

Bill Oberteuffer

Recorded in the offices of Hells Canyon Preservation Council - 12/7/01

Tape 1

I've heard your name pronounced a couple of different ways. Would you tell me the way you pronounce it?

A, O-ber-toy-fer.

Q O-ber-toy-fer.? A German name?

A. t-e-u is toy.

Q. That's the way I would have pronounced it from my knowledge of German.

A. Yes.

Q. You said you are 83?

A. 82.

Q. 82? Well, you're just a little bit older than I am.

Would you fill in a little background for me? How long you've lived in this area, for example. And education and anything else you think might be pertinent.

A. I was a public school teacher in Portland for 32 years. And during the latter half at least of that 32 years, my wife, who was a consummate outdoors woman, and I came to this area every couple of years, and the more we came here, the better we liked it as a possible place to retire, because we were both heavily into natural beauty. We had climbed all the major peaks in Oregon and Washington. Climbed some in Wyoming. Climbed some in Mexico. We were climbers and fisherman and hunters. This area offered everything. And it offered dilution of population, which we liked because we were getting a little bit troubled with the size of Portland. And so we looked for a place here to retire, and bought a place out here east of Elgin. Bought the property in '74 and worked on it all summer every summer thereafter until '79, when I retired on it and she retired on it in '80. It was an old, worn-out ranch. Pretty much everything had been done wrong on it, so it was a challenge to me because I had taught biology and I had conservation ethics all through my body. And I had a lot of fun working that ranch back up to what I thought it should be. The forests and the grassland and the water and the buildings, which we had to use, live in. We had an old log cabin on the place, which was terrible and we made that livable and so on. We had students that came there and

helped us in the summertime for several summers. Ultimately I hired people to live with us the year around and help us. We were there until my body began to weaken and I could no longer work the place the way I wanted to. I had the place to work in. I didn't want to sit on the front porch and watch somebody else work it.

I just faced the next stage of my life and became a city feller and moved in here.

Q. So you sold the ranch?

A. No. We had no one in either family that was interested in the ranch. Or what to do with it. Particularly the forest land. I had spent years developing the forest land into a sustainable forest by using single-tree management. I had a lot of different types of forest on the property. There were a lot of organizations, like Nature Conservancy and Boy Scouts, etc., etc., etc. who would like to have been gifted the ranch. But they would have just sold it. Rightfully so, to get the money out of it, and the person that bought it would have clearcut that forest, and that would have cut my heart out. So what to do with it?

Q. How many acres? Several hundred?

A. Had 240 acres. About 80 of it was cleared land, and so our Extension Forester, whom I had – now I know what I wanted to tell Brett here a few minutes ago – I had pestered our Extension Forester for several years to bring the Master Woodland Program over here from the west side. You know what the Master Woodland Program is?

Q. No. I don't. Tell me.

A. Do you know what the Master Gardener Program is?

Q. Yes.

A. Most people do. There's a Master Woodland Program that's patterned right after the Master Gardener Program, where you take about 80 hours of training, whether it's Washington or Oregon, from your Agricultural College. You take about 80 hours of training in "how-to" and then you give back to your Extension people that 80 hours, plus whatever you want to give. I gave about 200 hours and quit counting. I enjoyed it immensely. What I wanted to do was to pick the brains of all those foresters down there at Corvallis that they brought out here to talk to us and to teach us. We'd have indoor training sessions and then field trips. When I first got my ranch, I started taking all the field trips that I could get in on, with Forest Service and whoever else. I was a reader, having been a teacher. I was grabbing for everything I could about how to manage forest lands, soils, water, all of the creatures that live in the forest.

Q. Were you thinking of this as a demonstration project?

A. Yes. Ultimately. And I used it for that. When I took people out there on field trips, I would tell them that the most important organisms in that forest they would not see, because they were under their feet. And I would explain that, and what those organisms meant to the timber, particularly, and all kinds of things. You don't want me to give it all to you.

Q. It certainly helps to understand your involvement in other projects around here.

A. Yeah. And so I've been involved in everything that the Forest Service did, the private people did, and small private people and large private folks like Boise Cascade. Whenever anything about forests came up, or was in the paper or whatnot, I'm immediately interested. That's been my thing. I've traveled as far north as Vancouver Island and as far south as Northern California.

You know Collins Pine? You watch OPB much? Collins Pine runs one of those little advertisements, so to speak, before or after programs, and they use the same line all the time, for years now they've used it, and I just love it. "Collins Pine is interested in improving the life of people in Oregon." That from one of the largest commercial operations we have in forestry. I went clear down to northern California to see their oldest commercial operation. To see how they were doing it. They are the only, still to this day, they're the only commercial operation that uses what I was using out here on my 240 acres. Single tree selection. Cutting a tree when it's right to be cut. Don't pay any attention to what else.

Q. Does that involve considerably more cost? Does that make the timber growing more expensive that way?

A. No, it doesn't make the timber growing any more expensive. It may take a little bit more cost in terms of harvesting.

Q Well, that's what I meant. Commercial timber operation. Does it have a higher overhead by doing that?

A. Yes. Somewhat. And you have to have that tree, or those trees of that kind, followed through the mill, so that where you get the costs back is from the customers. There are more and more of them that want lumber from forests that they know are sustainably managed. And so you've got to have an "end man," so to speak, that can guarantee that to the customer. But the end man has got to have a chain of - what do they call it, a chain of something or other - clear on back to the forest that guarantees that. He has got to be able to follow that tree, so to speak.

Q. You were using the term “certification” before. Is that involved in what you are talking about now?

A. Usually. Yes, usually.

Q. And you said that the agency that does the certifying has to be completely independent and separate from whatever it is they are certifying.

A. Yeah. The people in New England that are producing mostly pulp started out certifying their own operations. Well, you know, “My operation is good.” All the hazards involved.

Q. Fox guarding the chicken house?

A. Yes. Exactly. And that’s who certified Boise Cascade here, and in the northwest, wherever they are being certified. There are two organizations in the United States, maybe three now, that are completely independent of any producer, who certify. And it costs you to have your land certified, your operation certified. But they are by far desirable, as far as I’m concerned.

