Loren Hughes **I**
11/12/01
Tape #1

(*Starts with several minutes of "dead air."*)

Q……..Know anything about crop rotation.

A. Not whatsoever.

Q. Why do you think they selected the crops they did? _____, for instance.

A. Well, railroads did help about then to get established where you could market your stock, and I can remember my grandparents shipping hogs to Salt Lake and also the Portland market by train. And, then, of course, livestock also. And I can remember in the little town of Stanfield, nearly every railroad had siding, and of course, the livestock cars would set on sidings for most of the year, until fall when they usually went to market. And, they had that much room between the slats so you knew what was a livestock car, you can't find one nowadays, they haven't used them for 30 years.

Q. When you were young and living in the Wallowa Valley, do you remember any times when you just stood and looked at the snow-capped mountains and the configuration of the valley and thought to yourself anything about its beauty?

A. Only, that came about only after I had climbed them all. I climbed Mt. Hood when I was 13 years old, and Mt. Adams, Mt. Thielson**,** …

Q. You mean you had to get up higher in order to appreciate the beauty?

A. Because you could see all of the mountain.

Q. What do you remember thinking when you saw those views?

A. Well, I didn't hear the expression when people would say: "Why do you climb mountains?" and I was probably 20 before I learned it: "To see what's on the other side of the mountain."

Q. Or because it's there. Because they're there.

A. Or "because they're there." Those two expressions are pretty …… And there isn't really very many mountains that I haven't been on top of.

Q. So do you think those climbing experiences, and taking in the views, had a lasting effect on you?

A. A real lasting effect, yeah. When I got out of the Navy, five years after I climbed Mt. Hood, we picked cherries, and we were called "Fruit Tramps," in The Dalles, Hood River, come here to Eastern Oregon, prunes in Milton-Freewater, so that was three months of summer to buy my school clothes. But, I just said, "We finished picking cherries today, let's go climb Mt. Hood tomorrow." And 23 people went with me. Family and friends. And, so I always enjoyed getting other people involved in the outdoors.

Q. So they were social occasions?

A. Very much a social occasion.

Q. Even so, what do you think was your sense of wilderness? I mean, wilderness can be enjoyed with a group of other people. But it can also be enjoyed when you're alone. For you, was it a toss-up?

A. I've never really ever done very much of that by myself. I also felt like it was a waste of time not to have lots of other people in with me. So, I've even owned 17 horses and mules so that I could take Senator and Representative aides to show 'em what we want protected. And, of course, 90% of this was all wilderness when I came to Oregon in 1926. And it was just alarming to see how quickly it was not becoming wilderness ……just like, that picture right there. Every inch of that picture belongs in wilderness, and yet it isn't protected.

Q. At what point in your life, especially if you were having social climbing experiences, did you get the sense that wilderness needed to be protected?

A. It did take visual people like Ric and hundreds of other Sierra Clubbers and Isaac Walton, I was President of our Northwest Isaac Walton League for several years, that we all started talking about it and then we all supported each other. And there used to only be maybe three prominent known conservation organizations 30 years ago, and now we have literally dozens of them. Because…..

Q. Let's go back, if we could, to whatever experiences you can recall that triggered in your mind the realization that wilderness was being lost, or that it needed protection.

A. When I came to La Grande from Oregon Tech in Klamath Falls, I climbed all those mountains around that area, came here and we had an organization that The Isaac Walton League had sponsored called "Save the Minam." It was a 43-mile river out here on the other side of the Wallowa/Union County boundary that went up the neatest canyon, and the Supervisor had given the survey crews direction to go stake the canyon for a 23-mile road. That was half of the canyon. And it was a real pork-barreler. It had already had been river logged, meaning they had splash dams, floated the logs to the mill, that's what they did all over the Northwest. Well, that had already been done, so there wasn't really any timber value. It was just to waste money and ruin the real future of the canyon.

Q. Why do you say "waste money"?

A. It would have been total pork-barrel, every foot of dirt that would have been moved for a road was only going to hinder the water quality of the river……

Q. Well, what was the purpose of the road?

A. They never did say. We brought it to their attention, and was able to convince Senator Hatfield and Representative Al Ullman what the value of the canyon was, by taking them there, showing them what was there, and showing them what <u>shouldn't</u> be there is that road. And they both recognized that the road didn't need to be built, and they sponsored our legislation, and that was 50 years ago.

Q. Could the road have been used for logging trucks?

A. Sure. It could have. And they would have scratched up the little draws that go up away from the river that was <u>beyond</u> horse logging. You're right. It was only horses pulling the men to the edge of the river, and then having the river raise enough to take 'em on down to the mill, which was 28 miles away.

Q. You said it was the U.S. Government that was building the road.

A. Yes.

Q. The Forest Service?

A. Yes.

Q. And you never saw anything written in Forest Service documents that would specify why they were putting the road in?

A. What they do, they do the surveys, and then they go to the Department of Agriculture and say: "We'd like to have you budget money for this kind of road, this kind of development." And that's what they're still doing.

Q. Why do you say it was "pork barrel"?

A. Because it was wasting money that could be better spent somewhere else.

Q. Who would benefit from it? Directly.

A. Boise-Cascade came to La Grande in 1950, and they came here to promote any road they can get.

Q. So it must have been for logging purposes.

A. We have 10,000 miles on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest of roads. And most of them have been built in the last 50 years. And 6,000 miles of those 10,000 are right here around Boise-Cascade. Right where they can use public resources, and only pay for a small fraction of the cost.

Q. And was clear-cutting the rule then.

A. Whenever they thought that old decadent forest had no place in Forestry is when they decided that "We'll clear-cut," and the animals and wildlife that depended on old-growth, there was nothing considered for that at all. In fact, even we conservationists really didn't know that there were half of our wildlife and species were dependent on old-growth.

Q. Now the word "ecology" was known to some people at that time, but did you hear anybody use that word?

A. Not 'til recently.

[Ric: From a conservation standpoint, you know the thing that's interesting to me is back when you were 6-7 years old and working the fields and the deer would come into the fields at night and everybody would …… you know, you didn't go to the grocery store, you hunted and grew your own or whatever. So at what point did <u>you</u> recognize, or who taught you to recognize that you can't just go out there and keep shooting deer, that there has to be management and controls and that the habitats need to be protected.]

A. It came about fairly easy because elk were almost eliminated in the Blue Mountains. In 1933, to get the public's attention and educating the public and educating us, Billy Meadows, right in the edge of the National Recreation Area, right there, we put up a big fence out there. We had these stock-train cars from the railroad, went to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and brought 50-70 elk here and out and then we put them in horse-drawn stock wagons that they couldn't jump out of and put them inside of a fence for 12 years, and then we opened the gates and let the animals out. We gave the public the opinion that they were on the verge on extinction, but the State Game Warden estimated that there were 2,000 elk still distributed through the ruggedest parts of the Blue Mountains. No one wanted to work that hard to go harvest them. So, that was a little buffer. But then we had a season for maybe 25 elk, and had a season, and naturally there were big, big trophy animals. Well, that gave the public and the law enforcement people were enough of them hired to prevent ranchers that had been harvesting them for five generations of family had lived off from wild animals. And that got us pretty well educated to do the same with other wildlife.

Q. So it was your direct observations of elk depletion that made you aware that there was something bad going on.

A. That's the way to put it.

[Ric: The frontier mentality where, you know, the attitude that we're never going to run out. And we just go take whatever we want. So that wasn't so pervasive back then. That frontier mentality, there was a lot of people that recognized that we could run out. Elk, or trees, or whatever. That's interesting.]

Q. Were there a lot of people, or just a few people then, that realized it?

A. There were a lot of people …..

Q. Hunters?

A. And hunters, naturally, because they set out 12 years of no elk hunting.

Q. [over Loren] They might be the first to observe ……..

A. You're right, that was a good point.

Q. Did you continue to be a hunter yourself?

A. There was nobody that was better at hunting than I was, really.

Q. What was your attitude toward it? Why did you do it?

A. Well, in Colorado we'd go visit …. where I came from, eastern Colorado, had millions of rabbits, and all my families had Greyhound dogs. A Sunday after church was to take the stock wagon, everybody, every rancher would come in from 20 miles with their dogs, we would drive these rabbits into, because they were eating the crops that you were raising, and we'd kill, maybe, 500-600 rabbits, by running them in, load 'em onto the hay wagons, go feed 'em to the pigs. You kind of did two or three things at once by doing that. Eastern Oregon, over by Hermiston, where I lived, we had lots of rabbits, they ate the alfalfa fields, there was an abundance of them, and now, really, between here and the Nevada border, you'll maybe see one rabbit run over in the road. There used to be a hundred would be run over, so there the black-tail and the white-tail rabbit are almost extinct now. But it made us realize that it was a balance, now we're going back to an imbalance. We've kind of overdone doing in. But we hear that rabbits are unique about every seven years, if there's enough population, they build up again. In southeastern Idaho, about every seven years, you'll hear of them having an epidemic of black-tail rabbits.

