

Brower: Yes, so I went over to that office. It was two rooms: the little room 203 and then the bigger room that he was in. In 203 was Anne Hus, who saw me just breeze by her. I got in to see Harold Small and breezed in and out, but paying very little attention to Anne. And she found that annoying [laughter], particularly when she had to put up with me in the same office, because it was

not a big room. My desk and hers were very close, so we could both look out the window at the campus, and we got into various conversations.

Lage: Did you have your own special areas in editing?

Brower: No, not necessarily, but we would have whatever Harold Small thought we should look at next. It was a very pleasant relationship, but she was very much interested in Paul Gordon and not me.

Lage: Now, who was Paul Gordon?

Brower: Oh, he was one of her early affairs, early interests. But the thing I remember, and I reminded her of, he gave her a little tiny miniature wooden duck, which was on her desk, and from time to time I'd get a rubber band and when Harold Small wasn't around [laughs], knock down the little duck into the next office.

Lage: When she was around?

Brower: Oh, she was there. She'd laugh pleasantly at it. And I'd pick up the duck and put it back. I think I did. I don't think she had to.

Lage: Were you interested in her right away?

Brower: Yes, I was.

Lage: So you were trying to annoy?

Brower: My impression was this: we had an awful lot of good conversations. There was some work that wasn't done because when Harold wasn't around we'd talk a lot.

Lage: Do you remember what kinds of things you talked about?

Brower: Whatever. Yes, but—

Lage: It's a nice way to get to know someone.

Brower: Yes, it was. And then, of course, I have my favorite story—and I guess still hers—is where she got back from lunch after I got back from lunch—and I usually went to lunch at the Faculty Club with Harold, and I'd get back to the office before he would, because he'd stop in the library to look something up—Harold was always doing that—and one of the things I did before *she* got back was to look at the manuscript she was working at. I went to about halfway into it and there was a footnote, and so I just took that page out and put it at my desk and wrote the rest of the page—rewrote the page—with a very absurd note. When she got to that, she cracked up.

Lage: [laughs] She knew what had happened.

Brower: She knew what had happened to it. I guess I can still see her expression, because I'd been watching as she started going through. [laughs] Then, of course, the tragedy was that she forgot to take my page out when it went back to the author!

Lage: [laughter] Oh, no!

Brower: And he didn't enjoy it.

Lage: He didn't think it was as funny as she?

Brower: He didn't think it was as funny.

Lage: Was it slightly at his expense?

Brower: Yes, it was. Oh, it was rather dull footnote. I made it duller.

Lage: That's very funny. So did Harold Small hear about that from the author?

Brower: Yes, he heard about it from the office, he heard about it from Sam, he heard about it from the author. [laughs]

Lage: What were the consequences?

Brower: Well, no consequences. He said, "Well, you shouldn't do that." But they both had a good sense of humor, so they weren't going to—they weren't going to go serious on me. They had to pretend they were.

Lage: Now, when did you and Anne get married?

Brower: Upon my return from Officer's Candidate School, May 1, 1943.

Lage: '43.

Brower: In her house with Judge Oliver Young presiding.

Lage: So you had a couple of years there to get to know her at the press.

Brower: Yes, and that actually is told very clearly in my documentary. She gets all the good lines, and I think those good lines should be picked up. Have you seen that documentary?

Lage: No, tell me about the documentary.

Brower: Oh, well, one of her lines is she “married a stranger," that I proposed to her by mail. We wrote regularly while I was at Officer's Candidate School—I think almost a letter a day, or something absurd.

Lage: So you proposed to her after you left?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Not before you went.

Brower: But before I even went to Officer's Candidate School, I got this little note with the green light on it—that is, the railway signal had turned green, and I knew what that meant, that Paul was out of it. So then I was bold enough to go for it.

Lage: I see, so during this whole time while you were working with her, there was a competitor.

Brower: Well, yes, I had the competitor and got to know her better and better, and fell quietly in love. I guess two or three times I went up to her place on Scenic—1400 Scenic—for sherry and got to meet her father and her mother. And then when I arrived at Officer's Candidate School, I went over to see a guy who was trying out his uniform because he had just finished and was about to graduate and that was Anne’s brother, Fran, so—[laughs]

Lage: Okay, so you got married and then went—she was here and you were off in the war, or did she come along with you?

Brower: Well, our honeymoon was—because I hadn't planned it, I came home from Benning—I think I graduated April 23 or something like that and we got married on the first [of May].

Lage: That's right, and it always conflicted with Sierra Club annual meetings from then on.

Brower: I was at a Sierra Club board meting on the morning of our wedding. I went to the board meeting and then got married. And then [we] started on the honeymoon that afternoon. Our scheduled honeymoon evening was at King City in a motel.

Lage: King City!

Brower: And I stopped on the way down, and that annoyed her quite a bit, to see George Rockwood because I'd known him for a long time. And when I first joined the army and went down to the Presidio of Monterey I ran into him. He just joined, too. We went separate directions because I went to Colorado, and he didn't. But then I thought it'd be nice to see him because I might not see

him again because he was just passing through, and so we met him and his wife. And Anne didn't want to see any of our time wasted that way. [laughs]

Lage: Yes.

Brower: If we hadn't done that we might have got farther down than King City, but King City was not really the most dramatic place for a honeymoon. [laughter]

Lage: No, and where were you headed? Down to Colorado?

Brower: Then the next day was Needles, Arizona, and the next day we were in Shiprock, where we paused there and camped out in the rain. And then the next day to Camp Hale.

Lage: I see. And did Anne stay at Camp Hale with you?

Brower: No, because they didn't have a place for women at Camp Hale. The nearest town was Leadville, and that was off limits because of its seedy reputation, so I guess we had a place we could stay that first night, but then Anne had to go down the next or very first opportunity. And she may remember that better than I, but then she found a place for us in Denver.

Lage: I see

Brower: That didn't work very well. I didn't think that was a very good place and we found another. Finally, I had to go down and see her just on weekends and that wasn't too good. When I got the weekend, that was a long trip from Hale down to Denver and back, and I like to point out, to Denver, that at that point you didn't even have a book store in Denver. [laughs]

Lage: No, so that wasn't a good place for you.

Brower: But Anne got a job at the university right away.

Lage: In Denver.

Brower: Yes. And we got someplace else and the other place was a basement room but it was much better, but she encountered a peeping tom there. So we moved up to Glenwood Springs, and that was much closer to Camp Hale.

Lage: And then she commuted down to the job at the university?

Brower: No, she quit that. Then she made peach jam.

Lage: She made what?

Brower: Peach jam out of the peaches in the place that we lived in with Viola Hildebrand. Milton was in the mountain troops with me, and so she and Viola were together.

Lage: I didn't realize Milton was in the mountain troops with you.

Brower: Yes, and that's where we got our picture, which you don't have here. It's a picture taken of me and later of Anne at the same place, by the same fence, by Barbara Bedayn. It's a very good picture of both of us.

Lage: So Barbara was there also, down at Glenwood Springs?

Brower: Not at Glenwood. I'm not quite sure where Barbara was at that point. But yes, I guess she was because that's how we'd have done it.

Lage: Was Raffi [Bedayn] also in the 10th Mountain Division?

Brower: Raffi was, too.

Lage: All right.

Brower: The Sierra Club took charge. [laughter]

Lage: Yes, it really—that's an interesting part of the Sierra Club, isn't it? That's pretty much forgotten now, I think.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Okay, coming back after the war, there were a few years before you were asked to be executive director [of the Sierra Club].

Brower: Yes, I came back and went back to work at the press in November of '45, right away. And one of the things I started working on was the new edition of the *Manual of Ski Mountaineering*.

Lage: Through the press.

Brower: It had been done by the press in the first place in '41, and that was one of the things that when I arrived in Colorado [Glenwood?] Springs I ran immediately into two people who had read the book who were in the mountain troops. One of them was killed in Italy, the other I still see because he's in Richmond—Paul Harlow.

Lage: Paul Harlow. So you came back to the press and worked on the *Manual of Ski Mountaineering*?

Brower: And then everything else.

Lage: Did Anne go back to work also?

Brower: By this time she'd been doing something else. That is, she'd been moved to the—they didn't want nepotism. And I'm trying to figure out—well, she spent thirteen years in anthropology, but before that she was in planning. She was the assistant editor to the Journal of the American Institute of Planners.

Lage: Through the press also?

Brower: Separate. I learned a lot about planning from that.

Lage: That's interesting.

Brower: Now, whoever was the editor—he thought soil was old-fashioned. His words.

Lage: You didn't learn directly from him, then, but—

Brower: No, but through things that were going on. And in the course of it, I got to find the organization man, William H. Whyte, and we had some very interesting meetings on what he was doing on urban conservation and development.

Lage: Now, how did you get to know him?

Brower: Through that journal. He was writing something there, and Anne made sure that when we had a chance to intersect, we did.

Lage: I see. That's interesting, because that was a new direction that didn't really come out of your Sierra Club connections.

Brower: No, it didn't, because that helped a great deal in understanding what you do in the mountains and what you do in urban areas and development rights. He was the development rights man, and he wrote the book *The Organization Man* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956], which was a very impressive book to me at that time.

Lage: Yes. Now what time are we speaking about here with getting—

Brower: Well, that's in, I guess, the forties. That was the late forties. I was at the press until '52, and then moved to the Sierra Club at that point.

Lage: Tell me about how you moved from the press to the Sierra Club.

Brower: Well, I was spending more and more time on Sierra Club concerns, as a member of the board, and a member of the editorial board. I worked whatever conservation I could into the [UC] press agenda. And some books came out, I think, pretty well because of that.

Lage: Like what? Can you remember those books?

Brower: Well, we did *One Hundred Years in Yosemite*[5], but we took that from somewhere else. We did Brewer and that came from Yale—we did a new edition of *Up and Down California*[6].

Lage: With Francis [Farquhar] as the editor?

Brower: I think he did, yes. Francis had edited it, I guess, in the first place. [For *One Hundred Years in Yosemite*] I worked over whatever we did to it at the press and got Carl Russell, who became superintendent of Yosemite, to accept some of my language and here and there give me credit—otherwise not. But then the early edition didn't have any index.

Lage: Is this *One Hundred Years*?

Brower: *One Hundred Years in Yosemite*. In the later editions I'm in the index, but they forgot to put me in the book, [laughs] or something like that.

Lage: Well, editors never really get credit, do they? Not as much as they deserve.

Brower: Yes, and I probably got more than I deserved at any event. For example, one of the most important things that we put in the [*Sierra Club*] *Bulletin* was "Yosemite, the Story of an Idea," by Hans Huth, and that went in with the pressure from Carl Russell. And he did the foreward, but I signed it because he couldn't sign it—he was the superintendent of Yosemite and it was too—

Lage: He did the foreward to "The Story of an Idea".

Brower: Yes, and I was awfully glad we did that. And we did some preprints then and there have been reprints since. And I want it reissued now because the Park Service—everyone in it has got to read that thing because they've forgotten what the park idea is and where it came from. Bureaucracy has taken over—the idea of it sacrificed to bureaucracy. That's one of the struggles I'm in right now in Yosemite. I had to join the suit with the American Alpine Club against Yosemite Concessions Service and the Park Service, and I'm on the advisory board for the concession service! [laughs]

Lage: Oh, you are!

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[5]Russell, Carl Parcher, *One Hundred Years in Yosemite: The Story of a Great Park and Its Friends*, foreword by Newton B. Drury, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947.

[6]Brewer, William H., *Up and Down California in 1860-1864; The Journal of William H. Brewer*, Edited by Francis P. Farquhar, with a preface by Russell H. Chittenden. [2nd ed.], Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949. (First published in 1930 by Yale University Press.)

Brower: I mean, we've found that a little bit amusing.

Lage: Was this over the climber's camp?

Brower: The climbers' camp, but it's also for the Sierra Club, now, over what the Park Service has done to the road from El Portal to the Valley, which should never be done. I mean, it's a vandalism again by the National Park Service, [like] what happened on the Tioga road. And that's another story.

Lage: Yes, another story. Now, what I find has not been recorded is what was envisioned when you became executive director of the Sierra Club? Whose idea was it? What were the expectations for the job?

Brower: Well, the idea had been Ansel's when he wanted me to be executive secretary when I was twenty-five. And Dick Leonard was, I think, pretty impressed with what I was doing for the Sierra Club.

Lage: That was way back.

Brower: And that was way back, so that Dick Leonard was the principal architect of my being executive director.

Lage: But there was some talk about your becoming executive secretary earlier?

Brower: Oh, that was Ansel Adams. He saw that I was not totally succeeding as publicity manager in Yosemite.

Lage: I see.

Brower: It began to occur to him and he advocated it, that I be executive secretary, that we have one.

Lage: Yes, because the club really didn't have [an executive]—I mean, well Will Colby kind of served—

Brower: But I guess various people thought that Sierra Club wasn't ready for anything like that. I mean, one of the people who didn't think it was necessary was Virginia Ferguson, who was the secretary. [laughs]

Lage: Right.

Brower: In any event, that didn't get anywhere. But that was 1937, so there was a fairly long gap between then and '52.

Lage: Now what had happened prior to '52? Did many people start talking about getting an executive director?

Brower: Well, I was just doing more and more work.

Lage: As a board member?

Brower: Yes. I'd got into the Dinosaur National Monument battle in '50, but I was able to do only volunteer work on that. But I'd been working on the Kings Canyon battle in the Sierra Club, and they were still aware of that. And when I was chapter chairman, one of the things I talked the chapter into was buying a movie projector, which I carried all around the place. I gave talks all over California with a projector.

Lage: On Kings Canyon.

Brower: On Kings Canyon. It was the movie I'd made in the Sierra Club. And that was, I think, a pretty helpful part of the battle.

Lage: Was the idea of having the executive director thrashed out in the board? Were there people who said, "No, we don't need this"?

Brower: No, I don't remember their being any major—that was worked out and it happened.

Lage: It wasn't controversial.

Brower: It wasn't controversial.

Lage: Did they have an expectation that you would take the club in a different direction?

Brower: I don't think so. I thought they were happy enough with the direction I'd been going. It started out that I was working for the Sierra Club just five-sevenths of my time. I don't know quite why we picked that, but that left my outing income independent of the [executive] director's income and that helped.

Lage: I see.

Brower: Also, I went into the reserves and would go on summer camps—summer whatever it is you called it, not camps, in the army. You know, I did, I guess, four of those, and those brought in income. Then I became director of the infantry school at the Oakland Army Base. There was a little income in that.

Lage: Was that during the year or in the summer?

Brower: That was during the year. I would go every week.

Lage: On the weekend? Was this a reserve activity?

Brower: No, nights.

Lage: So you did that while you were executive director.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: The pay must not have been too good.

Brower: Not too good. But then if I went to anywhere in the summer, the army would pay first-class rate for rail, and I would go coach and clear a little bit that way. It was pretty tough. We were strapped.

Lage: And you had a growing family.

Brower: I had a growing family but thanks to the war, I was able to buy this house cheap.

Lage: Did Anne give up working when the children came along, or did she continue?

Brower: She continued years and years and years, and so that included whatever she was doing: the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, and it also included her thirteen years as editor for the Department of Anthropology.

Lage: Did she go back to the press when you left the press?

Brower: No. She was working for Mel Webber [editor of the *Journal* and professor of city and regional planning at Berkeley].

Lage: So it doesn't sound like it was very momentous [for the Sierra Club], taking on an executive director named David Brower. It sounds like just sort of an evolution the way you describe it. Did anyone say, "Dave, here's what we think or how we'd like to see you spend your time"?

Brower: Very little of that. But I think that I had the chance to do the choosing. For example, when I was executive director and I did go back to Washington and started lobbying, there'd be some fairly extensive periods away—not huge, but fairly big. And Dick Leonard would be executive director, in effect, while I was away and take care of all the stuff that was happening in Mills Tower that I should have been taking care of and then come up with this very generous praise about what I'd done. And this was the relationship until Diablo Canyon came over the horizon.

Lage: I think that part has been well documented, so I was going to skip over that part, you know, of your executive directorship.

Brower: That's been documented better by the California History Magazine.

Lage: The article of Susan Schrepfer?[7]

Brower: Yes. That's the best there is, so far, of what was happening.

Lage: Oh, good. Susan's article—Susan Schrepfer's article?

Brower: Yes, she put some things in that weren't in the oral history.

Lage: Well, she really knows the Sierra Club papers.

Brower: That's right.

Lage: She's researched them very well.

Brower: You'll find that there's this brief allusion of Ansel to Diablo in our tape [the Bedayn tape], which you'll see one of these days.

Lage: Yes, I hope so. Actually, it was Susan Schrepfer who wanted me to focus with you on this question I've been trying to ask about what were the expectations when you became executive director, but it seems that there's not too much to say. Did you think you were—

Brower: Well, I think not, because what had happened—in 1950 we had a conservation meeting that was conducted by the Wildlife Management Institute. They'd been doing that for years and years and I'd gone to several of those. We had one in San Francisco, and that's where I first heard what was coming up on Dinosaur [National Monument, proposed dam]. And that's where Walter Huber's response to the Dinosaur was, “It's a bunch of sagebrush." And that's where Newton Drury said, "Dinosaur is a dead duck," and all that.

Lage: And all this went on—

Brower: This was what was happening in the fifties. And that's where I said, "Well, if that's true, then I'm not going to worry much about it." *Then* Harold Bradley made the movie and—

Lage: So Harold Bradley was the one who drew it to your attention?

Brower: His making the movie—that is, I'd heard about it, but when I saw what that movie had in it, with his family going through Dinosaur, I was absolutely sold. There was just no question. That all developed before I was executive director, but then it all began to fall together, so that one of the first things I did as executive director was get the trips going down Dinosaur. We had more people than had ever been down there on three different trips, consecutive

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[7]“The Nuclear Crucible: Diablo Canyon and the Transformation of the Sierra Club, 1965-1985” by Susan R. Schrepfer, California History, Summer 1992, pp. 213-237.

trips, by the Sierra Club, so we got about two hundred people there. That began to make a difference that led to the film *Wilderness River Trail*, which the bureau [of Reclamation] said was the most devastating thing we did to them. But so on.

Lage: So this battle was more important than—

Brower: But Dinosaur determined what I was going to do, I didn't. I was just pushed around by a Dinosaur.

Lage: [laughs] Okay. Did you have to convince the board to get interested in Dinosaur?

Brower: No.

Lage: Was it Harold Bradley's film that did it?

Brower: He helped and Dick Leonard helped, so that whatever it was that I had to say, it just—everything fell together in a way that things hadn't fallen together for the Sierra Club before. We'd been in various things, standing in battle for something, but it didn't compare with what happened after Dinosaur. After that, we became, in effect, the most effective organization—through this.

Lage: And you had so many elements there: the lobbying in Congress, the trips, the books—sort of the whole range of things that you do.

Brower: Yes, it all began to fall together.

Lage: Without controversy? There were no people on the board who said, "Oh, let's not change the club?"

Brower: I don't remember any fuss at all on Dinosaur. We got into quite a fuss on the redwoods.

Lage: Yes, but that was later.

Brower: Another story. But not on Dinosaur, and not on the idea of the Scenic Resources Review, which became the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and things like—

[End Tape 6, Side A]

[Begin Tape 6, Side B]

Lage: You mentioned the differences with Bestor [Robinson].

Brower: Yes.

Lage: I remember something Anne said [laughs] but I can't remember the rest of it—she said when William O. Douglas came on the board, I guess at your instigation—

Brower: Yes.

Lage: —he described the Sierra Club Board as the cross between a mourning circle and—

Brower: No, this was a telephone conversation I had with him from his house when he was back in Washington. He said the Sierra Club Board was a combination of a mourner's bench and ladies' sewing circle.

Lage: Oh, that was it! Mourner's bench and ladies' sewing circle! [laughter] Was that in reference to something in particular?

Brower: Just what he encountered, that they weren't focusing on what he thought needed to be focused on.

Lage: Did that ring true with you, or did you think that was an unfair characterization?

Brower: It rang true. It rang true.

Lage: Now, was this before Diablo [the controversy over the proposed nuclear power plant at Diablo Canyon]?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Because I'm wondering, you always say it was Diablo that brought the downturn.

Brower: Well, that was the big thing, yes.

Lage: But weren't there so many other places where you were diverging?

Brower: Well, it goes on for a long time.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: One was the Kern Plateau. Bestor went to work on that. We were going to try to make a wilderness out of it, and he was the advisor to the Forest Service and shot that down. And after that board meeting I cried.

Lage: Because—

Brower: Bestor had defeated the chance to make a wilderness of that part of the Sierra—which is Golden Trout wilderness area and so on.

Lage: And was that an area that you had—

Brower: Yes, I was working on that.

Lage: Worked on and also spent time in.

Brower: Yes. So that was one—actually, if I think harder—but I'm trying to think of what's when.

Lage: Well, you mentioned the redwoods as being—

Brower: Yes, the redwoods—Martin Litton knew better than anybody, including the Park Service and National Geographic, where the best redwoods were. He knew. He'd flown over, he'd seen them. Ed Wayburn picked that up from Martin. I was supportive of Martin, and Ed was supportive of both, and we got the ads going. Dick Leonard was in the Save the Redwoods League, and he and Newton Drury and others didn't want us to have a Redwood National Park get in the idea of saving the redwoods as state parks.

Lage: Because they were so wedded to the idea [of state parks] in Save the Redwoods?

Brower: Yes, so that got to the big battle where the ad appeared and Stewart Udall went out of the meeting with [Newton] Drury and Horace Albright. And we had a full page ad saying that's the wrong place [the Mill Creek site preferred by Save the Redwoods League].

Lage: And that did not make Dick Leonard very happy.

Brower: It didn't make him very happy.

Lage: So there were a lot of things that happened to sort of create a schism before the nuclear issue came in.

Brower: Yes, I had no trouble with the book on Dinosaur that—we didn't publish that, but I got into trouble—

Lage: The club didn't publish it.

Brower: No. It was just that I thought of it, got the authors, got the photographers, got the editor, got the publisher—kept my name out of it. [laughs] And that was an extremely good relationship to build with Wallace Stegner. I'd met Wally at Francis Farquhar's house on Avalon Street. He had a meeting there, in part celebrating *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*, at which point I'd met Bernard

De Voto. And he was supportive of what I was trying to do in the Dinosaur battle, but here was Wally with this tremendous book, just an incredible book, and in it, just four panels of Grand Canyon, which was a spectacular idea on the part of the publisher and Wally. So we built a very good relationship on that, which finally fell apart later on when I was “bitten by the worm of power.” [laughter]

Lage: Yes. People are going to have read a lot to get these allusions.

Brower: But to have all this say in a documentary I took part in later—and I thanked him for what he said—he said, "Well, I owed you that." [laughs] And then the rest of the Wally story was that the last time I met him was at a dinner in San Francisco, a conservation dinner. We sat together at the table and I said, "One of the things I've really liked is what you've said,"—and that wonderful quote: "If you're going to get old, get as old as you can get." He said, "Well, that isn't my quote, that was Ansel."

Lage: Oh.

Brower: Yes, but Herb Caen never got that straight. He quoted Wally and I don't know where I'd heard it, but I thought it was a terrific quote, and Wally straightened me out right away. I thought, oh, isn't that funny. That was Ansel. So I attribute it to Ansel now. It's always worth a laugh.

Lage: Mentioning Ansel again reminds me of something I’ve wondered about. I've heard so many people allude to the fact or say that Ansel could never be elected president of the Sierra Club.

Brower: Oh, that was only Harold Bradley at an advance session of the board meeting—board of directors—in the studio of Ansel's place in San Francisco. Harold said it would be a disaster if Ansel were named president.

Lage: Now, why?

Brower: I don't know.

Lage: When would this have been? In the fifties or early sixties?

Brower: Early sixties.

Lage: And the club was looking for a new president?

Brower: Yes, well, they don't have to look for a president because it's going to be a member of the board. And he was on the board, but he wasn't at that meeting, or at the moment he wasn't there, and we were discussing who it should be.

Lage: Well, how did people react when he said that? Did people agree?

Brower: They found somebody else.

Lage: Was that because Harold Bradley had so much authority, or was there some agreement that Ansel wouldn't be a good president?

Brower: That I don't know. I'd really have to sort that out, because Harold was a reluctant candidate. I proposed, I suggested that he do it and he didn't want to do that because he was afraid that at his age he might fall apart in some way or other and he'd be the last to know, but he undertook it anyway.

Lage: So that was when Harold Bradley became president [1957-1959]?

Brower: Yes. So he became president, but I don't think that was because he had said that about Ansel. Those were separate. It had to be separate, yes. I'm just fuzzy on that, and I shouldn't be because there's nobody else to tell you.

Lage: I'm trying to think where else I've heard this. Maybe Lewis Clark said it, or—it's come up in other oral histories.

Brower: Well, he would probably have been there. And Ed [Wayburn] would probably have been there. And Nathan Clark. Harold Crowe may have been. I'm just trying to think who would be there. But to have had that happen—

Lage: Was it a shocker?

Brower: To me it was a shocker, because I thought Ansel would be a terrific president—and he would have been. He would have put us on the map a lot earlier.

Lage: Yes. Well, that's interesting. I wish we could shed a little more light on it.

Brower: I wish I can sort that out, but I don't know whom to ask.

Lage: That's the trouble.

Brower: I'm sure I told Anne about it immediately, and she might remember it, but of course right now I have this difficulty in hearing her at all because of her voice and my hearing, put together don't make—

Lage: Don't go together.

Brower: Don't help conversations.

Lage: Right. Okay, let's pause for a second here.

Interview #4: April 8, 1999
[Begin Tape 7, Side A]

Brower: Well, I have to look at words again, to become a good wordsmith, but I was getting into this book about natural capitalism. I did a lot of thinking about that, and in the course of thinking about it, I realized, at the age of eighty-six, there was something wrong with the concept of conservation—basically wrong. It is not following the pattern of nature, is not worried about the schedule, it just counts on things going on and continuing, enduring, being perpetual. But conservation has been working mostly, for this whole century, since it was dreamed up, it's just been a matter of budgeting how fast you use it up—not how fast do you use it, but not use it up.

Lage: Yes, but *you've* never had that definition of conservation.

Brower: Well, I was just looking at what it meant. That is, I felt enough uneasy about conservation that I wanted to start being a preservationist—which John Muir was, whereas Pinchot was the conservationist. And I realized way back then that difference, but then, you know, preservationist became a way of just dismissing people: "Oh, he's just a preservationist." So I find that it's rather disconcerting that my thinking still has to evolve after eighty-six years [laughs].

Lage: Now, is your thinking evolved, or just your desire to change the words?

Brower: It's more than the words, it's the concept that I'm just going over in my head now. I'm looking at a new manuscript—the best presentation I've seen so far—on how we can move to the use of hydrogen instead of our fossil fuels. And hydrogen, of course, once you use it it becomes water, so it's a better waste product than most. And you can't quite exploit it the way you can other things. It [the book] points out that the people who stayed aboard the Hindenberg when it had its gas explosion all escaped. Those who tried to drop out couldn't, because hydrogen burns up and it doesn't burn that hot.

So I'm running into all these things, and I'm finding a basic disagreement with people with whom I've been agreeing very much. Right now I've got to disagree with some of the best thinking that's going on in our technical world: that of the Rocky Mountain Institute, which was started by Amory Lovins. I go back to thinking that I've done a great job in getting Amory out of Oxford before he became too dedicated a physicist, but now he's getting into another problem, as one of the brightest people on earth, that I've got to talk to him about.