Q. What sort of people are qualified to do that work?

A. Foresters. Soil scientists. Even sociologists that come in and study the community in which your mill and your operation operates.

Q. And are the certifiers certified? [chuckle]

A. That’s a good question.

Q. Can you just go out and claim that you are capable of doing it?

A. No. The organization for which they work certifies their work.

Q. Would that be like an independent engineering company? Architect company? Something like that?

A. Yeah.

Q. And you’re confident that they can do a good job. At least from what you know about?

A. Yes. From what I’ve seen of what they do.

Q. And the Collins Timber Company hires such people?

A. Periodically they come in. That's a part of it. The initial certification is the expensive one, because they haven't seen your land. They haven't seen your operation, and so forth. And they may have a team of three or four people come in and spend as much as a week looking at you. Well, you know, if they're high-priced people, that costs you some money. Collins Pines has got thousands of acres. Then they come back and re-certify you – just give you a quick look to see if you're doing what you said you were doing about every three years, or every five years. I've forgotten what it is.

Q I think I interrupted you, or side-tracked you from what you were saying about what happened to the acreage that you had out near Elgin after you decided that you couldn't operate it any more.

A. Well. We were really puzzled about what to do with it for a short time. Our Extension Agent over here, Paul Oester, who headed up the Master Woodland program that I had graduated from, put the idea into my head "did you ever think of donating it to the College of Forestry at Corvallis?" He's a graduate down there. I'm a graduate down there – not of the College of Forestry. I put in six years down there in Agriculture and Teaching. I knew Oregon State very well. All the time that my wife and I – she was a graduate also of Oregon State – all the time that my wife and I had been at Oregon State, their College of Forestry had a sort of a cut-and-run reputation.

Q. Like clear-cutting?

A. Yeah. And clear-cutting was the thing that I was MOST opposed to. So, the Dean of the College of Forestry down there was back here attending a meeting on this college campus, and we invited him to lunch with us, just the three of us. And my wife, who is now passed away, was very incisive with her questioning. She didn't mind asking anybody anything. She was counselor for her last 22 years in school, and she knew right where you were. And she knew how to get into your head. And she sat across the table from George Brown and just grilled him. Really got into him about what they might do with that property if we gave it to them. Because she was skeptical about giving it to them. When we got back home and she had a chance to talk to me about the meeting with George, she was satisfied that it was o.k. to give it to them.

Q. What were they proposing to do with it?

A. Keep it for education and research. And we spent our lives She taught for 40 years. So we're both educators, professional educators. Enjoyed it very much. Loved education. And I was into research. I taught Science, Biology. I thoroughly understood the need of research. So we wrote up a piece of paper to give them the property, which in effect said that we wanted it used for education and research in perpetuity. The

College lawyers would not accept the term “perpetuity” because it can’t be defined. [Hearty laugh] You know, “How long is *perpetuity*?” So we let that go.

Q. Did they also commit to spending a certain amount of money to do this?

A. No.

Q. That must have been alarming.

A. Yeah. They just changed Deans of the School of Forestry down there last year. And this past summer, the new Dean who had spent 20-25 years with the U.S Forest Service - his last job had been the head of the research station for the Forest Service up in Montana. He had a lot of understanding in the need of research and the value of research and so forth. I had the real distinct pleasure of walking my ex-forest out there with him and his wife and the Extension Forester, and I heard him say everything that I wanted him to say about what they would do with that property for the next 100-200 years. It couldn’t have been better.

Q. How long ago was it that they took over the operation?

A. About six years ago.

Q. And are they living up to their commitments?

A. Yes. They are. They’re not doing everything I would like them to do, but they never will and I didn’t expect them to. Right away, in the first year, they put a team on the property to check out everything that was on the property and put it on computer, so they know what they started with.

Q. An inventory of every tree and building?

A. Practically. No buildings. I didn’t give them any buildings. I gave them 113 acres of our best timberland in a block. We had a couple of other small blocks of timber and then a bunch of farm land and buildings. 127 acres of that which we sold to an elderly couple from Idaho who are still living out there and are doing a great job of taking care of it. They wanted to take care of it as we were taking care of it. They are people that love the land as we loved it. So we were very happy with that part of the sale. The 113 acres was what the College of Forestry got, and as you said a minute ago, they made a complete inventory of what they started with, which was very important. And since then they have done a little bit of harvesting of insect-killed trees. Other than that, they haven’t done much, there’s some harvesting out there that I wish they would do. They don’t understand yet the need of harvesting every couple of years. There’s a friend of mine, who’s one of the best foresters I know of, over in Wallowa County, who harvests

every year. He says that if you don't harvest every year, you're losing some board footage off of a tree that should have been harvested last year. He's that good of a forester. He sees trees that are being suppressed by some tree that's too close to it. Well, there's quite a bit of that out there on my property, but they are not eco-foresters yet.

Q. Have they done anything to truly make it a demonstration forest?

A. They are using it as a demonstration forest for teacher training classes from the University here at Eastern. And, I don't know whether they're taking high school classes out there or not, like I did. I haven't been able to do everything I wanted to do in terms of keeping track of what's going on out there. I know that they're planning a foot trail. You can access the whole place by a minimum of roads, and a minimum of skid trails, if you know where they are. But they're planning a foot trail around through the best of what they would like to show people. That has not been started yet. They want a foot trail that was graveled and so on and has signs where people can stop and this is what you're seeing, and this is the background of it, and this is what we hope it to be. So. It takes a while to develop that sort of thing.

Q. Have they given it a name?

A. Yes. They have a large sign, larger than that doorway there, tipped up this way....."The Oberteuffer Research and Education Forest."

Q. Good. I was hoping that was so.

A. It's a beautiful big sign. Wooden and carved and painted. And "managed by the OSU School of Forestry," and how to get access to it if you want.

