Oral History Center
The Bancroft Library

University of California
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Scott Hein

Scott Hein: Save Mount Diablo Photographer, Naturalist, and Board Member

Save Mount Diablo Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by
Amanda Tewes
in 2021

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Scott Hein on Four Days Diablo, 2016. Photograph by Ted Clement.

Abstract

Scott Hein is a software developer and founding principal of Diablo Analytical, Inc.; and longtime supporter of Save Mount Diablo (SMD), including as board president from 2013 to 2019 and as a conservation photographer. Hein was born in Crawfordsville, Indiana, in 1960. He attended Indiana University and Oregon State University. He and his wife, Claudia Hein, moved to Concord, California, in 1988. The couple started contributing to SMD in 1997 and have continued to support the organization through volunteer work and leadership roles. In this interview, Hein discusses growing up in Indiana, including his interactions with nature; attending Indiana University, studying environmental analytical chemistry; attending graduate school at Oregon State University, where he met his wife, Claudia; moving to the East Bay in 1988 and working at Dow Chemical; establishing Diablo Analytical, Inc.; early connections to SMD, including educational hikes around Crystyl Ranch, giving to the memorial tree program, and meeting longtime staff member Seth Adams; Claudia's volunteer work at SMD offices, on the board, and on the Community Advisory Committee for Concord Naval Weapons Station Reuse Project; his interest in nature photography, including projects for SMD; interactions with SMD, including leadership, growth and expanded mission, board makeup, political advocacy, education and outreach like Four Days Diablo, fundraising like the Forever Wild Capital Campaign and Moonlight on the Mountain, partnerships, and land acquisition and stewardship, including conservation easements; his personal contributions to SMD, including serving on the board and supporting committees, overseeing the hiring of current director Ted Clement, serving on the Community Advisory Committee for Concord Naval Weapons Station Reuse Project, and photographic work; as well as the current work of SMD and hopes for its future.

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Project History

By the early 1970s, the Bay Area was in the midst of great social and cultural change. With plans for the extension of BART into the East Bay, and suburban sprawl threatening Mount Diablo and other open spaces, Save Mount Diablo (SMD) answered a call to action. SMD was founded by Dr. Mary Bowerman and Arthur Bonwell in 1971. It became a nationally accredited land trust based in the San Francisco Bay Area comprised of biologists, conservationists, hikers, cyclists, equestrians, bird watchers, artists, and people who just loved to look at and enjoy the mountain. SMD has been preserving lands on and around Mount Diablo and educating the public to the mountain's natural values since its founding. However, the organization's focus on educational programs and protecting Mount Diablo's connection to its sustaining Diablo Range has grown substantially over the last few years due in part to new leadership and the growing severity of the climate crisis. As an organization, Save Mount Diablo is both an exceptional example of local land conservation efforts, as well as representative of national and international environmental activism that extends beyond the Bay Area. This oral history project began in 2021 as SMD approached its fiftieth anniversary. All of the interviews were conducted remotely due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Interview 1: July 6, 2021

01-00:00:01
Tewes: This is an interview with Scott Hein for the Save Mount Diablo Oral History Project, in association with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. The interview is being conducted by Amanda Tewes on July 6, 2021. Mr. Hein joins me in this remote interview from Concord, California, and I am in Walnut Creek, California. So thank you so much for joining me today, Scott, I really appreciate it.

01-00:00:24
Hein: Certainly.

01-00:00:26
Tewes: Starting at the beginning, can you tell me when and where you were born?

01-00:00:31
Hein: I was born in September of 1960 in Crawfordsville, Indiana, which is a small town in the farm country of central Indiana, not far from Indianapolis, the capital.

01-00:00:44
Tewes: And did you grow up there?

01-00:00:47
Hein: I did. I went to grade school and high school there, and then left after high school to go to college, and then moved out for graduate school.

01-00:00:57
Tewes: Can you tell me what it was like growing up in this farm community, in the era you were there?

01-00:01:02
Hein: You know, it's a small Midwestern farm community, not very diverse in nature. I grew up initially in town, and then eventually, when my mom remarried, moved out farther into the country and had a house right on a creek called Sugar Creek. So it was actually interesting. The house, you actually had to drive across the country club golf course to get to our house. It was situated sort of back behind this golf course. It wasn't a development or anything, it was just a house back behind the golf course. And people often asked me, "Well, that meant you probably golfed a lot, right?" And no, I never took up golf. And because I was so interested in the creek and the wildlife and the habitat associated with it, I spent all my time back in the creek, rather than golfing. [laughs]

01-00:02:02
Tewes: That's funny. What kinds of activities were you finding to do near the creek?

01-00:02:08
Hein: Oh, canoeing, hiking around, just generally exploring. When the water level was right, we'd hop in a canoe and just head downstream and get picked up somewhere down farther stream after exploring for the day, so spent a lot of time in the water and just a lot of time hiking around there.

01-00:02:33
Tewes: And you mentioned when your mom remarried you moved farther into the farmland?

01-00:02:37
Hein: Mm-hmm.

01-00:02:38
Tewes: Did you family have any connections at all to the agricultural aspect of the region?

01-00:02:42
Hein: No, my parents—my mom and my biological dad both actually grew up in Wisconsin and moved to Crawfordsville. He was a manager at a local printing company called R.R. Donnelley [and Sons Company], and that's why they came to Crawfordsville, and that's where I was born. And then he actually passed away when I was in the eighth grade, and so I was actually fairly young when he passed away. My mom eventually remarried a local physician, and she stayed there the rest of her life.

01-00:03:18
Tewes: And you mentioned you were in the area until you went to college. Can you tell me where you decided to go to college?

01-00:03:24
Hein: I went to college at Indiana University, which is in Bloomington, Indiana, in southern Indiana. I had spent a lot of the summers of my youth, starting probably when I was eight years old and actually through probably the sophomore year of college, in the summers at a summer camp in southern Indiana not far from Bloomington, where Indiana University is. And that camp, probably more than anything, sort of cemented my interest in the outdoors and in nature. We basically spent the entire summer outdoors camping and hiking and doing outdoor activities. I started as a camper and ended up as a counselor, and so it was a—probably a formative time in my life, and I made a lot of friends who were similarly inclined through that camp. In fact, they're the main friends I actually keep in contact with from my youth.

01-00:04:26
Tewes: That sounds really formative.

01-00:04:27
Hein: Yeah.

01-00:04:30
Tewes: And so that took you to Bloomington.

01-00:04:33
Hein: That probably took me to Bloomington. I was also, at least initially, interested in medical school, so I was going to be pre-med. Indiana University has a strong pre-med program, and so that was, when I entered college in 1978 as a freshman, that was my intention, was to become a doctor.

01-00:04:56
Tewes: I'm sorry, did you say 1970 or 1978?

01-00:04:59
Hein: Nineteen seventy-eight.

01-00:05:02
Tewes: Just making sure I'm hearing you correctly there. [laughs]

01-00:05:03
Hein: Yeah, yeah.

01-00:05:03
Tewes: So you were planning to be pre-med. Where did you see your love of nature playing into that? Was that going to be a hobby on the side?

01-00:05:15
Hein: I probably didn't think about it much at that time. You know, I was thinking more career. But what ended up happening was, as a result, at IU, most of the—at least at that time—most of the pre-med students were chemistry majors, and they had a special pre-med chemistry degree, and so I was a chemistry major. As part of that, at some point, I was given the opportunity to do some undergraduate research, and I did that in the lab of a professor who was doing state of the art environmental analytical chemistry, looking at deposition of environmental pollutants and developing the methodologies to measure them at trace levels, and things like that. I realized that I was a lot more interested in that than I was in becoming a doctor. I liked the people I was involved with who did that more than I liked the other pre-med students. [laughs]

01-00:06:09
And so I actually decided not to become a doctor at that point and [to] pursue chemistry—and in particular environmental analytical chemistry—at that time. That was the late seventies, the tail end of when all the environmental—major environmental legislation, the Clean Air Act and the [Endangered] Species Act and things like that were being produced, and so I decided that I would do what I could and study environmental analytical chemistry, and so that's what I ended up doing. My degree ended up being a BS in chemistry rather than heading to medical school.

01-00:06:58
Tewes: That's so interesting, Scott. I have a few questions. One is: can you explain to me a little bit more about environmental chemistry? This is a new field for me.

01-00:07:08
Hein: There are a lot of different aspects to chemistry. You have organic chemistry, where people are creating new compounds. You have physical chemistry, where chemists help—work with physicists to help understand the nature of matter, so to speak. Analytical chemistry is a branch of chemistry that really has to do with measurement of chemicals and developing new methodologies and instruments, and things like that, to help you both identify and quantify chemicals wherever that technology's needed. And environmental analytical chemistry is sort of a subset of analytical chemistry, where you're really focused on measuring chemicals in the environment. And so in the case of the work I was doing at IU, it was looking at specifically deposition of pollutants into various habitats around the world.

01-00:08:08
One of the things I did was, actually after the end of my senior year in college, is I joined a graduate student who was—that was his research, is he was looking at the deposition of pollutants called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons [PAHs] that are a result of combustion. He was looking at the deposition of them into pristine environments. And so we actually spent that entire summer after my senior year camped in Isle Royale National Park up on Lake Superior. We had a tent camp on the edge of one of the lakes in the middle of the national park, and we would, every week, collect air samples and lake water samples and sediment samples and rainwater samples and things like that. It was for his thesis research, which was trying to look at how and when those kinds of pollutants were deposited into that pristine environment. And obviously, that fed right into my interest in nature. And you don't have an opportunity to spend a summer living in a national park very often.

01-00:09:16
Tewes: Yes, this sounds exactly up your alley! [laughs] And then you also mentioned the connection to the big environmental legislation in the seventies.

01-00:09:26
Hein: Yeah, yeah.

01-00:09:27
Tewes: Given that, I'm wondering where you saw yourself moving in this field.

01-00:09:34
Hein: Well, that was my intention. In chemistry—certainly at that time, and it's probably still true—it's difficult to get a job with just—a long-term career-type job with just a BS in chemistry, so most people who get a bachelor's degree in chemistry, unless they're going on to medical school or something

like that, you typically go on to graduate school. And so my intention, based on my experience as an undergrad, was to do research in environmental analytical chemistry.