Q. I think I seem to detect some contradictions here.

A. O.K.

Q. Maybe you could explain your present attitude toward the role of humans in maintaining the balance of forces of nature.

A. We're fortunate to have a fair ratio of educated animal husbandry people, and wildlife people didn't used to be able to speak up at a public meeting and give direction on what would be best for management because they were laughed out of the meeting room. But, now they're able not only to stand up and give scientific information on wildlife management, and they ask and they get more consideration, but not nearly enough.

Q. Well, do you agree, then, that the ways in which humans impact the environment are sometimes good?

A. I can't think of very many times.

Q. Well, killing all the rabbits …….

A. You can do that with the Chiney [sic] Pheasant, we used to have thousands of them, and used to have lots and lots of this animal and this animal, and most of them are on a downgrade.

Q. The way you talked about shooting the rabbits because they were eating the grain, made it sound to me as though you approved of that.

A. It proved to adequate for 40 years, I watched an adequate population was never in danger until there's an endemic level of all animals. My brother-in-law was head of the Game Commission here in this corner of Oregon, so I was fortunate to hear and have questions answered that I had from his education at Oregon State. So, we introduced the Chukar from India, which is a great upland bird, but we had 25 times more than what the land would bear, and pretty soon they crashed. And I asked him why, and he said they reached the endemic level and they have natural parasites and diseases that leveled them off. And most of the animals, nature does that. Automatically.

Q. Yeah. That's what I was thinking. There are <u>natural</u> means for maintaining a balance. But as soon as you introduce humans, you disrupt the natural means.

A. It's just exactly that.

Q. And, I thought I was hearing you say that, well, that's inevitable, humans are going to do that anyway. Is that what you think?

A. Well, that's what they <u>did</u> do. But we conservationists, we really felt like we should be able to cease doing these extremes by man's activities.

Q. So, you wouldn't prohibit wilderness areas from any kind of human intervention, right?

A. As long as it is in balance with the vegetation and the animals that are there. But, you know, a lynx. We haven't seen a lynx in this part of the country.

Q. Have you come to the conclusion, then, that it's only through science that we'll be able to figure out how to maintain the balance.

A. We've had lots of science. La Grande is kind of the capital of Forestry Science. We have a wildlife lab that produced the Chief of the Forest Service. We've been right here where we're able to be <u>around</u> 30 or 40 of these people over the last 40 years, so we know that science……..but, we have land managers and private land owners that doesn't accept very little of this science. They like it as long as we stay in our cubicles and not come out with "voo-doo type of science," they call it.

Q. What do you say when they confront you with this idea? I suppose you talk to some of the people who have these attitudes, don't you.

A. All the time.

Q. What do you usually say to them? Could you give me a sense of how the conversation goes?

A. It's pretty hard, because they don't give you a chance to say anything very often, but I did serve in 1972 the first Oregon Forest Practices Act, which was really the first in the world. Well, who were on the committees? Weyerhaeuser, Boise-Cascade, every corporate leader, there were six of them and just one of me. So. And then when you only get your input in on 2% of the time, it's always that way. And right now there's great big land area conglomerates that have gotten funded to do forest thinning, fire suppression, make forests less fire prone and all this against science – every bit of it's against science, it's against wildlife. I know what I had to do to get an elk in a lodgepole thicket, and it was an all-day contest between him and I. Now there isn't even a lodgepole thicket. They want to even thin the new regeneration, and they say it's for fire suppression, but what it really is is getting a pellet factory. And last week's paper said they'd like to come to our area and make stove pellets out of what they call "waste," laying on the floor. Well, nature has to have that waste to make the soil recycle into quality vegetation, whether it's grass, forbs, scrubs, trees.

Q. Well I suppose you don't consider these people inherently "evil," they're just overwhelmed by economic and political necessities. Is that right?

A. I'd put the truth is they're 90% evil and the other 10%, they are satisfied.

Q. Don't you think that's a harsh judgment?

A. I'm too old to think less than that.

[Ric: Well, what about the Forest Service, Loren. I mean, the problems we have that they don't tell us the truth and they don't want to protect the land, they don't even want to obey the laws that require them to protect the land. Was it always like that? Or were they good people here at one time in the Forest Service.]

A. I have worked for lots of Rangers when I was in high school, when I got out of the Navy, I lived in Troy and redesigned the ridge road from Tollgate all the way to Troy, and every Ranger I've known all my life in Eastern Oregon, and they are uncanny in giving you a feeling that they're managing the land the best way they can. But, when they really go out on the ground and see what's

happened in my 75 years, they aren't hired as Rangers or Supervisors unless they are a little bit unreliable in their ….. they've always been there to satisfy the stockholder of corporations.

Q. They're in the "corporate pocket."

A. They're in the "corporate pocket."

Q. And you say they wouldn't keep their jobs unless they were?

A. They would not. We've had Rangers ……. one year we had a Tussock Moth outbreak, and he had worked for EPA, he decided to change and transfer into the Forest Service, right up there on the top of that ridge was solid brown, in fact he called the sale "Brown Sugar." We put DDT on every inch of the Umatilla Forest, in Wildernesses, it didn't make any difference, vast roadless areas, and he went right over to the helicopter the morning he was to go up and spray DDT on the top of that ridge, and called it off. He immediately was transferred to a lesser job in the back shelves of the Malheur National Forest in John Day, and he was transferred around to different areas, but he never had a future, never, ever got back a Ranger responsibility. They know how to …….. and I was in the Navy, watched the same thing happen to advancement within the ranks of a military organization. And it's the same thing.

Q. Now, when it comes to trying to get these people in the Forest Service, and , I suppose, in political positions to pay attention to what science is saying, about maintaining natural balance, is it primarily a matter of their just not wanting to hear that message? Or they won't take the time to study it? Or something else?

A. Last Friday, when we left here to go to Portland for Ric's HCPC meeting, here was a neat little pamphlet in a brown envelope that we get two or three of every week, and it was it for three national forests, the Malheur, the Wallowa-Whitman, the Umatilla on resource management. It had nice graphs all the way through it. We've seen those kind of documents for 30 years, and it says you're short of this product and this specie of tree and so on. That's fine. They do that, but nothin' is ever done about getting on the track of re-vigorizing [sic] that particular resource. You ask them later and they say: "Well, Congress didn't give us the funding." Well, Congress probably did give them the funding, but there is no consequences in directing the money into some other resource, that a corporation wants 'em – they sleep in bed.

Q. Well, I don't know, this might be a little digression, but I went out to the Union Agricultural Experiment Station earlier in the summer, and, of course there are several scientists there, many of them with PhDs,

A. And I know most of them……

[end of tape]

Loren Hughes **II**
11/12/01
Tape #2

A. We've often asked if we – to roll up to our sleeves, will make an official appeal of a manager's decision to do this or do this, and then with a threat that we will bring the science to Court and prove that they should abandon, and we are quite lucky to have a decision maker in a bureaucracy back away, but next year they're come right back with something very similar. So it's kind of a chase your tail.

[Ric: Didn't you have a nickname, what was that nickname ….. I loved that ….. stamps….]

A. "Five-cent Hughes" I was noted for because then it just took a 5-cent stamp, a stamp went from 3 cents to 5 cents, and I appealed 40 timber sales with one 5-cent stamp. So, I have my conservation friend gave me a nickname of "Five-cent Hughes."

[Ric: And you successfully appealed 40 timber sales, which ……]

A. And, all I did was look through the prospectus and here were sales that were building from 50-70 miles of roads, or in one year, that one prospectus would have, in a five year period – it covered that period of time – they would have built … they <u>did</u> build half of our Wallowa-Whitman roads were built in them five years.

[Ric: What was your affiliation. Do you appeal those on behalf of Isaac Walton League?]

A. It was the Isaac Walton League and they were the oldest and the most noted organization in 1922. And so, this being 1950-60 era, they had quite a bit of clout, so it …..

Q. You were writing letters with these 5-cent stamps to Federal agencies?

A. To the Supervisors of the Region 6, for Washington and Oregon.

Q. What did you say in these letters?

A. That they were not abiding by water quality – EPA had just come on at that time. And then, we recognized just what it took – that was 40 years, for salmon to get consideration on silt, and water quality was so poor for salmon spawning that it started the ball rolling way back then, when those were done.

Q. So you were citing the regulations in these letters.

A. Uh,huh. Yeah, you have to do that.

Q. Were you doing it in such a way as to make the agencies aware of these rules? Or did you think they didn't know about them?

A. They knew about them. And, really, the media was pretty good to us. They gave us the local papers and *The Oregonian*, then, gave pretty good publicity, and they felt it was somewhat damaging for a corporation to … so they tried, anyway.

Q. But you must have been implicitly accusing them of trying to put something over on the public. Of ignoring the regulations they <u>knew</u> existed and that they knew the corporations were violating. Isn't that what you were doing?