Q. Are they writing reports?

A. I'm sure they are.

Q. You haven't seen them?

A. No.

Q. They should, shouldn't they?

A. I had a wife that not long after we got to town became an Alzheimer's patient, and I had all that to take care of, eventually putting her into a home for Alzheimer's, where she died in February of 2000. And, I hit bottom, because I had been married for 58 years - that's a lifetime. And, I didn't want to live, until people like Jane and other citizens

around here were taking care of me off and on, and I was on “Meals on Wheels” and things of that kind. But there wasn’t anybody there at night. I was living by myself, and I was getting some psychiatric help and so on, but my life didn’t turn around until the right woman came along and started giving me love. Love conquers everything. We got married last April.

Q. So, along with that have your interests expanded?

A. I’m back on board now to the point where my current wife wants me to start tomorrow, and I would be ready to start tomorrow if I didn’t have to drive tonight to Portland to a family funeral of my wife’s, tomorrow. And then come back. But the materials are all out and ready for me to start writing my memoirs. She wants me to be sure and write those, and I have abundant materials to use. I’ve got journals and journals and letters and god knows. A big job of sorting it out and putting it together and making sense out of it. All I want to write the memoirs for, initially for my own benefit, [chuckle] cuz I wanna have a ball writing it, and I’m gonna make enough copies to give ‘em to members of our two families that are interested. But, I’m not interested in publishing them. Unless somebody makes me interested in that.

Q. I suspect, though, that portions of your memoirs will deal with matters that are of wider interest, not just personal things. Maybe you could publish those portions.

A. My memoirs are going to wind up in umpteen volumes. [chuckle] My wife and I traveled around the world in ‘70-71 on a sabbatical, and that changed our lives. We visited 27 different countries, and I have no doubt in my mind, for instance, but what the bombing of the World Trade Center was just our “chickens coming home to roost.”

Q. I think a lot of us understand that.

A. I think as more and more people are getting it into their writing.

Q. It’s a fairly common idea now. But

A. Not common enough yet.

Q. How exactly did you get involved with people who are interested in trying to preserve Hells Canyon?

[Jane: Can I mention one thing? By the way, I talked to Ric because Brett was wanting to absolutely make sure that there wasn’t anything specific that Ric wanted Bill to say to you, Eugene, and he said no, there’s nothing specific to Bill except<click in tape, can’t decipher>

Eugene: O.K., so weren't not going to talk about Hells Canyon specifically, although what's going on with Hells Canyon is probably related in many ways to your somewhat more localized interests I suspect.]

Q. So, let's turn to the Forest Service. What kinds of dealings have you had with them?

A. Well, I've been out on all of the "show me" trips that I could get on. Particularly when they had big-wigs from Washington along. You know the local Ranger District would be hosting some big-wig out here. And I just love to go along and listen to the big-wigs, and in my own mind sort out the difference between what the big-wigs are saying we would like to do or what we are doing, and what the local people are doing and what the local people would like to do, which is prevented by what the big-wigs are saying.

Q. By the "big-wigs" do you mean the agency heads, for example?

A. Agency heads, yeah. You see there's four things there. There's the agency heads that are saying: "This is what we're doing." The agency heads that are saying: "This is what we would like to do." And the locals that are bound by what the agency heads are letting them do. And the locals that I know personally who would like to be doing things differently.

Q. There's plenty of conflict there.

A. A lot of conflict. And I developed a close enough relationship with the District Ranger out here, who was here for quite a while, so that [you're taping this now, aren't you I don't know whether to say some things or not]

[machine turned off here and then turned back on]

There was a job coming up to head up a Demonstration Area here in this forest and the Umatilla Forest, promoted by the Region or by the National, I don't know, and I knew that this Demonstration Forest, I read everything that comes out, and I knew that they were going to select a Director for it. And just by chance I stopped in to Bob's office [Rainville?] one day to see him, just cuz I was going by. And I said "Bob, tell me about this Demonstration Forest. What's the progress of it?" He rolls out a bunch of maps, and so on and tells me all about it. And I said "You've applied for the directorship of it, haven't you?" And he got up from his desk - we're sitting in a little office - and he went over and he closed the door to his little office. Shut off the conversation from the

[long pause "Turn it off for just a minute, o.k. I don't like"]

A. What to you want to know next?

Q Well, where was this Demonstration Forest you were just speaking about?

End of Tape #1

Tape #2 begins with

["Turn it off for just a minute, o.k. I don't like"]

A. What to you want to know next?

Q Well, where was this Demonstration Forest you were just speaking about?

A. Oh, it's in parts of the Wallowa-Whitman Forest, which surrounds us here, and the Umatilla Forest, which is directly northwest of us.

Q. And who established those forests? The government or private.....

A. Oh, those forests have been there for years and years and years.

Q. Were they originally established as part of the Forest Service province?

A. Oh, yeah. I mean, I don't know. They've been around for a hundred years.

Q. It sounds as though it was a fairly enlightened policy at that time.

A. Probably the reason for it is, you know about the Upper Columbia River Study that was done by the Forest Service and other agencies – the BLM and Fish & Game and so on? They did an Upper Columbia River Study of the forests and grasslands of the entire Columbia River drainage from, let's say the Cascades east, which goes clear up into Montana and clear over into Idaho. That study went on for about four or five years. Their headquarters were over in Walla Walla and the Forest Supervisor of the Umatilla Forest, whom I know very well, great guy, and a fellow from the Forest Service Research Station here in La Grande, were the joint Directors of that study. The study was the brainchild of Jack Thomas, and they did an awful lot of work, and they published a lot of stuff. I kept up with it for a while, but I couldn't. I had too many personal things in the way. But this Demonstration Area is an outgrowth of that. That's all I can say now.

Q. You started earlier talking about all of the different levels of conflict and types of conflict within the Forest Service. What were some of your dealings with parts of the Forest Service that gave you doubts, or made you question what they do?

A. Well, when you say “dealings,” I don’t know what you mean.

Q. Well, I’m getting the impression that you’ve had opportunities to observe both directly and indirectly what the Forest Service policies are and how these policies are carried out. So, among these observations that you’ve made by one means or another, what are some of the reasons that you have had doubts about what they do?

A. Well, they have a lot of doubts about what they do. Between the researchers and what goes on on the ground. There’s a big time lag, as you must know.