01-00:10:05

But on top of that, then laid on top of that, was my interest in—I had always dreamed about moving west to a place with mountains and big parks and wilderness. Growing up in Indiana, one of the things—and probably the Midwest in general—is there's not very many public lands available for people like me to explore. Growing up, there was a little Nature Conservancy preserve called Pine Hills Nature Preserve, which wasn't far from where I lived, and I literally wore out the trails in that place, because there just weren't that many places that you could hike. Everything was private farmland and private land. My stepfather did have a neat little property he called The Patch, which was on this same creek. We could actually canoe from our house the thirty miles, or however far it was, down to this little property he owned back in the woods, and so that was another place I could explore. But for someone who really wanted to get out and explore vast wilderness, the West was the place to be.

01-00:11:09

And so when I was choosing graduate schools, I mostly looked at graduate schools in the West. It turned out that that was probably a good decision, because most of the programs that had good environmental analytical chemistry programs were actually located in the West, as well. And so I ended up going to Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, and a big part of that was because it was located in the West, in a place that I wanted to live and experience.

01-00:11:49

Tewes: And so you started at Oregon State in the mid-eighties?

01-00:11:55

Hein: Yeah, I started in 1982.

01-00:11:57

Tewes: In eighty-two, okay. And when did you finish up that program?

01-00:12:01

Hein: In 1988. And so typically, at least in my field, most people—I'd say the average student graduates in about four years. Some people get on the fast track and for various personal reasons want to get out faster, and they may make it in three years. It took me six years, and part of that was because my major professor who I'd started doing my research with left, didn't get tenure and left partway through, so I had to start over a little bit. But probably the bigger reason was I spent so much time exploring Oregon, hiking, backpacking, kayaking, fly fishing, that it took me a little longer than your average student to finish. So it took me six years to finish my doctorate.

01-00:12:47
Tewes: I love that. So it seems like you took to the West very well. [laughs]

01-00:12:50
Hein: Yes, yes. In fact, I joke now that whenever I go back and visit my sister in Indiana, I get disoriented, because there's no topography, there are no—now I can look at Mount Diablo and know where I am, I can know where the Sierra are, and know whether that's east or west. And yeah, and I get disoriented when I'm in flat places now. [laughs]

01-00:13:11
Tewes: I understand completely. So after you finished at Oregon State, what brought you to the Bay Area eventually?

01-00:13:21
Hein: It was a job. I had hoped to find a job in Oregon, because we loved living there. It's a little bit of a joke, but it's probably true: I educated myself out of working in Oregon at the time. The people who were in my program who stayed in Oregon weren't practicing analytical chemistry anymore. They were becoming ink engineers at Hewlett-Packard or other things that weren't in their field, and so there just weren't many opportunities in Oregon at that time, to have a profession. And so I did a job search and ended up getting an offer with, believe it or not, Dow Chemical in Pittsburg, California. Dow had both a research facility in Walnut Creek, as well as a research function, an analytical research function, in the Pittsburg plant that's there. I actually had friends who were working there and said it was a good place to work, and so we ended up moving to the Bay Area in the fall of 1988 after I accepted that job.

01-00:14:38
Tewes: And what were your first impressions of the area?

01-00:14:41
Hein: Well, so we had lived in Oregon for—I had lived there six years, and I think Claudia had lived there seven or eight years. And so we had sort of grown accustomed to the green grass and the extensive forests and wintertime rains. We moved to the Bay Area in August, and it was—I remember driving down through the Central Valley, and it was over 100 degrees and there were fires and things like that, and I thought, Oh God, what have I gotten into? And of course, that's the brown time of year in the Bay Area, and so it was a little bit of a shock, you know, I have to say, when we first moved into the area. And of course, we quickly came to love our golden hills, but it was a little bit of an adjustment we had to make, because it was so different from where we had been in Oregon and, frankly, for me, growing up in the Midwest where the summers were the green time, with all the rain and thunderstorms and things.

01-00:15:57
Tewes: That is a very good point. And when you moved, did you move directly to Concord?

01-00:16:03

Hein: We did, we did. So Claudia had, in graduate school, had finished a master's degree in chemistry. She learned through graduate school that she wasn't really interested in research. As part of the program at OSU, we were all typically teaching assistants, and so we had an opportunity to lead lecture sections and laboratories and things like that, and she quickly learned that she loved teaching and she didn't love research all that much. And so she, instead of getting her master's degree in chemistry, she ended up getting a master's degree in education. She was actually teaching high school chemistry in a suburb outside of Portland while I was finishing up my doctorate, writing my thesis. And so then when we moved to the Bay Area, we knew I was going to be working in Pittsburg and maybe some in Walnut Creek. We didn't know what she was going to be doing. She first started part-time teaching. She didn't have a full-time job immediately, and so we decided Concord was a good sort of central location. I could easily get over to Pittsburg or Walnut Creek, and she could get to the freeway fairly quickly if she needed to go somewhere else, and so we ended up in Concord.

01-00:17:23

Tewes: I will ask more about Claudia in just a minute. I do want to ask about what Concord itself looked like in the late eighties, in terms of city limits and the development there.

01-00:17:35

Hein: You know, it actually wasn't all that different than it is now. The development that's happened in Concord has, for the most part, been infill-type development. The exception to that was actually something that was happening right when we moved here, and it was actually the first introduction we had to Save Mount Diablo, and that was a development just literally within a mile or so of where we live now called the Crystyl Ranch Development, which was on the edge of Lime Ridge Open Space. The initial proposal was for a fairly significant development with a golf course that would consume a lot of the open space there, and there was this organization called Save Mount Diablo that was leading some hikes to try to educate people about it. And so we actually went on one of those hikes, and after that was the first time we made a contribution to Save Mount Diablo.

01-00:18:31

That development, actually, it was approved by the city council. Save Mount Diablo filed a referendum, and actually referended it, so they had to go back to the drawing boards. The development actually got built, but in a much, much smaller footprint and with a lot more land dedicated to Lime Ridge Open Space, and that's sort of typical of the way that Save Mount Diablo works. You don't oppose development wholesale, but when development is being done in places or in ways that could be improved, we typically try to work with developers to make improvements before they go through the process. But in cases like this, it had to be referended and they had to be forced to make improvements. [laughs] And I think that Lime Ridge Open

Space is one of those places that, during the pandemic, has just been loved extremely well. And a lot of the land that people are loving there was dedicated as a result of that Crystyl Ranch Development.

01-00:19:43
Tewes: That's a great story, Scott. I'm thinking—you're going on these educational hikes with Save Mount Diablo. What was it about what you were learning with them that made you want to give to the organization?

01-00:19:56
Hein: Claudia and I had both always been interested in the environment, and we had become birders, and I had become interested in—sort of reengaged with nature photography. I'd taken some time off from doing that. And so it was just we supported—we had always felt that organizations that protect land are the most efficient ways to do conservation, and so it just seemed to be an interesting organization and they seemed to be doing good things. And so initially we just became members and made small contributions. But it seemed like an organization that had been around for a long time and seemed to be doing good work, and so it seemed to be worth supporting.

01-00:20:50
Tewes: Was the longevity of the organization a big draw for you, the fact that it had been around since 1971?

01-00:20:55
Hein: I think so. I think whenever you make decisions about supporting, either financially or otherwise, that enters into your thoughts. You say, "Is this an organization that's going to be around? Is my—the dollars I send or the time I volunteer going to be sustained over the long period of time?" And so it certainly enters into it. You know, there are other organizations—there are start-up organizations you think are doing good things, and you want to help them get bootstrapped. But certainly, organizations that have been around for a long time that are still doing good work and are relevant and such, that certainly helps to have that track record.

01-00:21:49
Tewes: You brought up a lot of really great points here that I want to pick up a little bit later.

01-00:21:53
Hein: Okay.

01-00:21:54
Tewes: But I do want to back up and make sure we talk about Claudia, who we've mentioned already, but plays a big part in your role in the organization. But maybe, can you just tell me how you met Claudia?

01-00:22:05
Hein: We met in graduate school. She was in the Chemistry Department, the analytical chemistry division, as well, in the OSU Chemistry Department. She

was actually one of my first teaching assistants, so I was actually one of her students when I first got there. She taught an electronics and microcomputer interfacing course. And the irony there is that then I'm the one that went on to do lots of microcomputer interfacing. But she was an instructor in the course, and it was a small department. We all socialized together, and so that's how we met.

01-00:22:43
Tewes: I love that she was your TA. [laughs] And I think you've told me that Claudia was the person who started first volunteering with Save Mount Diablo?

01-00:22:55
Hein: She did. She had been chair of the—she teaches chemistry at DVC [Diablo Valley College] now. She did a little bit of part-time teaching at DVC when we first got here, and then got a—was hired full time there, and she's been there ever since, and so she's actually now one of the elder statesmen of the Chemistry Department. In around 2000, she had just finished a four-year term as chair of the Chemistry Department, and was looking for ways to get more involved in the community. At the time, Save Mount Diablo had a really small staff—two-and-a-half people—Ron Brown had just been hired in 2000 and Seth Adams had been hired in 1988, I think, and was the other staff person. There was a part-time admin, but they really needed volunteers to help, and Claudia decided that would be a good thing to do.

01-00:23:55
Tewes: Do you know what kind of work they were having her do at this time?

01-00:23:57
Hein: Oh, it was mostly clerical. They needed a lot of help just being organized, and Claudia is very organized, and so she was helping them organize. She was helping them with a landowner outreach program that they were trying to get started. Ironically, that's something we've struggled with ever since, and now we have—we're back trying to bring that program back to life and reach out to landowners and things, so what goes around comes around.

01-00:24:28
Tewes: Can you tell me what that's looking like now? I haven't heard about this yet.

01-00:24:34
Hein: The landowner outreach? Well, the idea is to try to develop relationships with long-time landowners who may have property that you would like to acquire at some time, so that when they're ready to sell they'll think about you. They might not give you a bargain, but at least they won't be opposed to thinking about doing a deal with you, and so that's the sort of general idea. And so it takes developing relationships and maintaining those relationships over time, and communicating with the—it's something you have to be proactive about. The landowners aren't going to come and find you, in most cases. You have to go find them, and then figure out how they want to be—what kind of

relationship they want to have. Some of them may not want to, others enjoy the interaction. So that's what we're doing.

01-00:25:39
Tewes: With the landowners from whom you're getting a positive response, do you get a sense of why, why they're interested in working with Save Mount Diablo?

01-00:25:47
Hein: Well, some of them are interested in the work we do, some of them are supporters. Others, it may be more we bought a lot of land in this area and helped our allies buy a lot of land in this area, and so they may know that if they—when it comes time to sell, we're going to be, potentially, one of the buyers. And so there may be some self-interest in that way, as well.