A. That's what I was doin.' Yep. My basement is as big as that room right there and it's stacked clear full of boxes with all of those appeals and all those scientific studies that gave us some hope that we might be able to ……

Q. But, you're saying your letters at least contributed to getting them to reconsider their actions.

A. Definitely. Yeah.

Q. Did a lot of other people write, too, or were you a lone voice.

A. Nope, we had like …. I was President when the Minam back here was on the brink of …… Al Ullman was to become our Ways & Means Chairman, and he did become and was for 15 years, the most powerful Representative. He lived in Baker. And we threatened to vote him out of office if he didn't support Senator Hatfield's Minam River Protection Wilderness bill. And the evening before the meeting came a telegram, brought over from the Railroad Telegraph Office that said: "Mr. Hughes, will you go to your Isaac Walton meeting …." which was 150 people came to our meeting, and all of Boise-Cascade executives were all there. And when I read the telegram that said: "not only you can tell all your membership that not only do I support Senator Hatfield's Minam bill, I have added all of the Little Minam," which was another 50,000 acres, to his bill. That was the greatest feeling that I ever had, and everybody got up and applauded and Boise-Cascade got up and walked out of the meeting, and it was a very elating thing. And Mr. Ullman was quite an outdoorsman. He had hiked and was familiar with all of the Minam and all the Little Minam and so it was just actually being patient as you could be for a five-year period – we had hearings in Washington, D.C. We'd fly back to and come back and keep right on. And Boise-Cascade, all the time working against us. But it was quite elating to have that telegram come, and have that success story.

Q. Would you say that you were an "angry" activist?

A. Very much so.

Q. Did you have an "angry" tone in these letters?

A. That one was a threatening letter to Mr. Ullman of our meeting date and when we wanted an answer from him. We didn't really, truthfully, think it would work. But it did.

Q. So, at what point in your life did you become an "angry" activist?

A. From then on.

Q. Well. Not before?

A. No. That was an issue that had took many, many years to bring it to that stage.

Q. Gradually rising in anger.

A. Yes. It hadn't been done anywhere else in the West. 'Cuz we had vast amount of roadless areas, only this one was so obvious, where you just – here's a

highway, and you go down and here's the Wallowa, and here's the Minam, 43 miles of the most pristine river in the world, and then you've already saw the mouth of the Grande Round [sic] River and the mouth of the Umatilla River and it was no quality for fish and wildlife at all. So it was the perfect river to use for an example.

Q. So far you haven't mentioned your direct connection with the Hells Canyon area. Could we make that connection now?

A. We can do that. And actually, we had a three-state interest in the Hells Canyon. And we had Senator Jordan, of Idaho – Len Jordan, Governor then Senator; and then, Bob Packwood was just elected and he was a great outdoorsman, and he loved the Snake River, floating and went on many trips with us and Ric hosted most of that; and we had our 25th Anniversary for that legislation just last August. So, it was kind of the same kind of a thing. Al Ullman, was somewhat reluctant, but because of his experience with the Minam, he supported the legislation, and we all went to Washington, testified, and got the legislation finalized and had no idea, and we kind of abandoned, 'cuz we had done our job. We gave it to a public agent that was to take care of it. Pretty soon we found they had built hundreds of miles of roads, logged everything that was loggable, and Ric worked for them as a fire fighter, right out on the NRA and he just come around and round us all up and said "We've got to reorganize Hells Canyon Preservation Council and get management that is going to do what they were supposed to do."

Q. I don't think I can fully understand this unless you take me farther back in time. Before there was a dam. Did most of the land belong to the Federal government?

A. In the Oregon Game Synopsis, when you apply for hunting in the Hells Canyon, it says 95% of the land is public. And it was almost that on both sides of the river – Idaho and Oregon.

Q. Well, when it was designated public land, what were the limitations on its use or development? Were they specified in some way?

A. No. The homesteaders out there, they liked Chief Joseph's model for wintering – you went into the bottom of the Canyons during the winter and then you went out to be out of the Canyon the other – the white man did the same thing, but when Depression came, they lost their ability to keep up the land and still live on it, so they came out to the communities, out of those homesteads were all abandoned. And then they diverted back to the public agency. And so

that picked up the percentage of ….. they were given 40 or 60 acres for a homestead, and lot of my relation were part of that.

Q. Explain that a little more. Could they claim homesteads anywhere they wanted to, or was there a portion of this large Federal area that was open to homesteading?

A. Wherever they thought they could make a living…..

Q. Then they just filed a claim, they didn't buy it.

A. They just filed a claim.

Q. And there were no stipulations on how they were to use the land?

A. Nope. They were just……and they naturally, immediately, abused the land by over-grazing it. And their stock could go to the rest of the public land and virtually forage free vegetation.

Q. And these were cattle? Or other animals?

A. No. Mainly sheep and cattle.

Q. I suppose the homesteaders thought that was the only way they could survive? Make a living.

A. That's exactly right.

Q. And nobody was telling them that there were any limits on what they could do, apparently.

A. No, they had …… Forest Service would, sometimes, say: "You're apparently, obviously are, abusing the range, and so we'll encourage you to build a trail to another bench where you can maybe still have as many livestock as you've got." And old homesteaders like Ace Barton, he wrote a book on the Hells Canyon, one of the best that's ever been written, but he specifically recognized every homestead up and down the river, every little mile or two miles or three miles, and how many lived in that family, how the kids were assigned to drive the cattle every morning up to where they could graze forage and then the cows would come back and they'd milk, or take care of them, so the family would have something to live. He told all of those very interesting, heart-warming experiences that they had to do to make a living.

Q. What was the name of that book?

A. "Hells Canyon, Below …." Something.

[Ric: "Hells Canyon of the Snake," wasn't it]

Q. Would that have been early 20th century? 19-something?

A. Oh! Yeah! He's, I think, 97 now. He lives over in Riggins, Idaho.

Q. What's his name, again?

A. Ace Barton.

Q. And he was a homesteader?

A. His folks and grandparents, but he lived there most of his life, and that's why the book was so interesting, because he had a real feel for nature, and, of course, you asked a while ago, it was building of as many as seven dams were surveyed to be built in the Canyon.

Q. Now, when did that happen?

A. That was, Ric knows exactly, but that was kinda like building 28 miles of road up the Minam. It was also for Washington Power had asked for the license on the highest dam in the world. The one dam would back up over the top of three other dams above that dam, below the mouth of the Salmon River. And then three or four more dams were also proposed below there.

Q. That was after Grand Coulee, wasn't it?

A. Yes, Grand Coulee was being built in the 30's, right after Bonneville Dam. Bonneville Dam, 1933, then Coulee – Roosevelt, I think, inaugurated both of 'em.

Q. So the plan for seven dams might have been in the 50's? I think I remember reading about it at the time at the time.

A. The proposals were in the 50's.

Q. Was it the U.S. Corps of Engineers that was spearheading that?

A. Actually, they were <u>private</u>, mostly private, dams.

Q. These were power companies. Washington Water Power and Idaho Power?

A. Washington Water Power, that's it. You hit it. I couldn't think of that. Washington Water Power.

Q. And I suppose they thought that this could be done and not damage anything. Were they that naïve, do you think?

A. Definitely. They were more than naïve. But we already had built and licensed dozens of dams all over the Northwest. It was an acceptable thing to do. No one questioned cheap power.

Q. Cheap power. Of course.

A. That was right.

Q. So what stopped that plan?

A. Packwood was the main instigator.

Q. And what were his main motives? Or what was his argument for stopping them?

A. Ric knows that for word, because he's repeated it many times.

Q. Well, let me hear your version.

A. Well, what we really had was, also another wonderful person. We had lots of influential people. We just happened to have William O. Douglas.

Q. Yes!

A. That happened to be only the Chief Justice. He graduated from Whitman College over here, and he loved our Minam and our Eagle Cap Wilderness. And he just lived there.

Q. I met him one day when he was living there.

A. Did you really?

Q. Yep.

A. He would go up the Lostine and be over on the Minam and so we found that there was a loophole in not who was going to build the dam, but ……. what, Ric ?……

[Ric: …….but whether there would be one at all.}

A. That's it. I told you, he knew that.

Q. That's important.

A. Or wouldn't do it at all. And so, by golly, we went after that, and when it came before Chief O. Douglas, he just said: "Hey, there isn't anybody gonna build a dam."

Q. How did it get to him? Who appealed it to the Supreme Court?

A. Conservationists. And Packwood supported it, and we had encouraged lots and lots of other Senators to support and recognize the Canyon for what it was.

Q. Now exactly where were you and what were you doing at that time?

A. Well, you know, there was such a good representative conservationist representatives from Washington, from Idaho and from Oregon, that when we had another building, just like this one's a 9-story building, we had another 9-story hotel, and there was a big, big ballroom, and in that ballroom, we had like 250 people there for the hearing, and it was just overwhelming and when I came to La Grande in 1950 to be a jeweler, all this issue was brewing, and I'd go to my Chamber of Commerce that I had just joined because I was a new businessman in town and the whole group of 50 businessmen was: "How many sacks of cement?" "How many railroad loads of lumber?" was gonna go through La Grande to Wallowa County, down to the High Mountain Sheep dam site to build the highest dam in the world? And, everybody's pockets was just runnin' over with dollars.

