

AN INTERVIEW WITH
JAMES W. GILTMIER

by

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James W. Giltmier
(1934-2006)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	i
Career in Journalism	2
The Everglades Story	4
Nixon and the Environment	5
Atlanta Television	6
Civil Rights	7
American Political Science Award	8
Washington, D.C. Television	9
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry	10
Senator Hubert Humphrey	13
Rural Development	15
More on Senator Humphrey	17
Farm Bills	19
Staff Assignments	20
Political Strategy	21
Senate Workload	24
Politics of Selecting Forest Service Chief	26
Resources Planning Act	28
Congressional Oversight	32
More on Farm Bills	35
Appropriations	38
“Senator” Sam Thompson and Bob Wolf	41
National Forest Management Act	42
Senate Agriculture and Energy Committee, Plus the House of Representatives	47
Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation Service	49
Eastern Wilderness Act	53
Three Little Bills	54

<u>Senator Melcher and Zenchu</u>	57
<u>Tennessee Valley Authority</u>	58
<u>Staff Assignments</u>	59
<u>Technology Transfer</u>	60
<u>Pinchot Institute for Conservation</u>	62
<u>Potomac Fever</u>	66
<u>More on Pinchot Institute</u>	67
<u>Senior Fellow at Pinchot Institute</u>	70
<u>Small Forestland Ownership</u>	72

INTRODUCTION

Jim Giltmier first came to my attention via Denny LeMaster's fine book, *Decade of Change: the Remaking of Forest Service Statutory Authority during the 1970s* (1984). During that seminal decade, Jim was the guy who knew the most about forestry on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, the committee that handled much of the legislation that LeMaster described. Later on, my interviews with former chiefs John McGuire and Max Peterson bolstered my understanding that Jim indeed was a key player and someone who much deserved an interview of his own to capture some of the congressional side story that has mostly been told from the agency point of view, except of course for *Decade of Change*. It wasn't difficult to persuade Ed Brannon at Grey Towers to support the project.

James W. Giltmier was born in Chicago on July 24, 1934. He states that "I started working when I was ten years old and I've been working ever since." He studied for a year at Loyola University, when he "ran out of money." He then enrolled at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, studying to be a priest but his "real goal was to get a college education." After a year and a half at Loras, he enlisted in the Air Force and was trained in pharmacy at Gunter Air Force Base in Alabama. There he met and married Kay Wilson, and the Giltmiers--by now with two children--completed his enlistment at Randolph Field in San Antonio, Texas.

The Giltmiers moved to Arkansas, and Jim began a twelve-year stint as a journalist, starting with the Pine Bluff newspaper, where "they thought much deeper thoughts than I had ever thought before." Although he had no formal training in journalism--or in writing--he did well, and shortly moved to Boca Raton, Florida, where the *Miami Herald* had a bureau. He covered a story concerning the health of the Everglades, which was his first tangible contact with environmental issues. From there, he jumped to Atlanta to be a television newscaster. As in Pine Bluff, civil rights was a major issue, "something was always happening."

From Atlanta, the Giltmiers moved to Washington, DC, where he continued in television news. However, he did not find that interviewing "talking heads" of congressmen and senators to be very interesting, "and it certainly wasn't paying anything," and he left after a year and a half. In 1971, he successfully applied for a staff position with the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, where Herman Talmadge of Georgia was its newly appointed chairman. This assignment lasted a decade and would turn out to be very significant for American forest management.

The Renewable Natural Resources Planning Act and the National Forest Management Act were key pieces of legislation for the Agriculture Committee during this period, and in the pages that follow Giltmier recounts their routes to enactment. We see a mix of players--in and out of Congress--and learn of ongoing congressional concern that new statutes will be effective but also not an undue burden to the agency responsible for carrying out additional mandates. We also learn that substantive forestry requirements have been periodically attached as amendments to farm legislation. In these cases forestry shares the stage with nutrition and other topics related to agriculture, all bunched together to attract enough votes for passage in a Congress with wide-ranging local interests. It is a legislative strategy, and forestry matters lacking adequate support can in this way be passed. In all it is a solid lesson on how "a bill becomes a law." Finally, Giltmier clearly lays out the importance of congressional oversight that aims to ensure the agencies adequately fulfill their responsibilities contained in law.