01-00:26:19
Tewes: Thank you. That's interesting. I can't wait to learn more about that.

01-00:26:23
Hein: Yeah. The other part of that is, in certain areas—Morgan Territory, for example—there's some people who, for various reasons, don't like Save Mount Diablo. It's important that other landowners meet us directly and come to understand that we're trustworthy and they can trust our word and all those kinds of things. And so that's the other part that's important with the landowner outreach, is just to make sure that people know we're good people and we're trustworthy, and if you do a deal with us, we'll treat you respectfully, and everything else.

01-00:27:04
Tewes: Yeah. I do really quickly want to back up and speak about the company you helped found, Diablo Analytical, Inc., in 1994.

01-00:27:16
Hein: Yeah.

01-00:27:18
Tewes: Can you tell me briefly about that and how it relates to Save Mount Diablo, if at all?

01-00:27:23
Hein: Okay. So as I mentioned, we moved to the Bay Area in 1988 so I could begin working at Dow Chemical. One of the people who worked at Dow was a person named Terry [L.] Ramus, who had actually been in graduate school with Claudia and I at Oregon State. And so Terry and I got reacquainted at Dow in Pittsburg. And then in 1992 or so, Dow announced that they were going to be closing the R&D facility in Walnut Creek and significantly downsizing the R&D function in the Pittsburg plant, and it was pretty clear that Terry and I were probably going to have to—well, we were going to be given the opportunity to move to Freeport, Texas, or Midland, Michigan. And to their credit, Dow gave us time to think about it. We had about a year-and-a-

half, and that gave us time to decide that we didn't really want to move to those places and looked at it as an opportunity to start a business doing similar research to what we did inside Dow, but on our own, to different kinds of companies that didn't have the resources that Dow had. And so we decided to start our company, Diablo Analytical. We incorporated in July of '93, and then actually started—left Dow and started actively doing our business in January of 1994.

01-00:28:53
Tewes: That's a big leap.

01-00:28:55
Hein: It's a big leap, yeah. I sometimes jokingly call it a lifestyle business, and it isn't really at all that, but it's allowed us to—Terry and I are both scientists and people who are interested in the science and the technology. Terry was—it was clear he was being tracked to become a manager, which he was, that was something he had an aptitude for, but he wasn't that interested in it. And I would probably have stayed on the science side, but who knows what kind of work I would have been doing. And so we decided that it was an opportunity to take control of our own careers. We could stay—his family was all in the area here, and Claudia and I had put down roots and thought we wanted to continue to stay here, so we decided it was an opportunity to start our own business and see if we could make that work.

01-00:29:53
Tewes: Can I ask—

01-00:29:54
Hein: So then the connection to Save Mount Diablo is simply one of being able to control our time and organize our business, so that we had time to dedicate time to causes that we both cared about. And in my case, that was Save Mount Diablo, for the most part.

01-00:30:14
Tewes: And is the name an intentional nod to Mount Diablo?

01-00:30:18
Hein: Oh, absolutely. Yeah. We started our business in Concord, which is in the Diablo Valley with Mount Diablo right around it. And so it made sense to call—and with my connection to Save Mount Diablo and Mount Diablo, it made sense to name it after the mountain. Now, of course that causes complications, because we don't just work in California. In fact, most of our business is outside of California and around the world, and so when you get into Latin America, you do have to explain why you're called *Diablo* Analytical, but we're able to negotiate that.

01-00:30:59
Tewes: That's too funny. [laughs] Okay, let's get into some of your early involvement with the organization. We mentioned the hikes, education about Crystyl

Ranch, and you started—you and Claudia started giving to the organization around that time.

01-00:31:14
Hein: Mm-hmm.

01-00:31:16
Tewes: Can you tell me about the grove of trees that you sponsored in your mother's memory?

01-00:31:23
Hein: Sure. So my mom passed away pretty unexpectedly in 1997. She was only sixty at the time. In fact, that's my age now, which is a little unnerving. And we had been looking for a way to honor her memory and had read about Saving Mount Diablo's Chaparral Spring Property and this memorial tree program that they had going. And so one of the visits my sister made out here on vacation, we decided to schedule a trip to Chaparral Spring for both of us to choose a memorial tree in my mom's honor. And so we contacted the office and said we wanted to do this, and they sent Seth Adams out to meet us at Chaparral Spring. We had not met Seth before, and so we didn't know what to expect and we didn't know what we were in for. So Seth took us on a hike around the property, and we looked at various trees in various places. In Seth's way—have you met Seth? Not yet?

01-00:32:29
Tewes: Not yet, no.

01-00:32:29
Hein: Okay well, Seth's a very convincing person, let me put it this way. And by the end of our tour, he had convinced both my sister and I that rather than adopting individual trees, which was our original intent, that we should instead adopt our own groves of trees, which was, of course, a bigger contribution. In his strategic way, he made sure to have us choose groves that only touched on a corner, so they're squares that touch on a corner, leaving the two other squares opposing them open, so that if in the future we ever wanted to adopt another grove, we could fill it all in and make a big square. [laughs] So that was the first, I'd say, significant involvement we had with Save Mount Diablo, other than being members and going on a few hikes, and it was our first introduction to Seth. So this all happened before Claudia started—obviously, before she started volunteering in the office.

01-00:33:33
Tewes: Yes, thank you. That was going to be my next question, about how this impacts the relationship you have with the organization going forward.

01-00:33:42
Hein: Well of course, once you—I think those groves were $2,500 donations at that time, which was not an insignificant amount of money. And so once you make that kind of contribution to the organization, you start getting invited to

various events, some of them more private events, et cetera. And so we had really started to accelerate our involvement with the organization. We got to know the people better, and that, of course, then facilitated Claudia's starting to volunteer in the office, because she learned that there were needs that they had.

01-00:34:27
Tewes: And when did you, personally, start volunteering?

01-00:34:30
Hein: So once Claudia started volunteering, she, of course, had more interactions with Seth and Ron. She had mentioned at some point to Seth that I was a photographer. I should probably back up and just say I had always been interested in photography, and actually had thought, briefly, about studying photojournalism in college. Thank God I didn't do that, because that's such a difficult way to make a living. The whole photography and news business has changed so much, it would be a really difficult place to be. [laughs] But I had thought about it, and still, at that point, stuck with my pre-med and then chemistry.

01-00:35:18
And then, when Claudia and I moved to Concord in the fall of '88, we didn't know about Save Mount Diablo yet, and started exploring various natural places in the Bay Area. Mount Diablo, of course, because it's right near where we live, but also places like Point Reyes National Seashore. And on one of those trips, we took a field seminar, and it was led by a naturalist named Rich Stallcup. Rich was one of the founders of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, which is now Point Blue [Conservation Science], and was sort of an internationally recognized ornithologist. We quickly became friends, and he became a mentor to both Claudia and I on all things nature, particularly Bay Area nature. He was best known for his knowledge of birds, but he was interested in everything, and so we learned about reptiles and amphibians and butterflies and dragonflies—and everything.

01-00:36:14
As we learned about the natural history of the Bay Area and California, my interest in photography was really sparked again and was—I wanted to be able to capture photos of all those beautiful things I was seeing in the field. And so my approach to nature photography has really evolved as a result of that. And taking the point of view of a naturalist, I spend as much time as I can with other scientists and naturalists to learn everything I can, and I think the best way to become a better nature photographer is to become a better naturalist. Save Mount Diablo has been a great conduit for that, because I get to hang out with people like Malcolm [Sproul], who's a great naturalist; Heath Bartosh, a former board member who was a—he was also a botanist and knew all about the rare plants, and I would hang out with him in the field. And so Save Mount Diablo was a great way for me to learn more about the nature, become a better naturalist, and as a result have—become a better nature

photograph[er]. And so that combination of natural history and nature photography were a significant factor for me getting involved in Save Mount Diablo.

01-00:37:27

And so Claudia had been working in the office, and she let Seth know that I was a photographer, and she showed him one or two photos that I had taken. One was a photo of North Peak with snow on it taken from the flats between Mitchell Canyon and Donner Canyon, and he liked it. That was probably February or so of 2001 I took that photo, so this would have been soon after that, probably early 2001. And so Seth began feeding me photo projects to see what I can do, and that was obviously the beginning of a very slippery slope—for me.

01-00:38:19

Tewes: What kinds of assignments, as it were, were you receiving to photograph?

01-00:38:24

Hein: Well, it was things like—and it's still the case today—we're interested in acquiring a new property and we need photos to help our board members and supporters and funders see why it's important for us to protect it, and frankly, to help us, as part of the due diligence process, determine if it's something we really want to acquire, and so it might be something like that. It may be associated with advocacy projects. We need photos of property that's slated for development, to show why it's important to try and protect it, and so that's the nature. He would send me out to—sometimes to capture very specific photographs to help complement stories he was writing for newsletter campaigns or other purposes. And of course, since then, we've done so much of this he just—he was very detailed in the beginning, and now he can give me a—and I've worked with him for so long—he can give me just sort of an overview, and I can generally bring back the photos he needs. Because we've worked together, I know what it is that he generally wants.

01-00:39:44

One thing I quickly discovered was that Seth wanted copies of all the photos, not just the beautiful ones. So he wasn't just interested in beautiful photos, he wanted everything, because he said you could never know when a particular photo will be important in the future. It may not be a great composition, it may not be a great exposure, but it may show something that's important in the future. And we've seen that over and over, over the years, where I went out to take a photo of a certain thing, and I took photos of everything that I was around, and something else became important in the future. You know, it's true.

01-00:40:26

But the follow-on story to that is that Seth, because Seth wanted everything, and I was shooting film at the time, I got overwhelmed real quickly, because I was having to make slide duplicates. And then later, I bought a slide scanner

and I'd scan the slides, and it would take a huge amount of time. I hadn't really planned to switch from film to digital, but in the fall of 2001—so I started volunteering and helping Seth and the organization with photography in sort of early 2001. By the fall, I bought my first digital camera body, and it was primarily to accommodate this issue, that it was so much easier to take digital photos and just send him a CD with the photos on it than it was to have to sit and scan each individual slide. And so Seth was the person who forced me, more quickly than I had planned, into digital photography.

01-00:41:21
Tewes: That's funny. Not to mention you're dragging how many containers of film along with you on these hikes?

01-00:41:29
Hein: Exactly.