What’s your experience? You’re in English?

Q. I’m an English teacher. But I’ve also hiked a lot outdoors, and I am a member of several organizations that are involved with preservation of the environment, so I am tuned into it, but I don’t have vast direct experience.

A. There’s a big lag time between what research thinks they find out and what gets used – in medicine, natural resource management and everything. So, I’ve seen a big lag time between how to use fire in the woods. There’s some of ‘em that think that you have to use fire as a tool. Well, in a small forest like I had, I couldn’t afford to use fire as a tool, because I couldn’t be sure that I could control the fire enough. And the insurance payments I couldn’t afford. And my neighbors could sue me if a fire got away from me. That sort of thing. And they would take me out and show me where they had used fire successfully, but I could take them out and show them where they had unsuccessfully used fire. But they don’t show you those things. O.K.? This is my observation. On Forest Service land. As soon as I would mention a place where....”Oh, yes, yes. I remember that.” And they’d tell you why the fire got away from them. So. There’s problems with fire. You know about the big fires back in Yellowstone. And our Fish & Game people went back there to see the results of the Yellowstone Fire immediately. And came back here and said “Boy. That’s just what that forest needed.” But, there’s still people like my sister who visited Yellowstone this summer, 6 years after that fire, that are complaining about all of those blackened tree stumps, and so on, because she’s not “with it.” She’s not a forester. She’s an average person from the city of Portland. Doesn’t know anything about it. She’s an antique dealer.

Q. She wants the forest to look pretty, I suppose.

A. Exactly. That’s where most everybody is.

Q. The way it looks in those colored photos in the calendars.

A. So. That's one place where I've observed problems. And, of course, the cutting. I worked trying to get a "no clear cut" initiative on the Oregon ballot about 4 or 5 years ago, and we didn't make it. We didn't get enough signatures. Everybody under the sun was against us. The industry, which gets so much of their crop off of Forest Service land, they can dump all kinds of money in there against us.

Q. Both the timber harvesters and the grazing people.

A. Oh, yes. They're having the same problem up on Vancouver Island. I was up there looking at it this summer. Hah! Clearcutting destroys the forest. It destroys most of the underground creatures for a period of time. It takes quite a long while for the underground creatures to come back. It doesn't take anywhere near as long for the grasses and herbs to come back, and right away the deer and the elk are on them. We're learning a lot of lessons from the St. Helens debacle. About forestry. And, of course Crown Zellerbach planted all their land, which was vastly destroyed up there on St. Helens, on the west side particularly. So. If you want to plant it, if you want a monoculture, which a good forest is not, there's lots of questions. And planting a forest takes a lot of money. A good forest, like I had, and like Collins Pine has, never has to be planted. The forest replants itself. That's where you save money.

Q. Back to Collins Pine, you said that you consider them the most enlightened timber company that you know about. Why is not their example more powerful for other timber companies?

A. Well, they want their money now.

Q. And Collins is somehow a little more patient about their financial return?

A. They're looking at the long haul. Grandfather Collins, I'll call him because he was the guy that started it, was a member of my father's Board of Directors in Portland. My father was in professional Boy Scouting in Portland for 40 years, and Collins was one of my dad's Board of Directors. And he's the guy that started his family down this line of forest land forever. And he saw – all it has to do is come out of one man's mind who's got enough power to have it done – he saw that this is the way that you had to manage your forests. You had to manage it the way nature manages it. And take off what is your share.

Q. And the Weyerhaeusers and the Crown Zellerbachs don't have that vision?

A. No.

Q Are we not coming to a time, though, when even people who are mostly concerned about money can see that the resource may not be inexhaustible?

A. I think so.

Q. What else needs to be done to help them see that?

A. I don't know. I don't know. You know, at my stage in life I feel more and more helpless.

Q. Yeah, I know that feeling.

A. Particularly in light of this present situation in Afghanistan, you know. Complete error going into Afghanistan. Complete. Utterly complete. All we're doing is creating more terrorists.

Q. Do you see any legal remedies on the horizon for these matters of protecting forests and operating forests correctly?

A. If we want sustainability, if we want sustainability, then we will know what to do in terms of managing the forests, and the grasslands and most important, the water. Water is where the pinch is going to come on our society first.

Q. We're seeing that already.

A. And energy, you know. All this trouble in the Middle East is because we won't control the manufacture of SUVs. We won't control how many cars each family has. The problem up on the North Slope, you know, is a drop in the bucket. It won't help us for very long. But the boys back there in, particularly, the White House, but also the Congress, because the White House can't do too much without Congress' o.k., they are not seeing nature as their guide. I think the reason we are in the strongest position in the world right now is because of a piece of real estate that we inherited, and we didn't inherit it, we stole it from the native peoples. But we got everything here that we need, for a while, but it's running out.

Q. If you were teaching again, how would you think you could convey these ideas best to young people?

A. Just as I'm conveying them to you.

Q. And, when you were teaching, did you find that they were listening to these ideas?

A. Yes.

Q. But, as adults, somehow these ideas got buried, or they found other more pressing needs, or what they thought were needs?

A. Some of them have come back to me, Gene, and told me what they liked about what I was teaching. I've got letters at home, beautiful letters, from my ex-students. When the first edition of "The Population Bomb" (you remember the book? – Paul & Anne Ehrlich) came out, I bought 30 copies of it because my school would not put it in the library. I bought 30 paperback copies of it, and put it in my classroom and every kid had to read it and report on it. That's how strongly I felt about it and I still feel very strongly population because I believe that it's way down underneath everything else.

Q. Well, it's also attitudes toward what the appropriate standard of living is for most Americans. Advertising keeps feeding ideas that are very harmful in that respect.

A. Buying "stuff" for Christmas. We're seeing it in papers. Now it just makes me sick, buying "stuff" that we don't need.

Q. This notion that there's a direct one-and-one relationship between how much "stuff" you have and how happy you are. [Chuckle]

A. Bullshit.

Q. Yes, it is, it is.

A. Bullshit. Hah. You can edit that out. [laughter]

Q. What's a little bullshit among friends?

[Laughter]

A. Well, you can begin to see where I am.

Q. Oh yes. Well, I'm in your corner. I have a son who is very much avid about these ideas. He will talk at exhausting length about these matters.