Q. And their palms were itchy?

A. And I never will forget ….. my brother-in-law, head of the Game Commission – he wasn't my brother-in-law at that time – but when Senator Packwood came and listened to their enthusiasm for and wanted his support for building the dam, that when the meeting finished, when he stood up, he only just said, "There never will be a dam like that built in Hells Canyon." You could hear a pin drop three blocks away!!! And they all got up, and never said a word, and all 50 of them walked out, and only my brother-in-law and I were the only ones that were

there to shake Bob Packwood's hand. They had never even dreamed that a Senator dare say: "There never will be a dam built in that Canyon."

Q. So, at that meeting you said there were 250 people?

A. A hundred.

Q. A hundred and fifty. Oh, who got up and spoke in opposition?

A. Excuse me ….. I got my ballroom meeting up in the main mezzanine mixed up. This was in the restaurant downstairs. Fifty people. That was about all the businessmen that were in town. And they were there because they expected Packwood to say "Yes, you can build your dam." But, he didn't.

Q. The meeting in the restaurant was not the same as the Congressional hearing?

A. No. That's right.

Q. At the Congressional hearing, were there people who were in opposition to the dam speaking?

A. Oh, yeah. We had lots of ……. It was kind of a balanced program, really. Because all of County Judges in Washington, Oregon and Idaho, as well as …… and then we were fortunate then to have another neat guy, and that was Tom McCall, Governor Tom McCall, the greatest conservation Republican that we ever knew.

Q. Do you remember at all, specifically, what the people who were opposed to the dam used as their arguments?

A. Well, the tribal people shouldn't be forgotten. We were gonna cover up all of their historic old tribal heritage. A lot of their ancestrial {sic] burial grounds were all going to be under water, which we had already done on the Columbia River. So, we had, of course, the power company people, there were hundreds of them, because every one of 'em that had planned on being stockholders and building more power dams, they were all represented at these meetings.

Q. I'm just curious to know what other arguments could be stated against the dams. The official burial grounds. What other considerations?

A. I don't seem to be very good a remembering all those particulars of, of course, the recreational part was brought out over and over, because it was kind of in its

infancy, but everybody seemed to have a very good grasp on just what was to happen, and now has happened, that they have to apply for permits to get on the river, the demand is so high, maybe only every other year or every two years, you get, maybe, a five-day permit.

Q. Right.

A. And so, that was one our biggest factors.

Q. Building one dam, though, has increased the recreational opportunities, hasn't it?

A. Well …… not really. I can't think of any time that it has.

Q. I don't know the usual level of water flow, but I thought a dam that would back up more water, would give more opportunities for jet boats and that sort of thing.

A. After we stopped that part of the Federal dams, then, of course, four dams that are below Lewiston to the Columbia River were built. And, there is really hardly any recreational, just water skiing, fishing isn't nearly as good. All the good fishing is beyond them on the Clearwater and the Salmon River – the free-flowing rivers provide better fishing.

Q. I'm still trying to visualize, though, what could be said in a hearing like that that would justify Packwood saying, "There will never be a dam built there." What could <u>he</u> have said that would persuade anybody that that's the way it should be left?

A. Isn't that amazing that I …… that was almost 45 years ago ,,,,,,

Q. You wanna take a break and think about that a little more?

A. Well, I'm not sure that this ole boy can remember how he, 'cuz I think he even surprised <u>us</u> when he made that rash a statement, and I don't know that I recorded it in my mind how he came to that conclusion. We'd asked him to do that, but there was no indication until he made that announcement before two conservationists and 50 businessmen.

Q. Could it have been just strong emotion? Would that have carried it?

A. No. He could do that. He does have that characteristic, yes he does. He could do it on that. But, I think he … and he obviously was nailed by Chamber

of Commerce people for how he made it. And, I'm sure he had it ……. I wish I remembered what he came back with to explain his stand.

Q. Maybe it'll come back to you. I think that is an interesting point.

A. It is. Definitely. Because that was about as an alarming statement, that not very many politicians would dare make.

Q. I should think would have feared being run out of town on a rail.

A. The same as we were starting to do with Al Ullman. No, that's right. But he never did waiver. And he come back and celebrated the 25th Anniversary with us. Bob Packwood came back and, of course, enjoyed seeing us old friends, and us seeing him, too.

Q. Do you remember <u>your</u> feelings at the time that the decision was made not to build the dam? Were you amazed? Or exhilarated? Or a combination?

A. I think I almost went out in the middle of Adams Avenue and yelled. It was pretty, pretty exciting. And,

[End of tape #2]

Loren Hughes **III**
11/12/01
Tape #3

A. Between Chief Justices and Senators and Governors, and the Governor of Idaho, then, Len Jordan. He <u>lived</u> there. He had a sheep ranch on the Snake River, his parents and grandparents, when he became Governor. And, so he had a love for the Canyon that even Idahoians [sic] that won't vote for one acre of wilderness or anything, they could not overcome Len Jordan 'cuz he <u>lived</u> there, he wasn't somebody that was just trumped up to …….

Q. What exactly is the "nub" of the issue about Hells Canyon and how it should it be preserved. If you had to boil down the reasons for preserving it so that it's not damaged any more than it is. What would you say?

A. Well, I ….. it's just that when you know how many million years that it took to bring about the Canyon and the evolution over those millions of years, and then think that those millions of years can go on, there isn't another canyon like it in the world, and the value of it in its natural state will be in the same ratio that it has proven in the last 45 years since its protection 'til now, now we're almost to where those many 660-some million, I mean thousand, acres could be loved and enjoyed and we're getting managements for most of the resources are just about to be a reality, because we plan to change agencies and favor National Park Preserve designation because they don't log, they don't graze, they really, truly give recreation its fullest potential.

Q. Is there legislation under way to make it a National Park?

A. We are… Ric….. we're drawing that up right now. And, we need to be sure to visit with him, he's asked us, so we assume, you, not to be very public with these proposals 'til our ducks are all in a line, and then we have the support that we will. But that's what …… we've had to come to that conclusion, that we won't be any better off in the next 25 years than we have been for the last 45 years.

Q. What do you think are the current threats to Hells Canyon?

A. There dozens of grazing allotments that not even old, historic, 5th-generation ranchers want to work that hard to re-open these discontinued grazing allotments. But, the Forest Service is promoting them because then they have more reason for their jobs. And so, they have an EA out that Forest Service is proposing opening up for bids on many grazing allotments, which would be just a national disaster.

Q. Would these be continuations of the homesteaders' grazing areas?

A. Yes, they would be. Yes.

Q. Are they back to where they were originally now, or close to it, do you think?

A. Are the ranchers?

Q. No. The grazing areas. You said they were practically demolished.

A. There's been some recovery, but there's been lots of noxious weeds, star thistles, cheat grass, medusa grass. A lot of these foreign grasses and vegetations

have taken over a lot of the ranges, so they only appear that there's desirable vegetation, but there's not 2% of what the original, native vegetation, the blue-bunch wheatgrass and lots and lots of shrubs and forages are not there, because of these "foreign invaders."

Q. And, the "foreign invaders" got a hold because it was over-grazed?

A. That's it. That's exactly right.

Q. So what does it need? Just to be left untouched? Or the noxious weed killed and then let the other come back?

A. The star thistle, because it's a very hearty, very invasive, they have been spraying vigorously for the last ten years.

Q. That's a good thing?

A. Not really. But we haven't really …… Nearly every noxious weed plant has a predator, so we've gone back to the Mediterranean and brought the predators for these noxious weeds and introduced them.

Q. Insects?

A. Insects. Yeah. And the insects are now doing a good job of getting established. And that is the best hope because the use of chemicals is always a real, serious detriment to unknown damage to other native vegetation. So, conservationists are very reluctant.

Q. On that subject, I think related to it ……. I think I read not too long ago that they need a qualified botanist to classify the various plants that are in the Hells Canyon. I gather, then, that this has never been done?

A. Charlie Johnson is one of best plant ecologists there is. And he's written several books this thick, but he is a Forest Service employee, and he does do his job, and nobody can do it any better, but that's as far as it goes. The book is put on a shelf, it's got a half inch of dust on it. And that's tragic.

Q. Why are they apparently looking for someone to do a botanical study now? I thought I read that until that was done, they couldn't proceed with some other plan.

A. I'm not sure of the technicality that they have of improving or getting a more thorough study made, but, in every case we have brought to their attention that

they're not doing their job, by not having a good biological study made and ecological survey. And so, we hired a lady, doctor, and she – Mary O'Brien – went out, and she really twisted their tail on their shortcomings. So, Charlie has supplemented his studies to combat her being able to call to his attention that he hasn't done his job. And, we're, evidently, possibly going to re-do it again, and probably go to court.

Q. So, if there were a complete botanical study done of plant life in the Hells Canyon, would that in some way help the argument that it needs to be preserved?