In 1980 the Republicans became the majority party, abruptly shifting committee make up. Giltmier and others appointed by the Democrats lost their jobs. He was then hired as Washington, D.C. representative to the Tennessee Valley Authority, where he stayed for five years. At TVA his primary assignment was to lobby for appropriations in support of fertilizer research, soil conservation, rural development, and forestry. Next he worked for the law firm of Arter & Hadden. A major client was Zenchu, the largest farmer cooperative in the world and located in Japan. The Japanese did not want American rice to be sold in their country, and Giltmier was involved in food import and export strategies. After a year and a half at Arter & Hadden, he responded to an ad in the *Journal of Forestry* that announced an opening for executive director of the Pinchot Institute for Conservation. He was selected in 1989.

It was to be a new position in Washington, D.C. The institute--then named the Pinchot Institute for Conservation Studies--was located in Milford, Pennsylvania, in the magnificent house that had once been the home of Gifford Pinchot, who had been founding chief of the U.S. Forest Service. Giltmier rented a mechanical typewriter and worked out of his home. The Washington representative for the Pinchot Institute was in business. He began by "writing to everybody I could think of, saying we're open."

His major programs were conferences; "We'd see a subject that needed some kind of coverage." The Forest Service was the primary source of funds, and the issues selected were germane to that agency's interests, such as the evolution of ecosystem management. He recounts that "networking is everything in Washington," and Giltmier also interacted with special interest groups ranging from industrial lobbyists to environmental advocates. In 1994 he was succeeded by Alaric Sample, author of *Land Stewardship in the Next Era of Conservation* (1991), published by institute..

Giltmier continued his association with PIC as a senior fellow. A major effort of his dealt with forestry education, and he compiled a chronology of state and private forestry activities of the Forest Service. After he moved from Washington, D.C. to Hot Springs, Arkansas, he developed a substantial list of email recipients for news of forestry and conservation related issues. He remains involved.

Harold K. Steen (HKS): Jim, let's start with when and where were you born?

James W. Giltmier (JWG): Chicago, Illinois, July 24, 1934, the hottest day in the history of Chicago.

HKS: Did something happen that made you who you are?

JWG: I was pretty much set up on my own. I started working when I was ten years old. I had two paper routes and I've been working ever since.

HKS: You entered Loyola I assume on sort of a liberal arts track.

JWG: Yes, that's right.

HKS: What did you think you might do as a major?

JWG: I had no idea except that I was determined that I was going to get a college education. I didn't have any money and there was no possibility of getting any money, but I just got in there and worked off on the side. It didn't work. I ran out of money.

HKS: Loyola is a private school, right?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: My thought was if you run out of money I can see that but if a state school had been less expensive...

JWG: Some states are very good about caring for their students, but Illinois wasn't one of those. I don't know if they are now.

HKS: And then you went in the Air Force. This was a draft situation?

JWG: No, I went from Loyola to Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. It was a Catholic school too, and I was studying to be a priest. I expect my real goal was to get a college education.

HKS: Were you the oldest son and oldest sons become priests?

JWG: Well, I'm the only son. I had two sisters, both younger. That was a wonderful experience at Loras, but I wasn't really destined to become a priest. I got out of Loras after a year and a half, and I didn't know what else to do so I enlisted in the Air Force. I figured they were going to come and get me anyway. There was still a little bit of the Korean War left, and that was a good experience. I did pretty well on the tests and they didn't know what to do with me so they made me a pharmacist. I went to pharmacy school at Gunter Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama and I met my wife there. She was to become my wife and then I started my life.

HKS: You didn't decide, hey, this pharmacy's a good gig. I think I'll become a pharmacist and make my big bucks and have my own?

JWG: I even had a doctor who wanted to send me to medical school, but I already had two kids and there wasn't any way I was going to medical school. It's like you build a set of dreams for yourself. One time when I was in the Air Force I asked Kay if it would be all right if I went to Mexico and got a Mexican divorce so that I could become a radar observer on a B-47. She said she didn't think that would be all right so I didn't. [Laughter]

HKS: You couldn't be married and be on a B-47?

JWG: No, you couldn't. You could get married afterward but in the training period you couldn't be married.

HKS: Wonder if they still do that?

JWG: I don't think so. When we first got married they did everything they could to keep us apart. With a wife and two kids, I was making a hundred and seventy-eight dollars a month.

HKS: Living on base?

JWG: No, couldn't afford to live there. I had to live at...

HKS: I thought-- I was in the Navy about the same time you were in the Air Force-- that base housing was a part of your compensation. It was deducted from your pay. But it wasn't that way?

JWG: No, no.

HKS: Maybe that's overseas. I was on Guam.

JWG: Could be. I fought the battle of Randolph Field, Texas and so we lived in San Antonio.

Career in Journalism

HKS: So you became a journalist, and you're still interested in journalism it seems like.