A. I joined the Sierra Club years ago because I don't do anything with the Sierra Club, I read all their stuff avidly, but I know that every organization like that needs to be able to say "we have *so many* members." That's the first reason why I joined them.

Q. Same with Nature Conservancy.

A. I've belonged to them for a lifetime.

Q. Wilderness Society.

A. Wilderness Society. My wife wrote an article, which was published in *The Living Wilderness*.

Q. How much writing have you done about these ideas?

A. Not much.

Q. And, was that because you thought you didn't have time?

A. Oh, I haven't been a writer. I've been a talker and a doer, and I've written a lot of letters to the editor. And I've saved every one of them. One thing I hope to do is to paste them all together and make a book of my Letters to the Editor. [hearty laugh]

Q. Well, they do influence opinion. It's a good thing to do.

A. Well, I haven't written articles. My wife was an English and Math major and ultimately became a counselor, because that's what she became most interested in as far as kids were concerned. She counseled Seniors, mostly, in high school. She was in a school where 80% of the kids went on to college or university. And she had a belief that there was a right place for every kid. Not where their dad went to school. Like you hear so much of. She studied colleges and universities all over this continent, and tried to get kids into the right place. She had her fingers on all of the aids that kids could get at colleges here and there and everywhere. And she wanted to get the kid into the right place. She worked hard at that.

Q. When it comes to trying to change the attitude of people who may not go to college, or if they do, don't get exposed to ideas related to the conservation of resources, do you have some ideas about how to reach such people? The great unwashed? The people who have bought into the media idea that consuming is the route to happiness?

A. No. I don't know how to get them to read the right stuff.

Q. Do we need to arrange somehow to get them in small groups out to your demonstration forest and give them lunch and explain to them in a way they can understand what the principles are of making this a sustainable forest?

A. Ummm-hmmmm. We do.

Q. Many of these people I think need a personal confrontation or a personal hands-on, as we say, experience with ideas like this, because the abstractions often aren't very compelling.

A. I started something last night that was related to this. You'll see the relationship. We have been working with a Peace group here for a couple of months, and I wanted to get people to discuss these things, and so I extended an invitation to people to come to our home every Wednesday in December – four Wednesday nights. Just for discussion. Open discussion. Open discussion. Talk about anything that was on their minds. Listen to other people. So on. Open discussion. I would not be the leader. There was no agenda. And I've got a little system for keeping people discussing and not giving speeches. I've got a little system for cutting out side conversations, one on one, go into the kitchen and so on, that kind of stuff. It's using what's called an "Indian Talking Stick." Did you ever hear of that?

Q. I think so.

A. O.k. You know how it works then. I got four people last night. The two of us and two others. The four of us had a discussion. How do I get people to my home? I'm working on that right now. I've got three more Wednesday nights. I don't want to waste them. I had a circle of chairs in my home all backed up to accommodate about 15 people. I got four. You see how this is related to what you were just talking about.

Q. How do you extend the invitation?

A. Through email and through personal invitations.

Q. People you know or don't know?

A. Know. People that I know. No. I'm not gonna put it in the newspaper. I don't know what I'd get. Maybe I should. What do you think?

Q. Well, it's a bit chancy. Especially if they know that you might have ideas that are "troublesome" to some people.

A. There are people that read my well, I've been writing letters to the editor.....

Q. I know

A. You know?

Q. Yes, I know.

[Q&A – hearty laughter]

A. You've been talking?

Q. No. I observe too.

[more laughter]

A. O.K. There's people that know me and that know that I'm somewhat of a radical. What's a better name for that?

Q. A leading-edge thinker.

A. Yes. Thank you.

[more laughter]

A. He's good. I like him. [probably to Jane] A leading edge thinker well, you know, I've had pretty much of a parade of articles in *The Observer* over the last several years, and I have friends here in town that have told me that they go down the Letters to the Editor and read the names of who has written, and when they find my name, they read the letter.

Q. And when they find Mona Charen, they don't read her.

A. Yeah [laughter]

Q. Yeah, I know how that works.

A. Well, I'm hesitant to extend an invitation in the paper.

Q. I guess what you need is something like a phone tree. Getting some of the people that you know to call other people they know to invite them in. That would be a safe procedure I should think.

A. Yeah.

Q. So this is your little contribution to at least spreading some capacity to think about important questions? Does everybody who comes pretty much understand we're not going to talk about local gossip or anything like that? We're going to talk about larger matters.

A. Yes.

Q. That would be important. Do you try to summarize, or record, anything that's said? Or is it just for the people to experience a discussion of ideas on the spot?

A. It's what they receive down here. And I'll say at the beginning that we're going to close this off at 9 o'clock. No summary. Come back next week if you liked it.

Q. I should think that would give you some sense of contributing, accomplishing something, rather than the feeling of hopelessness.

A. Oh, I'll enjoy it very much. I'll enjoy it very much, because I've been in a lot of discussions of that kind. Controlled in that way. And I like it very much. And I have been fortunate enough to be in a couple of organizations where they do business by consensus, which means that you've got to have a wide-ranging discussion. And where the "Chair" is smart enough to know who wants to throw something in over here, or who wants to throw something in over there.

Q. Of course, you also have to have an atmosphere where people aren't afraid to say things that might be shocking.

A. You've got to start out with that. You've got to start out with that.

Q. Fish and Wildlife – have you dealt with that agency?

A. Not much.

Q. Do you think that that agency

A. A couple of individuals, but very little.

Q.so you don't have any reason to have any more or less

A. Are you talking about the State Fish & Wildlife, or Federal?

Q. Both.

A. Federal, I have no experience with. The State, just a little.

Q. I guess I was thinking about the connection between the maintaining of salmon populations and forest practices, and grazing practices. That's where they seem to come together. You haven't had any reasons to observe what's going on there?