Lage: Now, tell me why you're disagreeing with him.

Brower: Well, they're thinking that one of the fine ways to get hydrogen is from hydroelectric dams, where you take that electricity and convert the water to

hydrogen to reuse and become water again when you've used it. Well, we're working very hard to get rid of dams.

I have to go back now for my source—not to anything the Bible has to say about that, except some things I'm looking up now that I'm finding in Isaiah and a few other people, but with no laughter—but I'm finding just great help from Alexander Pope in that one little bit on the "Essay of Man" where he said, "Whatever is, is right." And that has to be worked over now in view of what's going on at the moment, and for the last quarter, or two and a half, centuries—[it should be] "Whatever *was*, is right." Whatever he encountered at that time had been invented by nature, which is worked through and designed much more carefully than we have. It had to.

I'm just thinking, here is an outfit—Rocky Mountain Institute—that is thinking very thoroughly of certain points, but has left out a consequence which is of enormous importance.

Lage: It's left out the effect on the rivers, you mean? The dams—

Brower: It's left out the effect on rivers, that dams do not last, whatever the river is made for—which is moving material goods from one place to another, from a mountain to a sea—there's a function that is quite required by the natural systems, including what the rivers bring to the sea that feeds the sea, that feeds us. Now there are consequences; unless you remember those, you've forgotten something.

Then the other one I'm looking into right now is the steps necessary to make the Natural Step work. That's the new idea that's come into Sweden that's agreed on by many countries. I'm an ill-informed advocate of it at the moment.

Lage: The Natural Step.

Brower: The Natural Step—that's the name of it, but the essence is that there are four particular parts to it. And the last one is one that I'll talk about next, but the first is that we should stop taking from the earth things that we can't handle when we get them. I'll just do the quick example of uranium. We can't handle it. We don't know what to do with it, yet. It's safer locked away by natural systems. Now that we brought it out, we don't know what to do with it.

Then the other thing is we've got to stop putting on the earth things that the earth can't handle. So after we've figured out what *we* can handle, now what can the earth handle? The earth cannot handle plastic. It doesn't know what to do. It doesn't have the immunities necessary to get plastic back into the natural systems. Everything it had before that point, it got back into the system; there was no waste. It was either used in some other form, or moved about, but it

was still used, all of it, no waste. And we have become the experts in waste-making.

Lage: Absolutely.

Brower: Then the next [part of the Natural Step] is you don't lose anything; you watch out, and you preserve everything you cannot replace. And a species is irreplaceable. You take it apart, we don't know how to put it back together. We couldn't reconstruct a worm. We don't know how to do that.

Lage: They're working on it.

Brower: That's true, they're working on it, but you can make sure that they’re going to miss some of the consequences that nature got over missing three hundred years ago. It takes longer to do it right. Nature has found that out.

Then the last one is equity, and that gets into human behavior—our behavior within our own species and every other species. We can take that wonderful word from Bernadette Cozart, that we must be the youngest species of all because everything else knows what to do. Well, it took time to learn and we haven't learned yet. That's the challenge now—how do we learn how to do it right? Not what to do, but just how? My quick example there is that there is inequity to Bill Gates with his $87 billion, or whatever the number is this week. It's a huge amount. Our roughly three hundred billionaires on earth now control more money than roughly the bottom half of the world's population. That's not equitable.

Lage: Is this—

Brower: So what we're missing here is how to handle each other and how to deal fairly with each other, how to share, and so on—one of the few things that have just been missed by the industrial revolution. And it's getting grosser and grosser, the inequity that we're now suffering. The world is suffering from it, but religions didn't quite figure out how to handle that. Though I don't know enough about religions to know which came out best, my idea right now is that it's probably the Buddhists. Some of the things that we talked about is one that I'm having more fun with now. My great idea is to send Moses back up the mountain to bring down the other tablets.

Lage: Right. [laughs]

Brower: He brought down the ten commandments which tell us how to deal with each other reasonably well—I'm not complaining about that—but we don't seem to mind killing people and stealing. [laughs] But we don't consider at all in those commandments what we're doing to the earth—not a whisper of an idea, none. So I've been complaining about that and explaining that when the religions were invented by us, of course, naturally on our own, we thought that God

must look like us, so we'd say we were built in his image. That's a nice reversal in logic, or lack of logic. The rest of it is that we have not learned—and not too many religions learn—how to get together, so we have on our own the song that children learn how to sing, "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching on to war." Oh? Was that really what Christ was talking about? But they say, as a Christian soldier. Jesus wasn't carrying tank soldiers around, so you look into the New Testament for that, and I tried to remember the little bits I did learn when I did read the whole Bible at the age of eleven, but and what I remember most there—my mother remembered because she was very religious and had lots of quotations—

Lage: What kinds of quotations?

Brower: Well, "Love serveth long, and is kind." And then they edited it—they didn't like four letter words, so they made it “charity.” Well, charity isn't quite as complete a word as love, but in any event, that, "Love serveth long and is kind," the attitudes are pretty good on how we deal with each other. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Well, not yet. [laughs]

Lage: Are these things that your mother talked to you about?

Brower: These are things that she could quote. She could remember that. And I remember a few others, but then here's this one of Jesus: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Lage: Isn't that one that John Muir quotes, also?

Brower: Well, John Muir just picked it up. That was part of his thinking all the way through. And as far as I was concerned, it proved to be contagious. [laughs] But then the other one from Jesus considered the ant: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard. Consider her ways and be wild."

Lage: Oh, and be wild! You're editing. [laughter]

Brower: Yes. Well, is it, "Consider her ways and be saved"? [be wise] And then the old one I've been using for a long time—and it's just totally appropriate in this era of sprawl—is from Isaiah: "Woe to them that build house to house and join field to field ‘til there be no place that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." That was a plea for wilderness. No sprawl.

Lage: That's a very apt quote.

Brower: That was just terribly good in our discussion yesterday about what's community. Well, community, if it learns the importance of wilderness, then it'll be all right, but if it doesn't, it'll just sprawl until it's outsprawled the possibility to sprawl anymore because there's nothing left to sprawl.

Lage: What do you think of [thinking in] the academic world that's redefining wilderness or questioning whether there really is any such thing as wilderness. William Cronon and others—are you familiar with that idea of wilderness as a social construct?

Brower: Well, I'm watching this, and I've got to take it apart as soon as I can. People are questioning what is one of the most valid things we have because they haven't thought it through. I'm working on that.

Lage: I guess they're partly saying that, you know, earth is touched by man every place and even the things that we call wilderness are already—

Brower: But we exist solely because there was wilderness before we upset everything. If we go on with what I later started working on—that the wildness within us—[if] you don't understand it outside, it bothers you. Just think a little bit about the wilderness or wildness within you and what makes it possible for you to operate. In fact, if you're doing a lot of operating, lots of things are in the right place. There seems to be some such a thing as a genetic skill by nature that we are learning how to screw up before we learn how to celebrate. So I can carry this on forever, but I end up now saying that, remember, considering the wildness within you: that you have immunities, you have eyelashes in the right place, your eyes blink every few seconds so that the eye will continue to work, because you had to work a lubrication system out, and then you had to know what to do with food, and you have to know how to hear and how to see through your eyes—and all those senses that you are aware of without realizing that there is an operation of senses you're not yet aware of but they're operating every day. That is, you are not aware of whether to stop and call upon your immunity; that's all done for you. And the digestive systems: that's all handled for you. And what you do when you breathe and what you do in how you take oxygen, how you find red cells along—you make this transfer of oxygen and get rid of the CO_2. And you do not think about that; that is part of your wildness.

And where did the wildness come from? It did not come from the industrial revolution, it did not come from our brain—it was here a long time before that. It was there, that capability of life, in all its magic and all its whatever you want to call it. It was here billions of years ago. And each of us is still at this end of the perfect transmission of the magic or whatever you want to call it, of life, from the first life on earth to everyone here now alive, to every living thing on the planet.

Lots of things fail, but we are this side, this end of total perpetual perfection and passing that information on. And we didn't invent it, it was invented in the wilderness, because that's all there was. If you just think about wilderness as a place to exercise and feel good, you're missing the point.

Lage: Let me ask you, because I want to get you into the past—

Brower: That was my way into the past. These are the things I'm looking at and looking for and finding a little bit more here at 86.8. [laughs] I got to write about it today some more. In the business of draining Lake Powell, I got to explain why we've got to do this to a lot of our dams, and what's the problem with dams besides they're a nice way to get hydroelectricity.

Lage: But what I want to get to, though—can you recall—let's try to go back in time, when your thinking began to evolve from looking at wilderness as a place to recreate, or as a scenic resource only, when you were starting to have this broader view of wilderness. Do you remember?

Brower: Yes, I do. I didn't have the broad view, for example, when I wrote the first foreword to the Sierra Club *Handbook*. I was just figuring out that we owed a debt to the future that was equivalent to what we'd received in the past, because they gave us wilderness, they set aside wilderness, and reserved it in part to other forms.

Lage: Now when was that first handbook?

Brower: That was '47. I started to think about this, but that's where I was beginning to put it together. '47 was much later, because I was thinking about that in World War II.

Lage: You were thinking of this—

Brower: Yes, I did a piece for the *Yodeler*, "How to Kill a Wilderness," because I saw what they'd done in Europe to kill wilderness and that we hadn't done that yet—and I went into that concept. And before that, then, in the wilderness legislation.

Then when we first had our first Sierra Club Wilderness Conference in '39 [1949], I was thinking about that. And I was thinking about it even earlier than that when the very conservative Commonwealth Club—the question of one of the sections was, “Should we continue to build roads in the Sierra?” And the membership said no, but the Sierra Club hadn't made up that opinion yet. The Sierra Club was still looking in the board of directors for new roads across the Sierra, which is just pretty sickening to look at what they were.

Lage: This was in the thirties?

Brower: This was in the twenties. because they were ready to have a road up past Vernal and Nevada Falls.

Lage: Oh, my goodness!

Brower: Up to Tenaya Canyon and so on. They hadn't got it yet.

Lage: One evolution was in the attitude toward wilderness and biodiversity and all that, but another evolution that did occur at some point was looking beyond the issues of wilderness and land and thinking about population, pollution, and pesticides. Do you remember when those issues began in your mind?

Brower: Well, I remember when it began in my head, yes.

Lage: Yes, in your head, that's what I want.

Brower: That was just my proximity to Dan Luten. He got going on population, and he asked the question, "Can a conservation organization be one if it has no policy on population?"

Lage: When, do you remember? I told you I wouldn't make you remember dates, but can you—[laughs]

Brower: Well, I hadn't remembered Dan Luten yet, because I had not heard of what he wrote in the John Muir Hut on John Muir Pass about what Hervey Voge and I had done—when he said that all that could have been accomplished with the energy contained in a pint of Texaco Firechief gasoline.

Lage: [laughs] He did say that?

Brower: He said that, yes.

Lage: Did he put it in the mountain register?

Brower: Yes, he did.

Lage: When was that, do you remember?

Brower: Well, Hervey and I'd gone through in '34, and I guess he was through either that year or shortly after. [laughter]

Lage: That must be saved in the Bancroft Library because those mountain registers are saved.

Brower: Yes, well, I guess they've saved quite a bit on the Muir hut. I don't know, I haven't heard from the man who was really working hard on that for a while. He lost his companion in a mountaineering accident and sort of faded from the scene. Anyhow, that began.

Then when Dan Luten lived across the street when we were in the process of building the house, he offered me a shower when I was dusty from working on the basement. And because of the proximity, then, from that point on, we've never been farther than three blocks apart.

Lage: So you think this was like in the early sixties, or the late fifties, or the mid-fifties? Can you trace that?

Brower: Well, the house was built in late '46.

Lage: But the talk about population?

Brower: That's where—we were building that house because we were about to have our fourth child. And Anne was already feeling a little bit guilty about this because we'd been friends with Dan Luten.

Lage: Oh, it was that early on.

Brower: He'd been over giving conservation advice to MacArthur after V-J Day and so we became quite aware of that then. And it goes on to one day I was just watching television—before we had color—it was black and white and on a PBS program, if they had PBS and I think they did—[and there] was Paul Ehrlich. I heard this man talk about population and I said to myself, this guy is a Ralph Nader of population and got on the telephone and found him and urged him to write a book for us on that subject in the Sierra Club, and he said no. Then I got in touch with Ian Ballantine and Ian Ballantine got him to say yes.

Lage: And that was '68. *The Population Bomb* was—

Brower: So there was the first book on population that has sold more than 5,000 copies, and it sold 3 million, in different languages.

Lage: But had you been aware of less popular versions of what he talked about?

Brower: There were talks about population long before that. Fairfield Osborn was one of the people to worry about that in *Our Plundered Planet*. I was picking up these little bits from Sam [Samuel H.] Ordway and others that were primarily working with the Conservation Foundation, so these all began to fall together.

Lage: It seems like you brought many of these ideas into the the Sierra Club.

Brower: Or I sold them really good and exploited them. That was the best I could do.

Lage: Was a lot of it through reading or was it from the wilderness conferences, or contacts like Dan Luten?

Brower: Well, Dan had a lot to do with it. It was just a pretty big mix.

Lage: You mentioned the *Journal of Planning*, for instance—that it helped you think about land use.

Brower: That was planning. And remember, that's where Mel Webber came up with the idea of the line, "Soil is old-fashioned." The hell it is. [laughs]

Lage: Did that journal have ideas that you subscribed to? I know you didn't subscribe to "Soil is old-fashioned."

Brower: No, well, I began to think of planning because the journal was all about that. And when we ran into William H. Whyte through that, and what he had said, then I began to open up all kinds of ideas about what we do about planning. And at that point, I guess I began to feel—I picked up from somewhere else, if you want to know—the idea that prioritization was one of our sins, that priorities are not necessary, that they're too severe a limit. And so I had to work on that one. A university doesn't say, "Well, we're just going to pick three or four subjects and that should stand in for that one we ignore—geography," for example, which they don't have.

Lage: They don't have a geography department?

Brower: Stanford doesn't believe in geography.

Lage: Now you say you picked that up from somewhere else, about prioritization?

Brower: I picked that up from Newton Drury. There are various favorite quotes and unfavorite quotes. My favorite from him, I guess, was about national parks when he said, "We have no money, we can do no harm."

Lage: Oh, yes, I remember that. That's a good one.

Brower: That's priceless. That's one that we've got to work on some more. That gets on to equity.

Lage: Now what about pesticides as a concern?

Brower: Pesticides I'd thought about. I'd thought about it in my own way when Justice [William O.] Douglas asked me what he should say when he was going to advise the Ford Foundation on what to do about conservation. That's where I got my most flattering letter, when he asked me, "Well, what should I say?" [laughs]

Lage: When was that, do you remember?

Brower: It's recorded somewhere. I think you've got that down, but I don't quite remember the year now. That's too hard.

Lage: So how did that lead to your thinking about pesticides?

Brower: I gave five recommendations that he passed on to the Ford Foundation. And I had help from Dan Luten coming up with those, so it was post-Luten. One of them was that we should measure effort on the economics of peaceful stability. And they should! Then I talked about preservation and a few other odds and ends, but I was thinking of that—

Lage: This couldn't have been too early on, I wouldn't think.

Brower: Not too early, but at that point I was making the argument about what we were doing in the chemical industry where we were destroying soil. We were losing soil fertility, and every time we expedited the removal of a crop, we were losing something we weren't keeping track of. If you expedite production of food, and take it away, you're not doing what nature did in the first place, keeping, reusing everything where it could be used. This included the chemicals that you were taking out of the earth and didn't know you were taking out and didn't know how to replace.

So I was talking about that kind of chemistry, which infuriated Joel Hildebrand, because he was a very good chemist, very proud of his chemistry, who thought that no sophomore drop-out from Berkeley should be telling anyone what to do about chemistry. [laughter]

Lage: He did get pretty infuriated—and over Rachel Carson, as well.

Brower: Yes, so the chemical industry didn't know quite what to do with Rachel Carson.

Lage: Was Rachel Carson's book important in your thinking?

Brower: Terribly important. I read it all in the airport in Salt Lake City when it was in the *New Yorker* and I said, "Wow." People weren't saying “wow” yet, but I must have said something like that.

Lage: Was it new? Were the thoughts new to you—or the worries?

Brower: The important part was new—to think that life—we're trying to kill [life]. When we kill some pest we don't like, it is the same life forces that are operating on ourselves. We don't know, if we’re killing it, what are we doing to us? She woke me up to that. I guess I was suspecting it, but here was someone who explained it very clearly. I couldn't get over that.

Lage: And that was offensive to—I'm just thinking of two people [in the Sierra Club] that *Silent Spring* was most offensive to—Joel Hildebrand and Tom Jukes.

Brower: Yes, Tom Jukes especially. Anne and I joked that whoever Rachel had debating her on television or radio she must have picked, because he was so stupid. All she could do was make points when he talked. [laughs]

Lage: But that wasn't Tom Jukes.

Brower: No, that wasn't Tom Jukes. No, that was a friend of Tom Jukes. Then that led to other little problems, such as, one of the people who worked for one of the chemical companies he [Jukes] wanted to see on the Sierra Club board. And I was executive director—so that gives a date—and I didn't want to see him on the board, so I talked Paul Brooks into running instead. He was a candidate who was instantly much more positive than anybody Tom Jukes had to suggest.

Lage: Was Tom Jukes a power in the club?

Brower: No.

Lage: Was his being so unhappy with you important?

Brower: It was important enough that we had a board meeting in Tolumne Meadows. And because the needle miners were dropping little bits of excrement on the table [laughter] and they were giving the pine trees a rough time, so we voted to go along with DDT spraying, over my opposition. I think Charlotte Mauk went along, I don't know. But anyhow, we didn't have the message yet, and Tom was working us over.

And then of course the final—I've talked with Tom since, but what really bugged us was when I was asked to talk at Grace Cathedral [in 1969], and he was passing out pamphlets against me outside, not knowing that all I was going to do was use [Loren] Eiseley's great speech on nature and chemicals when I talked. But Eiseley was talking about chemicals in quite a different way in one of his very best passages about the birds that flew at dusk and their song. He walked along and picked up a bit of earth and thought about the chemicals in the earth and the chemicals that were flying and doing various things to life, for life. It was just a beautiful quotation, where he called it a miracle. That was what I was doing, and that was my speech. And I was so moved by what Eiseley was saying then, that I had to squeeze my toes when I was talking until it hurt, so I could think of something besides my voice breaking over the beauty of what Eiseley had said.

Lage: His works were very moving.

Brower: They still are. So to move clear on from there to what we're working on now, there aren't these supplementary books to the Bible. I want, since the Bible doesn't talk about laughter or about what we should do for the earth—except a couple of examples I just gave and the one I haven't given yet—there's so

little, that we need to know, well, what did Muir say, what did Thoreau say, what did Rachel Carson say?

Lage: And so these are going to be the other books.

Brower: This is another book—and I guess books within a book—because, see, you have the books of the Bible—just a series of passages as a supplement. And I think we can have fun just going through and picking up the kinds of quotes that are primarily by Russ Butcher, or the Sierra—

[End Tape 7, Side A]

[Begin Tape 7, Side B]

Lage: —West Ridge.

Brower: Yes, so we got a lot of quotations from *Everest: The West Ridge* [by Thomas Hornbein] including those from an old book—some of the first mentions of wild places. That was in a book that I got from Francis Farquhar. I knew about him because he'd been working with the wonderful press—the brothers.

Lage: Where are you going to publish this book, this addition to the Bible? Do you think you can get the religious presses to publish it?

Brower: Oh, the Sierra Club is going to do it. Of course, remember I'm running for the presidency in the next board meeting. [laughs] Next month. That's in May. If I do, it's going to be fun getting publishing back in order.

Lage: Definitely. The religious presses in this country do very well. They get their books well distributed, and wouldn't you think that would be a good venue if you could get them to accept it?

Brower: Well, it may be. I think that they would probably be very loath to accept any criticism of what has been going on, so that I think they would be pretty satisfied with things the way they are.

Lage: That could be. It'd be nice to be able to couch it in such a way that you could get it out to people who might pick up on the—I mean, it's basically a religious sentiment that you're expressing—not traditionally religious, but it's—

Brower: Yes, well, I think it's going to be terribly important. I think I already told you that—well, I've got lots of criticism. It's fun saying somebody should take the Pope to lunch and explain things to him, and it's fun saying that the guy should meet the Dalai Lama, who says, "Solve the population problem very easily: just more monks," with laughter. That is, the Pope doesn't laugh; the Dalai Lama laughs very often.

Lage: Yes. Anyway, I still want to pull us into the past. Are you in the middle of a thought?

Brower: Well, most of the time I try to be. [laughter]

Lage: But do you mind if we go back to our schedule?

Brower: No, I can wander off—and this relates, I guess, to my prioritization problem. I didn't tell you about Drury. He was dropped as director of the National Park Service and became head of [the Division of] Beaches and Parks in California. He fought priorities every time he had a chance to, because he said, "Once I get a list of the priorities, the things I think are most important, that means I just killed a whole series at the bottom of the list. And I'm not going to kill any of them."

Lage: So he refused to list [priorities].

Brower: So he'd go on to figure out, "Well, what we need to do is organize so they can take care of all of them and not just say, 'Well, let's just pick and choose so we don't have to work too hard—or we don't have to think anew.'"

Lage: You do talk about limits. Now are there limits to our abilities to affect change in so many areas?

Brower: [laughs] I'll worry about that when we begin to poke into them, into our abilities. We have enormous abilities and they pop up through the creative force, whatever that springs from. I haven't thought very long about where this creativity finds its origin in each of us, except that it's there. And MTV doesn't have any understanding. [laughter]

Lage: Okay, all right. Now I took us off; I'm going to get you back.

Brower: So that's about limits and me.

Lage: Yes. And that's come up over again.

Brower: If you spread yourself too thin—people say you'll spread yourself too thin if you don't concentrate, if you don't prioritize, so I simply quip, "That's my weight-reduction system."

Lage: This must come up many times in places like the Sierra Club board. And that's what we're going to talk about next. In 1983, you went back to the Sierra Club board. Can you talk a little bit about what led you to run for the board at that time?

Brower: Somebody and I don't know who it was that time—I know who it was the next time, but that time I'm trying—

Lage: At that time you were still chairman of Friends of the Earth.

Brower: President, I think.

Lage: Yes, I think. In 83? No, I think you were chairman.

Brower: No, that's right, I was chairman. It was time to retire in favor of—but I'd been, oh, kind of needling at the Sierra Club all the way along. That was what Friends of the Earth was supposed to do in life, I think, needle the Sierra Club back into doing things I wanted them to do in the first place. [laughter]

Lage: You don't remember who urged you to run?

Brower: I don't remember who urged, and I wish I did. I should, but I do remember the first two people who signed the petition.

Lage: And it was a petition because you weren't nominated.

Brower: Yes, it was by petition. The first two names on it were Ansel Adams and Dick Leonard.

Lage: Ah. Seems very appropriate.

Brower: Yes, that was very important to me. That's where, remember, Ansel said, "Dave, will you behave?" And I said, “No.”

Lage: Was your—well, not your attempt—successful attempt to run for the board connected at all with Friends of the Earth and the goals you had for Friends of the Earth?

Brower: Yes, I was still working on that, and then still continuing my errant ways, financially—that everybody thought were errant; I thought were not. And that's where I began to ask the question, "Well, not how much does it cost if we do it, but how much does it cost if we don't?" And that's where I'm stuck right now—that that's the expense we have not chosen to meet on the earth, bringing it up to now—as Gretchen Daily said in her book, *Nature's Services*[8].

Lage: You keep bringing us up to now. I'm trying to go back.

Brower: Yes, I know it. It's rough.

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[8]*Nature's Services: Societal Dependence on Natural Ecosystems*, edited by Gretchen C. Daily, Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997.

Lage: Did you have particular issues in mind that you wanted to push the Sierra Club on?

Brower: Well, I had one thing I wanted them to do. Our executive director then was not interested in what I thought was terribly important to me as executive director: that I have a discretionary fund. They gave me one—I had one that was $25,000 and if I ran out of that, then I'd have to make a case for adding to it, and I succeeded most of the time. But that discretion, I thought, was terribly important. Now that was part of my thinking. I think there are some people who didn't want to do that, and subsequent executive directors have not dared touch that idea, and so I was working on that.

Lage: Something they could move fast with.

Brower: Yes, so they could move very fast and make their very best decision. If they make a mistake, you could pound on them later, but let's have this freedom so that we can be swift. I guess I got this out of, more than anything else, from my military experience. But then I got this idea, I guess, before that from my mountaineering. You had to make decisions sometimes, and you didn't have a lot of time to make a decision. If a rock is coming down at you, well, you better know how to move in a hurry. [laughs]

Lage: You don't take a vote on that.

Brower: But that's what happened and what became part of my philosophy. And August Frugé, although he wasn't always happy about it at the University Press—and other people weren't—he realized that's what you had to do. I got that image from him: if you're in the middle of the table, it's too safe. You've got to be around the edge. That's where things can happen. And I haven't forgotten that.

Lage: He talked about this in the context of the press?

Brower: Just whatever context. We talked about any subject there was. But that was important. And that is, in effect, what he did at the press, when it became the number one press—I don't know where it is now, but it did very well. And Sam [Farquhar] was good, but August was thinking something beyond the printing department and the design of the book. He had the idea of how do you get more of them out. And so, it’s a long story.

Lage: Yes, it is a long story, and I think it's been written about. I happened to pick up a book on the press where you're called August Frugé's expeditor.

Brower: [laughs]

Lage: Does that characterize what you did with him at the press?

Brower: Well, there was something like that, yes. He was far more relaxed than I, at least in his manner. I think his mind was not relaxed at all.

Lage: But did he have you do some of the dirty work? That's what expeditor means to me. Maybe it doesn't.

Brower: Well, maybe he did. I just ran into somebody two lunches ago, from Binghamton in New York. And I said, "Oh, I've been there." I went there on various occasions because Vail Ballou [Press in Binghamton] was manufacturing a good many of our books—when August was wondering, "Well, we can't continue to manufacture our books at the University of California printing department because they charge too much." So we found much better prices elsewhere. Vail Ballou is very good, so that's what I knew about Binghamton.

And we finished the circle because this is the man who is now working on—to bring it up to date—the latest edition to our projects in Earth Island Institute, the Global CPR core—Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration.

Lage: I see.

Brower: And so that's moving something. Right off the bat we're going to be in three countries.

Lage: And coming after the president again.

Brower: Yes. [laughter] So I want to see a new and powerful alliance between these three organizations: Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and Earth Island Institute. Let's see what we can do with helping them think the way Ralph Nader does and Paul Hawkin and others.

The book I'm working on right now—helping edit—is *Natural Capitalism*. These are all for environmental purposes.

Lage: Okay. Now you mentioned the discretionary fund and you mentioned the executive director. When you came on the board in '83, Mike McCloskey was still executive director.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Just give me some feeling about how you looked at the Sierra Club at that point in time. Did you think it was not as powerful as when you'd left?