01-00:41:30
Tewes: Wow. So we talked about your initial giving to the organization and your initial volunteer work, but let's get into—or acknowledge, I suppose, that you became a board member in 2003.

01-00:41:45
Hein: Yeah.

01-00:41:46
Tewes: And Claudia did, as well, in 2006, so a few years later.

01-00:41:48
Hein: That's right.

01-00:41:51
Tewes: So you've had all these different perspectives working with the organization throughout the years. I'm interested in a few things about the structure that you've witnessed. So you mentioned working with Seth and Ron in the early years. How would you say the organization has changed structurally since you started working with it?

01-00:42:13
Hein: Well, when we were involved, as I mentioned, we had a couple full-time staff people and a part-time admin who became full-time pretty quickly. And so what that meant was that we were still a grassroots organization. We had a professional staff, and Ron was hired to increase the professionalism and capacity of the organization. But at that point, it was still an organization in which board members were expected to be both board members and volunteers, and help the organization in any way we could. Save Mount Diablo even now, but even more so back then, has been an organization that really punches above its weight, so to speak. We accomplished far more than an organization our size should, and that's because of the hard-working staff, but also the board members and other volunteers that make it happen. So at the beginning, it really was a grassroots organization. And then through Ron's

fifteen-year tenure, he really built the staff. We started with three when he began, and I think by the end, when he retired in 2015, we might have had eighteen staff members. And so there's sort of a natural progression as you fill in with full-time staff people. You don't necessarily need volunteers doing—or want volunteers doing—the work that your staff people are doing.

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And so there's this lifecycle that boards of directors go through, and Save Mount Diablo has certainly been going through that, from a grassroots board when we first started, to now—it's not fully a governance board that just deals with governance issues like some organizations have, and I hope it never becomes one, because the experience board members can provide and knowledge that board members can provide, is so important to what we do. But we're definitely in that transition where we have really talented staff members who can do the work that volunteers were doing before, but do it a lot better and have the time to dedicate to it. And so the board of directors changes, the organization changes, because we have this full-time staff that is doing to good work.

01-00:44:53

Tewes: And you mentioned that Ron retired in 2015, and then you brought Ted Clement on right after that?

01-00:45:00

Hein: Yeah.

01-00:45:01

Tewes: And you were the president of the board at the time that that hiring process took place, and I'm curious to hear about what you were looking for in a new executive director to bring this organization forward.

01-00:45:16

Hein: Sure. Well, the first thing that we knew is we had big shoes to full. Ron had been the executive director for fifteen years, and the organization was much different than when he had been hired. Ron wasn't a—you know, you have this founder's syndrome, where the founders of an organization, when it comes time for them to move on, it's sometimes a difficult transition. Ron wasn't a founder, but he had been our ED for fifteen years and really grown the organization to what it was. And so we knew we had big shoes to fill, and none of us had been through a search like—well, at Save Mount Diablo, a search like this before.

01-00:45:54

And so we decided to hire a search firm, and it was a company called Leadership Search Partners out of Berkeley, and a woman named Heather Merriam conducted our search. And you know, they would take on a lot of the day-to-day responsibilities. The board of directors, when you're hiring an executive director, it's really the board of directors' responsibility to do so. You get input from the staff, and we had Meredith Hendricks from the staff,

who represented the staff on the search committee. But it's really the board of directors' responsibility. The problem with that is that we're all volunteers, and so no one really had the time—we had some people who had experience in executive search, but we didn't have the time to do it justice. And so we hired a search firm to help us, and that turned out to be, I think, at least, a very good decision to make. One of the reasons we chose this firm over the others that we interviewed is they—part of their process was that they would continue to help us through the transition and the onboarding process of the new ED, which is just as important as finding the right person to hire, because if you don't do the onboarding well it can be a disaster.

01-00:47:06

And then as president, I was really fortunate to have some very experienced board members to help me on the search committee. Burt Bassler—I don't know, I'm sure he's being interviewed—he's our current treasurer, and he worked professionally in human resources. That was his career, and actually did consulting as an executive search consultant, so he'd conducted executive searches himself, and so he was invaluable. And then other former board members—Amara Morrison, Sue Ohanian, Marty Reed—they all had various levels of HR experience, and so that was really helpful, to have people who had been through those trenches before, because I never had. I owned a small company where we had a small number of employees. I'd never had to search for a top manager before, and so it was helpful to have—very helpful to have them, and it was really a team effort along with the search company.

01-00:48:12

So the criteria we looked at—I actually went and looked them up, the key selection criteria. The first one was—and this was done and developed in conjunction with the board and the search committee. So the first one was: demonstrated commitment to land conservation and preservation and resource management. The second one was: working knowledge of principles of effective land use, and familiarity with land acquisition. The third one was: understanding the importance of advocacy. The fourth one was: fundraising experience. And just sort of as a side note, we had started our Forever Wild [Capital] Campaign—I think it was 2013. It was right after we had purchased the Curry Canyon Ranch Property. And it had stalled a little bit, and we knew it was going to be on hold as we—as Ron retired and we brought the new ED on, so we felt like it was really important to hire someone who had experience doing campaigns, because we were going to have to hit the ground running once the new person was on board. And then the last was: an experienced leader and manager with experience serving on and reporting to a board. We wanted someone who was experienced rather than someone who was sort of an up-and-comer but had never served as an ED or developed a relationship with a board. So those were the criteria that we had developed.

01-00:49:41

Tewes: And what was it about Ted that drew you to him as a candidate?

01-00:49:46
Hein: [laughs] Well, it turned out he was the only candidate who actually met all of the criteria. At the time he was the ED of the [Hawaiian Islands] Land Trust, so he was living in Hawaii at the time. And so we had to conduct at least our initial interviews—there wasn't Zoom at the time. I think we did it through FaceTime or something, Apple FaceTime through one of our staff's phones and Ted's phone. [laughs] So we interviewed him remotely, and he ticked all the boxes. You know, there were other candidates who met several of the criteria; some who would be good managers and probably good with fundraising, but we didn't find all that many candidates—well, we didn't find any other candidates who had both the land experience and the management experience and the track record of successful fundraising. And so we actually—normally, the best practice is when you—when the search committee is going to make a recommendation to the board to interview candidates, you want two or three candidates for the board to interview. Ted was the only candidate we presented to our board, so if the board had said no—if Ted had come in and bombed or interviewed badly, we would have had to start over, basically, in our search process. But we really felt—we didn't feel that any of the candidates brought to the table what Ted did.

01-00:51:28
Tewes: So I know one thing that is Ted's brainchild here was the unique strategic plan process that SMD now follows. Can you tell me what that means for board members like yourself?

01-00:51:41
Hein: Yeah, so we had been through traditional strategic planning processes. I don't know if you've been through one of these before, but they're usually three- or five-year strategic plans, and you have a board retreat where you sit down and you develop these plans that you're going to do over five years. It's a really good exercise. It's important for all organizations to do it, because you need to be thinking big picture and strategically. The problem with them is what traditionally happens is you do them, they get written up. A lot of times you pay a lot of money to a consultant to help facilitate it, and it ends up, for the most part, sitting on the shelf. The three-year rolling strategic plan process that Ted brought with him is a completely different animal. In fact, in some ways, it probably couldn't be—it shouldn't be called a strategic plan, because it's so different [from] the traditional ones. But it's a process that worked for him, and it's something that you develop with both significant board and staff input, and then it's really used to manage day-to-day activities of the organization. Once it's approved, it becomes the blueprint for staff workplans for the year.

01-00:53:02
It's a really unique approach that ensures everybody is on the same page, and has been really effective. Now, it puts a lot of work on staff, because they—it's really staff that's developing the strategic plan each year, with input and agreement from the board of directors. But it puts a lot of pressure on the

staff. And certainly, the first year when he came in, he had to steamroll the strategic plan on top of everything else the staff was doing, and so it was—the first year was difficult, because it's something Ted felt strongly needed to be done in order for him to manage effectively, but it was done from ground zero. Now when we do a strategic plan, we already have the current year's three-year plan, and it's a matter of going through—and a lot of the work is ongoing, and so it gets rolled over to the next year. It's only new stuff that gets changed, and so it's a lot less—you still have to be very thoughtful about it and thorough about it, but the first year it was implementing it from scratch, and so it was a lot more difficult the first year.

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Tewes: What kind of input does the board need to give into this?

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Hein: So the way Ted does it is he first has a staff retreat where the staff meet, and they talk about what they think the priorities should be in the coming year and in subsequent years: if there are any new initiatives that we should consider, new programs, new projects—particularly those that might have budgetary implications—and any significant changes to staffing or anything like that. All that goes into—it first comes out of the staff retreat. And then, from the staff retreat, they develop an updated strategic plan summary, so that's the sort of verbal description of the high points of the strategic plan. And that then first comes to the board of directors to review any—there's sort of a reality check of that. And then from that, then, is developed the detailed strategic plan, and the board gets a high-level version of that. The staff version has details about implementation and timing and things like that. The board gets a high-level version of that, and then those are taken to a board retreat that happens a couple of months before the end of our fiscal year. And so the idea is we provide input before the retreat, and then at the retreat we have the discussions. We talk about any initiatives, and if there are things that the board supports or doesn't support, and so it gets—the strategic plan gets massaged at the retreat. And then it gets brought back to the board, once it's been updated, based on the input of the board, for approval. It's approved at the same meeting where we approve our next year's annual budget. Our annual budget's really based on the work we're going to be doing in the strategic plan. It all links together.

01-00:56:34
Tewes: Thank you. It's nice to hear about how this works in practicality.

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Hein: It does, and the nice thing about it, particularly from a board member's standpoint, is you have the blueprint of what the staff is going to be working on, so if you have questions about what the staff is going to be working on, you have the document there. And then Ted tries to give quarterly updates on progress. His evaluation by the board is based on how we do relative—in part based on how we do relative to the strategic plan. And I'm sure that his review

of staff, his evaluation of staff, is based on how they do relative to their parts of the strategic plan, so all of that kind of links together.

01-00:57:20
Tewes: Which I think relates to your board governance work, which we'll talk about in just a minute. So I want to say again that you joined the board officially in 2003.

01-00:57:36
Hein: Right.

01-00:57:37
Tewes: And I think Malcolm Sproul was president at that point, right?