A. Yes, definitely.

Q. Because, you said Charlie Johnson's book sits on the shelf, covered with dust. So why wouldn't a more complete botanical study meet the same fate?

A. Because we have a lot more-educated public that writes letters, and they, in turn, really make it uncomfortable for a public agency to not do the job that they're required to do.

Q. So it's just more evidence of how precious the resource is?

A. Yeah. It is more evidence. We have a very unique thing that even real good scientists are skeptical, and it's called a microbiotic crust. A microbiotic crust on the soil, at the roots of the vegetation, topsoil and these foreign invaders cannot get by a natural biodiversity or microbiotic crust, because it's repellant. But, not where it's been over-grazed. The ground has been abused. And terracing, where the animals on steep ground make a trail, and a trail, and a trail. All that breaks down this microbiotic crust, and just giving the soil a 30-year, 40-year unabusive domestic animal grazing, that microbiotic crust will come back. And then there's mosses and lichens that grow right on this biotic crust that is all nature's protective way. And that you can't get <u>one</u> Forest Service person, not one BLM, to recognize this because all of their friends are cattlemen, livestock people. So, they just ignore it and ignore it, but they can't ignore it any longer. It's just a known fact. You can just say: a road grader goes up on a road, a primitive one-way road, and throws a berm of dirt to each side, and then white top is a highly evasive [sic], and yellow-star thistle gets on those berms of disturbed dirt on the shoulders of those roads, and right at the last little bank of dirt, and here is all this noxious weed thriving and it can't get off that shoulder of that road on to this biotic crust that protects it, and yet it obviously spreads everywhere where ground is disturbed, but it can't penetrate nature's shield of protection.

Q. So, I'm getting the impression that it's the cattle interests that are the main threat at the moment.

A. They are the main threat.

Q. There's no longer a threat from the power industries.

A. Nope. There isn't. That's exactly, it is just exactly.

Q. And how strong are the cattle interests?

A. Not nearly as much as it has been. Because just as I started to explain a while ago, they don't want to work that hard, and the cattle markets are worse, and worse and worse, every year. The demand for their product is not helping ….. our doctors … "you look nice and slender, and I know you don't eat a lot of …."

Q. Right.

A. That's right, and that's what's happening. And so, really, it shouldn't have ever been breaking out on those kind of …. 'cuz, actually, I don't know why, a rancher….. I have a ranch, 200 acres, and my sons were FFA-ers, they, five boys, they raised all the livestock they wanted to, but the neighbor was official, 2000 acre, was in my Boy Scouts, when I was Scout Master, and we amateur cattle raisers are competing against their legitimate operation, and why they support anybody that wants to raise a cow, I don't understand. They don't need to. And I don't think they are going to from now on.

Q. Maybe they'll just give up and go away.

A. That's exactly …. that's what is happening. No, it is.

Q. Sounds as though the problem is getting smaller and smaller.

A. Yes, right. [laughter]

Q. How about tourists? Boaters and hikers and so on. Are they much of a threat?

A. No, they're all, they're promoters, and they don't appreciate a bank of over 100 jetboats swarming the river, very unaesthetic, for every reason there is. They're, you know, and so, but we've, we've been to court, we've been just short of the Supreme Court trying to get rid of 'em, and we didn't make it. The Courts didn't favor us on ….

Q. What's your ideal about how the Canyon, assuming it can be preserved, should be enjoyed? How would you do it? Or, how would I do it best?

A. We had, at our 25th Anniversary, we had lots of new faces come, they said you realize we need more access to the river by more roads, because you only got about four that are, and otherwise, you gotta get in at one end of the river and float through it. Well, we know that. [laughter] It made us think real, real hard and I'm not sure we really came up, but they were people. There was one from Michigan. One from Maine. And one from Florida, and they had just ….. and there they stood on the rim looking into the most vast canyon in the world, but never, ever, they just: "You build that road from where we're standin' down there, I'll come back next year and go down and see your river."

Q. They want to walk 100 yards and no more?

A. [laughter] That's exactly what it amounts to.

Q. Are they saying there should be handicapped access, too?

A. Well ….

Q. Get a wheelchair up to the river?

A. Yes.

Q. [chuckle] I've heard that argument.

A. And, they have. You're exactly right. But. We really explain: "Well, you walk down your Appalachian Trail for 150-200 miles, and then a segment of it the next year for your vacation, but because you're standing and looking into the deepest chasm, you're saying you're not sure you're up to it. But when you walk down the Appalachian Trail, you don't feel that you're intimidated, I guess."

Q. Except for people who want to go on a boat down the river, I mean a raft or a kayak.

A. A raft.

Q. Do you really need to get down into the Canyon to enjoy it?

A. Nope. Because it's a whole…. That's why I have 17 horses and mules. Ric specializes in floating on the river. I specialize with all of my family and all my

friends, of just riding these 2000 miles of trails that were all built by the homesteaders and the Forest Service maintained, kept up and identified only a fraction of those. But then, we just go ahead and find and explore trails that are between the trails that are between the trails.

Q. And you can see the river from most of those?

A. The neatest vistas just makes your old heart just, just throb, you know.

Q. Are there camping places there?

A. Oh! Always.

Q. And you approve of camping?

A. Oh absolutely! That's what it's really ….. that's really what ….. the Forest Service's hindered that happening and it should have been 100 times the magnitude in 25 years, than it is now.

Q. Because being up there you appreciate it more? Is that the idea?

A. You do. You do. And, we designated everything that went into the river "Wilderness," so that it wouldn't be developed. It would be only primitive camping.

Q. No fires.

A. Backpackers. No, you do build fires.

Q. Oh, you do? Well, what about scrabbling around for fuel? Is that a good thing?

A. No problem. Because north aspects is where usually there's springs and vegetation and trees and you have wood. But now, backpackers carry little gas stoves, and, you know, for convenience, and the less risk of a fire not being put out properly.

Q. Would you approve of a luxury lodge or two on the edge of the Canyon.

A. [laugh] He said the worst thing in the world. Ah, no way. But ….. that is usually what happens.

Q. What would that do besides cause parking problems.

A. Well, all those things bring about what most people are already doing. You know, you go to the Coast, people look for big, fancy hotels, motels, parked on the cliff …

Q. Hot showers and clean sheets …..

A. That's right. That's exactly right.

Q. So, why isn't that compatible with Hells Canyon?

A. Because that can be done nearly everywhere else <u>but</u> Hells Canyon.

Q. Oh, you should suffer a little when you go into Hells Canyon?

A. <u>A lot</u>. And enjoy every bit of it.

[chuckle, laughter]

Q. Now that's going to be hard to sell.

[more laughter]

A. There really are ….

Q. You'll enjoy it more if you suffer more.

A. We have generations of new outdoorsmen that put old an outdoorsman like me to shame. They are really …..

Q. Yeah, I'm aware of that. But then that's discriminatory. Isn't that the argument?

A. They throw that out. But it's, ah …..

Q. Why should only these rugged guys, and women, be the ones to enjoy it? Why shouldn't the rest of the people enjoy it.

A. That's why I mentioned to you at our dedication at Buckhorn there were people that challenged us on that very thing.

Q. And, do you have any comeback?

A. Yes, you can do just what you got right here. And you have Hells Canyon, but there are maps that have just like the Indian Reservation or Crater Lake National Park, the only one we've got in Oregon, and …..

Q. And, thousands of people can get right up to the edge of the Lake, easily.

A. They do do that. And, they do cause the problem that man has is not to know how to respect a fragile environment, and pretty soon those pristine places that we want to kind of protect are no longer ….. there's soil erosions, compactions, and …

Q. I understand that, but, how do you defend yourself against the charge that you really are an elitist?

A. Well, I have done my share of that, but that's why we have enough educated people that will support the upcoming legislation that we want to change from a public agency from Department of Agriculture to Department of Interior.

Q. So, I guess the argument would go: "Well, if we get enough people, thousands of people, who say that we need to preserve the Canyon the way it is, and we need to restrict access, we need to make it somewhat difficult to get there. The very fact that there are <u>thousands</u> of people who believe that, means that it's not an <u>elitist</u> position." Would that be accurate?

A. That'd be right. That's exactly what has happened.

Q. So, it's just a matter of defining "elitist" in a different way. And you don't have to make it such that 98% of the population is able to get to the lip of the Canyon and look over. Because 98% never will, in your view, I gather. Maybe 25%?

A. 25 would be ……. a possibility of still having the landscape survive. Yeah.

Q. Do you have any way of estimating how many people, approximately how many people a year, could travel these trails around the Canyon, without inflicting a lot of damage?

A. We know Yellowstone gets 3 million, plus, visitors. But, they can hardly wait to close the gate about now and then there's a different use that is <u>very</u> objectionable, and that's snowmobiling. But, the Park doesn't open until June, so <u>our</u> landscape out here is available to the public the year-around, from somewheres. You may not go to the 10-foot of snow on the top of the ridge at Hat Point. But you can go up to 1200 feet on the river level, and it's open the year-around and the Native Americans taught us that, over millions of years. So,

technically, it can be used more year-around that any other environment that I know of, really. Glacier Park, same thing, it's closed this week and won't open until next June, so it's only used for four or five months, and here, this one goes from 12000 to 8000 in elevation.