Brower: No, I looked at what happened to Mike because of what had happened to me, and what he therefore avoided more than I did. I realized he had been an extremely bold young man when we hired him and just a lawyer coming up. He didn't pass the bar ever, but just really he was willing to take on meetings,

get resolutions through, and so on. He just had very good thinking and was very persuasive, and then he cooled it a bit when he became executive director because I had just been fired, and he thought it would be a good idea to avoid that.

Lage: There was such a fear of having a strong executive director when they took him on. They didn't even want to name him the executive director. So do you think his approach as executive director was shaped by what had happened to you?

Brower: Yes, I think it was. I mean, he was very bright in his own way.

I was called, much to my disgust, charismatic. I didn't know what you do with charisma, but if there is any—I suppose there is some—and it seems to work, I think it's primarily because I have a sense of humor. I don't think it's because I can think.

Lage: [laughs] Mike seemed to, in his tenure as executive director, stress lobbying in Washington a great deal, kind of hands-on, strong, powerful lobbying. Is that something you would agree with?

Brower: Oh, that's what he got from us. That is, I started Earth Island under the League of Conservation Voters. There was the whole argument about Marion Edey—what she did and what I did—but I started it. In fact I tried to start it in the Sierra Club in '57 at a meeting in Monterey of the Sierra Club Council. Phil Berry was interested in helping it, but didn't. Nobody quite caught it, but that was the first thing I wanted to do if I started a new organization, to get that going, the League of Conservation Voters—with the name stolen from the League of Women Voters. That was an easy steal, and it worked.

Lage: Well, I'm thinking of the kind of lobbying that was done for the Alaska lands [in the 1970s].

Brower: Sure. Well, that was done because Friends of the Earth started it. That is, it was the Sierra Club's policy to do something about Alaska. I was glad to see the Sierra Club pick it up because they had much more more power. I'd learned that from Howard Zahniser when he wanted the Sierra Club to pick up on wilderness rather than say this is my territory and you're bothering me if you get into my territory. He didn't say that; he went the other way. And that's what I wanted to see happen in Alaska, because I started working on that in the Sierra Club. They weren't doing enough, so we started doing quite a bit in Friends of the Earth, and then the Sierra Club picked it up. And Doug Scott, who I criticized later, did one superb job in organizing his defense of Alaska.

Lage: He really did. Okay, so on that [the Alaska campaign] you were happy with the club?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Did you see your return to the board as introducing a new issue, or changing the organizational setup, or what was your goal?

Brower: I just saw that maybe we could set an example. We[FOE] were just a little outfit. Most of our membership came from people who were a little disappointed with the Sierra Club when they fired me. So that was where we got our first membership. Then I wanted to see what we could get them to do, so there was Alaska, there was the SST [supersonic transport]—

Lage: So that was all before you went back [to the Sierra Club board]?

Brower: That was with Friends of the Earth. The Sierra Club picked it up and helped it happen.

Lage: Okay. It looked like one of the issues you took up right away when you came back to the club board was nuclear war and nuclear power.

Brower: The Sierra Club wasn't quite where it needed to be at that point. After I had been named honorary vice president when a nuclear engineer was a president of the Sierra Club, Larry Moss—that's when we got the Sierra Club to change its nuclear position. The one expression I mentioned to you before that I came up with on the atom was “the fist and the glove are [in] the same atom.” And that worked.

Lage: Now that was nuclear power. And then it looked like one of the real key conflicts on the board during that period was nuclear—

Brower: Nuclear power and nuclear war. Nuclear power was still the glove, they thought. They could not think that nuclear war was a glove; that was the fist.

Lage: Wasn't Steve Rauh and—let’s see, the names I saw associated with this issue on the board were Madge Strong and Steve Rauh.

Brower: No, he [Rauh] wasn’t on the board.

Lage: No, but interested in promoting—

Brower: They were very good. That's where the Sierra Club *Yodeler* really went to work—with Steve [as editor].

Lage: Were you working with them or just have similar views?

Brower: No, with Steve.

Lage: Because he was also in Friends of the Earth.

Brower: He was. He was also one of my assistants, and it was he who had—more than anybody—I worked hard on getting the Fate of the Earth conferences going, but he worked assiduously without much sleep or whatever and made it work.

Lage: Did the Sierra Club take part in the Fate of the Earth conferences?

Brower: They were the last of the fourteen other organizations that we wanted help from, and we barely got that. We were in a board meeting where Michele [Perrault] was president. Denny Wilcher, our fundraiser, was giving us a talk, and he'd been talking to other foundations. He'd got quite a bit of support. And we were trying to get the Sierra Club to go along, because we had other outfits in there. Maybe we had thirteen others then. The fourteenth, the Sierra Club, was very hard. But just at the last minute, Denny had talked too long, Michele said, and the meeting was about to be over and we were about to lose it, but it just squeaked through. Got no money from them.

Lage: No money, just to sign on the report.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Was that while you were on the board?

Brower: No, that was before. No, wait a minute—it was '82 that we had it.

Lage: '82. That was before. And '83 was when you ran for the board. Did that have something to do with your running for the board?

Brower: I think it must have because we were going to have another one [Fate of the Earth conference] two years later. I wanted to make sure the Sierra Club was along on that.

Lage: Did you still have an emotional tie? You seem to have not lost an emotional tie to the Sierra Club.

Brower: Oh, well, I couldn't.

Lage: Was that part of why you wanted to come back on the board?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Or was it more this geo-political—

Brower: No, it was just that I had been a member of the Sierra Club. I didn't leave the club, I just had to leave the board. But I didn't leave the club a bit, and they were generous in that when they began to see the light [laughter] and made me an honorary VP—to Ansel's disgust. And then they gave me the John Muir

Award. I was happy to get that since I suggested the existence of the John Muir Award, as well as the Colby Library, which hasn't fared so well.

Lage: Let's talk a little bit about the three executive directors that you saw just through that first term in office [after returning to the board]. There was quite a turnover. Mike [McCloskey] retired, or—

Brower: Mike—that was easy because, after all, I'd hired him in the first place. He was doing things that I hadn't gotten around to doing because he was very good. [inaudible]

Lage: Were you at all aware of why Mike left to become chairman?

Brower: Yes, totally aware. He was being kicked upstairs. And I was against that.

Lage: So even though you have some criticism of Mike, it sounds like, you didn't—

Brower: No, nothing like that. There were minor disagreements, no major disagreements. That was to come next. [laughs]

Lage: You mean with the next executive director.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Okay, I know you have something to say about the hiring process for the next executive director, who turned out to be Doug Wheeler.

Brower: I guess I initially worried about it because we'd gone through the business of getting a search committee in Friends of the Earth and ending up with two consecutive disasters. I'm not sure I have any use for search committees, and here was a search committee for executive director of the Sierra Club.

Lage: Was it an internal search committee?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Or they hired an outside group?

Brower: Well, they looked around to find people and there were some inside and some outside. And so we got a guy who'd voted twice for Reagan.

Lage: Was that known to everybody that Doug Wheeler was that much of a Reagan man?

Brower: It wasn't known to everybody. Doug was just—there was just the wrong thinking going on.

Lage: What was your understanding of the process? The actual vote on hiring him—was there discussion? Did you object at the time?

Brower: Where was I at the time?

Lage: You were a member of the board.

Brower: Was I member of the board when he was chosen? No.

Lage: Yes, you were on the board '83 to '88. And he came on in '85.

Brower: Hm.

Lage: So I do think you were there.

Brower: Then I was worried, but I was going to see, well, maybe it'll work out all right. At that point I knew the good things that Reagan had done. They had all been done not as president but as governor of California. And I knew who did that. That was Ike Livermore [Reagan's secretary for Resources in California].

Lage: Yes.

Brower: He was the guy that Reagan listened to then, and he had him on the transitional committee when they were talking about EPA. I remember the meeting with a bunch of environmentalists where Ike said, "Well, we have all these men and a couple of girls." I said, "Ike, that won't work."

Lage: [laughs] Did he take your criticism well?

Brower: Not too well. He didn't like that, I don't think, particularly because he'd married very successfully, that is, the granddaughter of J.P. Morgan.

Lage: I'd forgotten about that. [laughs]

Brower: Dina is wonderful.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: Then he was mad at me, remember, because of the book *The Last Redwoods*.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: It took—I never clued him on that, but his brother Put [Putnam Livermore] did.

Lage: But you made up with him?

Brower: Oh, we did. Yes, very much.

Lage: Let's get back to Wheeler. How did you see his tenure as executive director?

Brower: Well, I saw his difficulty of getting along, among other things, with the board. And some of the things he wanted to do the board wasn't ready to go along, and for one good reason, that he was off on a wrong track, on the wrong road.

Lage: Were these conservation issues, on the part of the board?

Brower: It was a conservation issue. He was still pro-nuclear. There were a few other odds and ends that worried me, but then what finally got him was—and that was the spring vote where he lost—what he wanted to do, he wanted to get our tax-deductible status back.

Lage: Oh, really!

Brower: Yes, and I couldn't buy that idea.

Lage: So he wanted to try to—

Brower: And we're not out of that woods yet. That is, that's another separate woods—the Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Foundation. Some of the foundation people did—I made a very bad original mistake in proposing that the foundation in 1960—that the directors all be former Sierra Club presidents. And former Sierra Club presidents are not, to a man, all very flexible in what was going to happen next, and flexibility is what the movement needed. I was glad when they moved away from that bad idea of mine and got other people. I was not happy while Dick Leonard was [foundation] president and made sure that none of the things I wanted funded got funded. [laughs]

Lage: But that relationship has changed over the years.

Brower: That has changed, but the problem has not changed since then. And that's where we go on to where I was opposing the selection of the steering committee and the advisors for the Sierra Club Centennial Campaign. I said, "Watch out. What are we going to do to stress the fact that we are not deductible?" And the board did not heed me. They got a committee that was working to get money for the foundation—

Lage: To get the deductible money.

Brower: And they got more than $90 million, and that has affected things ever since. The Sierra Club has a lot of money [tax deductible contributions]: what can we *not* do in order to qualify for it? And that's an oversimplification because in case of doubt I want to oversimplify.

Lage: It affects their program, is what you're saying.

Brower: Yes, so my criticism of Carl Pope on that—I guess I haven't quite said it to him, but I've said it to others, that he's been so anxious about this complex situation that he's come up with instructions to the chapters and groups on what you do in order to get or not get money. It's a very complicated procedure, and my quip again is it'd be more fun to commit suicide than to try to follow those instructions.

Lage: To fill out the forms and keep the records.

Brower: That's the residue of, again, a search committee—a search for people to help fund the centennial. That was certainly a great opportunity to get funded, but there were people on the foundation who said, "Well, let's make a real effort to go for the hard money. It's there."

That goes on to what I want to do next, that is, reform the Internal Revenue Service.

Lage: Yes, that's the one you're going to get support on.

Brower: Yes, that's fun. I keep thinking about how I'm going to write this—I've got to write a short letter, but then have a lot of reasons and get these all lined up: "It's terribly important that the most powerful country in the world make it as easy for people to save the earth as they make it to trash it." And then go on from there and say, "How would you restructure the Internal Revenue Code to make it possible for you to do that?" And, "I'd like to see your ideas." I want everybody's ideas. I think that it's going to work.

Lage: And people will come up with it.

Brower: It's going to work because we're finding out that we're just not handling the situation right now. My one-liner—to get to now, and maybe I'd go back to where it came from—is that the world needs a pacemaker. I've got one, I know how useful it is.

Lage: Yes, that's a good concept, too.

Brower: And so my quip for that was that I wanted a pacemaker so that I could keep up with myself, and the world needs a pacemaker to keep up with the problems humanity has caused and need not have. These are just quips, quick-liners, because if you can't say it in ten syllables or three words, forget it.

Lage: Right. People won't listen, let's face it. Okay, now, Doug Wheeler was disposed of.

Brower: Shall we go back that far? How far back are we?

Lage: We're back in '86. Part of that was a revolt by the staff against Wheeler. They really didn't seem happy with the way he ran the club.

Brower: Right.

Lage: Did you get involved in that at all?

Brower: Certainly I was aware of it and I was aware of the things that happened, that maybe the staff needs to be budged, but it seems to me that he hadn't found a way to do what the staff was quite interested in. This overlaps a bit. At that point we had somebody in the foundation, I forget who, who was very critical of what Doug Scott was doing. Well, I was critical of some of the things, but there are some things he did—

[End Tape 7, Side B]

[Begin Tape 8, Side A]

Lage: Now, are you talking about Doug Wheeler or Doug Scott? You said Doug Scott.

Brower: Wheeler. Well, Doug Scott was very important. Doug Scott had a great deal to do with understanding what Wheeler wasn't doing that we needed to do. The foundation wanted a person that was conservative, and because that was happening, thought that Doug Scott was doing wrong things.

Lage: I see.

Brower: Doug Scott was doing a lot of very right things, and I'm using right and left the wrong way, but that's all right. [laughs] I think we had a contract with Doug Wheeler, and in order to change that position, we were vulnerable for severance. And I think I remember it correctly: a quarter of a million dollars.

Lage: Boy, you could do a lot with that.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: So the hiring was a mistake.

Brower: Yes, that was a mistake.

Lage: Do you remember the uproar when he changed the club's seal? He changed the seal without discussing it with anybody, as I heard it told, and had new stationary made up, and everybody had a fit. Now I notice the seal has been changed again.

Brower: Yes, well, the seal was first changed by Francis Farquhar without any discussion by the board.

Lage: How did he change it?

Brower: Well, if you look back at the covers of the *Bulletin*, you'll see the old one was designed by Willis Polk, and then we finally had the one by Bob Washbish, who is a designer at Taylor & Taylor.

Lage: So that was done without discussion or much happiness?

Brower: There was no discussion by the board that I was aware of, just Francis had a sense of design. I was a little bit worried about it because there was a literal quality to what Polk did and an ecological understanding of what he was doing that was missed by Washbish and has been missed ever since. And we went back to Polk for a while, and I want us to go back there, because I think the antiquity of it is one of its beauties.

Lage: But Wheeler thought it should be modernized?

Brower: I don't remember that, somehow.

Lage: And then I guess Carl Pope thinks it should be modernized.

Brower: Yes, he went along with that. Martin Litton and I have had fits about that, but not a good enough fit yet.

Lage: Because isn't something absolutely wrong about it—the trees?

Brower: Yes, no, the tree is now not a Sequoia. They've forgotten any reference to the Sequoia tree, which Willis Polk had built into the design. And we have it look as if the tree was in Yosemite, which it isn't. It's in the park, but not the valley. We've lost the character that Half Dome needed—Willis Polk had it in it. And we've lost Ritter—Mount Ritter is missing.

Lage: Oh.

Brower: I'm sorry that I'm about the only person left who knows this. [laughter]

Lage: Well, I see on the email some discussion about the new seal. Okay, where are we? Now, Michael Fischer, he was the next executive director hired. What did you think of Michael Fischer? You just had a short time on the board when he was executive director.

Brower: I had just a short time and I was advocating Denis Hayes.

Lage: Oh, was he a candidate?

Brower: Yes, he was interested, and I thought that he'd be just absolutely ideal. He had good international sense, and he was certainly getting awfully good ideas out. He talked extremely well, thought well, wrote well.

Lage: Was he seriously considered, or were you his only—

Brower: No, no, let's see—I guess there was Richard Cellarius. Oh, he would not be satisfactory. He would not be good for the Sierra Club. Just about like Harold Bradley and Ansel. Cellarius was just missing the point entirely and we didn't get along too well.

Lage: Did you have an opportunity to see Michael Fischer in the way he took over the executive directorship?

Brower: Well, I was, I would say, tolerant. We had some good talks, but I was very worried initially by him when he objected at the conference in Wheeler Hall on restoration. He was against the concept.

Lage: Oh, he was?

Brower: Yes, he thought that would get in the way of—that is, people would use that as an excuse for mitigation, something like that. So yes, at the conference he was speaking against it. And there were other comments against it by him and in some of the Sierra Club literature. And then we got into the situation where the Sierra Club—at least, Michael Fischer in the Sierra Club—was opposed to what the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund was doing, because they had hired a lawyer to be lobbying on forestry, where the Sierra Club was hesitant and SCLDF was not. And I had a wonderful lunch at one time with Michael Fischer along with Farley on a little boat going out in the bay for lunch with Anne.

Lage: Now, who's Farley?

Brower: He's in the comic strip in the *[San Francisco] Chronicle*. I didn't mention his name because it escaped me for a while.

Lage: You mean the cartoonist who does Farley?

Brower: Yes. Phil, or whoever he is [Phil Frank]. We had a lunch, very good lunch with him because Frank, among other things, is a tremendous cartoonist and has wonderful ideas. And his bears are great.

Lage: That's right! That is a wonderful cartoon.

Brower: And Bruce [the comic strip raven] is great. It's nice to have somebody listening to birds for a change.

Lage: Yes, was this lunch about old-growth forestry?

Brower: He [Fischer] said no, I want to go, I've got to talk to some people about SCLDF—not letting them use the Sierra Club name. I'd heard about this inquiry on another occasion when we went with Huey Johnson up to the Sacramento Valley to look at one of the bird refuges. I'd heard more about the dissatisfaction he had with the aggressiveness of SCLDF, and I argued with him on that. I said to him that I think that the SCLDF is on the right track and the club isn't, so finally when I got the chance to write him a letter, which I don't know whether you have or not, I said, "I understand you don't want the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund to use the Sierra Club name. I think it is the Sierra Club that is not entitled to use it."

Lage: [laughs] Those are strong words!

Brower: Yes! [laughs] I don't think he really loved that.

Lage: This was Michael Fischer you were writing?

Brower: Yes. Earlier I'd been at a meeting at the other David Orr's outfit in Arkansas—his Meadowcreek project—and he had this terrific thing going at Fox. This is in Arkansas, where the Arkansas person said with Arkansas humor, "Well, a lot of people living in Fox don't know where it is."

Lage: That's funny.

Brower: But David Orr had a terrific conference going, awfully good stuff. He's one of the really bright people we've got. This is the David Orr of Oberlin.

Lage: There's more than one David Orr?

Brower: Yes, there's one here who's on the Sierra Club board. David Orr west and David Orr east.

Lage: I'm glad you mentioned that. He's from Oberlin—David Orr east, you say?

Brower: The David Orr I'm talking about is the Arkansas Orr, the Meadowcreek project in Arkansas. David Orr here is now living in southern California but he's very active in supporting me.

But while I was back there, I got some word about what was happening on the Hetch Hetchy problem, so I alluded to my being a John Muir reincarnate, as determined by Steven Fox, and said I'd just had a conversation with John Muir. And then I went on [laughs] with what John Muir was thinking about what the Sierra Club was doing at this point with respect to Hetch Hetchy. I gave him a bad time.

Lage: I think you put that in one of your books because I just looked at that.

Brower: Good.

Lage: And you got the Sierra Club to endorse the idea of the restoration of Hetch Hetchy, did you not?

Brower: Well, half-hearted endorsement. Not a major effort. No funding. They didn't tell the publications committee this is what we would like—I wanted Holway Jones's book [*John Muir and the Sierra Club: the Battle for Yosemite* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1965)] reissued with an updated foreword. And I wanted it right away because that could have done an enormous amount then, and the Sierra Club publishing department didn't want to do it. And nothing happened.

Lage: Were you on the publication committee at this point?

Brower: Yes. I didn't want them to publish the book on David Brower the way they did. [laughs]

Lage: Oh, tell me about that. The book on the Sierra Club—the Michael Cohen book [*History of the Sierra Club, 1892-1970* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988)]?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Now, what was your objection to that? I heard that you were very—

Brower: Well, one of the things was I didn't get to see what it had to say until it was in the blues [bluelines, too late for corrections]!

Lage: Michael Cohen himself did not—

Brower: No, he never—the only time he talked with me was just briefly when he wasn't even taking notes. And he had an awful lot about me. My criticism, in part, was that he was trashing me a little bit, but he was trashing Ken. And that was just inexcusable.

Lage: Your son, Ken?

Brower: Yes. We got some changes of that because I was promising action if they didn't, but there were a lot of other things that were just errors—errors, errors throughout. And I'd passed these on—

Lage: When you saw the blues.

Brower: When they were in the blues. It didn’t work.

But a lot of his errors, I thought, were because of his conversations like that one with me: without notes, you can't remember enough, I guess. No tape recorder, no notes—that's pretty short shrift on a person you've cited a lot through the book. He'd relied upon minutes of the board of directors, and I knew that Charlotte [Mauk] and Lewis Clark, when they were doing the minutes, sometimes were a year late in getting them out.

Lage: That's right.

Brower: And it's a little hard to make sure that the necessary corrections have been made, so being an old editor, I went through and I wanted to make suggestions that could be made without changing the pagination of the book, and that was hard. And that was misinterpreted, I think, by Mike Cohen. He thought, well, I was just trying to rewrite the book. I was trying merely to keep the correction costs minimal, but get things corrected. And coming in with suggestions of what the correction could be—that is, you wanted to make them, with some economy in the changes. They were more interested—

Lage: Were these corrections based on fact or corrections as to interpretation, would you say?

Brower: Both. Lots of both. I've got pages and pages. I don't know whether you've got them. I've still have them here, the suggestions I made. They're pretty important, I think. But at any rate, my quick summary was that the Sierra Club was more anxious to go on schedule than worry about accuracy, so the book went out with the mistakes, which should not have happened. And that doesn't mean that my corrections are all perfect, but these things should not have been ignored.

Lage: Or maybe you should have looked at it at an earlier stage.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And then he could take your suggestions or not. He [would have] had the option, but at least he could have had your reactions.

Brower: Yes, but then the Sierra Club could have said if he doesn't want to take them, we will not publish the book, or if he doesn't want to accommodate them.

Lage: Interesting.

Brower: Yes, so we got off Michael Fischer pretty fast.

Lage: Yes, we did—we got to Michael Cohen. Lot of Michaels in the Sierra Club.

Brower: Yes. I don't know, I guess Michael Fischer was moved out in one of my hiatuses when I wasn't on the board.

Lage: Yes, you were not there at that time.

Brower: I think I would have resisted that even though we did have some disagreements. We certainly had some discussions. One of the things that disappointed me quite a bit was that I made a contribution of $1000 to the club and gave the explanation of why I did it and why it was not deductible and why I hoped that this would be picked up. I hoped they would use that in a major fund appeal for hard money, and they didn't do it: it would cost too much postage to put out such a request. And that annoyed me.

Lage: One of the big issues it seemed like you were very tied into was the environmental consequences of war.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And trying to get that to become a—I won't use the word priority, now that I know you don't like that word—but trying to get it become a feature of the club's program.

Brower: Yes. Well, the prioritization business—I said, “Macy's is doing pretty well. They don't say, ‘Well, we're only going to cover three subjects.’" They're organized so they can have quite an inventory and an awful lot of material to bring people in for all kinds of reasons. I want the Sierra Club to be—since it has several stadiums full of people as members—I wanted to organize it so that it exploits the skills of these people, and gets them and keeps them excited and creative and functional.

Lage: Was the argument made often at the board meetings that the club couldn't become so scattered, keep adding new areas?

Brower: Yes, there are always people who will say that. "Don't spread yourself out too thin." No, I just argue the other way—that I'm sorry but the world doesn't have priorities; things are happening.

Lage: Anne Ehrlich ended up head of a committee—Committee on Environmental Impacts of War. Were you on that committee, or did you follow what happened with that?

Brower: I followed what happened with it enough to know that it wasn't doing enough. It had people who were not confrontationalists—to make another bad word. But this is what Paul is and what Anne isn't, and I found that out when she was secretary of Friends of the Earth. And I found it out further. I would be president of the Sierra Club now if she'd voted for it.

Lage: Oh. [laughs] It's a style thing, you think.

Brower: I think that she just—again, well, I just marvel at the difference between her and Paul.

Lage: And they are still married?

Brower: Still married. But she's done some terrific stuff. And when she was on President Carter's committee on—I forget what that title was, but it was a major effort on conservation—she said that Friends of the Earth should publish the things that they left out.

Lage: Of the committee?

Brower: Of the publication and what they were doing with it. But I went to see—now, if I can think of his name because it was a very important part—the guy who was trying to manage this book in the Council on Environmental Quality—he took me to the office where they were and took me downstairs and showed me all the copies of the book which Jimmy would not release.

They finally released it, but by that time things had been taken out that shouldn't have been. One thing that I was really quite willing to criticize Jimmy Carter on was energy—and nuclear energy since he had nuclear expertise, even though he could not pronounce the word.

I have great admiration for him, and he knows it—and I think vice versa—but he had read Amory's book, *Soft Energy Paths*, he said three times, but he didn't quite get it. That's another subject that could go on now, because this is one of the things that we've got to handle. What has happened to the world right now is the inequity—there's just an incredible amount of power and authority in the energy business, oil and so on, than there should be. At this point, one of the things we've got to at least pretend is we have utility districts, or we have a committee that watches over the utilities. But we have nobody to watch over the oil companies, and their power is not new, but with the excessive use of it. You'll find out if you try to buy gasoline right now, and find out that what was just about a dollar a gallon now is just about two at their whim. They can play that like a concertina or whatever it is—an organ.

Lage: And then attribute it to California's measures to—

Brower: Or to what OPEC has done—they have done it!

Lage: Yes.

Brower: If anybody has been bitten by the worm of power, it is the oil industry. [laughter]

Lage: It does seem out of balance.

The use of the word power—let's talk a little bit about the ancient forest. You mentioned it in relation to the legal defense fund. This seemed like another issue where you and your allies on the Sierra Club board were kind of pushing the club.

Brower: Well, I've always been pushing to reform the Forest Service. I'm perfectly happy to have it abolished because we don't have one. If you're going to use that name, let's have a *forest* service, not a timber service. And let's be concerned about *all* the forest influences, not just the board feet. We're stuck with that, and it's just causing enormous problems around the world—not only at our behest, but in Japan's and others. We're just losing our forest right and left, because nobody's taken that on. But the Forest Service should!

Lage: But sometimes it's the Forest Service lands and sometimes it's the private lands, like the redwoods.

Brower: Well, so here's where I got into a momentary disagreement with the people who wanted no more cutting on the national forests—on the federal forests, on the public forests. I said, "Well, if you don't do that, that means there's got to be more pressure on the private forests." I'm currently quite interested in the redwoods—the private redwoods—and then I still remember from the Timber Resources Review way back in the forties, which was the first one I became aware of, that they were saying that America's future wood products are going to come primarily from private wood lots. I was aware of what happened in 1911 when there'd been so much damage to the eastern forest that we had the act that made public forest out of derelict private forest, and I was worried about this mix.

Lage: So you had this discussion with the no-cut people.

Brower: Yes. I was arguing against them, and I was saying that we can't do that, and I got outreasoned.

Lage: Well, tell me, who were you arguing with?

Brower: Tim Hermach. He's up in Eugene.

Lage: And was he a Sierra Club person?

Brower: No, he's on the Native Forest Council. He heads that. I was on their board. At one point we made a $5,000 contribution to them, provided it would be matched. It was matched initially by $15,000 and then by $50,000, [laughs] so I thought that matching was all right. I'd like to see more of that happen.

Lage: So you discussed this with him and this group in Oregon?

Brower: And also with Chad Hanson. Chad finally got me to see the light, that we can get by with two major reforms: one, we start using the forest without wasting it—

Lage: Using all the forest?

Brower: Yes, and we stop exporting. If we're running short, we don't send our logs to be stored in Tokyo bins and sold back to us at a greater price later.