01-00:57:39
Hein: Malcolm was president. I actually joined the board, and there had been some transitions in board members, and so I actually became—I had been a member of the Land Committee before I had joined the board. As soon as I joined the board, I became chair of the Land Committee and stayed in that position until Malcolm retired, and I agreed to become president. And then now, I'm back to being Land Committee chair. [laughs]

01-00:58:10
Tewes: Well, I want to speak more broadly about what this board work entails, because it is a significant investment of your time and volunteer labor. Can you tell me more about what expectations you had going into these positions?

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Hein: As president or just generally as a board member?

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Tewes: Both, if you could.

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Hein: So I'll speak first about the board of directors. So you know, all board members are expected to serve on at least one committee. Initially, for me, it was just the Land Committee, in addition to attending our board meetings. And so there's not a specific time requirement. We don't say you have to spend one week a month or two days a month working on Save Mount Diablo. There's nothing like that, but there is an expectation that you'll attend a majority of the board meetings and contribute to one or more committee meetings. And then, from the standpoint of the financial expectations, all board members are expected to make what we call a meaningful financial contribution every year, but we're not at all a pay-to-play board. You know, you have some symphony boards or something like that, that the entry to being on the board is a commitment to make a contribution of a certain level every year, and we're not at all like that. What we do is we leave it to individual board members to determine what they consider to be a meaningful contribution in the context of their personal financial situation. And so some people give relatively small amounts, and others give substantially more, and

it may vary from year to year depending on people's personal financial situation.

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And then, from the standpoint of what different board members bring to the organization, different members have different skills and knowledge. In some cases, it might be technical expertise: attorneys, accountants, biological consultants that actually bring important knowledge and experience to help advise the staff. We can hire experts, but that's expensive, so if we have people on the board who are volunteers—but it's best on the board, because if you get involved in anything sensitive, it's best to have it be a board member. And frankly, board members are very committed to the organization and are generally willing to do that kind of work pro bono for the organization. So we have people with technical experience that's important. We have people who have connections to the community; it may be to politicians, to donors, to community organizations, to partner organizations. And we have people who are simply passionate about what we do, and bring that passion and excitement and interest to the board of directors. We do have a matrix we call a matrix of desired skills, so it has the list of skills we like to see on the board here in the board members and which skills they sort of tick the boxes of. It helps us look at where we may have holes in our—both our experience and the diversity of the board and things like that, and helps guide us when we are trying to recruit and develop potential new board members.

01-01:01:48

Tewes: And what do you think you personally bring to the board?

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Hein: I'm one of those people—I bring, obviously, photography and knowledge, knowledge of natural history. But there are—a lot of people do that. So it's mostly the passion part and the—at this point, it's institutional knowledge. [laughs] I'm one of the longer-serving board members, and have served as president and on most of the committees, and so a fair amount of institutional knowledge, which can be important. It's important not to relive the mistakes of the past, but you have to be careful that you don't use it to prevent the organization from growing in different directions and things. But that's really what I bring. Relationships with donors I've made over the years. My photography still is important, I think. And just the passion to take people on hikes and get them excited about what we do, so that's, I don't—my professional background doesn't really help at all, other than being a scientist and appreciating that the science is an important core competency of the organization. In supporting that, my knowledge as an analytical chemist doesn't help much. [laughs]

01-01:03:15

Tewes: Yes, yes, I can see. [laughs] So you were board president from 2013 to May 2019, I think.

01-01:03:21
Hein: Right.

01-01:03:23
Tewes: What was your approach to governing the board those years? What were your goals?

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Hein: There are different ways that board presidents can lead. There are some board presidents who want to take charge and have their own initiatives and their own projects they want the organization to work on, and there are others who are more facilitators, and I certainly fall under the latter. I've always felt that we have this amazing staff and we go through this planning process, and it's not my job to have my own pet projects for them to work on, and so I really approached my leadership as a facilitator. The board president acts as the official liaison between the executive director and the board of directors, although that's not really true. Any board member can talk to the executive director, but from an official standpoint, the purpose of the president is to interact with the executive director to make sure that he has the tools and the resources necessary to do the job, find out if there are issues that need to be dealt with and bring them back to the board of directors. And then the second part is just sort of facilitating the interactions of the board of directors, and if there are problems that arise, then you're the one that has to figure out how to deal with them. And so really, that's the—at least in Save Mount Diablo, that's been the purpose of the board president. It certainly hasn't been the case where the board president has—I actually had one board member, when I first became president, who asked, "What are you going to do? What are your initiatives going to be?" And I'm like, "I don't see that really as my job. My job is to make sure the organization operates smoothly, and the executive director and the staff have the resources they need to be successful." And so that's the approach I always took.

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Tewes: Thank you for explaining that. But somewhat related, I'm curious, even if they weren't your initial goals for your tenure, if there were some significant events or things you're particularly proud of that happened while you were president.

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Hein: Well, certainly the biggest challenge of my presidency—so when Malcolm had—you were correct, Malcolm had been president for like fourteen or fifteen years, and he decided that was enough. [laughs] He did a great job, and it was time for him to step down. I was asked to step up, and I did so, though on the condition that it would not be an open-ended obligation; I didn't want to be a fourteen- or fifteen-year president, and so the board adopted a three-year term for the president at that time that could be renewed once for a second three-year term. So I initially agreed to serve for three years, and that was my intention, because I feel like it's important for other board members to develop leadership skills and be willing to step up into that position. I think

the organization benefits when you have different personalities and experience and such in that position. And so my intention was to serve for three years. But toward the end of my second year, Ron [Brown] announced privately that he was planning to retire, and that we would be needing to search for a new ED, and so I knew that it would be important—you were going to have this important transition of leadership at the staff level—I knew it was going to be important for there to be some sort of stability at the board level, and so I agreed to stay for another three years to see it through the hiring of the new ED and the onboarding and transition to the new ED, so I ended up serving for, I think, six years and three months or something like that. It was a little over six years.

01-01:07:48

Tewes: So let's speak a little bit about some of the committees that you've engaged with over the years. You're currently chair of the Land Committee, so let's speak about that first. What does that committee work entail? What does that committee do?

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Hein: So that's really the program committee of the organization, so any acquisition opportunities that come up, any land-use advocacy issues that may be happening typically first come to the Land Committee and are discussed. Those discussions are for a couple of purposes. One is to provide feedback to staff on—based on the experience of the people on the committee, whether a property is worth investigating further for acquisition or what the issues are with a particular political campaign, whether we should be involved in what—the issues we see. And so part of it's giving feedback to the staff. And from the staff standpoint, there are always several board members on the Land Committee getting a temperature of how the board's going to react to a particular thing. And so in most cases, acquisitions or decisions about becoming involved in a political campaign or a lawsuit or something like that are vetted at the Land Committee before they're ever brought, at least to a decision-making stage, [to] the board of directors. For things that take long periods of time, there may be updates that come from the land updates at the board meetings, but typically, the in-depth conversations are formulated at the Land Committee for those kinds of activities.

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And then the Stewardship Committee is a little bit different. It's sort of a subcommittee of the Land Committee, because it has to do with care and feeding of our properties. But it is really a hands-on committee, where it certainly has, by far, the most members, because most of the members are people who are property stewards and volunteers, who go out and clean up trash and remove fencing and all those kinds of things. And so the Stewardship Committee and the people who get involved—the people who get involved typically aren't interested in sitting in meetings and talking about governance. [laughs] They want to be out taking care of the land and getting their hands dirty and clearing downed trees and pulling fences. And so we

tried for a while to have a separate Stewardship Committee meeting, and it just didn't work well. The volunteers just didn't—they didn't want to be sitting in a meeting, they wanted to be out doing work.

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And so Stewardship has been actually more of a staff-driven function, where the staff works with John Gallagher, who's currently the chair of the Stewardship Committee, and they—and the staff helps facilitate the volunteers and the work the volunteers do. But from a structural standpoint, we, at least for the last year or so, we've been having Stewardship updates at our Land Committee meeting, because it's important that board members and people hear about what the Stewardship Committee is up to, but it really is a different kind of committee compared to the Development Committee or the Finance Committee or something like that. It's a committee that's out taking care of our land.

01-01:11:41

Tewes: I'm reminded of the fact that you've been involved with the Land Committee, in some capacity, since almost the start! [laughs] And I'm just wondering how you've seen priorities shift or even programs—intentions behind programs, I guess?

01-01:12:02

Hein: You know, that's a good question. One of the things you learn when you're involved in land conservation is you always have to take the long view. It's really rare that you are able to hear about a property, buy a property, and be done with it. It's much more common that it takes years and years to get to the point where you're actually able to purchase a property or protect it through the initiative process or what have you. And so what I would say is I don't think our priorities have changed all that much. How we go about doing the business has changed over the years.

01-01:12:52

There was a time when I first got involved with the Land Committee, where the California [Department of] Fish and Game— [California Department of] Fish and Wildlife now—was directing a lot of money our way as mitigation for either development projects that were happening or penalties for developers who violated rules under the Endangered Species Act and destroyed ponds containing [California] red-legged frogs or something like that. It would be not uncommon for us to get a $200,000 or $300,000 amount from Fish and Wildlife, for example, that had to be used for acquiring red-legged frog habitat. And so that was, in some sense, sort of easy money. We didn't have to raise it ourselves, and we [put] that money to good use acquiring really important properties. But that, for various reasons, that funding source kind of dried up, and so we had to then do the hard work of, for the most part, raising the money ourselves from various funding sources and donors and things like that. And so how we would fund an acquisition has

sort of changed. And of course, conservation easements, as a tool, is relatively new for us, as well, and so that's something that's changed over the years.

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But in terms of our priorities in protecting land, that really hasn't changed ever, since the beginning. We're still using the same land acquisition priority list that was originally developed by Mary Bowerman when she was doing her—even before Save Mount Diablo was founded, she had already developed her list of important properties based on their biotics, and we're still using a form of that list. Obviously, it's changed over the years, but it's the same sort of scientific approach to prioritizing our acquisitions.

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Tewes: Well, since you mentioned it, I feel like maybe we should skip a little bit [ahead] and speak about the new use of conservation easements. Specifically, you mentioned the Mount Diablo Trail Ride—I'm sorry, Concord—I'll get this all wrong here! [laughs] The Concord Mount Diablo Trail Ride Association land. Can you speak a little bit about that partnership?