Q. In terms of numbers of visitors, if it's open year-around, could you get as many as 3 million people there without damaging it?

A. No. Because those darned automobiles benefit probably two-thirds of that three million, and one million are the only ones that really would, if they didn't have wheels, there'd only be one million visitors, at the most.

Q. Let's say they didn't park the automobiles in a place that was going to be damaging. They were just tramping around on the trails, and going, however they could get down to the river. Would the number of visitors that could be accommodated number in the millions? Or is it much less than that?

A. It probably wouldn't without extensive …… Yellowstone, I've hiked most of it, and it's rather gentle terrain, except for the Yellowstone Falls and their chasm they have, which is a small fraction of what we have out here. So, I ….. no I think they would do damage, alright.

Q. I have not been to Grand Canyon, either.

A. I haven't either.

Q. But, of course, it's much larger, and I'm sure there are many millions of people who go there every year.

A. Good comparison.

Q. And go down the trail to the bottom. And, I guess there's a lodge of some kind down there.

A. There is, you can ride mule, if you want to.

Q. So. Are there any lessons from the way people have been using Grand Canyon that can be applied to Hells Canyon?

A. If it were …. the winter months of the Grand Canyon are very popular, 'cause that's where this old retired boy and his wife go is warm Arizona weather. Up here, we have snow all winter long, around the outside they don't have that, but then they have heat in the summer that people can't bear so they're not as prevalent, but they are thinking of the automobile has already overdone itself,

many years ago. So they are considering a railroad out to the Canyon rim that will carry 500 people, and not 500 automobiles. So they're having to change their management. We would like to not have anything as drastic as building a paved road down the top of the ridge on both sides in Idaho and Oregon. But it could come to that. The Forest Service on the Oregon side, Ric, Brett were out there hiking, just last week to resurvey the violations that motorized people are doing on designated wilderness, because they don't respect designated wilderness.

Q. Well what's the commercial interest in having highways come it? To get to the jetboats?

A. No. It's just the rim. It's on the tops where people have, can do what they do at Grand Canyon. At Yellowstone. At Glacier Park. Is to drive to a parking lot and look out over the most pristine landscape and that's all that they do there. And, that's what nearly all of those areas do.

Q. Would that involve charging admission? Is that the commercial benefit of doing it?

A. They do. And they …..

Q. You don't have to pay anything when you go to Hat Point, do you?

A. No. There is no charge.

Q. But there are other places where you do have to pay admission?

A. Yes, there are.

Q. Are they mainly on the Idaho side?

A. Not really. It's mostly river activity that they request some fees.

Q. That's what I thought. You said they were up on the rim, not down by the river. So, how does that……

A. Well, when you're up on the rim, again, it's like I mentioned, it closes in the end of elk season, the first of December, and then 4th of July is the rule of thumb for automobile access.

[end of tape 3)

Loren Hughes
11/12/01
Tape #4

IV

A. …. at the rims on both Idaho and Oregon sides of the NRA to be closed, but Forest Service is not cooperating, that's why we think we have to change agencies in order to have the area and the wildlife that we hope we that will have -- woof [sic] visitation and start using Oregon for expanding their population and they can't if they have

Q. wolf?

A. right through their, woof, the gray woof that we have, it's kind of ahead of its prediction for establishment in Idaho and Montana and we've had Idaho woof visit Oregon, but the cattlemen insisted on the animal being tranquilized and moved back and we did that, but he will be back again, because that's the nature of the animal. Only Oregon cattlemen have already said the animal will be destroyed if he comes to Oregon, so we're in a stage of educating the public. We had great, big, successful meeting right here at the College in a big auditorium where 350 people and their kids came and a real, rehabilitated from being, the woof had been hurt and needed rehabilitation and so they were actually had the life woof there, as well as showing pictures and slides in a very interesting, fascinating program. And it went over really, really great.

Q. There seems to be quite a bit of emotional appeal to the wolf.

A. There is.

Q. As people understand more about the wolf's tenacity and habits.

A. We've been under a cloud of hundreds of years of …..

Q. despising

A. ……despising the woof, and he wasn't of that nature at all. And so, it's really pretty exciting. And we think …… we, last turkey season ……. we brought my family of five boys and I have promoted Wild Turkey introduction. Oregon never did have wild turkeys. Now we have wild turkey in every county in

Oregon, and so we've found, we think, woof scat out in our turkey hunting area in the corner of Oregon, right at the edge of the NRA and we have lots of turkeys on the NRA, but we think Idaho woof already came into that part of Oregon and probably went back to get a mate. So next turkey season, it's very likely we'll hear a woof howl in the corner of Oregon again.

Q. And you don't mind giving the wolves a few Turkey dinners?

A. Don't mind at all.

[chuckle / laughter]

Q. Is that a natural prey? Do they normally prey on turkeys in other parts of the country?

A. Yes, there were woof and turkey from the crest of the Rocky Mountains clear to the East Coast, Pilgrim time, and woofs were the same thing. So, and we have several artists that paint pictures of wooves and bobcats, lynx sneaking up on a turkey that has decided: "Hey, I'm going to be eaten if I don't fly." So, we're sure wooves know how good turkey are to eat. And cougar, we had eight cougar come into our decoys when we're calling in turkeys, 'cuz they have learned that turkeys are good eating.

Q. I'd like to take you back to the time when you <u>were</u> a business owner here in La Grande, and, undoubtedly, you found yourself unpopular on some occasions ….

A. A lot.

Q. Do you recall maybe two or three conversations you had with other business people?

A. My wife reminds me, because I didn't happen to come to my store, I had an errand to do in the morning at 8 a.m.

Q. That was Birnie's Jewelry, wasn't it?

A. Birnie's Jewelry.

Q. I knew Jean Birnie slightly.

[pause]

A. You know, I came through that door, and I wanted to give you a hug like I have met you before.

Q. Oh, yeah? Well, it's possible.

A. And now you pull just what I thought just what I thought you could pull.

[chuckle]

Q. 1951,

A. I had been here a year, September, 1950, is when I came.

Q. That was it, then.

A. George passed away in three weeks after I came to work for him. He went ….I didn't have anything to do but work 'til midnight every night, so I had all of his two months' of watch-making work all cleared up, and he looked at me and he said: "This hasn't happened in the last 40 years." He said: "I'm gonna take my first vacation, and Jean and I are going over to Boise, where….." I can't think of his name, I'll think of it, he was the Greyhound mechanic, and he would work on George's old car. Well, they transferred him to Boise, so he said: "I'm going over to have my car worked on by my friend." And, by dang, Jean called and said: "Loren, George passed away last night." And that was the most heart-breaking thing there ever was, because I was to learn a lot of things from that old boy. First licensed optometrist in the state of Oregon. Neatest people in the world.

Q. I know she was. This is one of the two rings that came from the store.

A. [chuckle] I can't believe that.

Q. Well, you have to.

A. That is just somethin.'

Q. Well, it gives us a bond we didn't know we had.

[chuckle]

A. It really does, 'cuz she stuck it out for 5 years. She'd never been in the store and she just finally looked at me and just said: "Why don't you and Betty buy my store so that I can enjoy the rest of my life the way that I was s'posed to?"

And I never realized that she hadn't helped George or anything. And she was the most inspirational person that anybody has ever met. She really gave me the outdoor ethics that I have and have tried to improve on, and I don't think you could improve on her outdoor ethics.

Q. Tell me a little more about that. I think I knew that she was oriented that way, but I didn't know in detail about it. Was she a hiker?

A. You bet. But, her dad was the first doctor in the County. Lived at Cove, where to come to La Grande, the valley was one big lake, so they had to go around through Union on the Foothill Road, and everything. Well, she told those stories. So she was on a horse before she could walk. And her and Gerda Brownton, and Jean Reece, Jean was a sister of the McKennon family, Jean raised because their mother passed away. So Jean raised Dallas McKennon, all that. Well, all that was just …. and they called themselves "Antique Girl Scouts." For 80 years they packed into the Minam, and the Minam was more sacred to Berneice and to all those women than really was to any Native American. They protected that canyon more than anybody. You brought in a secret time bomb!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

[Ric: I apologize, but I had to get on a call there, and now I have to get to town before 4 o'clock to get down here, so I'm going to take off, but I'm going to come right back. I apologize for jumping in and out, you guy]

A. You brought in a guy on me that has known Mrs. Birnie.

Q. He didn't know it……

[Ric: Oh! Are you kidding!?! No kidding!!!!]

Q. She sold me this ring.

A. Even got that ring. I couldn't believe that!!!!!!!

[chuckling]

Q. I want to know show she conveyed this ethic of the wilderness and nature to you.

A. She had a way of interviewing you or listening to your use of the outdoors and if you didn't quite meet her ethics, she had the neatest way to visit with you about doing it this way.