JWG: Yes, I am. I'm a writer. That's my career, I'm a writer. It took me a long time to figure it out.

HKS: You had no formal training in writing?

JWG: No.

HKS: You didn't take creative writing your freshman year at Loyola or anything?

JWG: No, no, nothing like that. That's just what I wound up being.

HKS: Well, you were a journalist during interesting times. I guess all times are interesting, but the civil rights movement...

JWG: Oh yes, that was.

HKS: You're from this area and you work in this area as a journalist. Was it a shock to you when you started looking more closely and seriously at issues as a journalist where you might not if you were just going to work each day in Pine Bluff?

JWG: That's right. I was thrown in with a different group of people than I wouldn't have encountered in an ordinary life situation. They thought much deeper thoughts than I had ever thought about before. It was crazy. I had gone from being the executive director of the Pine Bluff Community Chest to being a journalist where they thought about who the governor was and what he was doing and who was being treated right and who wasn't. You know, the ideas and the ideals of social justice...

HKS: It was a liberal paper?

JWG: Yes, it was. It was. It isn't anymore, but the family who ran it just thought that some things were right and some things weren't right and it certainly affected the way I approached my job.

HKS: Orval Faubus was governor?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: These are names I remember. I was in the Puget Sound area at the time this was all going on.

JWG: He was an unusual guy. He was personally a very nice guy, but he used his office for some of the most venal and god awful things.

HKS: Did he really have choices?

JWG: Yes, he did. He did. At the same time that Little Rock Central was going down, Dale Bumpers writes in his book about his little community where they desegregated with no problem, no problem at all because the community chose not to make a problem. Faubus served more terms as governor than any other human being ever, and it was because of the race thing. And it was terrible, terrible, terrible, because it allowed stupid people to do terrible things to black people. It gave them permission. I never really thought of myself as kind of a crusader for race rights, but what was going on there it certainly made you stop and think about it in a different sort of way.

HKS: I was going to ask, growing up in the context of the South of when people started thinking seriously and could talk about it. If you go over at the neighbors for something and you talk about these things or was it just a subject that never comes up, civil rights?

JWG: Largely didn't come up in my family. Matter of fact, my folks were, both mother and father, were a couple of racists.

HKS: So were mine.

JWG: Even after King was killed, Chicago was still a far more racist city than any place that I'd ever been in the South, even Mississippi, which was the worst. I had a job at the newspaper where I traveled a lot and I used to be afraid to go through Mississippi and I wasn't black. It was such a terrible place and it still is in some respects.

HKS: And that's just across the river but it makes a big difference.

JWG: Yes, it does.

HKS: So you moved from Pine Bluff to Miami to the big time of the *Miami Herald* at Boca Raton.

JWG: Well, it was the big time. I went to eighty-five dollars a week to a hundred and fifteen dollars a week.

HKS: Percentage wise that's a big jump.

JWG: [Laughter] But it was an important jump because it was the *Miami Herald* and not the *Pine Bluff Commercial*, just because it was that. And they plunked me down in a little bureau in Boca Raton, Florida and I was the bureau. I had a wonderful time there, but after a year and a half or so I just could see that I wasn't going anywhere and I had to get out of there.

HKS: Let me go back a step. You started working for the Pine Bluff paper and you wrote a story. Did you have a role model, somebody that said Jim, this is the way a lead should be and help you get a sense of journalism and how you form a story other than who, what, when, and where? Or did you just write and the copy edited it and sent it back? Was there any leadership there?

JWG: The publisher first of all was a marvelous man. He and his brother ran the paper. The brother ran the technical side, the mechanical side of putting out the paper, and he watched over the editorial side. Then there was a wild and crazy man named Patrick Owens who was my executive editor. And managing

editor was a fellow named Gene Forman who went on to be the managing editor of the *Philadelphia Enquirer*. They were all very talented people. My city editor was a fellow named Bill Miles who went on to be some big cheese at the Memphis paper.

HKS: So the good people leave the small town papers, is this a fair statement?

JWG: Sure, sure, you have to. You can't afford to stay there, and I mean afford in the most literal sense. It just was impossible for us to live there. We worked seventy-hour weeks and we got eighty bucks a week for it. That's too bad but that's the way journalism is. It isn't a high paid business, I'll tell you that, except for television news. And I didn't ever make any money in the television side.