Lage: And was that all part of the package?

Brower: That wasn't part, but that was part of our disagreement. I thought, well, we don't have that much public forest left—it's only 5 percent of what we're cutting anyway. So let's stop cutting that, and let's stop having the Forest Service destroy a million acres a year of wilderness, which they've been doing since the forties.

Lage: So you did sign on then to no-commercial logging on the national forests, then?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And did you sign on without reservation?

Brower: Yes. By that time I'd signed on without reservations. I was enormously upset by what two Sierra Club leaders had done—Michele [Perrault] and Carl Pope. The earlier initiative they'd jockeyed around so much that in order to approve what the initiative writers had come up with, you had to vote no. And that I thought was just as unethical as you could get. I haven't got over that major difference. I think ethics are so useful.

Lage: Yes, so the initiative was rewritten and didn't pass initially. Am I right about that?

Brower: Yes. It didn't pass.

Lage: But then it did pass a second time.

Brower: It did pass, because of one person more than anybody else, and that was Chad. He went all over the state and country and talked—

Lage: To Sierra Club members?

Brower: To Sierra Club.

Lage: What is Chad’s background?

Brower: I ran into him first at law school at Eugene. I was quite impressed with him then and have never ceased to be.

Lage: Was he already into this issue when you ran into him?

Brower: Not quite, but that conference was such a great conference and still is. I've been to sixteen of the seventeen.

Lage: Now, which conference is it?

Brower: Land, Air, and Water. That was a conference put on in Eugene at the University of Oregon—but not the university, not the law school—the law students. The first time I went, the first conference had about two hundred people. This latest one, probably, about three thousand.

Lage: So he grew out of that milieu?

Brower: He grew out of that.

Lage: And he got involved with the Sierra Club right away, or did you bring him into the club?

Brower: No, no, he was worried about what the club was up to primarily on forest. It was he who talked me into running the last time I ran.

Lage: The last time was '95?

Brower: The last two times, yes.

Lage: And subsequently.

Brower: Both times he talked me into signing the petition for my running and then got enough other people to get the petition adequately supported and then adequately elected.

Lage: Did he found the John Muir Sierrans?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And who came up with that name?

Brower: He did. I didn't.

Lage: So this was not something that you guys plotted.

Brower: No, I guess all I did was find one of the old John Muir quotes because I had some old *Sierra Club Bulletins,* and they thought that was pretty good. [laughs]

Lage: It seems to resonate. The name still resonates with the Sierra Club and with Sierra Club members.

Brower: Yes, yes it still does.

Lage: Although I heard from Carl Pope that they'd done a focus group study of club members, and found that they didn't really respond to the name John Muir.

Brower: Well, I am not delighted with focus groups. I think this is another form, another abomination. With focus groups, I just turn the other way. [laughs] I've got something else to do.

Lage: Well, I think it's an amusing comment to make when the John Muir Sierrans are doing so well in the club election. It has to resonate with the membership. That's a better focus group, after all.

Brower: So I mentioned I don't like what's happening to our tax-deductible status and the way it's being handled by the chief of staff. I don't like what happened to ethics, and I don't like what is happening to population and immigration.

Lage: Now hold on, I need to turn the tape over.

[End Tape 8, Side A]

[Begin Tape 8, Side B]

Lage: You mentioned three things you did not like that were happening with the club.

Brower: Population and immigration, and ethics, particularly with respect to what happened in the forests, and the Sierra Club's tax status.

Lage: And the tax status. Now tell me about ethics in respect to—

Brower: That was where if you go to the trouble of getting a petition in to try to get the membership to vote on it, and then you have people juggling it around so that if you wanted to vote yes, you had to vote no, that's not what you should be doing. That to me is a frightful abandonment of ethics. And I think it's jailable.

Lage: A lot of what I might call the *establishment* in the club opposed that no-commercial-logging initiative.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Did you talk to any people like—well, Ed Wayburn's not on the board anymore, but he still has a say, or Michele, or Phil Berry?

Brower: Not very much, because Phil, having been one of my very favorite people, at the moment is not. And Michele is not, but I'm hoping that that reconciliation will take place before too long, because I won't be around long enough to participate in it if it takes too long.

Lage: [laughs] You just have divergent approaches?

Brower: Major divergences. That's another story, too, about Phil and what he was doing in Diablo, and after that what he was doing to my financial reputation. Not very nice.

Lage: Okay. That goes way back. The question of no-commercial-logging seems to have—people oppose it from various directions. And one way they oppose it is from the social justice direction. There are areas, such as the Southwest, where logging is crucial to community survival.

Brower: We're just about to come up to that. It's coming up. We're going to have a new struggle somewhere along the line. I just heard about it—it's already happening in the Headwaters, that they don't want the protection that was given to the forests—they think it's going to lose jobs. So I get back to this whole [issue of] jobs versus earth. They've got people who want to work, but they've got to ask what it costs the earth and find out how to do things that don't cost the earth that much. I go way back to my first encounter with Dick Cavett on that show.

When *Encounters with the Archdruid* came out, they wanted John McPhee on that program, and he didn't want to go on it because he was modest. I didn't have that problem, so I went on it. Arthur Godfrey was there. Arthur Godfrey was teased a bit by Dick Cavett because he was wearing alligator shoes, and then we got onto the question—he asked me, "Well, what do you think about the environment? Is it costing people—losing a lot of jobs?" And then, without waiting for me to answer, he said, "Well, I guess I have the answer to that question. I suppose a lot of people lost their jobs when they closed the furnaces at Dachau." Once he'd said that, he realized what he said was more powerful than he'd intended, and he changed the subject. [laughs]

But I've used that particularly with respect to Dan Ellsberg. He said, "Well, we took the furnaces to the people," which is a pretty devastating statement. And we did. So maybe we better get out of the furnace business. There must be other things to do besides roast people in furnaces. There must be other work. But people didn't say, "All right, you're choosing people who log trees and [those who are] trying to burn people in furnaces," that is, they'd take that and misuse it rather badly. But that's still a major question.

When we had a nice little talk with Ted Danson, who's pretty good on the environment, he was saying that we've got to think about jobs and the environment. What do we do about it? So we're working pretty hard on that.

We've moved from that to—well, to my mind we don't have democracy; wouldn't it be nice if we had democracy. I would use that with Gorbachev, that you can't have democracy if you're running a country with legal bribery—which we are—and you can't have capitalism if you haven't tried it. And that's what is on my mind now: well, we do not have capitalism. Anybody who manages capital knows what the resources are. You cannot use $33 trillion a year's worth of the resources of the earth and not put something back, and call yourself a capitalist. You're simply—

Lage: So what would be your answer to the people who are struggling in the Southwest and don't have a lot of alternatives to logging?

Brower: Well, you find them an alternative, because you're going to have to find one when you use those trees up, which you're trying to do. You're trying to do it awful fast, and faster. That's not going to work. Realize that now, before you don't have anything at all.

Lage: But you could have—I'm arguing with you to bring out your point of view.

Brower: Yes, that's fine.

Lage: You could have sustainable forestry.

Brower: Not until you've learned what a forest consists of. It doesn't consist of planting new trees, it consists of growing and keeping it growing, not taking more than the forest can replace. Sustainable is supposed to say that, and it's a concept that's all right, but it's not being practiced. They're not practicing sustainability.

Lage: So is the no-commercial-logging [policy] a response to poor management?

Brower: See how excited I get?

Lage: That’s what I'm trying to do, get you excited—a response to the Forest Service's failure to have a true sustainability?

Brower: Yes, we helped publish a book with the Sierra Club, which the Sierra Club is still ignoring, and it outlined, by a man from the Pacific Northwest, what sustainable forestry consists of. It's forestry that's practiced with ecological judgment, which the Forest Service lacks. They talk about managing ecosystems. What has to be managed is the Forest Service, and they don't understand that. You have to manage your thinking—and that doesn't mean that what you've been thinking that is wrong should be continued. One of the lines from Jeff Ingram, who was our Southwest representative: "Because you're wrong, you don't have to stay wrong."

Lage: Yes.

Brower: But the Forest Service is insisting on it.

Lage: So you don't think the Forest Service has evolved since you first confronted it?

Brower: No, it hasn't. There've been a few fleeting, pitiful attempts, but the same thing continues, and the forest disappears. And you get the misconception that even such a brilliant guy as Bill McKibben—he writes for the *New Yorker*, he's written several books, the *End of Nature*. He made a comment not too long ago in something he wrote: "We now have more trees than we had." So I tried to straighten him out on that. That is, that what we have now is instead of the forest we had, Paul Bunyon wouldn't use for a toothpick.

Lage: So you count the trees, but not—

Brower: You count the trees but not the size, and not what's happened to the trees in our attempts to re-engineer trees. They may grow faster but they don't hold up. You know, the structure of a tree has been pretty well worked out.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: And when I ask kids, "Where's the tree's brain?" they're closer to understanding it than the Forest Service is.

Lage: I can see why you signed on to no-cut logging, because your history with the Forest Service goes way back.

Brower: It does. 1938.

Lage: I'm thinking we should stop now, so I can rethink—

Brower: Before I begin offending people.

Lage: Oh, no. We got your thoughts on the logging and I don't want to start a new issue like population or immigration, because we've been going on now for a couple of hours.

Brower: Yes, well, the issue right now in this business is we've got to reform the Internal Revenue Code so that our whole ideas about how we use finance and how we use capital makes sense. And it can! That's what Paul Hawkens is writing about. I'm fussing about some of the words, because for example, I think Amory is still stuck on productivity, profitability, and marketing. These are good words, good understandable words, and they have to be used with people who will understand nothing else, but then you have to say something else beyond that.

Lage: Is he using them in new ways?

Brower: No.

Lage: He's using the same—

Brower: Not quite. When you say profitability, marketing, and some of these other words—I'll go into these more, but I came up something yesterday—let's do something that Anne picked up from our former son-in-law's parents: [laughs] when we were visiting in the Alps in France, somebody in a discussion was saying “Bravo!” for this and “Bravo!” for that, so I said yesterday in our little discussion, “Bravo for this understanding of profit and productivity,” and so on.

Lage: Are these words useful in order to appeal to people who are very much in the business world?

Brower: I want to appeal to them with a line I hadn't used from Isaiah yet, because you know what it is, “We have multiplied the nation, but not increased the joy." [sigh]

Lage: Yes.

Brower: That is so powerful.

Lage: Yes, it really is.

Brower: That's exactly what they're doing globally, with this country in the lead. And it has other things to lead in. So now the thing I'm threatening is that if you don't do this, I'm going to be spinning in my grave, and you're not going to like it.

Lage: Okay. [laughs] Okay, I want to close off for now because I find that if you go more than two hours, Dave, it's too long.

Interview #5: April 27, 1999
[Begin Tape 9, Side A]

Lage: Okay, today is April 27. We're going to talk more about the Sierra Club and some of the issues you were involved with.

Brower: Well, the Sierra Club issues that I was involved in are going to be revisited.

Lage: Yes, I know, you're still into it, [laughs] but I wanted to kind of go back. One thing I wanted, I don't think we've gotten yet. You were away from the club—I know you were always were a member, but you hadn't been actively involved until you went back on the board in '83.

Brower: Well, no. I was actively involved—and they were more generous perhaps than they should have been because they made me an honorary vice president two years after they had fired me, or required that I resign. Then they gave me the John Muir Award after that, and I couldn't complain about that. Then they put me on the Publications Committee and a few other odds and ends.

Lage: So you were on the Publications Committee. I see.

Brower: I still kept busy. And quite particularly busy, I guess, thanks to Steve Rauh. When he was editing the *Yodeler*—he was the *Yodeler* editor for a good many years and did some awfully good material in it, including being the person who provided the energy for getting the Fate of the Earth conferences started. I think we sort of shared the idea. It's one thing to have an idea, and it's another thing to do something about it. I had been slow at doing things about ideas, but I've been lucky to encounter people who were ready to take the ideas and make them work.

Lage: And Steve was a mover in the Fate of the Earth conference?

Brower: He was a very major mover. He found a lot of the people who would take part in it and helped promote it, and did it all so well that we ended up $20,000 in the black.

Lage: Now that's saying something!

Brower: Yes.

Lage: So he was one of these people who kind of went between the organizations as you have. Was he also on Friends of the Earth staff?

Brower: Yes, he helped me. He was one of my principal staff in Friends of the Earth later on, and that's when we got going on the Fate of the Earth conferences.

Lage: And then he was *Yodeler* editor?

Brower: And he was the *Yodeler* editor. And he was the one who talked Ron Dellums into giving me the Nobel Prize nomination—three times. [laughs]

Lage: Right.

Brower: Didn't work, but he tried.

Lage: It's pretty important just to be nominated. Did Steve Rauh also go into the Earth Island Institute?

Brower: No—well, he was around. He's been aware of what we're doing. He's still in touch.

Lage: But he hasn't joined the organization?

Brower: And then, he got married, and he named his son David.

Lage: Well! That's quite an honor. And what is he doing now?

Brower: He's in Canada. I'm not quite sure what he's doing, but he's doing progressive things. We're going to have to get him back involved again for the next Fate of the Earth conference.

Lage: Yes, you have a way of keeping people involved, and getting them involved.

Brower: I try to.

Lage: But when you did go back on the board so that you were really in the center of the power of the club, did anything surprise you about the club? I'm thinking about the balance of power, how it might have changed. When you were executive director, everybody was worried that you were taking too much power. When you went back on the board, how did that relationship—

Brower: Some people were worried [laughs] that I was taking too much power. Some people weren't bothered by that.

Lage: [laughter] Yes, you're right. I'm speaking too loosely. But this was one of the complaints.

Brower: Well—as I rationalize it all—they tried to get anything they could to get me out so that they could go ahead with the Diablo Canyon proposal.

Lage: So you didn't see it as a question of how the club should be structured—whether the volunteers should have power, or the staff should have power?

Brower: My principal concern and I'm not over it yet—and we'll see what happens next—was about what we had done in response to a Supreme Court ruling on

lobbying. That was back in 1955. That action by the court was Harriss versus the United States or something of the sort. It frightened the environmental movement into inactivity, where I said at the time in a one-liner, was that they were all seeking *cringe* benefits. That's what happened to most of them. Then the Sierra Club—as you'll find out if you look back on December of 1959—Dick Leonard was saying that really the Sierra Club didn't participate in any substantial legislative activity, which was a nice thing to say if you were just writing something for the IRS to read and believe, but it had perfectly little bearing on what the Sierra Club had been up to, and what I intended it would continue to be up to.

And I had already foreseen this sort of concern and right after that action by Richard Leonard, I said, "Well, we've got to divide the Sierra Club into two parts: the parts where the club does the kind of legislative and political activity it should, and the part where it will not offend the IRS." It occurred to me that the way to do that was to set up the Sierra Club Foundation, which I did. Anne and I made the first fund appeal and the first contribution.

And I made my mistake then, where I thought that all the officers in the foundation should be former presidents of the Sierra Club. That was a big mistake.

Lage: That came back to haunt you.

Brower: Yes, that haunted me later.

Lage: Now you say that's a continuing threat, so did you see this as a problem in the eighties?

Brower: It was a problem in the eighties and there's a problem in 1999 at this very moment.

Lage: And it's shaping the way the club is—

Brower: Well, it has shaped the way the club has worked. That is one of the things that I'll be trying to correct in this next session one way or another. I'm applying for the presidency. The board makes that decision in a couple of weeks—two or three weeks.

Lage: The election will probably have something to do with that?

Brower: I think the election will have something to do with it, but if we get the right new directors, I think I'm a shoe-in. I missed by two votes last time, but my idea is not to be the permanent president, but to get some things started again that were going pretty well.

But the main thing—and it's not Clinton's fault—it's led me to conclude and want to work on it—is that the greatest threat to the environment today in the world is the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. I had the chance to try that out on an audience just this last Sunday at Earth Day in Concord when we had a little audience of 20,000 people. I asked how many people were concerned about the IRS and would like some changes, and it got enormous response.

Lage: It's a popular one, too!

Brower: It's a popular one and it's essential. But then I said, well, all I really want to do is I want them to suggest how they would write the legislation so that they would give as big a break to the people who are trying to save the earth as they had been giving to the people who want to trash the earth. That idea is going to have an enormous constituency—and it's going to be fun.

Lage: What kind of legislation are you thinking of?

Brower: It's up to them! What can *they* do to the Internal Revenue Code—which started out a rather simple document and now involving millions of words. If you try to work through it, you'll find that out! Well, how can they simplify it, but how can the IRS say that you may be politically and legislatively active and still get deductible contributions? That's for openers, then we'll see what we need to do after that. After all, all kinds of changes could be made, but the goal—and it is absolutely essential now and there isn't much more time to play with it—is to favor the people who are trying to save the earth instead of those who've trashed it.

Lage: But you must not be thinking of legislation specific to only environmental groups, but any nonprofits who are politically active.

Brower: Well, we'll see. It's a very difficult thing, but I just have my own particular response to what happened in the Sierra Club where I was on the board rather recently at a retreat, and they came up with the decision of how they were going to fund the Sierra Club centennial. They had some people who advised us on that, and my first question was, "Have you had any experience with organizations that are (c) 4, that is, civic organizations that are not tax deductible?" And they hadn't.

Lage: The advisors had not?

Brower: The advisors they were bringing in. And I said, "Well, I think it's important that we have that ability because that's what makes the Sierra Club special."

Thanks to my awkwardness or whatever it was, we lost our tax-deductible status to save the Grand Canyon. As a result of that loss, I think that was a major contribution to our saving it. The public was so annoyed that the IRS was taking on the little old Sierra Club that was just trying to save the world's

Grand Canyon for the public and the people, and they got jammed by the IRS. That got us big editorials, it got us front page coverage, it increased our membership, and although our contributions were not deductible, we had had the foundation ready for six years with the deductibles on it. And we got a lot of people who were perfectly willing to support the non-deductible activity.

And what has happened since then? Since they didn't pay any attention to me and got these advisors who didn't know anything about (c) 4 organizations, they were very successful in getting deductible money. They got something like $100 million. And that was fine, but that has had its color every since because the Sierra Club who wants to do things that will qualify for grants from the foundation, for the Sierra Club's activities, is in the complete Catch-22 situation.

Lage: Grants from its own foundation? From the Sierra Club Foundation?

Brower: Yes. Yes, so that, as I said, by the time—if you read Carl Pope's instructions to the members of the chapters and groups about how they can qualify for fund—they get so complicated that my one-liner is that it'd be more fun committing suicide than following those instructions. And that's what we're still constrained with. Well, it's not Carl's fault. We all participated in that. I think they wouldn't have if they'd listened to me, but they wouldn't have had $100 million either! So I'm just saying that let's pick on the right people, let's pick on the IRS.

Lage: It seems that Carl Pope is emphasizing broad public relations activity rather than specific lobbying in Congress, and I've always heard him explain that he thinks that this is the most effective way to go.

Brower: Well, actually I think that there are quite a few stories that have claimed that the Sierra Club—in large part because it is not deductible—has got an ability to do things that the other organizations don't have, withvery few exceptions. They have nearly half a million members, and their dues are not tax deductible. So Carl has this problem: any environmental organization will always be short of funds if it's doing anything right. That's the law. That's the law we're trying to change. But in any event, so he's doing the best he can in that situation. And the Sierra Club, thanks to its (c) 4 status, is also politically active. There've been a good many people in Washington that think the Sierra Club is the most effective organization because of that, and Carl has helped that happen. He's been very good in watching the political activity—

Lage: But does it seem to you that Carl is retreating from that? I've heard from others that there's a shift in emphasis away from lobbying in Washington.

Brower: Well, I don't think that Washington appreciates that. I think they must be aware that they're still very good and they can do more. They can run people

for office and they can be really political active just as the League of Conservation Voters did.

Lage: Because of the (c) 4 status.

Brower: Yes. It's partly through the (c) 4 status, but this is all too complicated to go into in detail. The law has got to be simplified. That's, I think, one of the most important things I can think of. And this last Sunday, this enormous response from 20,000 people—I mean, we've got a constituency here.

Lage: Now where was this?

Brower: The Concord Pavilion. I'd never been there before, and I just was shocked at what sprawl has done for our area.

Lage: So just driving out there was shocking?

Brower: Yes. Mikhail Davis drove me out, and I said I remember when there used to be walnuts in Walnut Creek. It’s been a long time since.

Lage: You hadn't been out that way for a while.

Brower: I haven't been out that way forever. I didn't know where they'd stuck the pavilion—here it was up in the hills. It is incredible that they can put something up there that'll hold 20,000 people.

Lage: What was the event? It must have been an Earth Day event.

Brower: It was an Earth Day event for the county. But I was so enormously impressed by the constituency that was just waiting.

Lage: And your timing was right. It was very close to April 15.

Brower: Yes, it was. And I started a letter to the IRS. I haven't sent it out yet, but I'm reminding them that I'm asking them to come up with the legislation. Saying that may seem strange, but when I was the executive director of the Sierra Club, and Fred Seaton was secretary of the Interior, I told him that we were trying to get some legislation formed to do I don't remember what, and he said, "Well, we'll help you. We can do that because we've got people here who can draft legislation for you if you want to. We would even draft legislation to abolish the Department of the Interior! I doubt that we'd support it, but we would draft it for you."

Lage: Oh!

Brower: So I wanted to remind the IRS of that and say that, "I want you to draft legislation you think the world needs, never mind whether you want to

support it or not. We'll try to support it. But let's come up with what you think is going to be necessary to make this possible for you—for the power that the IRS has—to help us in a very tenuous situation we're in—this situation on the earth where we're realizing the forests are going, the fish are going, the soil is going, the water is going, the atmosphere is going. Somebody's got to do something about it, and *you are it!*"

Lage: What about people like Steve Forbes—the people who want to really simplify the tax code and make it a flat 10 percent?

Brower: I don't think you want to do anything that would interfere with profitability, and that's—

Lage: You're not into that kind of thing?

Brower: I'm not into that. I don't mind profit, but it's got to come from something that doesn't hurt the earth. And if this is going to be possible, I just make that allegation, now, all right, just spell it out—and that's what we've got to do. There are lots of things that will make it possible to make it profitable, just so that you can get some sort of gain from doing things right, but not at the earth's expense. That's not easy to come up with, but *Small is Beautiful* did—Fritz Schumacher—back in 1970.

I'm finding out that there must be a new law that every thirty years you have to think everything through again because everybody has forgotten what you came up with the first time. At the age of eighty-six—almost eighty-seven—I've had a chance to see that happen again and again and about again. I'd like to have the next again not happen.

Lage: I wonder if *Small is Beautiful* will have the same reception it had thirty years ago when we were in a different era, almost.

Brower: Well, actually we weren't. He was finding answers—he came up with answers in this book in 1970 that we're coming up with again, the need for. So right now the things I'm most excited about are restoration—he didn't say much about that, but I'm talking about nature's services. He wasn't calling them that name, but that's one of the things that we're just getting numbers on now. And he didn't have them. The number we're working with is that every year the world uses $33 trillion worth of nature's services. One of those nature's services, at no cost whatever, was the bee. And if you stopped having bees, we would stop eating. This is a very important part of the book. That's a free service.

Well, the services go on to clean water and everything else that nature provided—that the water that came out of wilderness you could drink, and you can't now.

Lage: Are these things that Schumacher talks about or things that seem tied into today?

Brower: He was talking about them, but not quite as specifically as now. But he had the idea. He had the idea of what the industrial revolution had done to us. What happened when we suddenly—thanks to energy and tools—had per person 100 times more power to change the earth as we had before that? And now we're surrounded by people who want to try another 100 gain, and the earth hasn't been able to stand what we just did. They don't know that yet. They're in very severe denial.

That's what excites me, that there is no way to avoid a major effort to get this denial phase out of our thinking. It's happening. It's happening. Look outside. Look what's happening: you can't see as far as you did. You don't want to breathe it too long, and you have to stay indoors. There's been too many cars—the whole thing is here. You put them all together, we've got a problem. We're going to do something about it to get there, but right now it might seem like it's not really a problem. There is no global warming. [laughs]

Lage: Or the thing that people seem to be really responding to, which is sort of disconcerting, is the increased price of gasoline. They want to remove the tax and keep going on.

Brower: Yes, they want to go exactly wrong. They should pay two, three, four times as much as they do for gasoline, because that's what it costs the earth.

Lage: I haven't seen too many people come out with that suggestion.

Brower: No, there's been an attempt to do it, but the oil companies have enormous power, and the energy companies have incredible power. We've got to find ways to dilute that power a bit and get some other interests to have some because—and I remember the president of Atlantic Richfield, whose name I forget, has said that, "By the nineties, we, ARCO, are going to be out of the oil business." They were going to go into other uses of oil that weren't quite so ridiculously expensive to the earth. Well, they haven't done it yet, but that was the *only* oil company that was thinking that way. But that's another long, long story.

Lage: [laughs] Okay, let's try to look back to the Sierra Club. You've complained a lot about the club lacking boldness.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Do you want to say more about that? What do you think is the problem there? What are its strengths? If you step back from the organization, what are its strengths and what are its weaknesses?

Brower: Well, I have to say that if you are dependent—if you are fixed on the idea that you must win, and you will take only the things that you think you can win on, and there's an awful lot of things that are not easy winners to start with, but you've got to lose some things to make it clear to people that winning is necessary for what you're trying to do on behalf of the earth.

Lage: So you think that's part of the thinking—they don't want to take on some of the more—

Brower: I *know* that is part of the thinking. Again and again.

Lage: Can you give me an example?

Brower: Well, it started with the nuclear question. They thought, as I had thought originally, that nuclear power was going to be too cheap to meter and all that sort of thing. Then I started to think, well, it did keep me from going from combat in Italy and to combat in Japan, and I was in favor of that without having thought the thing through. But I certainly had a chance to think it through since, and a lot of people haven't yet. They're still getting full-color ads in the major papers saying nuclear is the way to go because it doesn't bother the atmosphere.

Lage: But the club itself has switched on that.

Brower: The club has switched but—

Lage: Where is this strain of caution coming from?

Brower: The club has switched but is not doing anything about it. That is, they changed their nuclear policy, and finally we're doing what I wanted them to do in the first place, which is enormously satisfying, but that's not one of the priorities. I haven't seen a word in any of our Sierra Club publications lately, complaining about what we're doing. No complaints about Ward Valley. The Sierra Club was missing in the action there. Other people had to do it.

Lage: What was that?

Brower: Ward Valley, the big nuclear dump in Mohave area.

Lage: Oh, the dump, yes.

Brower: And I think we're about to win, but no thanks to the Sierra Club. They were wobbling on that one.

Lage: But now that you're back on the board, can you pinpoint where the wobbling comes from? Is it the staff, is it the local environmentalists, is it something about the structure of the club itself?

Brower: Well, it's a long, long story, but I'm still concerned about what we're no longer doing and what we did do with enormous success in our publishing program. That was when books were in a different status in the society from what they are in now. We had a lot more than Barnes and Noble and Amazon.com working on the book business.

It's fun to see Barnes and Noble with a full-page ad for books, but they're not hitting the subjects that need to be hit to cover what's happening to the earth. And the Sierra Club was in position to do that, and I'm just determined that it get there again. Let it do what the National Geographic Society has done—which has twenty times the number of members—but they started out making publishing an important part of what they did and making it attractive, making the photographs something that people would look at, even if they didn't want to read the text.