01-01:15:26

Hein: I can, and maybe I should step back and just talk about Save Mount Diablo and the process we went through to even decide to accept conservation easements, because it's actually fairly interesting. When the organization was first founded, Art [Bonwell] and Mary [Bowerman]—and you may not believe this, but Art and Mary thought that their work would be done in five years. They had no intention of the organization being around in perpetuity. They figured they'd protect the lands around the mountain and be done with it, and they'd be able to go on to other pursuits. Now, of course, that didn't happen. [laughs] And it obviously wasn't realistic. Every time we'd get close to maybe finishing what—well, we aren't even close to finishing what they originally wanted to do. There are still significant properties on the mountain proper that need to be protected. But you learn more about conservation biology and about wildlife connections and healthy habitat and things like that, and you know you have to protect more than you did back when they were first involved.

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But we had never actually had that conversation as a board of directors about whether we were going to exist in perpetuity. I think a lot of people probably assumed it, but we'd never actually had that conversation. And of course, once you start accepting perpetual conservation easements, you're making a statement that you plan to be around forever, because if you're not, you shouldn't be accepting them, right? And so we actually had a very significant discussion at a board retreat. This was actually before Ted [Clement] had arrived, this was when Ron Brown was executive director. But we had a very thoughtful and meaningful discussion about whether we wanted to say we were going to be around in perpetuity, but it was necessary if we were going to start accepting conservation easements—and we decided to do so. We made

the statement that we would be around—planned to be around forever. [laughs]

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And so conservation easements are a tool, they're a conservation tool. In some places in the US, they may be the most important tool for conservation. In other places—and I think [in] the Bay Area it's the case where they're still important. But at least from Save Mount Diablo's standpoint, we don't have a lot of longtime wealthy landowners who want to stay on their property but do philanthropy and protect it through a conservation easement. There are some, and we need to have the tool available, but not all landowners, particularly in our area, want to sell their properties outright—but they may want to protect them.

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And so Concord Mount Diablo Trail Riders are a really great example of that. They're a trail ride association, and they want to be a trail ride association. They want to continue to use the property for their recreational equestrian purposes, but they do—they love the land and they want to protect it from future development that would damage the unique beauty. It's right on the slopes of North Peak, and Cardinet Oaks, for example, is a really beautiful spot that's on their property. And so they recognize they would like to protect it. The issue for them is the sustainability of their organization. They have expenses, and what's happened in the past is that if they had a major expense, they would lease out another parcel for someone to build a house on, and so that's sort of how the—they have this unique arrangement up there, where the people who have houses up there don't own the property. They lease it from the Trail Ride Association, but they live there, and the assumption is, I think, they're going to be there long term. Many years ago, that's what they would do. They would have—the Association would have financial needs, and so they'd sell another parcel. And so what we were trying to do was prevent that from happening and having more land developed up there, but give them resources that would help make them be sustainable for a longer period of time.

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And so this is one of those long processes. I can remember, you know, maybe even as long as eight or ten years ago, going to talk at Mount Diablo Trail Ride Association board meetings to try to educate them about what a conservation easement was, and start the process of developing the relationships that would allow them to trust us enough to put a conservation easement on their—to sell them a conservation easement. They could then use the proceeds of that sale to make them financially sustainable in the long term, and so that's what's happened. It's really, in this case, a—the term win-win is way overused, but this was a win-win-win. We are able to protect really important habitat on the slopes of the main peaks—on the slopes of North Peak, and are able to get a fairly significant chunk of money that they can then use to manage and maintain the sustainability of the organization long term,

so it's a great example of how conservation easements can work, because the Trail Ride Association was never going to sell us the property, they were never going to sell it to the state park, and so this was the tool we could use to protect that land.

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Tewes: Thank you. That was a great example. I just want to acknowledge some of the committees you are [currently] or have previously worked on. The Development Committee, Board Governance Committee, and Nominating Committee. Is there anything you'd like to say about your work on any of those committees?

01-01:21:14

Hein: The Development Committee, I never considered myself an actual member. When I became president, we actually also had a transition in the development area and had a new chair of the Development Committee. I thought because of all the transitions going on and how important that function was to the sustainability of the organization, that it was important for me to support them by attending the meetings and providing what feedback I could. And so through most of my tenure as president, I would serve on the—I went to the Development Committee meetings. And then once I termed out of being president and went back on the Land Committee, I've sort of backed off from that. But it's a critical committee for the organization. It's the one that figures out how to raise the funds we need to operate. The Forever Wild [Capital] Campaign is a part of the Development Committee, and so it's a critical part of what we do. The Land Committee wouldn't be able to do the work we do without the hard work of the Development Committee.

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And then the other committees—so that the Governance Committee and the Nominating Committee are actually the same committee now. So we have what we called the Board Governance and Nominating Committee, and actually, when I first became president, we actually just had the Nominating Committee. And really, the purpose of the Nominating Committee was to recruit and develop new board members, and then deal with current board member development and evaluation, and those kinds of things. And so it was a fairly limited—a committee with a fairly limited work description, so to say, job description. When Ted came on, he was used to having a governance committee that would deal with by-laws and some of those kinds of things. And so we decided rather than having a whole separate committee, we'd just combine the Governance Committee and the Nominating Committee, so we're now the Board Governance and Nominating Committee, that deals both with board recruitment, as well as the governance function of primarily reviewing policies and reviewing the by-laws, and making changes as our practices change and laws change, and things like that.

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And then the other committee I've served on is the Executive Committee. And the Executive Committee—so stepping back to the Board Governance and Nominating Committee, the members of the Board Governance and Nominating Committee are the president and the chairs of each of the board committees. The Executive Committee, the members are the president, vice president, secretary now, and treasurer, so the officers of the organization. Ted's a member of both committees, both the Board Governance and Nominating Committee, and the Executive Committee. And then, many years ago we added to the Executive Committee three—what we call at-large rotating board members. The at-large members serve a three-year term, and then they term out after three years and someone new comes on. The reason for that was that prior to that, we had just the officers of the organization, and at that time we had two vice presidents. We found that the Executive Committee became kind of insular, and you had the same people sort of in the same positions for many years. When decisions were made by the Executive Committee, the rest of the board wouldn't understand how and why those decisions were being made, and it led to some, I'd say, low-level conflict. And so to address that—and in addition, and probably more importantly, to develop leadership capabilities from the board, we added this at-large member concept to the Executive Committee, where board members rotate through. And so lots of board members have served on the Executive Committee and understand how it works, how the decisions are made, and so I think that's been a really positive thing that we've done.

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Tewes: I want to talk about some significant events and programs in Save Mount Diablo's history, and leading the Forever Wild Capital Campaign.

01-01:26:02

Hein: Right.

01-01:26:02

Tewes: Can you tell me the significance of this particular campaign to the future of Save Mount Diablo?

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Hein: Well, so the Forever Wild Campaign was initiated primarily as a result of our purchase of the Curry Canyon Ranch Property. So Curry Canyon Ranch—and you've probably heard about it—we purchased it in 2013 after a long and complicated acquisition process. It's still the largest acquisition in our history, both in size—1,080 acres—and in cost—$7.2 million. And it was probably number one on our priority list for acquisition and number one on Mary's list—it was number one or number two. And so it was the most important property, largest in size and cost, so it was critical for us, when we had the opportunity, to purchase it. But we didn't necessarily have the capacity to—we didn't have the funds in hand to pay for it, and we didn't necessarily have the capacity to quickly raise those funds. And so Forever Wild was our response

to that, saying maybe the organization is in a place where we need to consider our first real capital campaign, and so that's what we did.

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So we went through the process of doing a feasibility study, where board members and donors and sponsors were interviewed to determine the feasibility, and we decided to go ahead with it. Now, what I'll say is despite doing that kind of due diligence, I don't think we were really ready for it. [laughs] We had done, I think, what we called a capital campaign, but it was really fundraising for one or two individual properties. This was something of an entirely different magnitude, and so I don't think we really understood what it was going to take to get it done. Our plan was to do it in three years, and so that was 2013—and you can do the math. [laughs]

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Now, of course, it was interrupted by an executive director transition and now the pandemic. We're literally maybe—probably this month, we'll finally raise the last funds for it and finish it, and so it'll finally be finished. But it's been a long process and it's been a difficult process, just because it's forced board members and staff members to sometimes step outside of their comfort zone when it comes to doing fundraising. We've had several different development directors over the course of the campaign, and different ones had different approaches to how it would be handled. And so it's been a challenge. But what I'll say is—and particularly since, as I said, the campaign was a little bit stalled when Ted came on, and so one of his top priorities when he came on was hit the ground running to try and get Forever Wild back on track, and he's done that. He hit the ground running, and I think he's still sprinting. [laughs]

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And so one of the things you get out of a capital campaign, if you're successful, is you really increase your capacity, particularly in the major gifts area, and so we've been focused on finishing Forever Wild with our major gifts effort. But what'll happen is we'll finish it this month, I hope, and we're going to pivot into a real major gifts operation. And we have a new major gifts staff member, Margie [Ryan], who—that's her job. And so it's kind of gone—land conservation isn't cheap, and it's not getting any cheaper, and you have to have—I always say it's really difficult being sort of a mid-sized organization, you know? When we had three staff members, we only had to raise funds to pay for the salary of three staff members. When you have six or seven staff members, you start getting in that zone where you have to raise a lot more funds just to keep your staff paid and fed, and it's hard to do that without investing in a full development and communications department, and so it's hard to be sort of in between. And so where we are now, I think we're sort of where we need to be for the time being, but it's possible we need to grow, depending on what happens, and we've invested in the development capability to do that.

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I think the Forever Wild Campaign, and Ted's knowledge and expertise and experience have helped us grow our ability to do the major gifts part of it, which will be critical to long term, because like I said, buying land isn't cheap where we live. We're different than a lot of parts of the country where there may be federal land that simply needs to be transferred from one agency to another to turn it into a state park. Where we are, with a few really small exceptions, it's all private land that has to be bought primarily at whatever the appraised value is, whatever the market rate is, and that's not cheap where we are. And so having the capability to raise those kinds of funds is critical, and I think that's probably the long-term impact of the Forever Wild Campaign.

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Tewes: You mentioned—

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Hein: Of course, we bought a bunch of properties. We've bought Curry Canyon Ranch, and I think there are probably six or seven other properties we've bought as a result of the Campaign, so I'm not downplaying that. But I think long term, looking at the sustainability of the organization, it's helped us with that major gifts part.

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Tewes: And what a great point about doing this work, the challenge of doing it in the East Bay, with the price of the land! [laughs]

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Hein: Yeah.

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Tewes: Is there anything you'd like to say about Save Mount Diablo fundraisers, such as Moonlight on the Mountain or anything else that comes to mind?