HKS: What I was thinking about when I asked you that question, when I lived in California I knew a professor who taught journalism. He said the first step is, stop using prepositions. Just don't use prepositions. He said it makes you think differently about the story you're telling. Academics may have four prepositional phrases in a sentence and it really bogs you down. I'm sure there are other guidelines like that. I'm not asking to list them or anything. I thought that somebody sat down with you and said Jim, this is the way you ought to think when you write your story. But that didn't happen? Just trial and error and you did well?

JWG: As a matter of fact, the way these people taught me how to think had nothing to do with the mechanics of writing. They were right [Laughter] and I hadn't thought about what was right before.

HKS: How about political bias? We're all biased in some ways, whether we're Republicans, Democrats, we come from urban backgrounds, rural backgrounds. As a journalist color is what you see. Is that much of an issue? Is that something to get over and become sort of neutral?

JWG: Well, you have to try to become neutral but to tell you the truth, when you have a pretty good idea in your mind what's right and what's wrong, I wasn't an unbiased reporter at all. I was damned biased.

HKS: Was there an editorial tone to the paper that affected the way you were edited when you turned your article in?

JWG: No.

HKS: Like they were for a candidate or against a candidate, that kind of thing?

JWG: No. What that paper did, because it was such a small staff, they trusted you. You either got it right or you didn't get it right and there wasn't anybody telling you how to write a story, that is to say, what was the right way to write this particular story. They left it up to the reporter.

HKS: Maybe Dan Rather needed some early schooling. He's taken quite a few hits.

JWG: [Laughter] Well.

The Everglades Story

HKS: Everglades story; looking back, did that tell you that the environment was an issue that you'd like to visit someday?

JWG: It just startled me. I saw a picture of a house in Belle Glade, Florida and the house stood about a foot off the ground. And I went out to Belle Glade and I saw that same house and it had a boat and an automobile parked under it because this muck, the so-called soil out there, was eroding at such a rapid rate of an inch or two every year because the water had been taken away from it and so it was turning into gas and evaporating into the air.

HKS: The Corps of Engineers did this or the developing did it?

JWG: Corps did it primarily. In the late '30s there was a hurricane that took Lake Okeechobee and just dumped it to the south. And ever afterwards it was a matter of trying to tame the lake so that you didn't have flooding in the Everglades. Well, the Everglades are all about flooding. So I did that story and the people went absolutely berserk. Matter of fact, the paper wouldn't even run it for a while. They said, you know, this can't be right. And then somebody said oh yeah, we did a story about that about thirty years ago. [Laughter] And so they finally ran it but they only ran it in the Palm Beach County edition of the paper because it would be just terrible, you know, if people really knew that that was what was going on in the Everglades.

Nixon and the Environment

HKS: You were long gone by the time the new Miami airport, jetport, was proposed?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Nixon finally denied the proposal but the same...

JWG: Same phenomenon.

HKS: I never really looked into it why Nixon would do that. I mean there's a political question to that. All that presidents deal with are political questions. But for him to do that, he was advised by someone.

JWG: Bill Reilly. Same guy who ran EPA.

HKS: Is that right?

JWG: Nixon was an environmentalist and no two ways about it. He created EPA. He created the Council on Environmental Quality. He almost created a national land use bill until he was told by some of the more right-wing Republicans that he simply couldn't do a thing like that.

HKS: Obviously we have sidetracked to Nixon. I interviewed Bill Towell, and he said twice that Nixon was ready to sign an executive order to ban clearcutting on the national forests. You ever heard that? That's about the time you were in the Senate.

JWG: No, I haven't heard that but I'm not surprised.

HKS: You're not surprised that he would have done that?

JWG: No. I would guess that more than any other issue that I can think of other than bombing Cambodia, [Laughter] he was really a person who cared about the environment.

HKS: That's interesting. I interviewed Bill Reilly who was head of CEQ under Nixon then EPA under Bush I, and he said that Nixon didn't care about the environment but he knew it was important and put good people on it, but he was a foreign policy person.

JWG: I think so.

HKS: I'm not trying to challenge you. Reilly did say that Nixon came up to him long after he was president. Bill spoke in New York and Nixon was in the audience. He came up afterwards and shook his hand and said I'm an environmentalist too. I created EPA, and Bill was smiling when he was telling me this like he thought sure, whatever he thought. Nixon's reputation has been greatly affected by Watergate.

JWG: That's right. You know as you pull away from things and people and in time you begin to get a better perspective on them. I despised Nixon but on some things he couldn't have been better.

HKS: Lincoln was one of the least popular presidents too.

JWG: That's right, that's right.

HKS: History does have a way of changing the story. So you're at the Boca Raton bureau. Everglades was interesting but the environment was, you didn't really seek that out? That came later as it turned out?