We were doing something like that with the Sierra Club, and we were doing it at big expense. That is, the first Ansel Adams and Nancy Newhall book, *This is the American Earth*, began it. Then the other Exhibit Format books picked it up by an order of magnitude. There were all kinds of things that were happening that haven't happened since.

We were getting a lot of members who joined the club because they liked the books, and that was the beginning of what the Geographic Society has done. And the Sierra Club can do that—it can be its own Barnes and Noble, it can be its own Amazon.com because it has half a million members. And if you can get 10 percent of half a million members buying a book, that's ten times better than most books ever get anyway, so this is the potential.

Lage: But they have cut back the publications.

Brower: They've cut back the publications, and they've cut back in the participation of members and what the books were doing. You don't really know from *Sierra* [The Sierra Club's magazine, successor to the *Sierra Club Bulletin*] quite what the Sierra Club should be about. You know what the ads look like, if you can stomach them. [laughter]

Lage: Have you been on committees for *Sierra* and for the publications?

Brower: Not for *Sierra*. I was on the Publications Committee but that committee has been abolished.

Lage: Completely abolished?

Brower: Yes, it's gone.

Lage: When did that happen?

Brower: This was Carl Pope's doing. And this is one that had people on it who were some of the top publishers in the country.

Lage: Did anybody stand up and speak up for it besides you?

Brower: I did, but that wasn't enough.

Lage: Anybody else on the board?

Brower: No.

Lage: Was this in that reorganization that—

Brower: It was partly that that we had committees on governance and I was to be named onto a governance committee on publishing and information and so on, but they never—

Lage: Communication and education.

Brower: Yes, but whatever they called it, they never got it set up so that I could attend the meeting. I mean, it never happened. And it's one of the things that upsets me a bit. But the other things—

Lage: Well, some of these subtle restructurings really have their effect on policy.

Brower: Well, the restructuring that bothers me—has been bothering me a long time—is the attempt to claim that this is an organization run by the members but make sure the members don't have much chance to say anything. And that hasn't happened since yesterday. [laughs] I was on a conference call—it was a conference call on a couple of subjects—and I said, "Well, I'm on the board of directors and I have a telephone, I have a fax, I have free email, and I have an address and I heard about this conference call, as one of the directors, by accident. I got it from Mikhail—he had picked it up somewhere.

Lage: And was it a conference call among the directors?

Brower: For the directors, so that I heard about it less than three hours before it was to happen.

Lage: What was the issue under discussion?

Brower: Well, by the time it was through, out of the fifteen directors, we only had nine—we had a quorum. But I said, "Where is the notice of the meeting? Who knows what we're going to talk about?" And by the time we'd had a little bit of storm, Phil Berry came in with his support, which is delightful. He said, "Well, I think the legal advice is—we're not doing it right." He said, "If we're going to have conference calls, several things have got to happen. We've got

to come up with a system so we know who's talking, and we have a right for them to talk. And we have advance notice of what's going to be talked about." All these things.

We can do that, and we've got to do that or just give up on the whole idea. But it goes on from conference calls to working sessions of the board to retreats. They wanted a retreat, and I said, "I don't want a retreat. This is something that members need to know about. Retreats are collegial and all that—it's lots of fun, but the members—500,000 members—don't know what you're doing."

Lage: Because they're not allowed to be there?

Brower: Well, you can't have 500,000—well, that would be too difficult, so let's not try. Not get any, or very few.

Lage: Well, who's behind the closing down of access to the members.

Brower: I think that's an automatic thing that happens in any bureaucracy, that you would rather not hear from the people who may be disagreeing with you. I had a suspicion that one of the reasons that they didn't want me on this conference call coming up—I'd written a letter that went to the New York group—the New York city group. And the Atlantic Chapter was having a big spat about who had the right to do what. And I wrote I thought a pretty good letter that went in their paper.

Lage: Were you taking sides with one or the other there?

Brower: I was saying that obviously we need a separation. We've got a lot of chapters in California and you only have one chapter in New York—and you've got differences of opinion. Why, let's set it up so the differences of opinion can be handled. And I gave my favorite quote from Carl Anthony, "I can handle disagreement but I can't handle disrespect. And we should welcome disagreement, that's where creativity comes." Disrespect is a downer.

Lage: Are there forces against the New York group becoming a chapter?

Brower: Well, the New York group is part of the chapter, but the chapter headquarters are upstate. And New York City and upstate New York are different planets.

Lage: Yes, well, do you think that that's the way this will be resolved?

Brower: I think it will be resolved and they'll have two. That's all right, somebody else is suggesting it, and I'm for that. But the whole idea of squelch—stifle and squelch—appalls me, and we can't afford *that*.

Lage: The other end of the spectrum though, that you see an awful lot of in the Sierra Club, is constant carping and kind of internal politics which seem to take attention away from the issues at hand—the big issues.

Brower: Well, I think you might even say that that happens in Congress.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: That's part of the democratic process—carping.

Lage: Right. [laughter]

Brower: I just pick up that Carl Anthony thing again: we can handle disagreement. And if you don't have disrespect with it, there's less carp, there's more reasonable discussion.

[End Tape 9, Side A]

[Begin Tape 9, Side B]

Brower: I think most people like to have their thoughts agreed with. It's comfortable. And you feel good about it. Sometimes people are agreeing with what I'm saying, sometimes they don't. But I've learned from this. I have something I just wrote yesterday, and my son Kenneth has given some very good suggestions. My first reaction is to be annoyed that somebody would suggest that I'd written something less than perfectly, but then I start looking—well, every one of his ideas are valid ones. And if somebody who's as friendly to me as my oldest son is, who's a very bright writer, then I'd better think about it. If it hasn't come clear to him, there are a lot of other people it will not be clear to. And a hell of a lot more people than that! I'd better do something about it and not just go into a snit. [laughter] So that was what, when you came this morning, I was out of my snit.

Lage: Oh, good! I'm glad I didn't find you in a snit. Okay, well, this is quite interesting. You're talking about squelch in the club, because I know that's been a complaint.

Brower: Yes, and I finally, years later, came up with this idea—and may have mentioned it to you already—with Ansel that we'd been great friends, and then suddenly I began to annoy him. And as I looked back to the meetings I'd had with Ansel, I can't remember any of the early meetings where I wasn't bitching about something or other instead of saying, “Well, here's a way for us to do that. What do you think about this or that, or should I just stop bitching anyway because there's no point?” But I hadn't reached that part of my career—whatever you might want to call it. And maybe I'm getting closer.

Lage: Okay.

Brower: [laughs] But it took a long time.

Lage: When you got back to the board—I'm going to mention some of the members of the board who were on it. This was in the eighties. Just give me some reactions, if you don't mind. Is it okay to just kind of run through some of the people?

Brower: Well, I was just thinking about that, and I was telling Mikhail, "Well, she wants me to talk about Sierra Club presidents and so on, and I don't know whether I want to do that."

Lage: Okay, well, that's fair enough.

Brower: But then I can say that one of the things that happened when it came up on the board was that I'd just annoyed them by suing the Sierra Club for something it was doing wrong—I forget what it was—but they deserved to be sued. And they were not happy about it.

Lage: So that was right in the eighties. And you don't remember what it was about?

Brower: I don't remember. I'd have to—

Lage: Was it about—I think it was about the way an initiative was rewritten.

Brower: No, that came later. I was certainly very upset about that.

Lage: There was an initiative having to do with war and peace issues.

Brower: It could have been.

Lage: And you were objecting to the way it was rewritten, I believe.

Brower: Well, thank you for remembering. [laughs] I would have to look back to some notes, and of course I'll never find them. And the Bancroft Library can't find them either.

Lage: Well, I won't ask you about all these people. I can see why you wouldn't want to talk [about individuals]. But let me ask you about Denny Shaffer, because he's a person who's exercised a lot of power in the club.

Brower: He did.

Lage: And he was new. He wasn't around when you were executive director.

Brower: Well, I will say this about Denny, that he was a very persuasive member of the board, whether it was treasurer or president or whatever. He has been in

politics enough to know how to speak with political effectiveness, and spoke well, and had a good sense of humor, and a bit of self abrogation and so on.

But when I'd been on the board and I had two three-year terms to complete, I resigned, in no small part because of what Denny let happen. There was a board meeting where I'd come up with several suggestions, and with emphatic order, he shot every one of them down. Then we had another issue on nuclear that came up, that had gone through all the processes of the Sierra Club—through the regional conservation committees and everything else, the works—and they'd come up with how they wanted it. The night before, the vice presidents had a meeting, headed by one of their members who worked for the defense department, and they shot down the action, everything that had been proposed. And I said, "Well, you've got a vacancy on the board."

Lage: So you actually resigned?

Brower: I did.

Lage: Oh, you didn't finish out that last term?

Brower: I didn't finish that second term.

Lage: I see.

Brower: And I was really royally annoyed at that. And I would be annoyed at other things later.

Lage: Who was the person who worked for the defense department?

Brower: Jim Dodson.

Lage: Oh, and was he a big opponent of—

Brower: Yes, he was head of the regional vice presidents group. That was one of the things that the Sierra Club could easily get into with about half its membership, some maybe 200,000 or more members, being in California. And with California having defense business that was about twice the volume of our agricultural business, there would be a lot of people who would have to see the defense business as important. They love wilderness and everything else, but they didn't want anything to get in the way of their source of income, or what they thought the country needed to do, whatever. And that's been and continues to be a problem.

Lage: And Denny Shaffer exercised a strong hand. Was he president when this happened?

Brower: Denny Shaffer—his business was the dry-cleaning business and most of the uniforms that were cleaned were defense employees.

Lage: Oh really!

Brower: Yes. [laughter] Well, so he would annoy me from time to time. But when on one of our retreats I was not feeling very well, he was one of the people who was pushing me around in a wheelchair [laughs], down in Hanover to see what was wrong with me.

And they found out. At least, they found out some of the things that were wrong with me. I kept the rest a secret. [laughs]

Lage: So he—

Brower: No, he's very friendly.

Lage: So you had a good personal relationship even though you may not have agreed with each other.

Brower: Yes. I can handle that better now because of Carl Anthony. But then I had to be eighty before I could handle that.

Lage: Well, it's nice to have Carl Anthony say that—something that kind of clicked with you.

Brower: It certainly did. I use that in every speech, and it makes a difference when you say that. From there on, you don't have contention in a meeting. It's just amazing the effect of that. And then, oh, I can respect somebody I disagree with—what the hell. Give it a shot.

Lage: Now does that work in the meetings of the Sierra Club now?

Brower: Not yet.

Lage: Have you tried it?

Brower: Not well enough. There isn't really quite a chance. And if I were to be president I would say that, well, for one thing, I want to follow the Robert's Rules of Order. The president is not supposed to talk. He presides, but he doesn't give big speeches or anything else.

Lage: Maybe you don't want to be president, Dave.

Brower: What's been happening, and I'm sure that the directors who come just when they come are not overwhelmed by the staff or by the executive committee. And the thing that has annoyed me from time to time is that if some subject is

coming up, and we have a new committee that knows less about the subject than the people who are supposed to be governing, I'm not happy about that. If I want to talk about it, I have to hold up my hand, and the president is keeping a list of who has hands up, but then there's a question of, well, "But please be short because we're behind schedule," so there's no good chance for discussion. And almost all the effort is on administrative matters. It is on governance, not on substance. And I would just like to see what we have to do to change that.

Lage: So you think that the board doesn't engage some of these issues of—

Brower: They don't have a chance to.

Lage: Is that manipulation by the staff?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: By the executive director's staff?

Brower: Yes, and I think the executive director has been able to persuade the president, well, let's do it this way. They work jointly on the agenda and the scheduling of it, and so what time we have for this or that is all neatly scheduled, and there is very little time to talk about what's happening to the earth. At one retreat I said—well, I came up with one of my nasty remarks: "The earth is burning, but I've heard nothing but the music of violins." And that's what is happening.

Lage: How do they respond to you?

Brower: They're not too happy about that. But this is not just the Sierra Club, this happens in meetings, and it's got to be watched for.

I think that Robert's Rules had one of these ideas in mind, that if the president isn't usurping the time—and in my reintroduction to the board, most of the time goes either to the executive director, his staff, or to the president. That doesn't give the directors much chance to do anything but be rubber stamps—or keep quiet.

Lage: Well, do the directors that you have kind of allied yourself with—the John Muir Sierrans—do they speak up?

Brower: They don't have much time to speak up either. They try. And it's improving, I think, but I think we can have a vast improvement if we get away from the closed-door meetings and figure out how to open this up to the club as a whole so that we have participation and informed participation. And that doesn't mean any total agreement—and to this right now, "Oh, we've got to agree," I say, "Well, Congress doesn't." [laughs]

Lage: Of course, they don't get much done, either.

Brower: Well, they got quite a bit done. They go through bad phases, too, such as now.

Lage: So it will be very interesting if you become president to see if you're able to kind of go against the tide here.

Brower: Well, I only lost by two votes last time, out of the fifteen, and if we have some major changes or just a few changes this time—the people that were on my side before are not at risk [in this election]. We have new candidates up, and if we have enough people so that I'm there, I'll do something I don't want to do too long. I think there's no problem there, because I'll be eighty-seven, and then I'm not a permanent fixture.

Lage: You don't plan to be president for a full year, or be there for a full year?

Brower: Well, I'll see what happens.

Lage: See how it goes.

Brower: Yes. If I have another stroke, I think I'll rest.

Lage: Okay. Let me ask you about a couple of things we didn't talk about that go back into the eighties. The Sierra Club handbook—you were a great spokesman for the need for a new handbook. Do you want to talk about that?

Brower: Yes, I certainly do. And I still think that we do need it.

Lage: We got one.

Brower: We got it, but it's not in print anymore. It's gone. Out of sight. But I knew from experience how important the first Sierra Club Handbook was—published in 1947—to have the members know what the club was all about, what the various committees were doing, who'd done what, to have pictures of the people of the past and so on, and then to have just the chronology of what we'd done in all those years and a few other odds and ends—who had been president and who hadn't. This was something that I thought needed to be there along with the bylaws, so that we could have an informed membership.

Well, I had to fight to get that. And one of the things that happened, I'm still complaining about—wherever I am—what happens when you take a poll that records off-the-cuff feelings, an uninformed bunch of polls where you don't always have a yes or no: this is this side, this is that side, what do you think? Having a chance, at least, to see that there are two different views.

Lage: You mean asking a question without giving enough—

Brower: Yes, so, "Well, what do you want? What shall our priorities be?" But it's a totally uninformed question, that is, we don't know when they list all the priorities what is to happen or know what the considerations are. I just got a poll, not from the Sierra Club, but which said, "Well, what are the most important things and what are the percentages of people who are in favor of them?" Well, global warming had everybody 51 percent and the level of the oceans 3 percent. They're rather related.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: This happens if there's no discussion of the difference. And I went all through it, so my comment, I passed it around, was that everything you have here that was voted on was all related, but there was no chance to evaluate what the different relationships were and what the—well, whatever.

Lage: And what the information the people were talking about—

Brower: There wasn't. So nothing came out because it was just a license for an exercise of stupidity. I don't think that should be happening, and that happens when you just have off-the-cuff responses.

Lage: And was the handbook part of a poll of what the club was working on?

Brower: I tried to get it going and it was always at the bottom of the list—we didn't need it. And I said—"Well, for one thing, through good fortune, I was able to talk Rachel Carson into giving the Sierra Club $300,000 in her will. I think we should call this the Rachel Carson Fund and continue to honor her so that that supports what it takes to get this kind of information to the membership." Well, one of the responses was, "Well, who are you to authorize the spending of all this money on a book?" And I'd say, "Well, if you don't want it, don't read it, but there are a lot of people who can read, and we're working with them."

Lage: Well, then finally they came out with a handbook.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Did you have a role at all in producing it?

Brower: No, but I just kept pushing for it, and it was pretty good.

Lage: Were you happy with it?

Brower: Pretty happy with it.

Lage: Did you get any response, or did the club get response from members?

Brower: I think what was happening was that the development department wasn't asking what the response was. They were just—if something costs money they want to do it. What does it cost? And that's my major difference of opinion of almost anybody who's working with budgets—not what does it cost if you do it, what does it cost if you don't? And this is a question that the earth has to face right now: what does it cost? Because we aren't thinking about what's happening to the planet, and face the fact that there's no other place to go.

Lage: Right.

Brower: If there was, we couldn't afford the energy cost of getting there.

Lage: Another thing we haven't discussed was when there was a discussion about whether the club should buy or rent a new headquarters when they moved to Polk Street. Were you involved in that?

Brower: Oh, I certainly was, and I lost.

Lage: What was your opinion?

Brower: Well, I was the one that said that you're just fooling yourselves if you think that, when you buy it yourself, that the things that you're paying for might well take care of themselves, because when you rent, somebody else is responsible for operating the building and getting the elevators in line or whatever else has to happen and this is going to cost money. It's better to have somebody who knows how to do that because that's their business, rather than to try to get the Sierra Club into that business. And certainly it's better than putting it in the neighborhood [Tenderloin district of San Francisco] where right across the street from you is a gay bar where various ladies of the night would be screaming as they walk past. [laughs] And they [the staff] didn't dare go to the office after night.

Lage: And that did happen, didn't it?

Brower: So they spent $6 million from here and there to get that building and sold it for $2 million and were proud of themselves. And I thought that losing $4 million isn't something particularly to be proud of.

Lage: I had thought that was one of the decisions that people acknowledged was a mistake.

Brower: They certainly didn't.

Lage: You didn't find that people acknowledged it?

Brower: No.

Lage: Because they picked the wrong neighborhood to go to?

Brower: The wrong neighborhood and the wrong idea. Then they could cook their own books on what it was costing, instead of paying rent. And now we're in this ridiculous place on Mission Street.

Lage: You're not happy with that?

Brower: Not at all happy with it.

Lage: But we don't own it.

Brower: We don't own it.

Lage: What is your objection to it?

Brower: Well, my objection is just part of what's happening to our civilization—there's no place to park.

Lage: [laughs] That doesn't sound like an environmentalist!

Brower: Well, it doesn't sound like an old mountaineer, but then if you're walking with a cane, you don't want to walk any farther than necessary.

Lage: Right, and it's not that easy to take BART when you're walking with a cane.

Brower: It isn't. So that's changed my thinking. I'm relying upon computer and fax.

Lage: But do you have other objections besides the parking there?

Brower: Just the building itself: there's no class, there's no whatever you should have. At least when they built their building, once you got inside they'd done some nice things with it. We had the Colby Library that was still a little bit like a library, and we have nothing like that now. And since it was my idea that we call it the Colby Library in the first place, way back in Mills Tower, I had this feeling that libraries were not all that bad.

Lage: Well, the club headquarters now look almost deliberately inelegant and uncomfortable.

Brower: Even at the beginning at Mills Tower, somebody with some sense had figured out what to do with the rooms. Then it was reworked, and reworked with some architectural skill—and some air conditioning—and it takes somebody with a little bit of skill. That is, I think architects have a function. They can do things to make a place liveable. And I'm learning more and more about it, but you just don't do that by dropping into something and saying there are doors there, and you get inside and there are windows.

Lage: Yes, so is that still a subject for discussion?

Brower: I haven't brought it up, but I'm pretty much unhappy with it. Here we have the Yosemite Room, the so-called Yosemite Room and one of the big pictures there is a picture of aspens in New Mexico. They don't know the difference.

Lage: Yes. [laughs]

Brower: But it will happen. Of course, I will never let them forget the time the Sierra Club calendar came out with a picture of Yosemite Falls and they said it was in Colorado.

Lage: Oh my!

Brower: That's Yosemite. California. The beginning of the National Park idea. And they don't know where it is.

Lage: That must have been an oversight, not lack of knowledge. Okay, one other thing here from the eighties that seemed important.

Brower: See, I'm bitching again.

Lage: Well, that's okay, we need people to bitch. Your letter to Doug Scott. That seemed very significant and meaningful. Do you want to give me some background for that?

Brower: Well, I've pretty much forgotten what it said, but I knew that I felt pretty strongly about it at the time. Part of that was the difference we were having over what was to happen with the forests. At that point we were getting into a struggle where the Sierra Club was in, you know, a waffle position. And the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund wasn't.

Lage: In a waffle position, you say?

Brower: Yes, the Sierra Club didn't want to take a strong position and the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund wanted one that was stronger, so they hired a lobbyist. Well, that wasn't what the Legal Defense Fund was for, but they felt forced to do that. And this bothered Michael Fischer quite a bit, but it didn't bother me: I said, "Well, the Sierra Club should be more active on this very important conservation issue." And then I went on to the fact—I think you've got that mentioned somewhere else, where Michael Fischer and I had lunch with Farley [Phil Frank].

Lage: Yes.

Brower: Farley was in Yosemite today, this morning, on a very good piece on whales in Yosemite. [laughs] But in any event, we had a very nice trip around the

bay, and just before we left, Michael Fischer said he had to go see some lawyers about denying the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund the right to use the Sierra Club name. And having known where that was coming from, I was happy about that and wrote the letter to Michael Fischer saying that I question whether the Sierra Club should be using the Sierra Club name. It was a little hard for him to enjoy that.

Lage: Did that letter get out? When you write letters like this, do you send them to others?

Brower: No, I just sent that to him, but it got around a little bit.

Lage: Now when you wrote the letter to Doug Scott, did you intend that as a public letter?

Brower: Pretty much. That is, I wanted that and I wanted other people to see it. Lots of people all over picked it up. But this is again getting back to what we are for, and what's happening to the earth.

Lage: And apparently the root of that letter was something that Doug Scott said to you or about you and Dave Foreman at the International Assembly. Do you remember what that was?

Brower: Yes, he dumped on Dave Foreman and talked about flag burning or something of the sort.

Lage: Flag burning?

Brower: He didn't really dump on me that I remember, but I was upset at what he'd done to Foreman. And here Foreman and Ed [Edward] Abbey were supposed to be there—and I—and these were people who made a habit of speaking up. And Ed Abbey double-crossed us—he died. [laughs] Oh, he'd have been quite interesting.

Lage: Yes, he was very interesting, but did you know him very well?

Brower: Not very well but well enough. If he'd been there, he would have told the Sierra Club “what for” in no uncertain terms.

Lage: What about Dave Foreman? You must have gotten to know him fairly well.

Brower: I did. And I had my standard thing: I will talk *before* Dave Foreman, but not after. Anybody who talks after Dave Foreman must be an anticlimax.

Lage: So he was a good speaker?

Brower: Oh, he speaks extremely well. The only person that was close to that in the ability of doing that was the mountaineer who was on West Ridge along with Tom Hornbein—Willi Unsoeld. Willi Unsoeld would spellbind an audience.

Lage: I didn't know that.

Brower: Oh, no, he was terrific. He could put people—one of the things that I regret is that nobody seems to have had tapes of what he did. There should be tapes of it. It was very, very moving.

Lage: And was he talking about conservation?

Brower: Whatever he was talking about! [laughter] And this was true of Dave Foreman, who'd get everybody to give a vote call [?] by the time he was through. [laughs] And then not shut up.

Lage: Now he was very active with Earth First.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: What did you think of a group that's considered fairly radical like Earth First?

Brower: Well, I thought it was absolutely essential. I thought it was essential, as well as the Nature Conservancy. We needed the whole spectrum and that's the system. The world was built with full spectrum, and we needed that difference and that challenge.

Lage: Because they did more than just talk.

Brower: But I complained about their theater. I thought it needed to be wittier. I gave the example of what happened, for example, in Friends of the Earth—Les Amis de la Terre—when we got started in France. The first thing they did was to jam the city as a protest against trying to put a freeway in the Left Bank. That got a lot of people mad because they wanted to move and not be jammed; they wanted to travel to whatever they were supposed to do, so it was an irritant. But the next one they did didn't get anybody bothered because they brought sheep to the gardens around the Eiffel Tower and said, "You were building on our pastures, we must eat your garden." Of course, the police couldn't do very much about the sheep. You could put them in jail, but that would send the wrong message. But this is humor—and it worked. And they're still doing in Paris what they're doing everywhere else—sprawl is around. Sprawl is still—

Lage: But you didn't think Earth First had the same kind of wit in their program?

Brower: They didn't have enough. They had some wit but not enough, and we needed better theater. And I think we still do. We've got to get a show going, on

what's happening to wildness in the world—and make it interesting. There are all kinds of ways to make it interesting. The world is too fascinating to be dull if you put the earth on stage.

Lage: Yes. What has been the evolution of Dave Foreman, as you understand? He left Earth First, did he not?

Brower: No, well, he and his co-founder had a spat, or whatever, they disagreed on something.

Lage: Who was the co-founder?

Brower: I'll think of his name—but he is a good man, but they disagreed. I'll think of his name after a while, but I haven't seen him for about two weeks, so I—[laughs]

Lage: We can always fill that in. [Mike Roselle]

Brower: But he, for example, had to spend some time in jail in one of the Dakotas because he had been a participant in the attempt to show that the figures of our former presidents on Mount Rushmore. They were trying to put some plastic over it, I guess, to show them that they're being threatened by acid rain.

Lage: This was not Dave Foreman, but—

Brower: No, just the other guy. And so he—and Audubon had enough money to get him out of jail, but they didn't work the way they should have.

Lage: They didn't get him out?

Brower: No. It was just an outrageous thing on the part of the court. Anyhow, there was a difference of opinion and I don't think it's healed yet.

Lage: Was it ideological?

Brower: Yes, I think it was.

Lage: How much theater to have?

Brower: Oh, no, not theater but just again, I think Dave Foreman is not quite so interested in being scatological as some of the other people were. [laughs]

Lage: I see. But Foreman came on the club board, which is kind of an interesting movement to such a mainstream—

Brower: Yes, well, but he had changed a bit from that, and he had started the new operation with involvement with the Wildlands Project—whatever that was. That's one of my problems of remembering all the names I should.

Lage: Well, we can always fill in those things. So he started a new organization?

Brower: But he started this new one. Their publication is one of the best we've got. It's extremely well designed, the subjects are discussed, and the Wildlands Project is one of the most important things we should all be taking on. The Sierra Club doesn't even mention it, or hardly ever mentions it, in *Sierra* or in the meetings or anything else, and we should be working more on that.

Lage: What role did Foreman play on the board? Did he work through the usual processes and go on to be director?

Brower: Well, you'd have to ask him, but I think he may have been as disturbed about what some of the board was doing as I was. I was certainly glad to have his total support when they wanted to drain Lake Powell. But then the whole board supported that, so I had no complaints about their voting unanimously to drain it, but I am a little upset that since that time they've spent $1,500 to do something about it. And I've spent $40,000, not $1,500.

Lage: Oh. Yes.

Brower: They're not serious.

Lage: But did you feel that people like Doug Scott are too much in the beltway, as they say?

Brower: Well, that happened, but I remember when the Alaska situation was coming up, Friends of the Earth started on an effort to save Alaska. And we were rather small and we did pretty well, but then when the Sierra Club took it over and Doug Scott did, it was a tremendous effort, and we had all kinds of people working hard on it. Some 1,500 little organizations all over were working hard to do something for Alaska, so it was terrific on that. But then he wasn't willing to take some things on that I thought should have been taken on, and that's what the letter was about—what I thought should happen in the forest, to get—that is, the Sierra Club could, within its budget, just take on the subject and do some full-page ads and do a book and do the kinds of things we'd done.