Q. She wouldn't confront you?

A. No.

Q. Use a more subtle approach than that.

A. No. No. More subtle than that. She was really the altimer [sic] of outdoor ….. there are many stories that have been written, and I have quite a few of them, about her outdoor ethics and about her. She actually was one of the 150 that testified for the Minam, and everybody stood up and applauded when that old girl. They knew, that was, ….

Q. She knew. Yes.

A. … knew, yeah. That's exactly right. You know, she always had a dog, like all of 'em, as they got older. She cooked in the fireplace. I lived with her, by the way. When George died, she just said: "Why are you staying down here in a little apartment? I have an extra bedroom."

Q. You were single?

A. And I went up and moved in. Until I gave my wife a ring, and got married on Thanksgiving Day. But she would cook …… no Native American could cook on an open fire like she could. So she was cooking, and squatted down and got up and the dog had gone up and set down behind her and when she stood up, she was 87, she fell over the dog and broke her hip. And like, too often, she couldn't get over that.

Q. I'm going to get back to your confrontations with businessmen, businesspeople around here. But,

A. I had the Baker Yamaha dealer come over from Baker with three of his ….

Q. This is Yamaha vehicles, not Yamaha pianos …..

A. Yamaha snowmobiles and ATVs and they were picketing the front of my store, and I wasn't there yet, and my wife just ….

Q. What would they call you? "A god-damned environmentalist?"

A. Yes. That's exactly right. Yeah, it was just exactly that. And, by golly, before I come – about 1/4 after – the local judge, Warner Wasley, had had coffee across the street from Birnie's Jewelry, and he was going back to his office, and he came

across the street to see what was happening, and he told the Yamaha dealer that he was …….I had all of my rights and that he was violating several city ordinances in picketing my business. And he wasn't that close a friend or acquaintance, but he had enough ethics about him, and that guy packed up his paraphernalia and all his picketing and his signs and took his friends and they left. And……

Q. Did he talk to you? Did the picketer talk to you?

A. No. When I got there they had …… the judge had threatened them that they were illegal, and my wife told me about it.

Q. You must have seen the picketer out there before the judge arrived.

A. I didn't. My wife did. She was putting the jewelry in the window for the display of the day, which by the way, that was one thing Mrs. Birnie, Jean, liked to do. She was so artistic, she could put in the prettiest windows and they were always the <u>first</u> buttercup of the year. She knew only where they grew, and she became a legend. Everybody knew they could look in the window in the first week of February, and see the very first buttercup of Eastern Oregon. She'd have it in the window.

Q. That's a good example of a subtle way to remind people of the presence of nature.

A. She could do just exactly that.

Q. Were you picketed only once?

A. Well, I'm trying to think ….. I can almost remember some other irate situations.

Q. Did you hear about them second-hand? Or did there often ……

A. Well, we always had lots of second-hand …….

Q. They wouldn't come right up to you and discuss it?

A. Not very often. I can't hardly remember more than a few times. I don't know if I had a mannerism that kept them from doing it. But I would <u>hear</u>, and other people would go to public meetings and I maybe wouldn't be there, but I'd be chastised and then they'd come and tell me, well this was this and this was that. But I kind of expected it, so I didn't think anything of it, really. But a lot of it was

because I was inspired so much by Jean Birnie that I could take anything anybody wanted to hand out.

Q. She was there at your side, at least…...

A. All the time.

Q. …….in your mind. Like a Guardian Angel.

A. And my having horses was like her having horses. And, so we really enjoyed telling each other's experiences month after month after month. And we kind of understood each other, but I never was a horseman. Horses ….. my cousins would make me ride a bare horse, bareback horse, knowing that I'd fall off. So, I never had any love for horses 'til Jean Birnie.

Q. Well, as you felt this disagreement, or outright opposition to your views, did it become more difficult to hang on to them?

A. Nope, it never …. It really got stronger and it still is stronger than ever, because of people like Ric. They've all been so inspirational to me, that it just actually ……. but I don't sleep as good at night as I used to because of the volumes and volumes and volumes of conservation projects that need to be accomplished, you know.

Q. What exactly are you doing now? About the conservation projects?

A. Well, all of my conservation friends are very inspirational in keeping this old boy around. I don't really do that much good. These lovely girls are part of that whole thing.

Q. Well, they might not like to be called "girls."

[laughter]

[Jane: Oh yes they would!]

A. They go get on those computers, and start getting money, and they start getting…..

Q. What do you do then, do you mainly inspire <u>them</u>?

A. They say that, but I, sometimes I wonder.

Q. Are you up here often?

A. Yep. I am.

Q. What do you just sit around chat? Or, do you …

A. No way. They don't let me get by with that!

Q. Well, what do you do then?

A. Really, we always have an appeal on a gold-mining operations or we have something that ……

Q. So you're working on …..

A. …… so we jump in my pick-up and Brett goes with me and we go up and look at Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams from up here on a high spot, but here's ATVs that have cut all of our ranchers' fences, and we take pictures of them, so I come back and this office writes up letters and legal documents that make me look good.

Q. I should think the ATV riders and the ranchers are both on the wrong side, aren't they?

A. They are both on the wrong side. But we're trying to get on the side of the rancher because of the destruction of … his new fence was destroyed.

Q. You're making the best of a bad thing? Is that it?

A. Yes, [laughter] that's right. [laughter]

Q. I just think compromise ……. that's what it is, isn't it, compromise, a lot of the time?

A. It is, just that. Yeah. But conservationists have been doing too much of that, compromising.

Q. Especially when it's paid by the government.

A. Especially [chuckle].

Q. Is anybody writing up a history of all of this? Or taking notes for a history?

A. I think there is definitely a nice file. Ric always says: "I can provide that historical information." And we were just asked that in Portland, just this last Saturday. And Ric assured that we have all that documentation.

Q. It seems to me that since, in your mind, is a great deal of the history of this, and you have a broad prospective on what's been going on since the 1930's, approximately, …..

A. Yes, that's right ….

Q. …..that you probably are in a position, maybe with some help, to tell what really is an epic story. This is a large struggle, isn't it? With many ramifications. Many different players. Many implications for centuries, probably.

A. Definitely. Umhmm And it seems like it's only still in its infancy, when we have a five-state wilderness proposal, and you know you take in lots of people in five states. So, that's exactly right. And that's what makes me set up in my bed, eyes wide open and not able to sleep, 'cuz I don't have very many more years to go, to see these things be finalized.

Q. People around here are living to 100.

A. [laughter] Right.

Q. So ….. why not you. Do you think that a history like this needs to be written from a neutral standpoint? I mean, a sort of a detached perspective, so that it's possible to try to state fairly what all sides are saying about Hells Canyon and maybe the area as a whole, or would you like to see a more partisan history?

A. Again, there isn't time to involve, in educating and swinging people from the opposite viewpoint over. This old boy has decided they're not worth spending any more time on.

Q. Well, I really don't think they're "evil."

A. Because I've already spent 70 years doing that.

Q. Of course, the purpose of a history is not usually to argue one side or the other. You can't write history that way. But, I wonder if you think maybe that we've reached the point where a history of this struggle would be valuable if it were told from an essentially non-partisan point of view.

A. Definitely. Yeah. It really would do just that. That would be the "Jean Birnie Approach."

Q. "Jean Birnie Approach" ……. you mean, she would certainly, at least subtly, indicate what her point of view is, if she wrote the history it would be largely from her perspective, I suppose.

A. She'd have done just that,

Q. I gather, though, that the efforts going into the struggle are so consuming now that there isn't time for anybody here to write such a history. Or maybe this is not the best place for a history to come from, anyway.

A. No, I don't know why it wouldn't ….. there really isn't anybody that shouldn't have, that wouldn't benefit from it, right from here. Really. It's just HCPC and their staff and people that we have around us are the best that there is …..

Q. Most informed …..

A. ummhmm.

Q. Yes, that's certainly important.

A. Yeah, it is, really. No. It is. Nope it would be …..

Q. Have all of the – I suppose this is an obvious question, and the answer should be obvious – Have all of the facets of Hells Canyon as it was and the various damages that have occurred within, been documented by photographs.

A. Yep. There has been.

Q. You've got thousands of them?

A. Yes.

Q. Amateur photographs?

A. Yes.

Q. Any aerial?

A. Yes, I had friends that have taken me on airplane rides lots of times.

Q. To take photographs?

A. uhhah, and then that helped with some of my appeals on resource damage.

Q. That's what I wondered. Do the photographs show <u>clearly</u> the effects of human intrusion?

A. Definitely.

Q. And can you ….. are they ….. can you arrange them chronologically, so that you can see from the photographs how it was? I mean, obviously, not before the homesteaders got there, but, and you said they had already over-grazed by the early part of the 20th century, but would some of the photographs show it <u>close</u> to what it might originally have been?

A. I have a cousin that that was his job, to do transects of over a hundred-year period, and he's published a couple of books ….