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Hein: You know, Moonlight's a really unique event. We're coming up—of course you're here because we're having our fiftieth anniversary, but it's also the twentieth anniversary of Moonlight on the Mountain, and I'm sure you'll talk—someone will talk to Bob Marx, I think, as part of this. Bob was the—a board member who was sort of the person who came up with the idea of Moonlight on the Mountain. You know, so many organizations have some sort of gala event, right? That's how you do your major—some of your major fundraising. They're usually in a hotel [ball]room somewhere, and you have your auctions and things like that. You go to one or two of those, and you've been to enough of them. [laughs]

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Moonlight on the Mountain was a completely different idea, and it was risky, and it *is* risky. So the idea with Moonlight on the Mountain is bring 500 of our closest friends up onto the mountain and have a white tablecloth sit-down dinner, sitting outside, not under tents or anything like that, and have an

evening of learning about the organization and making contributions, and bidding on artwork and experiences, and things like that. So it's completely unique, right? I don't know of any other events like it in the Bay Area, where you bring that many people outside in the environment, sitting in front of the mountain, and in the years that it works out, having the moonlight—the moonrise over the mountain. It doesn't happen very often that we get that lucky with the moon, but that's the idea. So it's really unique, but you're in nature, you're in weather. [laughs] So we have hot days, we have—a couple of times we've had wildfires that happened before—if it hadn't been for the pandemic last year, we would have had to cancel Moonlight on the Mountain because of all the smoke of the wildfires, because that's exactly when it was scheduled, was when we were having the horrible wildfires in September. We've had rain, we've had—almost every year you worry about how cold the fog is going to be coming through, because as soon as the fog starts coming through and people get cold, they start leaving and stop bidding. So it's a challenging event to put on, but people love it, and people love to come back to it, and it's been pretty successful as a fundraiser for us. The last year—and we're doing it virtual again this year—has been quite different, obviously, because we couldn't be there in person. But it's been an important part of raising the operational funds for the organization.

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Tewes: I'm conscious of the time, so I want to push some of this forward. But I do know that you've been involved with Four Days Diablo, and I'd like to hear about that.

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Hein: Yeah, Four Days Diablo, many years ago—and Seth will—and Malcolm may talk about this, as well—we helped develop something called the Diablo Trail. It was a multi-use trail running from basically Walnut Creek out to the Los Vaqueros Reservoir. To popularize the trail, we came up with the idea of taking people on a—essentially a four-day hiking/backpacking trip starting in Walnut Creek and ending up—and most years it actually ends up in Round Valley Regional Preserve near Brentwood, but in some years we do end up in the Los Vaqueros watershed. So it's thirty to forty miles, depending on the side trips we take. Three nights we hike entirely on public lands the whole way, except for the—in more recent years we've detoured onto our Curry Canyon Ranch Property, and we get permission to hike out through a private ranch on that day, so it's—in recent years it hasn't been completely on [public] land, but you get the idea that you can hike from Walnut Creek to Brentwood—almost to Brentwood on [public] land, and immersed people in the work that we and our partners have done for the last fifty years. There's no better way to expose people to the work we do and the importance [of it], than getting them out on the land—and not just for a day hike, but for four days in a row.

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The first night we typically camp in Live Oak Campground in Mount Diablo State Park, one of our great partners. The second night, depending on where we are, we've been camping recently in our Curry Canyon Ranch Property. Before that, we camped in a part of Mount Diablo State Park that's managed by one of our other great partners, the East Bay Regional Park District. And on the last night, if we can, we camp in the backpack camp in Morgan Territory Regional Preserve, the East Bay Regional Park District Preserve. It's, at least in my opinion, the most spectacular camping spot in the East Bay, with views of Mount Diablo. Each night we bring in restaurants to serve gourmet sit-down meals to the hikers. Their gear is all carried from campsite to campsite, so they don't have to actually backpack; they just have to take their day-hiking stuff.

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Many of the best donors and most committed volunteers and board members have come from—their first introduction to the organization was Four Days Diablo. And so it's an event that doesn't raise a lot of money for the organization. It's expensive—I mean, that's one of the downsides, is we only—we limit it to twenty people, and to make it worth our while we have to charge a fair amount for it. We try to get the meals donated and things like that, but it's expensive, and so that limits some of the people who can attend. But on the other hand, it develops—and we don't, in the end, raise tons of funds off it, but it develops really committed donors. Those relationships pay off in the long term, so it's an event that is really important to a bunch of us who have done it for many years, and I hope we are able to continue to do it. We've had to cancel it the last two years, because of the pandemic, and I hope we're able to get back to it—and I don't get too old to do it. [laughs]

01-01:39:35

Tewes: I think you've got some time. Another side, but related piece of work that you've done, is you served—and you and Claudia, I should say—served on the Community Advisory Committee for Concord Naval Weapons Station Reuse Project. Could you very briefly tell me about that and how it relates to Save Mount Diablo?

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Hein: Sure. You know, it's an example of the advocacy work we do, and it's actually sort of looking back at Ron's tenure with the organization and sort of how we operate. It's a great example of the ways that we get involved in the political process. So the Navy had a 5,000 at least—they have 10,000 acres, but 5,000 acres of it was going to be closed down. And so the question then is what would happen to it. It was all within the city limits of Concord, and so Concord would eventually be the entity that would determine the outcome of that land. And of course, 5,000 acres of undeveloped land in—anywhere in Contra Costa County is rare, particularly in the location it is. [laughs] So there's obviously a lot of interest in development. But also, you had the existing city residents of Concord who bordered on it, and for as long as

they'd lived there it had been sort of open space to them. And so when that process started, we knew it was going to be important for us to be involved, and be involved on multiple levels in order to ensure that there were adequate protections of open space for the existing and future community, parks for the people that would end up living there, et cetera.

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And so Ron Brown brought a lot to the organization. Obviously, he grew the staff and the capacity of the organization. Probably one of the things that was probably more unique with Ron and made him more effective was his willingness to reach out and collaborate with all kinds of partners. He was a member of business groups like Chamber of Commerce and the East Bay Leadership Council, and those relationships he built through those interactions, would help us immensely in many cases over the years. But the Concord Naval Weapons Station is a great example, where, as the planning process went along, Ron was working at a high level with business groups and politicians. Seth [Adams] was working in developing a grassroots community coalition, and then I was serving on the city council's Community Advisory Committee, helping advise the city council on what the reuse plan should look like. And that was really effective, having that sort of three-pronged approach to the reuse planning. We ended up with what I think would ultimately be—what is it, Claudia, a 2,500- or 3,000-acre regional park, a new regional park in Concord? That land has actually already been transferred to the East Bay Regional Park District, and so that land is protected.

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And then, it's been sort of a complicated process. They had hired a master developer for the commercial parts of it, and various things happened and the master developer withdrew. Claudia had been on the Community Advisory Committee for that portion of the process. They had another community advisory committee to help develop the specific plan for the first phase of the development, but the master developer backed out. And so now, they're right now starting up looking for a new master developer, and so this has been going on for ten years or more from when I was on the committee.

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The thing that happens is you come to agreements about how the—what the reuse plan's going to look like. We didn't have anybody sue. [laughs] And with these reuse plans, if you don't have anybody sue, you've been successful. But as time goes on, people leave, staff members leave, city councilmembers move on. People forget why you agreed to what you agreed to, and so it's critical—Save Mount Diablo's role has been critical as the institutional knowledge about how we ended up where we did, because each time we go through this process and get a new master developer and new people with the City involved in the process, they have to be educated about why the reuse plan looks like it did, and so far we've been successful with that, but it takes ongoing engagement with all the stakeholders to make sure that things don't go off track there.

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Tewes: Certainly, there's a lot of political work there in your current—

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Hein: Yeah, there's a lot of political work, but the great news is we have a brand-new regional park. We've been going through the planning process, and part of it may be open within the next couple of years, which is fast for the [East Bay Regional] Park District. And so we have that to look forward to, and it's going to be spectacular. It's the ridges between—the ridge between Pittsburg and Concord, and has spectacular views of Mount Diablo, so when it opens, it's going to be a spectacular place.

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Tewes: I'm looking forward to it. Speaking about politics, we've mentioned throughout that Save Mount Diablo has increasingly become more involved in campaigns, for instance ordinances and measures. I'm specifically interested in county urban limit lines, and what you've seen in both Save Mount Diablo's involvement in this work and what you've observed, what that has meant for [Contra Costa] County.

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Hein: Yeah, well it—prior to the establishment of the urban limit line, there was a lot of speculative development going on around the County in all the cities in the County, and it was really difficult for Save Mount Diablo or anyone interested in protecting that land to get their hands around it, because it was happening in each city, and big speculative developments would be proposed, and it was—you had to expend a lot of resources to combat them. And so it's probably better we get the details of the timing with—from Seth or someone like that, who was actually involved. But it's arguably, I think, the most important legislative initiative that we've been involved with, and we were critical to it. The way it ultimately ended up working was it was attached as part of a transportation measure, so a half-cent transportation measure that the—in order for the cities to receive their return-to-source funding, which is a big pot of money for fixing streets and building parks and all that kind of stuff, each city in the County either had to create their own urban limit line or adopt the County's urban limit line. We had been instrumental in developing the County's urban limit line previously, and none of the cities wanted to lose that return-to-source money, and so every one of them either adopted the County's line or developed their own line.

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Now, some of the cities had developer-sponsored initiatives that created growth boundaries that we weren't particularly happy with, and we tried to fight them. In some cases we were successful, in other cases we weren't. But in the end, even in the cases where we weren't successful, there still was an urban growth boundary that was set. And really what that did was it eliminated the speculative development that was going on and limited the types of development that can be done outside the urban limit line. And so

that took pressure off a lot of the places that we wanted to protect, and our partners like the East Bay Regional Park District wanted to protect, giving us time to raise funds to purchase those properties. I think, like I said, I think arguably, it's the most important initiative process and legislative process we've been involved with, because it put that pause on speculative and sprawl development in areas around the cities, so it's been critically important. We were involved intimately in the development of both the County line, but even more so with the transportation measure.

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Tewes: As we approach the end of our conversation, I do really quickly want to ask you about this last year and the COVID-19 pandemic, and what that has meant for the organization as a whole.