[End Tape 9, Side B]

[Begin Tape 10, Side A]

Brower: So we got into the general thing of trying to save wilderness in the Northern Rockies. The idea that they had there was pretty much the same as the

Wildlands Project: what places need maximum protection, what needs some protection, what corridors do you need so the wildlife can get through, what development do you need in cities, and eventually what limits for cities. There was a good rethinking of what we do with that land. That is, we don't throw people off it, we don't throw wildlife off it, we figure out this is for you and this is for us. But this is something they're working on, and the Sierra Club fought it.

Lage: The Sierra Club fought it. And who was pushing it? A special group?

Brower: The people in the Northwest were, the people in Earth First were, and that's where I learned about mycorrhizal fungi. I'd written about it in the *Sierra Club Bulletin* in about 1955, but I didn't read quite what was being said, that there was a concern about what was happening with the microscopic things in our forests—but that was an awfully good piece, way back.

Lage: Why did the Sierra Club fight it, do you think? Was this part of Doug Scott's doing?

Brower: They were playing politics with the people that they would have to get approval from. And they had other things they wanted to prove, and if they did this for the forest, then they wouldn't get something else set aside for the wilderness or something.

Lage: So it was sort of strategizing on how to get—

Brower: Yes, they were playing political games instead of ideal games—like what do you do, what should happen? No matter what the opinions are now—what is your goal for this piece of earth? What is your goal for these species? How do they mix it?

Lage: Can they behave as you want them to behave on these various issues like Northern Rockies and the ancient forest in the Northwest and still have an effective lobbying operation in Washington?

Brower: Well, if you don't, then you know where the weakness is and you work on that, too, but you don't give up what you think ought to happen, just to please somebody. No, it's very hard to do that. But I wouldn't want to go storming in and raise hell right now with Congressman Miller. He's one of the best we'll ever get. I have nothing to raise hell with at the moment.

Lage: But if you did have something to raise hell—

Brower: I'll disagree with Dianne Feinstein or Barbara Boxer, but I want to make sure that the people who want to be critical realize that it's not Barbara Boxer, it's not Dianne Feinstein, or somebody else that we're attacking; we're just attacking the failure of democracy. My line with Gorbachev—I still use in all

my speeches; it always works: "We're watching Russia very carefully. If you can make democracy work, we're going to try it." People love that. And I go on, "Isn't it sad that it's funny?" But it is, and you can't have democracy when your country is run by legal bribery, which is exactly what it's doing now. And you know that.

So the people who are stuck or brave enough to run for office at a time when they're going to have to spend most of their time looking for money—and you know where you find it—you're not paying them; you know who is, for what reasons.

Lage: Those are all huge issues.

Brower: Yes, relax, and don't blame them. Let's go to work on legal bribery and get rid of it.

Lage: Legal bribery, the IRS—you're taking on some pretty big issues.

Brower: Yes, make bribery illegal. Well, that and taking on religions.

Lage: Okay, now, I think we covered the eighties. And I do think we're getting a good picture of your thinking, and where it diverges from the Sierra Club, and how you'd like to see the club go along. And I haven't made you talk about all those different board members and presidents. [laughter]

You told me last time why you came back on the board in the nineties, that Chad Hanson talked you into it.

Brower: Yes, I'd run into Chad at this conference, Land, Air, and Water, that's held every year by the law students or the law school of the University of Oregon. The law students put it on, not the law school. They're a little unhappy about it. And the university is unhappy about it because it gets in the way of their contributions, but they still go on. And this is now seventeen years, with about up to three thousand people coming from all around the world to attend it. One of the very best there is.

One of the people I ran into there was Chad Hanson. He is a Sierra Club member, and he was active in that part of the country. He, among other things, is extremely unhappy with the Sierra Club's weak position on forests. I'd disagreed with him initially. I said that the whole business of cutting out the logging of publicly owned forest merely means that logging has to be done on the privately owned forest, and I'm busy trying to save some redwoods that are privately owned, and I got a problem.

Lage: And there's not as much control over the private ones.

Brower: Yes, but they got me over that. But we do have control over the public, and we do have to work on what we're doing with wood. I go onto my usual routine on that one, that the problem is the market system.

The market system knows the value of forest for pulp, for two-by-fours, and nothing else. No value is put in for what it does for carbon dioxide or oxygen. I like the way that's balanced. The forest has a lot to do with water control and quality, for soil preservation, for habitat, for beauty. All those things are the important things are totally skipped by the marketplace. It hasn't the foggiest idea what nature's services are worth—no idea. It's just as ignorant as you can get. And we're depending on it, and we've got to get over that.

Schumacher was trying to get us over that, and now there are other organizations that are trying to do it. I'm in the business of being involved, I guess, in maybe three books that'll help.

Lage: Okay, so he kind of turned you around there and broadened your thinking a bit on the no-commercial-logging issue.

Brower: Yes, he did.

Lage: And encouraged you to get back on the board.

Brower: Yes, so I went along, and I was part of the people who said, "All right, no more logging in public forests."

Lage: Now, that seems to be an issue where there's really been some difference made in the Sierra Club as a result of the initiative.

Brower: Yes, see, the initiative, the second time around the board didn't screw it up, but they did their best to do that. I scolded the then president and the then executive director, Michele and Carl, about what they'd done, because when the membership votes for a petition issue, when they petition for this to go to the membership and when you juggle the language so that if you want to support the people who put the petition in, you've got to vote no, you've been very unethical.

Lage: So the first time around that happened?

Brower: That's what they did.

Lage: And the second time around?

Brower: They didn't.

Lage: They didn't. What changed?

Brower: Well, one of the things that changed was that Chad Hanson went around the country and talked to various chapters. And he gave them the story so it came out the right way two to one, instead of losing.

Lage: But also it was couched properly?

Brower: They didn't dare change the language again because I'd have sued—or anybody else would have, I think, at that point. And I should have sued the time before. I was not alert enough.

Lage: Now from your vantage point on the board, how has the club responded to this vote of the membership?

Brower: Not well enough.

Lage: Because the powers that be in the club—

Brower: The membership did, but they responded to that about the way they responded to draining Lake Powell. They got sidetracked on something else. Here was a unanimous vote on the board. The Sierra Club has been essentially ineffective in doing anything about Glen Canyon, and they've not been effective in doing what they should be doing about forests. Chad has been very effective.

Lage: There has been lobbying in Washington—has that been through the club's official Washington office?

Brower: That was stirred up by Chad Hanson more than anybody else.

Lage: He must be a very effective guy.

Brower: He is.

Lage: How old is he?

Brower: Oh, in his early thirties.

Lage: Lots of energy.

Brower: Yes. He thinks well and has some law training and few other odds and ends. And he essentially got the John Muir group going within the Sierra Club.

Lage: Had he been a long time member of the club?

Brower: Not too long.

Lage: But he seems to have had quite an impact for a young—

Brower: He has. Yes. And still is. I had to call him up just after our meeting yesterday. I said all we need to do is get an audio tape of what happened in that meeting—

Lage: You're talking about the conference call?

Brower: The conference call—and then there'll never be another conference call. [laughter]

Lage: You should have been taping it.

Brower: Yes. It was hilarious.

Lage: I always think it would be awfully hard to carry on a conference call even if you had certain procedures in place.

Brower: Yes, well, I carried on a little bit myself this time. [laughs] And it was really strange the way things worked out that Phil Berry came in with support. We've done various things—he's been a very strong supporter in the past and a very strong opponent in the past, but at the meeting of the chapter [the 75th anniversary dinner for the San Francisco Bay Chapter], I had fun telling him I was going to destroy him. I revealed to everybody the time when he was fifteen, and I bought a steak and we were going out to getting ready for the High Trip and he asked, "Shall we boil it?" [laughter] So I wanted to tell them Phil Berry is the kind of person who would have boiled a steak! But bear in mind that shortly after that I thought he should be cook on the Sierra Club High Trip, so we were both guilty.

Lage: Yes. [laughs] Well, do you think that your interchange with him at the dinner Saturday night had some influence on his coming to your aid on Sunday or Monday?

Brower: Yes. Right. I think so. [laughs]

Lage: Okay, I want to talk now about immigration and population control. It seems like there are different groups within the board of directors that are supporting the no-cut logging and supporting the immigration and population control.

Brower: I still want to find out what was going on. I got a little bit of it from Mikhail, but I'm going to get some more, I guess, this week from Justin Ruben.

Now, who's Justin Rubin? I encountered him when I was giving a talk about forests at Yale. He was not from Yale, he was from Dartmouth, but he was there. He was a tall guy with very big hair, as you say, and after the meeting he waited for a long time while I was saying whatever you say after meetings to people who come—say how great you've been all your life. I say, "Not

yet." But in any event, he waited and waited and finally passed a letter to me. And I said, "Well, should I read it now?" And he said, "Well, sometime later."

But here he was, a very young guy who had read *Encounters with the Archdruid* and is quite moved with what I seemed to be up to. And that keeps happening. And I've got to explain this to John McPhee, that I'm getting all kinds of wonderful situations because of that book. That's why I have Mikhail. He read that when he was fifteen.

Lage: Really! Is it continuously reissued?

Brower: Every McPhee book is in print and kept in print by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, and that just doesn't happen in publishing. Every book he's written. So that, last I heard, there'd been twenty-seven reprints of it. And I keep running into people who've read it when I get student audiences, and almost every time I'm around there, somebody brings me a bottle of Tanqueray gin. [laughter]

Lage: Because of that?

Brower: Yes, because of the book.

Lage: Well, you must like it for that reason as well.

Brower: Yes, I do, I guess. But it happened when John McPhee and I were at a bar at the airport in Seattle, the attendant came by and John said, “I want a Tanqueray martini straight up with nothing in it and so does he.” [laughter] That's in the book. Anyhow. Here's what McPhee did and we're back to Justin Ruben.

Lage: Justin Ruben, yes.

Brower: I read that letter and it was very kind and funny. He told me what happened and what was happening to people in his age group. I wrote a letter to him and put it in my autobiography, and we've kept in touch ever since. Now he's out here. He's working now on pesticides in Fresno, but he'll be up here for a meeting. To get back to the subject of immigration, I heard from him in just a little short talk at lunch that if the immigration initiative passes, the young people in the Sierra Club are just going to resign en masse. I never got a chance to find out what's happening here. And we'll be talking about that.

I also found out from Adam Werbach, who was then president, that people are lighting up on this whole thing and saying any attempt to control immigration is racist. And he was just having a fit about that, so he was for not doing anything on it. Because of this, I chickened out. I didn't take either position.

Lage: Right, I noticed that.

Brower: I *wrote* on what my position was. I wrote a long piece, sent it to the *New York Times* by way of a guy who put the most celebrated piece I ever wrote in the *New York Times* magazine section and who's now still working in the editorial department.

Lage: Do you remember his name?

Brower: Yes, Glen Collins. And I never got a response from him or the *Times*.

Lage: On that population issue?

Brower: On that piece. So I still want it published somewhere. But the upshot of it was simply that overpopulation is one of our biggest problems, overmigration is an important part of it. We can ignore neither, and let's address both.

And that was the difference because the Sierra Club wanted to ignore the immigration question, not discuss it. And that's ignoring it, not addressing. And my point—and I go on at great length—is that why does it happen, and do we realize how much we have caused it? Do we realize that there are lot of people who'd probably like to come over here and share the loot we stole from them? It's just developing that. It's a very developable subject, and we'd better think more about it.

And then I go on to such subjects as from Niel Wilson, how many people can the earth sustain? He said if they have added up the resources of the United States and Japan, 200 million. I'd never heard that. I called him up and asked, "Did you say that?" He said, "No, but it sounds reasonable," and then he gave me people to talk to. Then the man who said he had said it was David Suzuki, one of the top environmentalists in Canada. He said, well, if he did say it, he may have forgotten it, but he'd said it. So I said, well, the argument isn't whether or not he said it, but whether he thinks it's reasonable. Let's go from there. And then we have a lot more than the 200 million people in Japan.

Lage: But now you're talking about population and not immigration.

Brower: So then I go on to the next point where you have the subject I've used again: in the last fifty years since World War II, the United States has used up more resources than all the rest of the world in all previous history. And we think that's a good idea, but nobody else does. That's not going to make peace or anything else. And it has forced a lot of immigration, and then I go on with more specifics.

Lage: I'm trying to get at this very complicated issue and also the concern people have that it's racist to try to limit immigration.

Brower: Yes, well, it isn't. That's just half thinking and going off at half cock.

Lage: Yes, but when you're talking about controlling immigration, *you* seem to be talking about looking at the root causes of it, whereas there are those who just say let's shut the borders and save California.

Brower: I wanted to make it unnecessary. I want to stop requiring that people come over here and follow our examples because, A, our example is not a good one and, B, I think most people given a chance and a break wouldn't mind living at home.

Lage: But the people within the club who are pushing for this initiative that links population and immigration control seem to be focusing more on "Let's shut down the borders and keep our land."

Brower: Well, they never said shut down the borders. The racists opponents thought that's a line-up, which is not what they were proposing. They said, “Let's control immigration. It's controlled everywhere else on earth, why not here?”

Lage: So you wouldn't go along with it at this point in your thinking?

Brower: At this point, for example, even though our population is growing rather fast, I'd like to learn what we're doing to the earth ourselves to pay what we need to pay to get some restoration where we caused the problems.

Lage: You mean in other parts of the world?

Brower: Yes. My example that I use in the article that the *Times* hasn't run, my own cousin, born in Sebastopol in apple country, found that there are lot of people from Mexico working in their orchard. He talked to them about it when he was just beginning in his twenties, found out why they were here, and then devoted the rest of his life—which is going on right now; he's a little younger than I—to go to Oaxaca. He married a Zapatec Indian, has four children, all of whom are bilingual—she still speaks only Zapatec—and was there to change the agriculture in Mexico. He started in Oaxaca, did so well there that the Mexican government had him working in all thirty states, and he was called over to Russia to do some of this.

Lage: This is a cousin, you say? Your cousin?

Brower: My cousin. And he should be celebrated for what he's done. He's done an awful lot in trying to get—well, for one example, which I'll stop with, he's come up with two hundred strains of corn to work in various microclimates. That sort of thing is what he's done. What can you do with where you are?

What has happened in Mexico is that we have unsustainable agriculture and we don't know it, our agriculture department doesn't know it, the U.N. doesn't know it, but that's what we've got. *He* knows it, a lot of people know it, Wes Jackson knows it, David [Piminton?] knows it. We've got a lot of people who

know that, but it's not getting through our institutions yet, not even in the University of California. And well, we need that change. This guy is working on it.

With our unsustainable agriculture, we were able to underprice our food, because we weren't paying what it costs. And that was driving people in Mexico off their farms. They couldn't compete with our unsustainable marketing, and where would they go? To Mexico City? No room at the inn. Go north where they're making all this money? Why not? We caused it and then we bitch about it.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: And we don't see that. And there's nobody talking that story. Even now, right this minute, it's not getting out.

Lage: And is that a story that the Sierra Club prefers not to talk about?

Brower: They just don't get around to it. At the *Sierra* magazine, I'm sure they're trying hard, but there's a requirement: you've got to have as much money coming from the ad as you cost us editorially, and that should never have been permitted. And so we've got all kinds of ads and all kinds of glossy designs that looks as if we're running a chain-store magazine instead of the kind of magazine we had.

We're getting in many other places such as Harper's *Atlantic*—you go through the *New Yorker*, they've got lots of ads, but they've got content. And you hardly know from *Sierra* what the Sierra Club's main concerns are, so that was my other complaint. Let's let the magazine rejoin the Sierra Club.

Lage: And not be just a newsstand item. This population question has it come up again—or it will come up again?

Brower: It will come up again.

Lage: But it's not on the ballot this time, is it?

Brower: No.

Lage: And next time will you sign on to it?

Brower: Well, we'll see. I want to sign onto—that is, we've got to address it; we can't ignore it. What can we do about it in this richest country in the world? See if we can cut it off where it begins and get some of the funds back to them that I say that we stole.

Lage: Well, you have a very complex and informed position on this whole issue. Sometimes that's hard to get across in a ballot measure, or in the way that the press reports on the ballot measure.

Brower: Well, if it had got by all right, if the Sierra Club had said what I think they should be saying on this whole question. Address it, don't ignore it. Because the numbers are here. We know we can't stand what we're doing. We can't stand what we've done to California—another doubling and you wouldn't want to live here.

Lage: So on this one you didn't go on either side, I notice here.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Adam and all the former presidents endorsed Alternative B [that the Sierra Club not include restrictions on U.S. immigration as part of its population policy].

Brower: I think that I should have done it.

Lage: And Brock Evans, I noticed, endorsed A [to include a reduction in net immigration to the U.S. as part of a comprehensive population policy].

Brower: And E.O. Wilson.

Lage: E.O. Wilson, Lester Brown, Stewart Udall.

Brower: I should have done it, but I kept fussing, well, I think the wording on the initiatives should be changed this way and that way. And then having said what I think they should be and I'll have to change them, I didn't. It wasn't that I intended not to, it's just that I didn't get around to it, which is one of the things I do very well.

Lage: [laughs] Well, you do have a few things on your platter there. Dave Foreman endorsed the initiative A. Martin Litton.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Farley Mowat. Do you have much to do with Farley Mowat?

Brower: No, I just know of him. Just know that he had trouble getting into this country because he writes too well. He thinks too well, we can't stand it.

Lage: Right. Paul Watson, co-founder of Greenpeace—is he a person that you've had much to do with on the board?

Brower: No. He's running for the board, and we'll find out in a couple of days whether he made it or not, but I don't know quite where he's coming from or why he decided he'd try for the Sierra Club board.

Lage: I wonder if it has to do with population?

Brower: It may.

Lage: Yes. Have you had much to do with Greenpeace at all over the years?

Brower: Not too much. I've used them as a whipping boy, but they and almost everybody else now, including the Sierra Club, they're always saying, "We did it, we did it," as if nobody else existed. And that sickens me. I didn't do that when I was executive director.

Lage: No, I noticed even at the chapter dinner, well, there wasn't that much time to talk about the accomplishments, but almost everything that's been done here in the Bay Area has been done with other groups—prominent other groups.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And the club really can't take the credit for all of it.

Brower: No they can't.

Lage: It's part of the whole—

Brower: But I don't claim that I figured this out myself, I did it from my favorite singer, Bing Crosby. When he finally got into radio, he was always self-deprecating. And it just seemed so important to do that, particularly since it's true. [laughter]

Lage: Right. It does take this whole range of people. Do you keep in touch with Galen Rowell?

Brower: Yes, yes.

Lage: I'm just looking at this list of people who supported Alternative A.

Brower: Yes, Galen was very generous to me in what he's written and so on. When they had the foreword to *Bay Area Wild*, to that book, I did the foreword and he gave me the treatment I got from my son Ken: "Well, now, look what you did, look what you said." By the time we worked it over, it was much improved. [laughter]

Lage: He's a good writer, as well as a good photographer.

Brower: Yes, and climber.

Lage: And climber.

Brower: He also climbs.

Lage: And he has a lot of thoughts about climbing and how it affects your attitude to nature. I thought that quite interesting. Okay, well, anything else you want to say about this population issue?

Brower: Well, what I want to do is talk to Justin: "What is bugging the young people, which you said were going to quit in droves?" I haven't sat long enough yet to ask Mikhail what he thinks of it, because he's young enough to know what young people are thinking, but I do want to know from Justin, because we're quite fond of each other somehow after this strange experience.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: And he thinks extremely well. That's one of the things I'm getting into—now, some of these kids, these young people are as bright as they come.

Lage: You must have been listening because that's why you didn't support the measure.

Brower: Yes. And here with Adam—that is, "Adam, I was supporting you." And he said, well, that I was his campaign manager." I said, "Well, not quite." But I supported him as president, and he's the youngest president, and he's supporting me as the oldest. [laughter]

But there's awfully good stuff going on and we need it. My observation that led to this was way back several years ago, when I found out from one of the members of the club council that every year the average age of the Sierra Club member was going up a year. There wasn't anything coming in new. I've seen that happen in other organization, and I felt it should never happen in the Sierra Club. I wanted it to be perpetual.

Lage: If it's true that the issue is dividing young and old, I think you're wise to find out why.

Brower: Well, it has, and I do want to find out why. I want to listen carefully and see, well, all right, now what do you do about it, because we just can't continue growing more and more and more. So let's start out from the Brower law: growth is guilty 'til proven innocent. Well, that's gone over well with audiences.

Lage: I like that. Maybe that's a good place to end for today?

Brower: All right.

Lage: I thought today would kind of finish—except Sierra Club will always come up—but finish the close look at the club in the last twenty years, unless, is there anything else you want to say? Because next time it's Earth Island we're going to talk about.

Brower: Well, whatever. That is, when I'm in my fatuous moments, I'm going on with what Steven Fox said in his book about John Muir, that I'm the John Muir reincarnate. Well, if I am, I'm going to play that for all it's worth. If you want to know what John Muir is thinking about, just ask me.

Lage: [laughs] Okay.

Brower: Then I passed that on to Mikhail, which could happen also to Justin, that I'd like them to be John Muir incarnates, too. They still get that idea. And here's Justin working on pesticides, and here's Mikhail who went to Stanford and did environmental studies. Amidst other duties, just this morning Mikhail was reminding me as I'm going down to BART—he had stayed last night because he'd used my car—I was going on and on, so he spent the night here because it was too late to go home, so while he was waiting, he looked at our book on bees. The function of the bee—

[End Tape 9, Side A]

[Begin Tape 10, Side B]

Lage: We lost some there, but you were saying what the bees do in pollinating.

Brower: Then he began to talk about some of the other functions here and said these are all part of nature's services. And he got me thinking about that book out of Stanford by Gretchen Daily and *Nature's Services*, which has not yet sold well enough for the public to know what it's got to say. And it's one of the most important things there is to know.

Schumacher was talking about it, not in the detail that was needed. Gretchen Daily's people from all over the world were talking about it, but it hasn't come through. When I've gone to audience and say, "Well, how many people know anything about nature's services—or how many people know about—what's the next one I ask? There's still another. Not *Nature's Services*, but *Natural Step*.

Lage: Yes, *Natural Step*.

Brower: And now I did that for Earth Day in San Francisco, and there were just a handful of people. I said, "Now, how many people have read the book *Natural*

Capitalism?" And a lot of hands went up. I said, "Well, the trouble is, that book hasn't been published yet, so I'm going to see you after school."

Lage: [laughs] So you caught them trying to look more informed than they were.

Brower: But to have major groups not know about *Nature's Services* and *Natural Step* I'm going to do what I can. The name doesn't say anything. Nature's Services says something, but that still isn't doing it right because it isn't sold well enough. Now the Natural Step, I don't know what it means to you, but—

Lage: It could be anything.

Brower: Is that a dance step, or what? It doesn't say what's happening, and it's extremely important.

Lage: So the words that are chosen make a difference.

Brower: So I want a full-page ad saying this is a contest, and you can win a prize and take some of my prize money and give it to a winner so that it is a full-page run of a contest. This is the essential elements of it: what would you call something that's doing this? What would you call it so people know what it's about? Even the people in the environmental movement, who are one out of a thousand, don't know. And so that's an idea we've got on track. They don't know what it's about—and what do we do?

Lage: That could be a role for *Sierra*, also, to publicize to its members.

Brower: They could do an awfully good job. The only thing the Sierra Club has done on the Natural Step is hold a meeting in the Yosemite Room. Now that was scheduled by Earth Island. [laughs]

Lage: Oh, dear.

Brower: But it included Paul Hawken, who heads the Natural Step [organization] in this country, included the guy from Sweden [Karl-Henrik Robèrt] who invented it, and we had to get Earth Island—we had a group together at the Sierra Club.

Lage: But did Sierra Club members come?

Brower: A few.

Lage: Sierra Club leaders?

Brower: Yes, but they still don't know what it is. And it hasn't been covered, so these are the opportunities.

Lage: Right. That's a positive way of looking at it. Okay, let's stop for today.

Brower: For God's sake. [laughter]

Interview #6: June 15, 1999
[Begin Tape 11, Side A]

Lage: It's June 15, 1999, and this is our sixth session, eleventh tape, of our oral history with David Brower.

Brower: All right.

Lage: We haven't met since April 27.

Brower: That long.

Lage: And a lot has happened since then, and that's what I thought we'd start with.

Brower: Yes, we have to. I don't know what's happened, but we have a whole month behind us, plus.

Lage: I just wondered if you had any comments on the course of the Sierra Club election, since we've talked about it several times in the past. You were going to run for president.

Brower: Yes, well, it turned out that I didn't have enough votes to win, and so when—well, we went through a little bit of difficulty with them doing some rather strange things—like holding the election in my absence before I arrived there—so I told them since they knew I was running, you'd think they'd better try it over again.

Lage: You mean, they held it at the caucus?

Brower: They'd had a caucus ahead of time, and then they had the final meeting where they're supposed to go through it.

Lage: I see. The formal meeting.

Brower: But they neglected to wait until I got there, and I was one of the candidates. They started that a little early, so they agreed to run it over, and I knew at that point that I would get more votes than I had in the caucus, but not enough, so when Chuck McGrady was nominated for president, I seconded the nomination, and threw everybody off badly. [laughs]

Lage: Do you think they'd been worried that you were going to put up a kind of public opposition?

Brower: Oh, I don't think they thought that, but they just winced when I went through. And I told people I'll run again when I'm mature.

Lage: [laughter] Well, that would have been—that was exactly thirty years after you'd left as executive director before.

Brower: Yes, a while back.

Lage: It would have been kind of a nice—

Brower: It would have been nice. I got quite a bit of press, and the press, I think, revealed what I was concerned about—that the Sierra Club was much too interested now in its board meetings with talking about rules, procedures, standing rules, and all that, but not enough about what was happening with the earth; and I wanted to get that switched. And maybe we'll get it switched anyway, but I just want a little more democracy in it, and then I'll participate happily.

Lage: Did you object to the fact that they do this board election in a caucus beforehand, or does that seem—

Brower: No. They've always done something like that. But they met separately to agree, well, who shall we run for president, so it wasn't just a drag down fight at the meetings.

Lage: Yes, that doesn't disturb you?

Brower: That's always been done. That didn't worry me, but this went on for three days.

Lage: This caucus?

Brower: Yes, in the course of which there was no conservation discussed. They were just discussing the operation of the Sierra Club and what it does.

I'm a little hoarse this morning—I don't know why.

Lage: Well, if you feel like your voice is giving out, we'll stop. Is there anything else to say about the election or the direction you're going to take with the Sierra Club?

Brower: Well, I'm still on the board, and apparently I'll be on one of the committees that does a lot of the conservation thinking. But nothing much has happened yet, and I'm just worried about that whole procedure, trying to divide the bureaucracy of the Sierra Club into more parts that it was in, and so there is more time operating a bureau and less time saving the earth.

Lage: Do you think it has something to do with the size of the club or do you attribute it to other things?

Brower: Well, I think that the size of the club is certainly going to be important. It's quite a different club from what it was when I joined. Before it was not quite two thousand members.

Lage: Or even when you left as executive director.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Much bigger.

Brower: It's much bigger—it's about 600,000 now. And I have the pleasure of pointing out, which I just learned, that the membership of Friends of the Earth, which started after I was dismissed from the [club] staff, so that was just thirty years ago, is now 1.2 million.