Q. Of just that area?

A. And photographed 99-100 years ago and then the present day, and it was done on transects, that were …… And, Gifford Pinchot is even in one of the pictures a hundred years ago, and then, a hundred years later, a transect picture on the same site. And, there's about 70-some of those in this book. So, the Forest Service has a lot of those, and he was able to go get that, and the Forest Service did do just what you just said, and they didn't influence his comments and his 100-year-later response. He re-read the vegetation and documented the vegetation of a 100 years later. So, those are available. And then Ric, has just recently, for some lawsuits that are pending, showed us, just last Saturday, that are astounding photographs.

Q. I should think they would be good objective evidence for the case.

A. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

Q. Are there detailed captions and explanations to go with them? Written?

A. uhhah, umhmm

Q. The Forest Service wrote them?

A. Yep, they did. But, really, Ric's attorney has written more recent ones in order to go to court and represent the cause.

Q. What aspects of this whole story have we <u>not</u> covered? Especially the older parts?

[long pause]

A. Well, I know ….. there has to be …. lots of 'em …..

Q. Well, let's restrict it to your own <u>direct</u> personal observations. There are probably parts of the chronology of your involvement in this whole matter that we haven't touched on.

A. I don't know why I'm drawing a blank on …..

Q. Do you remember the first time you saw Hells Canyon?

A. [long pause] Well, it probably …… it's alarming to think that maybe I <u>never</u> really seen very much of the Hells Canyon because ……..

[end of tape #4]

Loren Hughes **V**
11/12/01
Tape #5

A. [repeats] Well, it probably …… it's alarming to think that maybe I <u>never</u> really seen very much of the Hells Canyon because ……..…. for 30 years, probably, because we had something more aesthetic in the Eagle Cap Wilderness. And I was really, technically, embarrassed when my oldest son played in the high school band and they had been invited to Wallowa Lake in August to play in an outdoor concert. And my son came to me and said: "Dad, do you s'pose that you and Mom would come to Wallowa Lake and see and listen to my band play." And I looked at him and I said: "Why, sure I would!" And he looked at me and he said: "Do you know I have <u>never</u> been to Wallowa Lake?!" And it just <u>stunned</u> me. That I had deprived <u>all</u> my boys of being ever been to Wallowa Lake, 80 miles. But they had been to <u>every</u> lake, all 100 lakes of the Wallowas, Eagle Cap Wilderness, every trail in the Wallowas, and I had turned them loose clear in the edge of Idaho and they walked all the way through to La Grande, 80 miles, and yet I had <u>never</u> taken 'em to Wallowa Lake.

I really almost felt that little, but yet, it emphasized that I really had thought …… I thought I had showed 'em the whole world, their whole lives, but that was ……

Q. You had shown them Hells Canyon.

A. But they all have rode horses and mules and killed Bighorn Sheep and bear and hunted and, first my one son killed the first Spring bear in Oregon. The first legal Spring bear hunt 14 years ago. And, so, and then they had worked for the Forest Service maintaining and building trails on Hells Canyon, and we gave up on the Eagle Cap after we discovered Hells Canyon because it's truly wilderness. You don't see ever, hardly ever, any other human beings because there's so much country out there, you know where to go to have a true wilderness experience. And, you can't hardly do it on the Eagle Cap any more, because too many people have found out about it.

Q. When you take boys to the Hells Canyon, what do you talk about?

A. Well, first place they were always out on a rock with a fishing pole. [chuckle]

Q. So, they're talking about the fish ……

A. …..and, the fishing. And look around, one of the lake and see a wolverine going around through the rocks, and then the elk were usually …… August is the most desirable time of the year because, and so elk are bugling. Every time I'd tell Jean where our family went to camp, or if we asked her, she would tip us off where the best camp spot, back away from the lake, so that you didn't have any other visitors feel deprived or shorted for a wilderness experience by somebody already being there. So she always told us if you go back around you can be away where you won't ruin the experience, but you have already had the experience of a wilderness, by you being the first one there.

Q. Now, you're talking about Eagle Cap lakes now.

A. Eagle Cap lakes, yeah.

Q. In Hells Canyon ……

A. We don't have very many lakes in the Oregon side, but the Idaho side, Seven Devils has lots and lots of lakes.

Q. But you go to Hells Canyon for somewhat different purposes. I mean, the main thing you see is the river? Right? And you go on these trails? What are you ……You're observing plants? Talking about animals?

A. All of that, yeah. You do. And there's a species of vegetation, plums and pears and apples, some apples that are like this, they don't have a worm in 'em because they are so far back there the worm hasn't found 'em.

Q. These are <u>wild</u> apple trees?

A. Nope. They were most of them domestic.

Q. Planted by the homesteaders?

A. The wild cherry and the wild plum and a lot of that is native and, of course, [tape glitch?] …..we maintained 80 miles of trail and went after the camp and then went down to the river and watched a family of otter swam along beside us for about 20 miles, playing in the water and they knew we were enjoying them, and certainly they were enjoying us, in a way. But you have just …… and then you see remmelments [sic] of old homesteads and the old farm machinery that has rusted up and you visit about how primitive all that was and how did they get all of that equipment 50 miles from the nearest road? You know? And they had their …… Ace Barton writes stories gold mining stamps being put on the backs of big draft horses that carry a half a ton of weight, which is about four times more than any other animal, and getting them into these areas. And that old equipment is still there, because nobody knew how to get it out after it got there. So, it's just ……. there's lots …….. and he makes such detail. Those books just go right in our saddlebag and you ride around into one homestead and you open up the pages and you read about the name of the family that was there and, you can visualize that they did all the haying that they could do on this little five-acre area.

Q. You can get all this from the Ace Barton book?

A. Uhhuh. Yep. Uhhuh.

Q. Sounds very complete.

A. It is complete. It is.

Q. He surveyed everyone that was living there at the time?

A. And their names. And someone would live on the Idaho side of the river and he would tell how they would row a boat across the river and stay overnight with those folks, and then come back on to his side of the river. It's really a very complete book.

Q. Have there been archeological studies of the Indians being there?

A. Not nearly enough. And not all that plentiful.

Q. What's the evidence that they were there?

A. There are visible teepee rings, of which one of the lawsuits that are just being filed is, the Forest Service building an illegal road right in to where the ….. it'll provide access to where there will be public vandalism of a lot of these archeological sites.

Q. What is a "teepee ring"?

A. It's where a teepee has been for hundreds of years, and a recess of them living down in a kind of a bowl, and …….

Q. Lined with something?

A. No, they just had their teepee poles and their teepee, but they lived down in there and built fires for many years, that they just got lower and lower. The soil would be moved around just by human activity.

Q. I would have thought erosion might cover those up.

A. It has, lately, been some of that, and we have part of our lawsuit is to make the Forest Service close that road so that human activity – there are so many people, public, that don't know that they're even a teepee ring. They don't recognize the size.

Q. Why should they? Yeah.

A. And so they can't be totally blamed for the erosion that they bring about.

Q. Is there evidence of tools?

A. Yes, definitely. There is. A lot of that has been collected, and we have had an active archeological, and it is a friend of us, as conservationists, he's been very good about being secretive about where he finds things. But we often tell him where we run on to things and then he collects it and brings it in, so that it won't be vandalized. And Ric knows where a lot of petograph [sic] work is up away from the river, and he does a very good job of taking river floater clients and pulling in and say: "We've got a little hike up the this area. And, I'll show you

some really good Indian artwork." And it is exceptional. But he don't tell hardly anybody where those are at. He don't trust 'em. The Canyon is full of …… and I bet a very small percentage of it has actually been actually recorded.

Q. Do we know with certainty which tribes were there?

A. We think so. The Nez Perce dominated this part of the……they were ……. Not many of the other tribes really wanted to work as hard as the Nez Perce did, wintering in the Canyon.

Q. Were the Shoshone farther south in Idaho?

A. Yes, they were. We just got back last month from Great Falls, Montana, where I hosted my ship's reunion for Lewis and Clark and C.M. Russell Museums are all up for the 200th Anniversary is coming up in two years. So, Sacajawea was Shoshone, and the Shoshone and the Nez Perce were pretty friendly tribes among themselves, and they dominated most of the Snake River and Montana. Lemhi, Idaho, southern Idaho area. It was a very nice experience. All my ship's mates, really, we were in the Pacific during the War and they really did enjoy Montana, not one of 'em had been to Montana – so that was an experience. So the Nez Perce are our best friends. Ric works with them hand-in-glove and they're doing woof recovery for us at Winchester, I believe is the name, it's right out of Lewiston a ways, that they have woof rehabilitation there.

Q. I'm sure we haven't exhausted the subject, but shall we end it here?

A. I think maybe we can.

Q. And if you think of things that we should have talked about, we can schedule another time if you like.

A. We could do that. I'd like that. You old devil, what I'd do is make a few notes so I don't have these, what do we call 'em, "Senior Moments"?

Q. You haven't had many of those.

A. I did. You spellbound me.

Q. No, I always consider those moments when you're thinking.

A. I'm not sure you could have given me a heart attack ….. he pulled one that just topped everything …..

Q. Oh, I wanted to surprise ya!.

[end of tapes]