A. They're improving a few of our streams so that salmon are returning. But the Fish & Game Commission doesn't do that. Well, they consult with the Forest Service. They work as a team. They work as a team with private landowners.

Q. I guess I'm trying to figure out where you stand now, and maybe you don't have a clear-cut position on this, as to the overall advocacy of governmental agencies in

doing what needs to be done to preserve our resources. Is it tipping mostly toward doing the right things? Or still below that?

A. I'm thinking about what my Emergency Room doctor asks me every time I wind up in the Emergency Room. He says, "Now on a scale of 1 to 10, how's your pain?" You've gotten that.....

Q. Oh sure, that's common now

A. O.K. Well 10 is a severe pain, and 1 or zero is "Why are you in here?" [chuckle] and if I rate what the Feds are doing in relation to natural resource management, that's just about as hard as rating my pain. But there's an awful lot the Feds outta be doing, that they're not doing.

Q. Are you tipping toward optimistic or pessimistic right now then?

A. I guess I'm optimistic. I see them moving in the direction that I'd like them to move.

Q. And is this at mostly the lower, every-day working level, or are you talking about the upper echelon level, too?

A. I'm talking about the working level. I don't think the upper echelon understands yet.

Q. And they don't understand because they're, what, subject to the political and economic pressure of large corporations.

A. Exactly. Exactly. They're subject to politics.

Q. Yeah, and the lobbying. They do tend to call the shots, it seems, on many issues.

A. Sure.....It's the guys on the ground that know what needs to be done, and if you'd turn them loose and let them do it, we'd be alright. Mostly.

Q. Does more need to be done to make ordinary people aware of what the people you are talking about are doing?

A. Yes.

Q. How could we do that?

A. Take them out on field trips and show them.

Q. But, it's going to take a long time to get them all out to your forest. So, what else?

A. There's of "show-me" trips being done, but, you know, that many people, compared to that many people that need to be out there. And articles in the newspaper, feature articles in the newspaper. A lot of them are pretty good. But, I don't know who reads them. I read them because of what they're about.

Q. It seems that most people read what they already agree with.

A. Yeah, right.

Q. You said your father was active in Boy Scouts. Do you have any opportunity to see now what present Boy Scouting activities are that may be helping with this cause?

[End of tape #2]

A. [unintelligible].....Boy Scouts of America I don't think my father would have stood for it for a minute, not for a minute. My father went to several international jamborees. I went to the International Jamboree in Birmingham, England, or near Birmingham, England, which was the 100th Anniversary of Baden-Powell's birth and the 50th Anniversary of World Scouting. And we camped with 35,000 Boy Scouts from 85 countries for two weeks. And that was quite an experience. I had a troop of Scouts from Oregon, Washington and Alaska that I was Scoutmaster of. And at one point we had a troop of Scouts from the Belgian Congo, the Belgian Congo used to exist at that time. Those kids were blacker than black, every one of them, and their Scoutmaster was the only one that could speak English, and we had that troop over for Sunday morning breakfast. They had never had pancakes before. We fed them pancakes, and their Scoutmaster interpreted for them everything that I had to say. That was a neat experience. Just neat. But, my father took me out for two weeks when I was eleven years old on a just a father-and-son trip in the mountains, horseback trip - my father was a consummate horseman. I went, when I was seventeen, on a horseback trip from Mt. Hood to Tijuana, Mexico, down the backbone of Oregon and California, with two buddies, and my father went the first half of the way, down as far as Chico, California. I've had a lot of unique experiences like that, you know, that I need to write up - well, those are all written up in the form of journals, which I can write introductions to, or add to, or whatever. I told you about going around the world with my wife, and stuff of that kind. I've had a lot of precious experiences. I've been very fortunate, very lucky in my life, to live this long and have as much health as I've got left. I've had a triple bypass, but that's about the only major thing.

Q. Do you have, aside from collecting all of this in a written form, do you have other specific goals?

A. Nope.

Q. Well. Suppose you have 10 years left. What would make you happiest at the end of that time?

A. If I can look back on the ten years as being very profitable, but at this point in life, I guess, I have adopted a philosophy that my current wife has taught me. And that is to take things a day at a time.

Q. What does that mean?

A. That means to plan today well, and carry it out well.

Q. Use time productively.

A. Yes.

Q. I wonder, though, I hear that said many times and I almost concluded that many people are extremely fatalistic when they say that. That they won't even try to think about what they'd like to try to do tomorrow or next year.

A. Well, she hasn't gotten that far with me. And, I don't think she's fatalistic. She's planning with me to go to Costa Rica next June on an Elderhostel trip. But, getting back to what you asked me, I want to do everything I can do and do it well, and I don't know what I can do.

Q. Well, to me that means that as far as one-day-at-a-time is concerned that even though you don't have a very specifically formulated goal, you are going to work each day toward the things that you value.

A. Yes. And when the Hells Canyon HCPC group asks me if I will come in here and be interviewed by somebody I don't know, I say "yes," because I've got it in my heart to help. That's where I am.

Q. I'm certain of that.

A. And I will keep doing that, Gene, as long as I've got the breath to do it.

Q. And, certainly, your writing is one of the ways of doing that.

A. Yes. And, when I get into writing my memoirs, I'll probably say: "Oh, I ought to write something about this." [laughter]

Q. Well, I've had the view for a long time that until you've written about something that's important, you don't fully understand it.

A. I agree with you wholeheartedly. And my letters to the editor, I don't write twice. You'd be surprised. I don't write it out in longhand because my longhand is so poor, I find it very uncomfortable to write with my hand, and I find it difficult to read my own writing, but I compose on the typewriter. I'm an old-fashioned this is the way I type and I compose on the typewriter, and before I write a sentence, I sit and think about how I want that sentence to read. It takes me forever just to write one page. I can type a whole page on the typewriter with maybe just one or two mistakes, which are easy to correct with pen. But, you know, it may take me an hour to write that page. I think long and hard about what I want to write.

Q. Do you have any means of writing to your former students?

A. Oh, I've got names and addresses, if that's what you mean.

Q. Wouldn't that be a good idea? Reinforcing some of the ideas that you were hoping that they were understanding at the time?