Lage: I had no idea!

Brower: In sixty-three countries.

Lage: That counts the international.

Brower: That counts the international, which is all part of it.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: So I'm not too disappointed.

Lage: That's really quite wonderful. Now, this question has been raised when I talked to some of your cohorts at Earth Island Institute: why do you put so much of your energy into the Sierra Club?

Brower: Well, I'm still a member of the Sierra Club, and I think that it has the ability of doing things that it should be doing, and the earth needs it. And right at this point, the environment is getting pretty much vandalized. It's not getting any attention in the press, it's not getting any attention in the political world, or even in the environmental world that it needs, so I'm just trying to see, well, what can be done to bring it back to life, with the urgency that the earth requires and isn't getting.

Lage: But you seem to be so discouraged with the direction the club is going; do you ever just think you should wash your hands of it and put your attention elsewhere?

Brower: I suppose that would make sense, but I've felt sort of a proprietary interest in it, having been in it this long, and having seen it do good things, as well as not do good things. I'd like to get us back into doing some good things again. I like to go through my recollection of the areas of national parks, the

wilderness system, the various things that have happened, the ideas that I think are pretty useful, the books that were put out, the ideas that were moving the environmental movement ahead and are now just grinding to a stop. We can't afford that, and so I'm anxious to see it come up with the vigor that I find now in Earth Island Institute.

Lage: It has the membership to support those ideas.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Okay, well, let's go to Earth Island Institute.

Brower: All right. [laughs]

Lage: Now, it was founded officially in 1982. Do you want to talk about how and why it was founded?

Brower: Well, actually we started it in 1972 in London. That was Earth Island Limited, and there was the idea of getting another voice in the environmental movement where we would try to make profit and take the profits and put that into the environment. And it almost worked.

Lage: How were you going to make profits? Publishing?

Brower: Well, publishing was the thing we were thinking of starting out with. And indeed, in our brief period before we went busted, we put out seven books. I was glad we put them out.

Lage: And then that went defunct?

Brower: That went defunct because we didn't have enough capital for it.

Lage: Who did you work with on that?

Brower: Well, Edwin Matthews was one of the people. I guess I put something like $15,000 of capital into it, and that's not a great deal, but we thought things might start. But it didn't quite work.

Lage: Okay, so now how did it get refounded? In '82 you were in the midst of some troubles in Friends of the Earth.

Brower: Well, having started Earth Island Limited, we wanted to start Earth Island Incorporated in the U.S. We spent, again, about $15,000 on law people who were trying to get it ready for a public offering.

Lage: Now was this in '82?

Brower: This was leading up to '82. I mean, I never seem to get the right time—it didn't seem to be the right time to make the offering. And so finally when Friends of the Earth began to change its ideas, when they decided they wanted to move to Washington and close their main office in San Francisco and get rid of the principal people that had made it possible, I thought we'd better get going on Earth Island and just go the simple way—make it Earth Island Institute, a tax-deductible organization. And then take it from there and see what we could do to get all of the things going that we wanted to see happen. That was '82, ten years later.

Lage: Okay, that was '82. So what was the nature of it? In '86 it became a membership organization, I've read.

Brower: Well, I think '84. I know that we were having a little bit of a contest with Friends of the Earth at that point, and we wanted to see what kind of a cooperative effort we could come up with to carry on what was going on in San Francisco, to keep those people busy. It didn't quite work out the way I had hoped it would.

Lage: Yes, so did a lot of the Friends of the Earth people in San Francisco just transfer over to Earth Island?

Brower: Yes, that was the lifeboat for Friends of the Earth San Francisco.

Lage: Now it is a very unique organization—this project-based organization. How did that come about and why?

Brower: Well, it came out through various ideas, but the main thing, I think, was that I wanted to—or my idea was to try to get some ecological consciousness of many spheres of activity. We were trying to do that in our final days here in Friends of the Earth. And we got going on the Fate of the Earth conferences.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: That was initiated by Friends of the Earth. Earth Island wasn't involved in that, except that we called our first little publication *Earth Island Journal*.

Lage: The publication for Fate of the Earth?

Brower: For Fate of the Earth conference. It was our first newsletter, and it was a sixteen-pager, and it had all the things we were trying to get done and would be trying to get done in Earth Island.

Lage: So you used the Fate of the Earth conference as kind of a launching pad, also?

Brower: Yes, so that was a launching pad. Also, when I taught my first year at Stanford—I taught for a quarter, and it was an environmental course—the

thing that we did there was we had various things the seventy-five students could do. They had their choice—they could be in pollution or population, or various things, but also we came up with the idea of a weekly paper and that was *Earth Island Journal*.

Lage: I see.

Brower: So we put out *Earth Island Journal* as a weekly at Stanford the first time I was there and then when I was there for a quarter three years later, we did it again. But the idea of putting out a weekly paper as part of a class activity was pretty good. It got around the campus pretty well. And the first year did better than the second.

Lage: And Dave, do your papers that you've put in the Bancroft include copies of those?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Because we don't have a good run of *Earth Island Journals* and that's something I'd like to see come out of this. So the journal, as a weekly, started at Stanford. And then was that carried on by the institute?

Brower: Then the institute carried it on as a quarterly, not as a weekly.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: I wanted it to be a weekly. I wanted *Not Man Apart* to be a weekly. I think we need to get something out for the environment because we have good material and some of it, if you just put it out every quarter, can not be very timely.

Lage: And has Gar Smith been the editor all along?

Brower: He's been the editor almost all along. Right now he's on sabbatical, but he's coming back. He's just tireless at putting it out. And since every quarter we would put out something almost like fifty-six or sixty pages, I thought that all we needed to do was put it out more frequently and not so many pages, and we'd get a better readership and have something current, too. But that hasn't happened yet.

Lage: Now Earth Island Institute is a membership organization.

Brower: It is.

Lage: How large a membership does it have?

Brower: Not large at all.

Lage: Not large.

Brower: No, we haven't worked very hard on recruiting. That was my big problem with Friends of the Earth; they weren't working hard on recruiting. I just got the habit of having a lot of members in other organizations I've been in, and it just seems that's part of the political requirement, that you have enough people that you get paid attention to.

Lage: Who does the journal go to if you don't have a lot of members? Does it go on newsstands?

Brower: A little bit on newsstands, but not really very much. We try to get it around to people that we think should be reading it. And it is, I think, very good. It has a lot of material that you don't get in the other journals. There's room for improvement, but I think it's one of the best things put out.

Lage: Now who helped you or worked with you at the time that Earth Island was conceived? As I understand it, it consists of a lot of projects that are a bit independent and a core group that handles their bureaucratic needs.

Brower: Well, Earth Island was started after the Friends of the Earth had closed, and we just didn't have anyplace to go. We got upstairs in a little restaurant on Columbus Avenue—

Lage: That was the first office?

Brower: Yes. David Phillips and John Knox were the people who were there steadily.

Lage: So they've been kind of executive directors from the beginning.

Brower: Yes, we didn't call them that then, but they've been quite important all the way through.

Lage: And how did you develop your board? You have an advisory board, you have a board of directors—

Brower: Well, we started putting together the people that we thought could be useful, that we'd used in Friends of the Earth. We tried to have some control over what happened there, and we lost control. So we were trying to get the people—the staff and the advisors and the board—that we thought would work. I'm not sharp on all the details, but just that we started right from the beginning.

Lage: You've never had trouble drawing people in to help out with your organizations.

Brower: I seem to be pretty lucky that way.

Lage: I'd like to get a sense of what you like best about Earth Island. Which projects do you kind of tie in with? There seems to be such an array. I can bring out a list here, if we want to look so you can talk about specifics. Okay, I have a '93 annual report and I have this very recent one: Atmosphere Alliance, Baikal Watch, Bay Area Wilderness Training, Blue Water Network. Tell me about some of these, so we get a sense of the spirit of the organization.

Brower: Well, one of the most important things we were doing was the Marine Mammal Program. That was David Phillips, who was not only to be the executive director—one of the two executive directors—but he's also head of that program, which is the one that has received the most notice. We're working to save dolphins and whales and whatever marine mammals we could find that needed a little help to work with.

And we've got some good people working there. One of the biggest things that happened was Sam LaBudde, who was a very bold man with a camcorder and got photographs of what the tuna fishermen were doing to the dolphin. And that got worldwide notice before we were through, so we went from a rather simple beginning to being a rather important thing, that is still going on—where we got Keiko.

Lage: Yes, tell me about Keiko.

Brower: Keiko had been born as a pup near the waters off Iceland; they put him near Mexico City, at an elevation of about 9,000 feet, which is much higher above sea level than a whale ought to be. It wasn't the best place.

Lage: He was put into an aquarium?

Brower: Yes. And he wasn't doing very well there. It was David Phillips' idea to see what we could do about that. So when we got the movie, *Free Willy*—

Lage: Now, was the movie connected with David Phillips?

Brower: The movie was connected with Keiko.

Lage: Yes, I know, but David had a role in the movie?

Brower: Well, we had such a role that at the end of the film, telling what could you do about whales, they gave a telephone number which was our Earth Island telephone number. And that was more successful than they intended because we got a huge number of calls—hundreds of thousands of telephone calls. [laughs]

Lage: Did you know what to tell these people?

Brower: Well, we weren't quite ready to do that, so the whole story was running into a huge telephone bill. And David Phillips went to Warner Brothers and told them this wasn't working out quite the way we hoped, so what happened was that they made the video of *Free Willy* with a little brief commercial for Earth Island, and if you wanted to help, you could adopt.

Lage: Adopt a whale, yes.

Brower: Adopt a whale for something like $24.95, and then we would do certain things with that money.

Lage: That's better than getting all those phone calls.

Brower: But that produced about a million and a quarter dollars.

Lage: That was a tremendously successful campaign.

Brower: And that led to the boldness that got us to think, well, we could move Keiko to better water, off Portland.

Lage: I see, not back to Iceland.

Brower: And so it took $9 million to build what was necessary.

Lage: $9 million!

Brower: Yes, to build a place for him, the right water and everything else. We got him shipped by UPS free.

Lage: Within this tank?

Brower: Yes. UPS had already had some experience carrying a whale because they carried him when he was much smaller.

Lage: They carried him up to Mexico City?

Brower: From Iceland when he was first caught. That's how they got him from the waters off Iceland to Mexico City. So they were ready to help again, and there'd be good press for UPS. And it worked. Of course, my story was there was just no way to send him by parcel post. The post office couldn't handle it, but the UPS could and did.

Lage: So was he set free in Portland?

Brower: No, he was set in these expensive quarters, so he was much closer to the right water and the right temperature and everything else. And there was more room for him to maneuver around, and he was well cared for, so he liked that.

And then the business of moving him to Iceland, on our way toward freeing him—he's not quite free yet, but he's on his way to being free.

Lage: They're training him?

Brower: They're trying to train him so that he will learn how to feed himself and not be fed all the time.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: And that's one of the problems, of course, when you start human maneuvering and manipulation. Animals get used to being fed. Why bother to go look for it if you can wait and get it?

Lage: Did Dave Phillips come up with the idea for the movie and interest Warner Brothers, or did it happen independently?

Brower: I don't know quite how it happened, but there was—I just don't know. You'll have to ask him, because he will remember that very well.

Lage: Yes. Do you think that was a good turning point for Earth Island? Was it a one-time sort of interest?

Brower: Well, we certainly had interest in what he was doing for the dolphins and for the whale, and our biggest source of income has been from that's source. And that's helped feed a lot of the other things that didn't have that much money.

Lage: Yes, on one of the annual reports it was a very dominant part of the budget.

Brower: Yes, and that was Dave Phillips who finally got the money that was necessary for setting up the Keiko Foundation. It is independent of Earth Island, for the people who use David Phillips and made the money available then thought, well, maybe they should have more control. So that it's not exactly an Earth Island project now, but we know what we did, and we tried to see that this can set an example on what we do with trapped animals.

We can get back to working on the earlier idea—the Phillips Zoo—where instead of putting wild animals in captivity, we use film in all the ways we can use it, in all the ways that would make it exciting—from IMAX to hand computers, whatever—but at least leave the animals where they were and get photographers to describe what happened, and not put them in jail to please human beings.

Lage: Did you get any criticism of spending so much money on one whale?

Brower: Oh, yes, but that's something that would appeal to people who had money and wanted to do it. That's one of the things you are tempted to do; you try to do

something that you can get money for. And there was enough drama, enough show, in doing this for a whale, that it got some major contributors.

Lage: And maybe changed some people's thinking.

Brower: It's begun to change people's thinking. It hasn't gone far enough yet, but we'll see. But that was certainly the most prominent of the projects. We had one on what we were trying to do for South America. We were trying to get EPOCA—Environmental Project on Central America—it was an attempt to wake up the people to what we were doing, and to help other countries to get what help they needed, instead of what they were getting. And that led to our fourth Fate of the Earth conference, because the people who were working on that knew enough about speaking Spanish and what was going on in Nicaragua to make it possible to have a conference there. And we had one thousand people from sixty-five countries.

Lage: And what was the theme of that conference?

Brower: Just again, the same things—the Fate of the Earth—what can they do for the earth? By that time, from having conferences in New York, Washington, and Canada, we were changing *Fate* to the *Hope* of the Earth. Fate sounds a little bit too serious.

Lage: So the goal there was to draw in people from Latin America?

Brower: From Latin America and the world. For example, we had quite a few people from Africa, and it was the Soviet Union that funded that. Our biggest contributors were not, of course, from the United States, but from Norway and Sweden.

Lage: The contributors to the conference?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Money-wise?

Brower: Money-wise.

Lage: And who were they? How did they come aboard?

Brower: Well, that part of Europe has been pretty progressive. In Holland and Scandinavia, they're leading in what to do for the earth.

Lage: Was it through individuals that you or other people at Earth Island—

Brower: It was through individuals, primarily Steve Rauh, who's working hard in finding the people who contributed to this, right and left.

Lage: I want to go back to the marine mammal project and Sam LaBudde, is it?

Brower: Sam LaBudde, yes.

Lage: Tell me more about Sam LaBudde. I've heard him described as something of a cowboy.

Brower: Well, he's just himself. I don't think you can describe him as anybody else. You describe cowboys as Sams. But Sam just was very brave, very bold, and wanted to think of new ideas, so he got these things done.

Lage: And did you bring him on board at Earth Island?

Brower: No, David Phillips found him. And we were very pleased at the notice we got and the attention we got, once he'd been brave enough to get these films and fool the people who were catching the fish, making them think that this was just a toy he'd got from his father. They had no idea what he was up to.

Lage: I see. So where did he go?

Brower: He went out on the tuna ship.

Lage: Oh, out on the ship. They didn't realize that he was—

Brower: No, he had a camcorder along. He was the cook.

Lage: I see.

Brower: Yes. And then he went from that to being concerned with what was happening in Alaska.

Lage: The pipeline?

Brower: No, not the pipeline. It was mammals again, marine mammals. Walruses.

Lage: Walruses.

Brower: He was very much worried about what was happening there, where the indigenous people were getting the whales and transferring what it was worth to drugs. He began to cut into that.

Lage: Now, say that again. They were—

Brower: They were shooting walruses, taking the tusks, getting money from them, and going into the drug business.

Lage: And he documented this?

Brower: He documented this. And then he went next into Taiwan, where they were doing an awful lot of damage to mammals, for money. And I guess the thing that got the biggest notice was tiger penis soup.

Lage: Oh, my!

Brower: It was just the strange things that were being done for wildlife. That is, what they did with the horns of rhinoceroses—aphrodisiacs and so on—just strange human behavior at the expense of wildlife. This annoyed Sam and still does. And you'll hear more from him from time to time.

Lage: Does he still work at Earth Island? Is he still part of—

Brower: Well, he shows up every now and then, and he did get the Goldman Prize. One of the early ones when it was just $60,000, which enabled him to pay off his student debt and to start funding an Earth Island project where other people would get camcorders to do with what he had done.

Lage: I see. Did that have a name?

Brower: No, it didn't.

Lage: Did you see that Paul Erhlich got the Blue Planet Prize? You know that.

Brower: I just saw that, yes. He also had surgery on his back, so I don't know how that's come out and I've got to find out.

Lage: Okay, now let's see, what other projects would you want to talk about?

Brower: One of the things that's getting a lot of notice is the Blue Water Project. And here Russell Long was a PhD. He began to be concerned about what is happening in the waters and lakes on the Bay because of the two-stroke engine, which is a frightfully polluting thing that he began to get the details of—whether it's a chainsaw, or a leaf-blower, or a snowmobile, or the jet skis in the water.

Lage: And outboard motors.

Brower: Yes, the two-stroke engines are frightfully polluting. And one of the demonstrations he put on near the Yacht Club in San Francisco, while we had some fish and wildlife people standing by—

[End Tape 11, Side A]

[Begin Tape 11, Side B]

Lage: He demonstrated that the two-stroke was—

Brower: Was just very polluting. And he asked the question, well, what would happen if I dumped this pollution back in the [San Francisco] Bay? That'd be a capital offense—I guess the right word is not a capital offense, but it would be something you can't do. You'd get fined for and jailed for it. But they can do it day in and day out out on the bay, because a lot of that fuel goes directly into the water. And so right now, because of his work, we're having our reduction in that kind of use. They're going to stop using jet skis at Lake Tahoe. And we're making progress all around, in the national parks and so on, in getting this kind of pollution ended.

Lage: Was he also a factor up at Lake Tahoe? Did he push the issue up there?

Brower: Yes. He's had this effort in court. And he's provided awfully good data for it and his own science—his PhD genius has been useful.

Lage: So he is a scientist.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: How did he come to Earth Island?

Brower: Again, I would have to ask some of the other people. We've seen this happen later, that we had various things going on, various kinds of activities that would be part of this overall view—how do you get ecological conscience into whatever you're doing? So we have something like thirty projects.

Lage: Do people apply—come with ideas?

Brower: Yes, they come with ideas, or we suggest that they come to us. We've got a system worked out so that this is what you do, what you would like to do, how different it is from what other people are doing, and what you can do with it with Earth Island. And it has just been amazing. The meeting we had just, oh, less than a month ago, a meeting of the project directors for three days.

Lage: Was this the project summit?

Brower: Yes. And it was just quite amazing to see what happens when these people get together.

Lage: Tell me something about the meeting, so I get a sense of it.

Brower: Well, what we're trying to get is, oh, to see what understanding synergy can do for the various projects, how do they work with each other. I'll think of the word I'm trying to think of—

Lage: I like that understanding synergy.

Brower: The relationships with different projects. We're building that up and we're not quite there—we haven't mastered it yet, but I don't think anybody else is that close. It's pretty close to what we're doing—the Tides Foundation. But there are opportunities. I'd like to see other organizations pick this up. I'd like to see Sierra Club pick up this kind of activity.

Lage: Now when you say this kind, what do you mean?

Brower: Where we have projects. The Sierra Club will come up, say, with three priorities, something like that, and that doesn't begin to cover what we need to cover. And I have this basic prejudice against prioritizing anyway that I got from Newton Drury, where when he was head of beaches and parks, he wouldn't prioritize what areas he wanted because as soon as he'd put priorities on, that would be fine for the top priority but the bottoms he never even heard of again. He didn't want that to happen.

Lage: And that doesn't happen with your project-based organization?

Brower: It doesn't happen with the project-based. So we've got things to work out where the projects won't be in conflict. There would be some conflict—we got into a major conflict between the people in New Mexico, who wanted jobs cutting trees that shouldn't be cut. And that conflict involved our president—

Lage: Yes, Carl Anthony, and Urban Habitat.

Brower: And Urban Habitat. We haven't figured out how to handle that difference yet, but we're getting closer. So far as I was concerned, when Carl Anthony, who's African American, and has been in conservation work for years—he was the best-informed conservationist of color I've ever encountered. If there was something that was giving us this kind of difference, we needed to figure out how to handle a difference, and to do exactly what he was advocating when he said, "I can handle disagreement but not disrespect." I learned that from him, and I've been using that in meetings ever since. And it's amazing what just saying that at the beginning of the meeting does to the meeting! That is, all right, we can disagree.

And it's a productive thing, it's a creative thing; there'll be people that disagree all over. Religions disagree, states disagree, nations disagree, the planets would if they could, but agreement is not the essence. But understanding and being respectful of difference of opinion is terribly important, so I was just saying that that has worked, so that when we were meeting with the steelworkers and the environmentalists—started out with that—there was no disrespect throughout the entire meeting.

Lage: Was that in Houston?

Brower: That was in Eureka. Then when we came up, when we had our big meeting in Houston where there were some environmentalists but it was mostly steelworkers, this is what happened.

Lage: Now what was the issue there?

Brower: We enjoyed the help we got from the steelworkers in saving redwoods, and they wanted to save the redwoods because they hated [Charles] Hurwitz [CEO of MAXXAM, Inc], and what he was doing to them.

Lage: The steelworkers were—

Brower: In his various businesses he was doing them a great deal of damage and cutting them out for one of the programs they were in and so on.

Lage: Not in the Pacific Lumber issue, but some other businesses?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: I see, so that was a strange bedfellow.

Brower: Yes, it was a strange bedfellow, but he was a common enemy, and so it worked out very well.

Lage: So the steelworkers came out to save the redwoods?

Brower: Yes, they helped to save the redwoods. And they found out that when they were looking for support, the fact that they were saving redwoods was one of the things that was doing them a great deal of good just in the attitude of understanding what steelworkers are up to.

Lage: I see.

Brower: So we have our new organization [Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment] and the Houston Principles are out now, and when we went down there to that meeting, I like to brag that I got six standing ovations.

Lage: Speaking to steelworkers?

Brower: Speaking to steelworkers.

Lage: Now, when did you get your standing ovations? What appealed?

Brower: Well, I had three occasions to talk, and they gave me a standing ovation before I said anything and gave me one after I said something. [laughter] Now I hasten to point out that everybody got a standing ovation.

Lage: Okay. But I wondered if it was some message that was particularly—

Brower: No, but they were just glad to see this collusion, if you will, between environmentalists and steelworkers.

Lage: Did it go beyond hating Hurwitz?

Brower: Well, it certainly did. That is, one of the things that we're very anxious to see happen—I am—is that we get the railroads working again. What has happened to this country from the period when the railroads were doing great work until where Detroit took over making everybody ride in cars and trucks has been extremely damaging environmentally—frightfully. It's just damaged the society and everything else, so to get the steelworkers helping get the railroads back and to use high-speed rail, which is going to take different rail from what they've used before, or to use light rail, which is different, is a whole new career for the steelworkers. If we start thinking about what other jobs are going to be needed for restoration of a sustainable civilization, there are all kinds of things that begin to open up.

Lage: So they began to maybe think—

Brower: So that this will be a good example for others. I reminded them back to the days when I got to know Walter Reuther a little bit. At that point Walter Reuther was ready to have hundreds of thousands of auto workers build mass transit. It didn't quite come off, and then he died in an airplane crash, and I point out I was supposed to have been on that airplane.

Lage: Oh, I didn't know that.

Brower: Yes. But I missed it.

Lage: You actually missed it? You were late?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Somebody's watching out for you. Where was the airplane trip to?

Brower: That was to Black Lake in Michigan—their hideaway or whatever it is.

Lage: Tell me, just to clarify, this Houston meeting—was that an Earth Island initiative, or a David Brower initiative?

Brower: Well, the steelworker-environmental liaison began when they closed the bar in Eugene at the Land, Air, and Water conference. We had the steelworkers there, and we got to talking. And that led to the next meeting in Eureka, and then that led to Houston. And it'll lead to more, but now I'm trying to get other organizations—we're inviting a lot of organizations to join the Houston

Principles, which we worked out carefully. And there are two Davids. I'm the environmental David and there's another—David Foster is the steelworker David. He's the president of one of the regions of the steelworkers—the northwest region. That's from the Great Lakes to Washington State.

Lage: And do these principles show your common ground?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: What do you do about the uncommon ground?

Brower: Well, we'll agree most of the time, but the statement he has, I should remember it, but Mikhail will remember it exactly, but if we in the environmental movement will help get environmentally sustainable jobs for labor, they will make a sustainable environment a top priority in their work. That's the opening lines that came out in our meeting in Eureka where they asked, well, would I be willing to be part of that. And I said, "Well, if you're serious, sure." We'll see what happens.

Lage: That sounds like a promising direction.

Brower: Well, it's a terribly promising direction. Right now it's nobody's secret, but there's an enormous corporate power, and the problem is that it's too great an expense, that corporations shouldn't have more power than the government. But they do, and let's see if we can balance that out a bit.

Lage: Very interesting. Okay, I want to go back a little bit to the misunderstanding that led Carl Anthony to leave [the presidency of Earth Island Institute]. It focused on northern New Mexico, it appeared.

Brower: Yes, that's where the battle came. Somebody from Earth Island was criticizing somebody else from Earth Island and what was happening there, and I'm not sure I have all the details, yet. But I do know that my point of view, the thing that I would keep arguing, is that we can not continue to have jobs that destroy the earth—that they don't last that long. We can work on—rework—go on to the business of restoring the damage we've done. That'll keep a lot of people busy.

Lage: It seems that in that area it's more than just a job, it's kind of like a way of life. They were talking about Hispanic peoples and Native American peoples who have lived in these areas before there was the United States.

Brower: Well, they weren't cutting trees, then. No, they're cutting trees for other purposes.

Lage: And now—

Brower: But then when you're down to—we've cut, say, 95 percent of our old-growth trees. You can't continue a business in cutting old growth trees.

Lage: But were they old growth?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: I see.

Brower: And so I started using my favorites story from my Dick Cavett show, when because of *Encounters with the Archdruid*, John McPhee was invited to go on the show. He was too modest, and I wasn't, so I went on. We had Arthur Godfrey there and Dick Cavett teased Arthur Godfrey a bit about his alligator shoes, and then he asked me, "Now, well, what do you do? What's your answer when people say environmentalists are costing people their jobs?" He said, "Well, I guess I can answer that." He didn't wait for me to answer it, he said, "I guess a lot of jobs were lost when they closed the furnaces at Dachau." And then that so shocked him that he changed the subject. When I brought that up later, to Daniel Ellsburg, he pointed out, "Well, we took the furnaces to the people in Japan, and we're still doing it." So we've got a major change to make in our own behavior. Well, the point here is that we should find other jobs rather than frying people in furnaces.

Lage: Or cutting old-growth trees?

Brower: Or dissolving them on Japan's streets, so that they disappear, and just their shadows are left. That's a bad idea. It's a bad opportunity. We should not build reactors. It's a bad idea. We should not cut the last of the old-growth trees.

Lage: Do you think that the problem there in northern New Mexico could have been resolved if it was handled properly?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: To have a no-cut policy?

Brower: Yes, you can. You just get other jobs, because you're going to have to stop cutting pretty soon. Let's stop while we still have something left, and then we'll find other work. Having said we'll find other work, that means a major effort. And that major effort is slow to move. And I've been talking about, all right, well, let's find what are the jobs in restoration. I do my quick quip, if you think restoration won't pay, take your car to the shop, your body to the doctor—both are in restoration business and they're making good money at it. And you're glad they do, or else you stop driving and you stop moving. But there's these kinds of things to be done for the earth itself. That is, bad habits we got into destroying nature's services that are so valuable to us and not even

knowing what you're doing—all these things are going to require rethinking, re-design. There are jobs to be done in this. Now.