JWG: As a matter of fact, someone got me a copy, a photograph of this house and challenged me to go out and find the house and see what had happened since. So I did that and it was mind-boggling. But I got support for the story from my bureau chief in West Palm Beach, and that really changed the way I thought about a lot of things. You grow up on the south side of Chicago in a tenement, you don't think much about the environment, I'll tell you. So when I went out and actually saw this phenomenon of soil subsidence, it was pretty jarring. But then I had to get out of there too because I wasn't going any place and I needed some more money for my kids.

There was another big story that I did on there. They built this school called Florida Atlantic University. Its motto was "Where Tomorrow Begins". And they were going to teach by television and they were going to do this and they were going to do that. I ran twenty or thirty stories about how they weren't going to do this and they weren't going to do that and it isn't where tomorrow begins and it's all baloney. I really got in a lot of trouble running those stories but they were true. As a result, I became very friendly with a lot of academics, who were promoting those stories, who were saying, we came here with the understanding that this was going to be a different place where young academics could soar if they really applied themselves. And it turned out not to be true. But that ran me into a bunch of people I'd never known before and young Ph.D.s who had high ideals about higher education. I've carried those ideals with me for a long, long time, up to today. So that was my other big story at *Miami Herald*.

HKS: You read about when a paper carries a controversial article, advertisers cancel their ads and stuff. Does that really happen in papers that they get that kind of financial pressure directly based upon controversial stories?

JWG: Sure, sure. With a paper as big as the *HERALD* they don't worry about that too much, but it certainly does happen and they have to decide whether they want to tell the truth or whether they want to eat the lost advertising.

Atlanta Television

HKS: So you went to Atlanta TV?

JWG: I found an ad in the *Editor and Publisher* magazine, and they wanted an investigative journalist. I didn't know what the heck an investigative journalist was.

HKS: Watergate hadn't broken you in?

JWG: No, but I went down there and it still wasn't for all that much money and I got into the television business. I had to learn a whole new technology.

HKS: Were you in front of the camera or did you supervise a large story that somebody else wrote the script for?

JWG: Oh, I was on camera.

HKS: Oh, you were on camera?

JWG: I didn't know what I was doing [Laughter] but I was on camera.

HKS: I always thought that must be the hardest job, a two-minute story or something.

JWG: Oh, it is hard. It is hard. I had to learn a whole new way to write.

HKS: You watch the presidential debates and they've got two minutes and forty-five seconds and thirty seconds, I mean to talk about Iraq in two minutes. You can't even define the issue in two minutes. It's sort of like being on television, right?

JWG: It really is. And writing for other people to speak is very difficult, you know, for the anchorman to speak.

HKS: Because of speech patterns they have?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: The ability to pronounce certain words?

JWG: Well, it's how fast they speak. And time is everything in television. I mean, the six o'clock news goes on at six o'clock. You don't hold the presses.

HKS: "This just in." [Laughter]

JWG: I had to learn all that junk about cameras and lighting and sound quality.

HKS: Boy, what you bring to mind is when Kennedy was assassinated, Johnson became president and was using Kennedy's speech writer, Ted Sorenson, and here was Lyndon Johnson speaking like John Kennedy. It didn't work. And shortly he had his own speechwriter and he started talking like Lyndon Johnson and that's what you are talking about. The script has to actually match the personality, the temperament of the guy or it doesn't look real.

JWG: That's right. That's right. The people who write for the anchors on network news tend to stay there a long time or at least stay there as long as the anchor does because they can get into the groove of the way this person talks, the way he thinks. They're surrogates really and that's really important. On little stations like we have here in Little Rock you don't pick up on the nuisances there very much but in Atlanta where we train people for NBC news everyday. Brokaw used to work with me.

HKS: That must be tough on the, I'll call them the stepping stone stations here. You never really develop a rhythm of your own. There's no face recognition.

JWG: That's right. At our station the news director was the anchor and the assistant news director was the anchor at noon.

Civil Rights

HKS: When civil rights was the issue, were you assigned to civil rights particularly?

JWG: I didn't think I was going to go back and do that again. But as it worked out, it was the home of Martin Luther King, Jr. You couldn't hardly skip it. [Laughter] And I was kind of into that too. I'll never forget when Dick Gregory came to Pine Bluff, the comedian, and all the civil rights movement was local. Pine Bluff was the center of the civil rights activity in Arkansas back in those days and they had a freedom house, which was an old shotgun shack that had a lot of bedrooms in it and somehow or other they got Dick Gregory to come right from jail to Pine Bluff. His wife was still in jail at the time that he came.