A. Yes, I could. Yes. I've got in mind a number of them that I

Q. I think most former students would be amazed, in the first place, to receive such a letter. But pleased. Particularly if it was personalized, and

A. Yes, I've got a PhD student back at Michigan that I'd love to write. I've got a PhD student over in Paris, France, that I'd love to write. I've got a PhD student at Harvard that I'd love to write. Brilliant people. Yeah, I picked out three PhDs.

Q. They certainly aren't beyond listening to somebody else's ideas, I don't think.

A. I would value what they fed to me very much. And I've got some of what they've fed to me.

Q. Speaking of "feeding," I'll bet you have ideas on food. On not only how food is produced, but on how we should select food.

A. My wife's the one you want to talk to. She's an organic person, and she doesn't like the way they're splitting genes and modifying food all over the place. She's highly against that, and I haven't gotten into that. I understand it. I understand how it's done. And I understand why it's done, but I can't get into everything.

Q. It's just that it's related to your concern about forests, and about other resources that we have. It's certainly an area of specialization that you have to study hard in order to sound authoritative. On the other hand, you can eat well by knowing a few principles and a few "don'ts."

A. I taught Biology. And I taught a lot of Anatomy and Physiology in that. And I thought that Biology should be required, it wasn't. But it should be required of every high school Sophomore, or somewhere in high school, if for no other reason than that they could live with themselves better through life if they knew what was going on in here.

Q. That's if it were taught properly.

A. Yes.

Q. I'm afraid it's still being taught in many places as a taxonomic exercise. Memorization of phylum and so on. Although some of the more modern science curricula have organized it around concepts, which would be the better way to do it.

A. I used to dissect rabbits for my kids after they had dissected worms and crayfish and frogs and other things. I used to dissect a fresh rabbit for every class. You could give them preserved pigs, embryos and so, but that doesn't look like the fresh stuff, and I wanted them to see the fresh stuff. I wanted them to ...well ... I'd dissect a fresh rabbit, and something I'll remember forever, is the kid that said: "Gee, that muscle there looks just like meat." Now think about that "that muscle there looks just like meat"! What's going on in that kid's head. During one class period, I could dissect everything within the body cavity, and show it. I would have the animal killed and ready when the class came in. They would see everything. They'd see the liver, and they'd see the heart and the lungs and so forth. And the next day, when they came to class, I would have boned out all of the muscles, and I would have a chef's hat and apron on, and I would have a couple of deep fryers going, and they would be offered on toothpicks samples of that rabbit to eat.

Q. And how many takers did you have?

A. All of 'em. All of 'em. I believed when I was teaching that we should have fun. I told the kids the first day of class that "my objectives for you in this class are for you to learn as much as you can and have fun learning it. If you can't do both, I want you to do at least one."

[laughter]

From the beginning, I would try to make things fun. And for the rare kid that couldn't have fun, I'd get rid of him. Much to my principal's problems with me.

Q. Could we go back to your decision to give your east-of-Elgin forestland to the University? There has been a lot of talk in the last few months about the seemingly sudden upsurge of interest in people giving – at least money – and maybe time, maybe giving of themselves in ways that they hadn't done before, a little puncturing of the complacency that we had been feeling, it seems, for at least the last decade.

A. I've noticed that.

Q. I suppose the easy explanation is it takes having the shit scared out of you before you can start thinking in different ways. Do you think that your and your wife's decision to donate the land is really bizarre, something that's extraordinary for Americans?

A. Umhm. No.

Q. It's not habit yet. Is it? Do you see instances of giving, I mean major giving, that people do for the right reasons? Because it's altruistic and it's for the benefit of the greater good and not for some kind of self-serving

A. Well, you get a big tax break out of it – [chuckle] - - you know. That's one reason for doing it, but, I read The Nature Conservancy and the Friends of the Columbia Gorge and Sierra Club, you know. I just "gobble up" all that stuff, and there's more and more of it being done, as you noticed, Gene. And, I think people are doing it I don't know why they're doing it, but I would like to believe that they're doing it because they feel it's a good thing. It's for the good of the Columbia River, or it's for the good of the wildlife marsh down there at Monroe, Oregon, or, you know, people I gotta believe are getting closer to nature. And, one of the results of our being too rich a nation is that we can afford to do it. The guys that lived here early on, ahead of us, the Indians, hunted and picked bulbs and so on in this valley, and took care of it. And didn't over-fish it. Didn't over-hunt it. Didn't over-pick bulbs. And they didn't even live here. This is a summering place for the Indians that came in here. They went somewhere else to winter. Look at what we're doing with it. We're over-cutting the timber. We're over-farming the valley – there's beautiful farmland here in the valley, but we wouldn't be able to get the crops that we're getting if we didn't bring in petroleum-based fertilizers out of Prudhoe Bay petroleum. We're over-living this area, even though it's such a nice place and we're not over-populating it, but we're over-living it.

Q. Of course, the urban areas are even more shocking.

A. Oh gosh. Every time I go back to Portland, I can't get back here fast enough. I gotta go down to Portland tonight.

Q. Aside from giving out of fear, as with terrorist attacks, do you see any untapped motives for giving. Motives that could be made more prominent, or more public or more accessible to most people? Some of it comes through churches, I suppose the churches would say. But the kind you're talking about, seems to have to arise out of an awareness of overuse, of exploitation, with more long-term effects than short-term effects. It's hard to visualize the long-term, it seems, for many people, and therefore, giving now may seem to be silly or unnecessary.

A. Well, the Sierra Club, you know, for years do you belong to the Sierra Club?

Q. Yes.

A. I'm a life member, and as far back as I can remember, they've had a huge outing program, and one of the great reasons for their having an outing program is to get people to appreciate what's out there. And I think that's what we've got to do. The Natural Resources Defense Council doesn't do enough of that. They're one of the prime organizations to protect our resources, I think, but they don't get people out there. The Wilderness Society used to run a lot of trips – do they still run any? I don't know.

Q. I don't keep up with that.

A. I don't either. I still belong to them.

Q. We have a new Department of Homeland Security. It seems to me what we're talking about would fit under that department.