Lage: Are there jobs in northern New Mexico like this?

Brower: If there aren't, then think of something else. Then we'll just go into the tourist business—that is, ecotourism is very good in northern New Mexico. Ask Santa Fe.

Lage: Now, I don't know, it sounds very reasonable. You know I'm not arguing with you; I'm trying to get your thoughts.

Brower: Yes, so, but I'll go on from there. I keep saying this and I've made a list—just a list of the kinds of jobs. Well, a list isn't enough. Start putting some flesh on that list, piece by piece. What are these specific jobs? Well, that gets us into something else, and we've got to get going on that, and that's terribly important. Restoration is a way of global CPR—that's what I'm all about now—but if you don't come up with the jobs, you don't get people interested in it. They still like the idea of getting enough money so they can eat, drink, and be merry.

Lage: Right, right. Now, why, Carl Anthony being such a good environmentalist, as you say—why did he draw the line on this issue and say I can't go along with it?

Brower: Well, I don't know quite well enough, yet, but he's certainly done an awfully good job in trying to make sure that when we pollute, we stop polluting the people who live in Harlem or in Watts. That is, to think about that. He's done a lot of good work on that and all across the country—but not enough, yet. But again and again, people of that color are pretty badly treated. And we see the other stories right now, that 75 percent of the people stopped by the police are people of color.

Lage: So you are sensitive to those issues, it appears, but somehow you and Carl Anthony—

Brower: Yes, we part on that. I gave him my first story, I've given him the Dick Cavett story, the other one I had when we were trying to save the condor. A woman of color said that saving the condor was not going to feed my children. Well, the answer should be, well, killing the condor won't feed your children either, so let's think of something else. That's not at issue. We want your children fed.

Lage: Now, how did—am I interrupting you?

Brower: No, well, I just would add that I am particularly capable of being aware of the color business since David Brower is African American. My grandson.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: And I'm extremely concerned now. I thought I was quite objective about the whole subject, but now color is in my family, now my genes also appear in color. He's a very bright kid, and I'm paying attention.

Lage: How old is he?

Brower: He's thirteen now. He's getting pretty big, and I start paying attention to people—well, he looks like my grandson or so on. I'm seeing people and understanding people and getting into conversations that I would not have been in. And I pull out a picture that I carry around of David and say to someone of color, “Were you this handsome, or were you this good looking at this age?” Or something like this. [laughter] They look at him and are pretty impressed at David.

Lage: Does your grandson like the out-of-doors?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And do you take him to the mountains?

Brower: Well, his father does.

Lage: Has he become a mountain climber?

Brower: Not yet, at thirteen, but he's a very good basketball player.

Lage: Oh, really. Where do they live?

Brower: East Oakland.

Lage: Oh, right here.

Brower: But my favorite story is that one of the pieces that Ken put in the *Atlantic* was on Death Valley and the opening line is, "Take off your clothes, Dad." [laughs] They were out in Death Valley in a place where he just wanted his dad to feel what it's like when the wind blows all the time.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: But that was the way the story starts. I think one of these days that David can write pretty well, too.

Lage: He can?

Brower: Yes, I think he may end up getting a piece in the *Atlantic*. That would be fun.

Lage: That would be very fun. That would be nice. Nice to have him named after you, also.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: How did Carl Anthony come to be president of Earth Island? You were president and then you retired?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: You became chairman. Was there any reason for why you retired at that time?

Brower: I got to know Carl because of a man who came over from Germany, Karl Linn. He was a K Karl and Carl Anthony's a C Carl. But Karl Linn was very much interested in gardens, and the general idea was to have a little park in every block, where the people put the park together and watch over it. He'd done a video on it, and we wanted another video, and he said, "Well, let's do it with these two "Carls" because he'd known Carl Anthony himself, so we got them together on the video. And that's how I got to know him. Then he started coming to meetings of the Earth Island. He agreed to go on the board, and he came on at a time when there was quite a bit of contention going on in board meetings.

Lage: Over?

Brower: Just differences of opinion: well, why should somebody in marine mammals be running the rest of the outfit and getting so much attention for marine mammals when we had things we had going on?

Lage: Too successful!

Brower: Well, I'd already given up the presidency. We'd had two women as presidents after that.

Lage: Oh, I hadn't realized that. Who were they? I'm making you remember names.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: We can fill them in later. Okay, so you had two women presidents in a brief period of time?

Brower: Yes. That's why I was chairman before Carl came on.

Lage: Did Carl found Urban Habitat before he became president of Earth Island Institute?

Brower: No, after.

Lage: Okay, so continue.

Brower: But I thought it would be a very good idea if he would be president, and he took it on. He took it on despite of the fact that he saw all this contention going on. As I pointed out later, he was able to handle meetings as president better than I could. He would not let people wander too far off the subject matter. He would not let things fall between the cracks. He kept things cool, and he was very good at it. And it was just—I haven't figured out yet. Then he was very much interested in environmental justice. And environmental justice is a good combination of names, but it needs to be clarified, because if you're thinking about justice for people, that's very easily something that people are inclined to do, and not be inclined to think about what other species they share the planet with. And there's a basic difference there.

Lage: So you think—does Carl Anthony need to clarify what he means by it?

Brower: Well, he doesn't think so. He's pretty clear, but he's more concerned about people of color and the inequity. And I'm concerned about inequity, but then we have gross inequity.

Indeed, the Natural Step, which we're trying to support in Sweden, [says] we should stop taking from the earth's crust things that we can't handle, and stop putting back on the earth things that it can't handle, because we've messed it up so much. We should stop getting rid of species we can't replace, and we should give equity a chance.

And I'd say that the difference between a homeless person and Bill Gates is an example of inequity. [laughs]

Lage: Yes. Pretty strong example. So I notice in the annual reports that when Carl Anthony would give his presidential summary, he was heavy on the social justice angle.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Did that rub some of the project leaders the wrong way?

Brower: Well, we're still trying to get clarification. It's clear to him that when he wants environmental justice, he wants the environment to treat people with justice. And I'm concerned that that should happen, but I'd like this to go both ways. I want people to treat the earth with justice, and he's not thinking about that, or at least, his thought just concentrates in the other area. I try to balance some, but everywhere you go, you find this missing.

For example, Al Gore missed the whole point of—what do we call it—deep ecology. He was down on deep ecologists, and my Anne was down on deep ecology because she thought it was condescending: “I'm a deep ecologist, why

are you so shallow?" [laughter] And then I had a meeting in Marin County with about thirty people, and the guy who started the movement from Norway was to talk.

Lage: Now who was that? I always think of Bill Devall as the deep ecologist.

Brower: No, it was Arne Ness. He was a little older than I, so I said, "Well, I'd start with difficulty because my wife and I disagree with the term deep ecology. We don't disagree where you're going—we know what you're up to—but the name doesn't say that." And the first thing he did was agree with me. He didn't think it said it either. And that wasn't quite what it meant in Norwegian.

Lage: I see.

Brower: I've never got that cleared up. But the whole idea was not invented by Arne Ness, as far as he was concerned, it was invented by Robinson Jeffers. "The greatest beauty is the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man apart from that."[9] So he was setting the parameter. Remember that you started out in that poem, "A severed hand is an ugly thing," and it is. Your hand intact is not ugly; it's useful. And some hands look pretty good—good enough. But the "severed hand", then go on to "love the universe and not man apart", it was just terribly strong. And you could probably use that for the title of a book—probably use that as a title of a newsletter of Friends of the Earth: *Not Man Apart*.

Lage: Right, it's a beautiful statement.

Brower: And I was getting into that whole concept way, way back, and I am still. It's very important to think about. I've got something I'm supposed to comment on for forewords in people's books, and they start forgetting this whole concept, "Not Man Apart." Of course, we got into trouble for that in Friends of the Earth because women didn't like men—well, they didn't want "man" to be that well heralded.

Lage: [laughs] Is that the way you see that, that they didn't like men?

Brower: Well, they were really bitching about it. They wanted the name changed. They didn't want it to be called *Not Man Apart*.

Lage: You mean they didn't like the word man, not that they didn't like men.

Brower: Yes.

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9 The Jeffers poem reads: "The greatest beauty is organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man apart from that.

Lage: I misunderstood.[10]

Brower: Yes, well, I didn't make it clear. Then I began looking at all the stuff I'd written before, and again and again, I was saying “man,” “his,” “son”—it was always that gender, and you didn't need to say that. You can use “people,” you can use other terms. I wouldn't use “person” because I don't like that, that's too stilted, but “people.”

Lage: So have you changed your writing style?

Brower: Oh, I have. Yes, I don't say that anymore.

Lage: But we don't need to change "not man apart."

Brower: But don't change the Bible, don't change Nancy Newhall, [laughs] but mix it, don't just run it all as if this gender didn't matter.

Lage: Now I want to go back to deep ecology. I really don't quite understand what deep ecology is. How do you understand it?

Brower: Well, I understand it as appreciating we are related to everything that's alive on earth today. We all started out on the same course; and there's a little bit of us that comes from the beginning of life on earth to everything that's alive now; there were no failures. That's three and a half million years of total success, of life continuing—changing a bit as it goes, because of the evolutionary process, which is very—very what? Well, it's not efficient. Evolution is certainly not efficient, but I'm glad it happened. But, so when you begin to realize that you are related to that leaf and there are some of the same things going on—the same transfer of information—

[Begin Tape 12, Side A]

Brower: There are lots of good lines to be used. I like my son Ken's quote that he used in a foreword to the Galapagos book when he was twenty-one: "A living planet is a rare thing, perhaps the rarest in the universe, and a very tenuous experiment at best. We need all the company we can get on our unlikely journey." Now that does it to me.

Lage: That's deep ecology?

Brower: That's deep ecology.

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10 Tom Turner recalls that males as well as females in FOE objected to the name Not Man Apart. It was resolved with a poll of the members, who voted 3-2 in favor of retaining the name.

Lage: It sounds something like John Muir: everything is connected to everything else.

Brower: We need that company. And I got my first insight on that, I guess it was from Rachel Carson when I was reading “Silent Spring" in the *New Yorker* at the airport in Salt Lake. It just happened in between flights—I started reading that and got this sense that these things that we're trying to kill with our pesticides are exactly what's operating in us, that we're using the same mechanism. There you go, too. Lots of luck. I mean, I began to see that interrelationship of the cells. You start beginning to think of this and the structure of cells and what they're doing and all of that and you open your eyes, or whatever. Something in your mind. She did that.

Lage: Yes. That had quite an impact on you.

Brower: [air whistle] It most certainly did. Wow.

Lage: And on a lot of people.

Brower: Yes.

Lage: Do you know Bill Devall and George Sessions, who often come up in connection with deep ecology?

Brower: Yes. I know them both. Bill Devall was at the meeting in Eureka.

Lage: Oh, he was.

Brower: And I would meet George Sessions every time I talked at the university—whatever the university is he was at. He's now retired, so he can climb more. I've known George Sessions since he was about thirteen.

Lage: And he's a climber.

Brower: He was a very good climber.

Lage: Is he from this area?

Brower: No, up in Sacramento.

Lage: Was he involved with Sierra Club climbing at all?

Brower: No, but he's upset with some of the things Sierra Club has done. He writes extremely well, and he taught extremely well. I would run into him every time I was up at Sierra College, and we'd go out to dinner.

Lage: So deep ecology is something that you feel akin to, it sounds like.

Brower: Oh, yes, very much so. But I just don't like the word. Deep ecology doesn't tell me what I want to know, just as the Natural Step—that doesn't tell me what I want to know. It doesn't tell people what it's about, and maybe it should do that.

Lage: And it's even—deep ecology—it leaves you shaking your head.

Brower: Yes. Right.

Lage: Well, you need to think of a word for that. How are you doing right now? Do you feel like we should break and finish this up another day?

Brower: No, I'm all right. I need to leave about ten minutes to twelve, to go to lunch at Sinbad's.

Lage: That sounds like fun. Tell me about the Brower Fund within Earth Island. How did that come about?

Brower: Well, we started the Brower Fund in Friends of the Earth.

Lage: Oh, you did?

Brower: And we were trying to find the right name, but one of the names that was suggested way back when we started Friends of the Earth—it was suggested by Howard Gossage—was that we should call it the Brower Concern. [laughs] Well, we never did. I've used the name a couple of times, but the Brower Fund was in Friends of the Earth.

Thanks to Anne's having a little money and inherited a bit, and thanks to my honorariums from talking, I was able to pick up my own expenses pretty much at Friends of the Earth for the tune of some $700,000 so I was the biggest hard money contributor of the organization. And that was all right, but that's a long story. And we continued that in Earth Island. I was picking up my own expenses where I could, and Anne didn't have a lot of money, but she had some, and so we're not uncomfortable, but we can use it all up on our health needs as we get older.

But I would get, oh, somewhere between $30,000 to $60,000 a year from honoraria—talking—and so I funded quite a few things for Earth Island, too, in a quiet way. Then when I got the Blue Planet Prize, I thought that the thing to do was to put that in Earth Island.

Lage: So has the Brower Fund been where you put the honoraria and then Blue Planet, also?

Brower: Yes, the Blue Planet, too, to do things that I think ought to be done and that are beyond the ordinary budget.

Lage: Is this your discretionary fund?

Brower: Well, it's not—it's not used for me, it's used for anybody else. But the discretionary fund in the Sierra Club was something else. If I wanted to do a Sierra Club job that was off budget, they gave me $25,000 a year to use at my discretion. And if I used that up and they thought I used it up well, then they recharged the battery. And they should be doing that now, but they don't.

Lage: They don't do that for the executive director.

Brower: They never quite understood that, when they said I was doing things without supervision, I was doing what they said I could do without supervision. I was not buying reactors.

Lage: No. [laughs] All right, but with the Brower Fund, you are the one who makes the decisions, it sounds like.

Brower: Well, I was. At this point, the Brower Fund is directed by Mikhail. So he makes the decisions. We have some people take part in it, and I have a role in it, and some of the family have a role, other people, too, so that it's mixed up, but Mikhail is the director of the Brower Fund.

Lage: But does he come to you or others for decision-making?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And what kinds of things are accomplished with this?

Brower: Well, for one thing, we've committed $40,000 to draining Lake Powell. We've committed to, oh, various other things. Another one was that we have efforts to do a global CPR [conservation, preservation, restoration] effort now; we're getting that going now. It's one of our projects, so I've provided the funding commitment to get it started. So we're in Taiwan, Costa Rica, and Kenya.

Lage: With projects towards CPR?

Brower: Yes. My main hope is to say, all right, since I was that generous with money that I could have spent myself, would some of you guys who really have some money like to throw into this kitty? And we're working on that, and I think we'll have some luck.

Lage: To get others to sort of match?

Brower: Yes, some people are really [able to give]—Ted Turner, for example. If he can give a billion dollars to the U.N., give a million to us. [laughs]

Lage: Is that something you have done yourself, gone to people to try to get them to give money? Are you a good fund raiser?

Brower: No, I'm not. I'm a poor fund raiser. I would like other people to do it, and do something without my saying, “I did it, so why don't you do it?” I want someone to say, “He did it, why don't you do it?”

Lage: Is that one of Mikhail's roles?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: To get out there and knock on Ted Turner's door?

Brower: He'll be doing that shortly.

Lage: That's a big responsibility. What about funding for Earth Island as a whole? Has it been a difficult thing to fund all these projects, or do people bring their projects and their money to Earth Island?

Brower: Well, one of the things that happened that I think I had something to do with, originally when we had various projects, the management of Earth Island—specifically, John Knox—wanted everybody to pass through him. We switched that, so John will give them advice, and make sure that we're not stepping on each other's toes, and watch for that duplication. But the main point is that the project directors know their project and can be excited about it. They may not know that much about money and running administrative details, but they can use this umbrella organization—our network services, so-called—and then go out and race the runway.

Lage: I see. And had John Knox wanted to be the fund raiser?

Brower: Well, first he'd wanted to be the fund raiser, and I fussed and fussed and fussed, and finally that broke loose. Whether I did it or not, it just—I guess logic did it.

Lage: The people closest to the projects—

Brower: That is, you can fund for the Bancroft better than the president of the university can.

Lage: That does seem to be the way fund raising is working these days. The people who have the passion for what they're doing fund raise for that.

Brower: So we hope that that will continue.

Lage: So you have each project raise funds, and then the funds come through the organization, or are administered by the organization?

Brower: Yes, but you need somebody to take care of the rent, and telephone, the fax, the computers, the general administration, and the accounting advice—all these things are necessary, and the imaginative people who have dreamed up the projects are not necessarily good at that, too. Usually I think they're not.

Lage: Does [this structure] have a counterpart? I mean, was there a model for this, or did it grow out of—

Brower: I think it just grew at Earth Island. We began chug along and see what would happen. And we didn't object when we got this grant of a million and a half from the Goldman Fund.

Lage: Now tell me about that. How did that happen?

Brower: Well, it was something to help this thing happen, to help the organization handle the people the way we're now handling it.

Lage: So did the Goldman Fund money go to the network, the central organization, or go to various funds?

Brower: No, it goes to the network so that the network can give the help these other people need.

Lage: Is that something that was applied for to the Goldman Fund? Was it a grant applied for, or sort of an award?

Brower: I think it was an award, but we were in touch with them.

Lage: Do you know the Goldmans?

Brower: I knew him [Richard Goldman], but I never knew her [Rhoda Haas Goldman]. I knew him through Ansel. I got my first grant from him. It was $1,000 to have our Fate of the Earth conference in New York. And one of the things that was amusing was when Sam LaBudde got his grant—

Lage: From the Goldmans?

Brower: From the Goldmans. I was at the performance where these were given away, and at that, the governor of the state came up and began to say what a great thing the Vietnam War was, or something like that, and Sam LaBudde walked out. [laughter] So Mr. Goldman said to me, "Well, your son shouldn't have done something like that."

"Well, thanks, Mr. Goldman, first he's not my son, and second, you gave him an award because he *is* that independent." [laughter]

Lage: What response did you get?

Brower: Well, he stopped fussing. He gave us some money later.

Lage: Yes, yes. They've done a lot of very creative things, the Goldmans.

Brower: Yes, oh, they have. It's terrific.

Lage: They seem to have a desire to fund people on the edge.

Brower: So it [the Goldman Prize for excellence in protecting the environment] was $60,000 a year from various parts of the world, now it's I guess $75,000 each, maybe, and growing—but it's a good show, just terribly good. Then they have some little commercials on television, too. It's just very fortunate and we need more people doing that.

Lage: Is Earth Island Institute tax-deductible, a 501 (c) 3 organization?

Brower: Yes.

Lage: And that's something that kind of bothers you with the Sierra Club?

Brower: Oh, yes.

Lage: Now how does it—

Brower: Well, it still bothers me. What I want is—we have also an Earth Island Action Group which is (c) 4.

Lage: Oh, I see.

Brower: I'm the president of that.

Lage: Is it part of Earth Island Institute?

Brower: It has to be independent.

Lage: I see. Earth Island Action Group—tell me about that.

Brower: Well, it's simply that—it's the point that I've been making through the environmental movement, that the decisions we're concerned about are going to be made, for the most part, in the legislative arena, by the people who get into that arena by being politicians. So you can't ignore those two important parts of society; whether the IRS likes it or not, they've got to be worked on. And I started getting into that way back when we were frightened by the anti-lobbying act in 1955, which scared all the environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club. So they sought what I claim—this is one of my [terms]—they sought *cringe* benefits.

Lage: Yes. [laughs]

Brower: And I didn't want us to do that, so I had a role in starting Trustees for Conservation, the Council of Conservationists, and the—well, one other one. Three organizations that were *not* deductible. I was on all those boards, and it was very hard getting that kind of money, so then that's when I suggested that we have a Sierra Club Foundation, since I, by that point, knew that if we did what we needed to do, the IRS would come after us.

So in 1960, we got the Sierra Club Foundation started, which would not do legislative work, it would do science education, research, all the clean jobs, and it got deductible money that way. And so I was quite ready, when we had to do it to save the Grand Canyon, to risk our tax status and, indeed, to lose it. That's one of my favorite stories, that when we lost it, the public was exasperated with the IRS, not with us. And we got more members, we got contributions, and we saved the Grand Canyon. And Mo Udall told me later, that he was quite upset because it was he who got the IRS to take our tax status away.

Lage: He admitted that?

Brower: And he said that was the worst mistake he made. He told me that privately later. [laughs]

Lage: So Earth Island Action Group is this political side?

Brower: Now, yes—political and legislative. And it's been used a bit. We haven't really exploited it yet, but have used it. David Phillips was keeping the records for it, and the president has done very little except do what I wanted whenever—I just was the dictator.

Lage: When you wanted. [laughs] You like that role, you've been telling me.

Brower: Danny Moses was also on the board, and Jim Harding, and Steve Rauh. And our board has never met. So somewhere along the line we've got to figure this out. We've got to meet, because that's what organizations are supposed to do.

Lage: Yes, right. So is this sort of—

Brower: What I wanted was I wanted Earth Island members to be members of this action group and to have the Earth Island Institute be the Sierra Club Foundation. And I tried. I wanted that to happen even with Friends of the Earth. Friends of the Earth was just not deductible. That's the way we started. And then we got the Friends of the Earth Foundation, which was. I just wanted two ancillary organizations working together, but I was never able to talk John Knox and David Phillips into supporting this full bore.

Lage: I see.

Brower: So we'll do it sometime.

Lage: How long have you had the Earth Island Action Group?

Brower: I guess about four years—four or five. Maybe longer. I lose track.

Lage: Well, Earth Island seems like a place where lots of different things are going off in different directions.

Brower: Well, then I also want and still I'm working on—I want Earth Island Voters, Earth Island Law Institute, whatever you want to call it—

Lage: But you don't have that yet.

Brower: We don't have that. Then I want an Earth Island Conservancy. It would be a conservancy for natural and cultural conservancy.

Lage: Something like Nature Conservancy?

Brower: But cultural, too. That is, I'm really—going into my later life, I'm just so damned fascinated with the cultural diversity of the planet that I get a particular kick out of—you get so many of these people who also speak good English. Of course there's the Chinese-Americans who've been here all their lives. There's this guy who was just on [television] last night, and he was over looking at Angel Island where he'd come sixty-two years ago. He had to stay there for three months before they finally called his name and let him come out and into the country, and he said when that happened, he almost cried. Here was this older man—

Lage: Yes. Was this on television last night?

Brower: Yes, but I'm just watching this again and again. I just get such a kick out of it. We're getting a good mix. We're not mixing the Latinos well enough, but we're doing it very well with Asians and with blacks, and I want to see the Latinos worked into it.

Lage: And when you say mixing, what do you mean?

Brower: Well, here you have—

Lage: More interaction?

Brower: More interaction, that is, in the stations—the news programs: who's doing it, who's in the commercials. That is, they're spreading it out, they're getting the

message, and it just pleases the hell out of me when they do. And when they speak better English than we do, it's really fun.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: Because Anne and I had that experience in Russia, where our interpreter was twenty-three years old. He'd been learning English, and he'd try various words out on us. Well we'd never heard of them. And then he'd say which author had been using them. [laughter]

Lage: And you thought maybe you should pick up your reading?

Brower: Yes, that we should pick up our reading.

Lage: Gee, that is wonderful. These are ideas that you have, but not necessarily things that have happened: the Earth Island conservancy, the Earth Island voters?

Brower: It hasn't happened yet. I want the voters to happen pretty soon.

Lage: How would that be different from the action group? They're both focused on legislation?

Brower: They are different. That is, that the League of Conservation Voters is not an action group, it's a political group or whatever you want to call them. They rate people. And the IRS doesn't want you to say, "I'm for this candidate." You can be for positions. And I want to get that law changed. That's one of my goals.

I want the IRS to come up with a change of the internal revenue code that will enable them to give as good a break to the people who are saving the earth, as they now do to the people who are trashing the earth. I think we can. I want to do that. And I want to make quite a story of it, and I want them to come up with the legislation, which sounds a little silly, but then I'll give them the example of when Fred Seaton was Secretary of the Interior. I was talking about some legislation we wanted to get going to help the environment, and he said, "Well, ask us to help you on that." He said, "We've got people here who can write legislation, draft legislation." He said, "If you want us to, we'll even draft legislation to abolish the Department of the Interior. I doubt that we'd support it, but we'll do it."

So I wanted to tell that story to the IRS and say this is what we've needed. And I tried this at Earth Day when I had this audience of 10,000 or 20,000 sitting in the audience. I told them a little bit about it, and people are just crazy about the idea.

The whole idea that we *do* want to give a good break: not just to corporations and these big stockholders who run them, but for what we need to do, what's happening to nature's services. According to that Stanford book by Gretchen Daily on what's happening to nature's services, we're destroying, we're exploiting as far as we can. [construction noise]

That's too noisy.

Lage: We might want to let them go on and wind up today and continue next week.

Brower: All right. Yes.

Lage: But finish your sentence.

Brower: Well, so I still want to see that happen. And we're getting into this right now with something that just came out. Bill Moyers came out with the best thing I've seen on television. It's a very good thing. I recorded it, where he was telling about what's happening now. The corporations are in control and they're controlled by the media. And Disney—and then he lists the people who are doing it, and the damage has happened. It's a terrific piece. And I'm sure that nobody but Moyers could ever get away with it. And they're going to have a hard time firing Bill Moyers. [hammering resumes]

Lage: Right.

Brower: And so I want to see this copied, and I'm going to start taking this whole thing—we've got to give the corporations a chance to realize that if they're going to be capitalists, they have to take care of the capital they're dependent upon. A great big chunk of that is the earth's services that they use every day, everything that they're doing. And my simple example is that one of the earth's services is the bee. If you don't have a bee, you're not going to eat. And we don't have to pay the bees a thing. They just go around doing it.

Lage: We don't need to fund raise for them, except for their habitat.

Brower: But this happens all across the board. It's part of the book *Nature's Services* that something like $34 trillion a year['s worth of goods] we depend upon globally from nature's services. This produces a global GNP of something like $20 trillion, and we feel no obligation to pay any of it back. And I think that we're not too far from nature’s saying, "Your credit's no good," and that's going to be bad news. And there's no need to do that.

And so this is part of the enthusiasms the old man's into now, but let's stop doing that to the earth.

Lage: Do you get to speak in front of groups where there are corporate executives there, listening?

Brower: Not very much, yet. The nearest we're getting is with Interface—that's the carpet company. It's a billion dollar corporation. Amory Lovins, Paul Hawken, and Dan Quinn and others are in there. They called it initially the dream team; they have another name for it now. They're not paid, but they're there for occasional meetings to come up with suggestions to get a company to succeed by ending waste, not being dependent on fossil fuels, not polluting—these are the goals that they're working on. They're not there yet, but they're—I was at a conference two years ago on Maui where we had corporations from, I guess, thirty-five countries around the world. They're working with these other corporations, too, but just, it's just a little one—just a billion dollar corporation now.

Lage: But you need some more of those.

Brower: Yes. Bill Gates wouldn't—what's a billion dollars? It would be nice if he was willing to do something like Ted Turner.

You've got to see—somewhere along the line I promised to get you that Ansel Adams tape.

Lage: Yes.

Brower: I haven't taped it yet, but you've got to get it to the Bancroft. But you should have this tape from Bill Moyers. It is one terrific tape.

Lage: Okay, I think we should stop for today.

[End of Interview]

ANN LAGE

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