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Hein: Yeah, it's been interesting. [laughs] You know, it—the biggest thing was the uncertainty, right? We just didn't know what was going to happen. We didn't know what was going to happen if our members were going to be impacted. We didn't know if our donors were going to be impacted. And so we just didn't know, and largely, because of—well, Ted's leadership had a lot to do with it. Ted—one of his great attributes is he always looks at things positively, and he wants to run a positive operation, and so when he's faced with a challenge, he wants to look at positive ways to address it, as opposed to the negative thoughts you might have. And so that's the approach he wanted to take, and that's the approach, to their credit, the board of directors wanted to take. And so we didn't lay off any staff. We developed what we felt was a realistic budget, that if it turned out that the bottom just dropped out of our contributions, that we'd be able to adjust to it if that happened. But we didn't know, we had no frame of reference. This has never happened before. We didn't know what was going to happen.

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As I said, Ted's positive approach really helped, and it really held the organization, in particular the staff, together during really an unprecedented situation. We hired some staff members essentially right before the pandemic shutdown happened. Sean Burke, our director of land programs, I think literally his first day of work was the day that the shutdown happened. And so he never—his first full day in the office with his colleagues was a week or two ago, I think. So he had been with the organization for over a year, and that was his first—and so it took a lot of effort on Ted's part to make that work and be successful at it, and it turned out our donors and supporters came through big for us. We actually had some of our best fundraising campaigns ever during the pandemic, if you can believe it. And I think a big part of that was people wanting to contribute to something positive during those dark times. But I also think there was an increased appreciation of the work we do, and how important parks are and how they helped so many people endure the pandemic. Of course, the pandemic's not over yet, so there's still uncertainty,

but given how we've weathered things so far, I'm hopeful that we'll manage any future challenges in a similar way.

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Tewes: Yes, that's certainly been one of the many success stories of Save Mount Diablo this past year.

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Hein: Yeah.

01-01:52:32
Tewes: Thinking overall, I would be curious to hear what you think the major changes [are that] Save Mount Diablo has undergone the many years that you've been involved.

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Hein: You know, it's mostly been one of growth, and the change—the growth from being mostly a grassroots organization to being a fully professionally run organization with staff members covering most of the important aspects of what we do. And the changes in how the board contributes—and there have been significant changes—and so that's probably the biggest change. During the time at least I have been involved in the organization, we have expanded our area of interest. When the organization was founded, it was really focused on the peaks of the mountain, and at various times, for various reasons, we would expand our area of interest to include the area on the—beyond Marsh Creek Road to Black Diamond Mines or the area beyond Morgan Territory Road, which has become Morgan Territory Regional Preserve and Round Valley Regional Preserve. And then most recently, an expansion south of 580 into the parts of the Diablo Range. So those have been changes, but they've sort of been evolutionary changes, and our growth has been fairly evolutionary, as well, so I can't say there have been any dramatic step changes in what we do, but there have been a lot of evolutionary changes, and they've been for the better, I think. It made us a more sustainable, more effective organization.

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Tewes: Is there anything that you are most proud of, either your personal contribution to Save Mount Diablo or the organization as a whole?

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Hein: Well, probably separating the two, you have to be proud of what Save Mount Diablo has done as an organization. And really, when you look at what Save Mount Diablo has accomplished, you have to step back and look at Save Mount Diablo and all our partners, and the people who work together to make it happen. You've probably heard this statistic—if you haven't, you will—that when we were founded in 1971, there were just under 6,000 acres of protected parkland in our area of interest, and well over 110,000 acres today. That's success, by any way you measure it. Of course, we didn't do that all ourselves, and one of the things you learn—I said before, land conservation, you have to

take the long view, but it's also a team sport. You can't do it yourself. We've had great partners in the East Bay Regional Park District, [California] State Parks, East Contra Costa [County] Habitat Conservancy, to name a few. And of course, all the great supporters and donors and volunteers. So we didn't preserve those 110,000 acres ourselves, but our fingerprints are all over it. We purchased some of the land directly; in other cases, we would hold off development until one of our partners would purchases the land. We helped our partners raise the funds that would enable those purchases. And then we often say that our land-use advocacy efforts have probably protected far more land than our actual acquisition—fee title acquisition efforts. And so that's a significant legacy, and so you have to be proud of the overall picture.

01-01:56:08

In terms of what I've done personally, I think probably it goes back to managing that transition, that major transition between Ron's retirement and Ted's coming on board. I look at that as: my job was to make sure that went as smoothly as possible, with the least disruption to the organization. And although it was complicated and difficult at times, I think it ended up being smooth ultimately and working out the best for everyone, so that's probably the thing I'm proudest of. Of course, the land I've been involved in protecting, I'm proud of that. That my photography is used and can be effective in helping us do our work, I'm very happy about that, but I think I'm proudest most of that transition in leadership.

01-01:57:08

Tewes: What keeps you and Claudia motivated to stay involved these many years later?

01-01:57:14

Hein: Well of course, the open space and the wildlife habitat is important to us. We love getting out on the land and hiking, so that's important. But when you say, "Why Save Mount Diablo," there are a lot of great charitable organizations that do great work and we support them financially, but Save Mount Diablo is our local organization, and land conservation is an interesting charitable endeavor. When you have a part, even if it's a small part, in protecting a property, it's really a very tangible accomplishment. You can actually visit property you protect, helped to protect, and stand on that land and know that future generations of humans and wildlife will be able to do so, as well. It's a very satisfying way to dedicate your time and energy to something. It's important to us. We see that it's important to other people, and we had a hand in doing that. As long as Save Mount Diablo continues to be effective and resilient and such, we'll continue to support them.

01-01:58:35

Tewes: I really quickly before we go want to just acknowledge that you have received some awards. The *Diablo Magazine* Threads of Hope Award in 2013 and the Save Mount Diablo Volunteer of the Month Award in May 2019. So certainly, your contributions have not gone unnoticed by folks.

01-01:58:53

But the last question I have for you is: we're talking today in the context of the fiftieth anniversary of this organization. What do you hope for the future of the organization?

01-01:59:06

Hein: You know, that's an interesting and difficult question to answer. I mean, the obvious answer is simply that the organization stays relevant and continues to do the great work that we have for our first fifty years. Certainly, we have new challenges that we're going to have to overcome, climate change being probably at the top of the list, and how we respond to climate change and help others respond to it is going to be important. But you know, in the next fifty years, there are going to be a lot of other challenges, and if we meet and address those challenges in the next fifty years the way we have in the first fifty years, that's all you can hope for.

01-01:59:53

Tewes: Well, that's the end of my questions, Scott. Is there anything you want to make sure we acknowledge in this conversation about—

01-01:59:59

Hein: Well, let me look back through my notes real quick.

01-02:00:02

Tewes: Sure.

01-02:00:13

Hein: [reads notes] Yeah, the one thing I thought I would mention—you'd had a question about the role photography plays in land conservation, and I thought I would just at least—I actually gave a—one of the programs we developed during the pandemic—we couldn't have people come in. We used to have an executive director speaker series where people would come and sit in the room and we'd give presentations. We obviously couldn't do that, so we developed something called the Nature Heals [and Inspires Zoom Series]. And so I've done a couple of those, and one of them was on conservation photography, and so I thought a little bit about that. Richard Louv wrote, "We cannot protect something we do not love, we cannot love what we do not know, and we cannot know what we do not see. And touch. And hear." And that's a quote that—there are other versions of it that express a similar sentiment, in that the best way to get the public to support land conservation is to get them out on the land and experience the natural beauty in person, and that's why we have our Discover Diablo Program, that's why we do Four Days Diablo, that's why we encourage public access on conserved land and build trails on our property.

01-02:01:53

However, not all the lands we protect are easily accessible, and not every person has the time or the ability to get out on the land, and so photographs are the next best thing. They're the way that we can communicate that beauty

to people who can't experience it in person, and conservation photography has been a critical tool going back almost all the way back to the beginning of land conservation. For example, Carleton Watkins, who you probably haven't heard of, was a San Francisco photographer whose photos of Yosemite helped to convince Congress and President Lincoln to pass legislation to preserve the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove, and so his photography was critical in, essentially, creating the beginning of the National Parks through the protection of Yosemite Valley. And there are all sorts of stories like that, where photography and artwork have been critical, particularly in those days where it wasn't easy for people to see a place like Yosemite.

01-02:02:59

Save Mount Diablo has also recognized the importance of photographs in communicating the significance of our work, and has worked with some really talented people in the past that I wanted to make sure to mention. One was Bob Walker, who was involved with the organization from—and doing nature photography and conservation photography literally for just ten years, from 1982 to 1992, when he passed away. And his photographs—he was a real environmental advocate who was also a fantastic photographer. I don't know if you've hiked at Morgan Territory. It's my favorite park to hike in. If you like hiking, you need to hike out there sometime, preferably in the spring. But he was probably the person most responsible for that becoming the park it is today. He was just relentless in photographing, and taking people out there to hike and learn about it, and lobbying the [East Bay] Park District board to spend money there. A really amazing guy who was really a critical part of protecting land in the East Bay through his photography.

01-02:04:08

Then the other person is Stephen Joseph, whom I mentioned earlier. When Bob Walker passed away in 1992, Stephen came on the scene and has been involved really all the way to the present. He's published a couple of books of spectacular photos of Mount Diablo and generously allows his photos to be used by Save Mount Diablo and other local conservation organizations, and he's the Ansel Adams of Mount Diablo. His photography business started getting busy and he wasn't able to dedicate the time to Save Mount Diablo that he had in the past, and that was right about the time I was getting involved, so there's sort of that continuity from Bob Walker to Stephen Joseph to myself. And of course, I'm still involved, but we have lots of other photographers who do great work for the organization—Al Johnson and others, who have done great things. So and photography is still critical. I'm constantly rooting through my 200,000 photos in my archive, looking for things that could help us in advocacy or in fundraising or other projects we have going.

01-02:05:22

Tewes: And I especially think that photography is a useful tool in a digital platform, and perhaps even more so than it has been in the past.

01-02:05:29
Hein: Yeah.

01-02:05:32
Tewes: Wonderful. Thank you for sharing that. Is there anything else you wanted to make sure we discussed?

01-02:05:38
Hein: I think we covered most of the pertinent things.

01-02:05:41
Tewes: Excellent. Well, thank you, Scott, so much for your time today. I truly appreciate it, and I learned a lot, as well. [laughs]

01-02:05:49
Hein: Good, good! Well, hopefully your interview with Malcolm is consistent, so we tell the same version of history. [laughs]

01-02:05:58
Tewes: That's true. That's the fun part. Thank you, Scott.

[End of Interview]