HKS: I really liked his humor.

JWG: I did too and he was funny. He came and the guy who was running the civil rights program in freedom house was running out of money. He couldn't pay his gas bill. He was two hundred dollars behind on his gas bill. So after they had the rally at the church as they always did every Sunday night, we all went back to freedom house to jaw with Dick Gregory. [Laughter] I went home then and I got a call from Associated Press in Little Rock saying what's with Dick Gregory in jail. I said he's not in jail. I just talked to him.

Well, what happened was, Dick Gregory wanted a cup of coffee and so Bill Hansen who was a white guy but he was the head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee here. He had taken him out to a place just outside of the Pine Bluff city limits where there was a fireman who had a little coffee shop there who hated black people in the worst possible way. And Dick Gregory walks in the door and this guy went nuts and probably he should have gone to jail. But instead here comes the sheriff's people. The city police they were all inured to this civil rights stuff, but the county sheriff didn't stand for any civil rights. He went out and he arrested Dick Gregory and Gregory said what are you taking me to jail for. These aren't my demonstrating clothes. [Laughter] He had this leather coat on and was dressed up to look like a million dollars. Then when he got bailed out he held a news conference in this terrible little place and sat in the middle of the room with a telephone in his lap and said get me the attorney general of the United States. [Laughter]

Civil rights was much bigger time in Atlanta than it was in Pine Bluff. I mean something was always happening. For instance, I did a series of stories about the white people who go into the ghetto and prey on the blacks. This lady had a little old black and white television set that she was paying on, going to pay three or four hundred dollars for and it wasn't worth a hundred dollars. But, you know, they jacked up the interest on her. That was the kind of thing, insurance scams. It was so evident that you could see them marching into the ghetto in the mornings and marching out on the afternoons. We have the shots of these white people going into, raking in all the dough they could from this ghetto community.

HKS: When the Forest History Society moved from California to Durham in '84 we bought an insurance company building. They had moved to Raleigh twenty miles away. And for the next year poor blacks would come walking to the door to pay their weekly insurance premium. They took the bus from some place. We said the company's moved. Well, they couldn't get to the company in Raleigh.

JWG: Oh, boy.

HKS: I mean it was this "welcome to the South", you know. The subtleties of the discrimination were enlightening. That's what you're talking about, that kind of thing.

JWG: Yes, for a very brief period I sold Industrial Life Insurance and went from door to door in the ghetto collecting the premiums.

American Political Science Award

HKS: You won an American political science award. That looks like college professors judged your work. Is that correct?

JWG: I guess that's right. I hadn't thought about it that way. But political scientists are a different breed of cat than most academics. They think they're of the real world. They're not really but they think they are more than other professors do.

HKS: Economists think they're real world too. Historians never ever consider themselves being in the real world. [Laughter] But go ahead. You were on the six o'clock news every night or certain times of the week and this committee watched? Did you apply for it? Did your station send your scripts?

JWG: No, just sent in scripts, same with the newspaper business. Sent in clippings.

HKS: And what was the subject, you generally or specific stories that you were doing? What did they give you the award for?

JWG: A body of work, not just one story or two stories. You sent in several examples of what was done. I was encouraged to enter that when I was with the *Pine Bluff Commercial* by Pat Owens, my editor, and it had never occurred to me before that I was doing anything that everybody else wasn't doing.

HKS: Is this a national award?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Do they give out one award?

JWG: No, they usually give out about four or five.

HKS: So it's pretty prestigious in that sense?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Congratulations.

JWG: Well, thanks.

HKS: Was your boss impressed? Another five bucks a week?

JWG: No, no, nothing like that. [Laughter]

HKS: I'll pat you on the back, but no money.

JWG: What happened at that newspaper, every year the U.S. Department of Labor would send by an inspector and they would take us away from the newspaper and interview us about were we working overtime without getting paid for it and all this kind of stuff. And of course we were.

HKS: You were salaried? You weren't hourly anyway, right?

JWG: That's right.

HKS: Usually salaried people do the job that has to be done for your so much a week.

JWG: Well, if you're making eighty-five dollars a week [Laughter] it matters a lot. But no, we'd lie for them. They took care of us in their own weird way and we took care of them in our own weird way. And we would never tell the truth to the Department of Labor. [Laughter]

HKS: So much for these questionnaires.

JWG: Right.

Washington, D.C. Television

HKS: So Washington beckoned and it looked good, or just a change? From Atlanta to Washington in terms of how one lives, a major urban area. It's not that much difference I guess.