A. There you are. Yeah.

Q. A broader concept than Mr. Ridge may now have.

A. Yeah, I'm sure he doesn't at all. But, I think people have got to get out there and rub their noses in what we've got. I don't see any other way. I don't think reading about it, or talking about it, you know I can sit here and talk myself blue in the face, and you can't hear what I'm saying. Right?

Q. I can, because I'm on the same level as you, I think.

A. Wait, wait, wait, wait a minute.....

[Gene chuckling]

You, you know what I'm saying You can talk to people

Q. You're talking about the generic "you" now.

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. Sure. You can't understand what you're reading until you've got the experience that the reading is based on, and then you do understand.

A. There's some great, great programs on TV that will sell this idea, but you can't get the person to turn it on in the first place. You can't get the person to look at what's offered by OPB today, to read what's offered. You can't get them to turn on the right programs. You can't get them to hear what the guy is saying on TV, necessarily. We're talking about how to get this idea across.

Q. Well, we need more *paths* through the Demonstration Forest that you gave to the College of Forestry. I'm using that in a figurative sense now. *Paths* to a lot of other places around here, and some inducement to get people out there on those paths.

A. Well, the Umatilla Indian Tribe did put on for a couple of years, now I don't know whether they're still doing it or not They're putting on a Salmon thing in the spring out here on Catherine Creek that runs into this valley to show Salmon spawning, and to have demonstrations about all of the things that are related to Salmon spawning and what they need and so forth.

Q. Exactly. That's what we need a lot of.

A. It's great. But they don't get enough people out there to see it. I don't know how to blast people out of their easy chairs and away from their beer cans, ...

Q.or their RVs

A. Yeah.

Q. Well, what facet of your interests and your work in the field of preservation of our resources have we not yet talked about?

A. Oh, boy. [chuckle]

Q. I've been trying to go at it, both from a large, conceptual policy level, as well as a personal level, but I'm sure that there are concerns you have, or interests you have that we haven't yet touched on.

A. Well, one of the reasons that I was so interested in Hells Canyon was that I think it's very important to have large blocks of land, like Hells Canyon and Yosemite and Glacier National Park where I spent 15 days up, no three weeks up there in Glacier, no it was a wild area just south of Glacier National Park that I spent three weeks in, anyway large blocks of land. I think it's very important to have large blocks of land that are left relatively untrammelled, so that people can see 'em, but not too many people. I think we allow too many people into Yosemite Valley. We haven't gotten the idea yet in terms of our National Parks and who sees them. We haven't gotten the idea yet that the Game Commission has used for years and years and years about how many hunters should be allowed to hunt pronghorn antelope. There's only a limited number of pronghorn antelope. They figure out how many they can take. They issue that many tags. I, for one, would be perfectly happy to know that I had to stand in line and wait for a tag to visit the floor of Yosemite Valley, and that I could only see it once in my lifetime, if that was to preserve the floor of Yosemite Valley the way it ought to be. I don't think that's a tremendous idea, I think it's just a sensible idea.

Q. I understand that it is being practiced, at least in a beginning way, in some places now.

A. Like where?

Q. Well, I thought Yosemite. I thought I had heard that recently. The number of visitors per year would be limited.

A. Really? Well, you're ahead of me. I know that they've gotten to the point where they'll allow only so many cars in.

Q. That may have been it.

A. Or, they are talking about not allowing any cars in, but making people park their cars out here and go in by bus. And they've done that up in Denali. McKinley. You can't drive in there. You can only go in by bus.

Q. So the idea is at least around.

A. It's creeping in.

Q. Would you apply a similar principle to farming in the Grande Ronde valley? That only so many acres should be farmed each year.

A. It's not a matter of acreage, it's a matter of how it's farmed. We have a farmers' tour around the valley here every year. I went on it once, just to see what happens on it. They take you on a bus around to the farms they want you to see, and then somebody

throws a big steak feed at one of the farms. And, it's a nice tour. But, we went to one farmer that was raising garbanzo beans. And, at each stop they'd tell you all about their system. And he talked about those garbanzo beans being subject to so many chemicals in the soil and sprayed from down on top, that I never ate another garbanzo bean! I don't want to eat them. I don't know where those garbanzo beans come from, but they might come from that guy's farm.

Q. And he does it because he thinks that insects or fungus or something will attack it.

A. He does it because it produces more. More. God is money. That's what's wrong with our whole society. Uneven distribution of this stuff. The quest for it. And the whole thing is driven by greed. And you can go clear on back to the Pyramids of Egypt, which were driven by greed. I don't know whether we can get rid of it.

Q. I was thinking it's probably an eradicable trait.

A. But, I gotta try. I gotta try. I've got to live with not much more than I really need. People talk about their "wants," and I ask them over and over again, "Is that something you need?"

Q. And, of course, the human capacity for rationalizing "wants" into "needs" tend to prevail.

A. "I 'need' that car." "My son 'needs' a car as a graduation present from high school." Well, hell. My first car I bought for myself with \$75 when I was a junior in college, and it was a used Model A Ford. Times have changed. But, I was happy. I had everything I needed. I put myself through college. I got married in college. We took care of ourselves. We got married as Juniors in college. We took care of ourselves. Our parents were all college graduates. They were deathly afraid that we would not both graduate. We both graduated. We both got Master's degrees. You can do it. If you want to.

Q. Of course, you have to be willing to live kind of on the edge financially, which is not a great privation, really, if you look at it right.

A. I eat a lot of day-old bread. And, you ask me about what was good for my body, That day-old bread was just as good for my body as fresh bread. And I ate a lot of unmarked cans of fruits and vegetables, which were just as good for my body as if they'd had a marking on there. I used to go to the box of canned goods and I'd stay to my wife, "Well, would you like prunes or stringed beans for dinner?"

[laughter]

Q. Surprise!

[laughter]

Q. Well, shall we end it there?

A. Sure. I've enjoyed it a whole lot.

Q. I have, too. Partly, of course, because I'm sure we are in about close to 100% agreement on everything.

A. Yeah.

[end of tape #3]