JWG: It was a lot different but a lot of things happened in Atlanta. I got brained by a brick in a race riot and that slowed me down quite a bit. Somebody said change. I'm for change. Let's go to Washington. And so we went to Washington.

HKS: Still another southern town socially.

JWG: It was going from Atlanta where I owned the town in a manner of speaking, I could do anything I wanted to in that town, to going to Washington where all you could do was interview congressmen and senators and it was oh, so terrible.

HKS: In what way, because of the sameness of it?

JWG: You've heard the term talking heads. Well, television is a visual medium and you just can't have talking heads day after day after day or people are going to turn you off.

HKS: You were on camera?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: You conducted the interview and you'd say I interviewed senator so-and-so today. It cut to the interview? You were standing on the steps of the Congress?

JWG: Some place like that. They always said the most predictable things as you could possibly imagine. Either they wanted to say too much or they didn't want to say enough and that's pretty much the way it was. [Laughter]

HKS: So that's the news, huh? I lived in Washington for two months when I was researching my Forest Service history. I was there during Watergate and there was, of course, a lot of news about that.

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

JWG: Well, by that time I was working for the Senate Agriculture Committee.

HKS: And you had left the TV?

JWG: I only stayed in the TV business for a year and a half or so after I got to Washington. I didn't find that interesting and it certainly wasn't paying anything.

HKS: I would like to talk in more detail about getting a job, how you were interviewed, just how the process works, assuming that there is any such thing as a typical event in how Congress operates, because I don't think this is well understood. You saw an ad in the paper?

JWG: No, there was no ad in the paper. What happened was Senator Alan Ellender of Louisiana was kicked upstairs from the Agriculture Committee chairmanship to Appropriations, and that meant that Herman Talmadge of Georgia was then going to be the chairman of the committee, who would have some hiring opportunity.

HKS: When Ellender goes he takes his staff with him because he likes them and is used to working with them, or everyone's fired no matter what happens?

JWG: Well, it's almost like that but, as a matter of fact, Ellender left his staff behind. It was the smallest staff of any committee on Capitol Hill and so I knew that Talmadge, who is a more active kind of a chairman, was going to be hiring somebody. I just stepped up to the plate and said why don't you hire me.

HKS: So each committee doesn't have a fixed budget? All committees are equal when Congress is setting up its own budget? Why was it the smallest committee? Was money being turned back? He didn't use the money?

JWG: That's right. That's right. He didn't think the staff was very important, that he made all the decisions. But in fact the little tiny staff that he did have, they were some of the most astute on Capitol Hill. If they hadn't been he'd been dead in the water, because he didn't know anything about the tobacco program or the upland cotton program in Texas.

HKS: Now a senator and a congressman have their own office staff?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: And then each committee have staff?

JWG: That's correct.

HKS: Does each committee have a minority staff and a majority staff?

JWG: Yes, yes, but because Ellender held his staff down to a minimum, the minority staff was I think one or two people and that grew, you know.

HKS: Okay, so you hear about the job and you apply and then you sit down across the desk from Talmadge and how do you get hired?

JWG: Talmadge's top attorney on the ag committee staff was a guy named Mike McLeod. I just said look, I'm in line to become vice president for news in Cox Broadcasting Corporation. Hire me and give me a ten thousand dollar pay increase.

HKS: So even the vice president in television doesn't make a whole lot of money, from what you said?

JWG: Not with Cox Broadcasting. [Laughter] Anyway, he did.

HKS: Okay, generically, you're an employee of Congress and they have salary structures and so forth? You go to the bureaucracy and you fill out forms and vacation and sick leave and then all the fringe benefits stuff? Is it a job in that sense?

JWG: It is a real salaried job.

HKS: But if you get sick you have a health plan?

JWG: We had good healthcare but you could opt for or not to have federal retirement benefits. When the parties change, that is in '80's when the Senate shifted over from being Democratically controlled to Republican controlled, all the Democrats were thrown out. I lost my job. And I got a job then subsequently with Senator John Melcher of Montana, a Democrat. But had that not happened, there was...

HKS: This is a naïve question but this sort of startles me. You've been working on certain kinds of bills, legislation and you develop networks. You know Bob Wolf well. You know the people. You're efficient, you're effective, you're concise, you have a track record, authority of your own and you have this kind of knowledge and you're gone. And the person that replaces you doesn't have any of that.

JWG: Right.

HKS: And it's quite a learning curve and it must really affect the ability of a member of Congress or senator to handle legislation early in a term. Is that a fair generalization?

JWG: Sure.

HKS: When you have a party shift, shift in majority?

JWG: Right.

HKS: And that can shift every two years.

JWG: Yes.

HKS: So it could really be hectic in some committees, maybe more than others, for whatever reason.

JWG: But it turns out that it doesn't work that way because the majority tends to stay the majority. It doesn't change every two years. We've come close a couple of times in the House, and we have actually changed once since 1980 from Republican to Democrat and then back Republican. But the electorate pretty much sticks with the people that they put in there.

HKS: The president shifts back and forth but the Congress stays?

JWG: Pretty much.

HKS: Pretty much the same. In terms of staff talent, that's probably a good thing.

JWG: Yes. We have a general assembly in Arkansas that doesn't have a single lawyer on the Judiciary Committee, and that's because they all got thrown out because of term limits. That's terrible. We've got a general assembly that is just ridiculous it's so terrible. Continuity is very important and you see the kinds of just lame brain stupid things that happen with people who don't know what they're doing.

HKS: I can see that. It's better to have a talented Democrat than a dumb Republican or the reverse.

JWG: Yes.

HKS: I interrupted you. You learned about the job and you were interviewed and told McLeod who you were. You're about to be vice president for Cox Television.

JWG: Yes, that wasn't really true but [Laughter].

HKS: You wanted to make sure he grabbed you while you were still available.

JWG: That's right.

HKS: What kind of guy is Talmadge? Did he give you ten minutes or?

JWG: Oh, yeah, he's a very abrupt sort of person. Not anybody who'd ever be your pal. I don't know if he ever had a pal.

HKS: I know John McGuire told the story about Talmadge. He chewed tobacco and was always spitting?

JWG: That's right.

HKS: Not to sit near him.

JWG: That's right. But, you know, if you wrote some words for him, which I did frequently, he spoke them. He didn't go this way or that way. He said those words. He trusted me and I trusted him and he was a remarkably talented man when it came to handling other senators. He had senators on that committee like Carl Curtis of Nebraska and George Aiken of Vermont, who were older than he and were quite happy

with him as chairman. His fairness with the other party, which wasn't always true in Congress, you know. When the Democrats had Congress for forty years, Republicans always used to talk about the tyranny of the majority. But nobody ever accused Talmadge of that. As a matter of fact, one of the first things he said when I went to work there was, all of the staff works for all of the members of this committee. And I frequently did work for Republican members of the committee. By and large, agriculture issues were not partisan issues. If you were from a farm state you voted for the farm bill and it didn't matter what party you were from. And so it made it easy for him to be that kind of a chairman.

Senator Hubert Humphrey

HKS: Characterize the relationship between Talmadge and Hubert Humphrey.

JWG: Now that one was really weird.

HKS: It surprised me when you sent me that memo about that. I didn't see Humphrey hanging out with Talmadge, but obviously they saw something important.

JWG: I think it was party. I really do. I never saw Talmadge engage very much in party politics, but when Humphrey came to him with an idea about rural development he bought in on it as something that he could run with it in Georgia just as easily as Humphrey could run with it nationally. They weren't pals but they were friendly and he tried to be as helpful to Humphrey as he could be, which was plenty helpful.

HKS: Does this relationship become even more significant when you're talking about RPA and the National Forest Management Act a little later on in the story?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: That they knew each other and worked well together?

JWG: That's right. In the '73 farm bill towards the end of the committee discussion and mark up, Humphrey tried to bring up the RPA as something that they should tack on there as an adjunct as the bill was going by. And Talmadge correctly sensed that that committee was tired. Talmadge was very abrupt and he said Hubert, we just can't take that up right now. But when Humphrey didn't just drop the issue and kept running with it, that's when I got assigned to work on forestry, out of the blue. Talmadge wanted to be associated with that. Talmadge was a tree farmer, a pretty big one, and it was a subject of great interest to him. So then whole new relationship started developing on the forestry question. George Aiken came up with an eastern wild areas act and I got assigned to that. Boy, what a failure that was.

HKS: It was a failure because it just wouldn't pass muster or just altogether?

JWG: Couldn't do anything with it. The wilderness crowd had to have the word wilderness in the act and they were not going to buy some watered down version of the wilderness act just for the East. So it finally wound up over in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and it became the Eastern Wilderness Act. And now we have wilderness areas with mines in them and roads and God knows what all.

HKS: If I recall accurately, Denny LeMaster characterizes Talmadge as that he would judge a bill to be a good bill if it could be passed.

JWG: Right.

HKS: He wasn't so much content oriented, I mean in that sense.

JWG: That's right.

HKS: If he could see that you'd get a majority, let's push this through. He didn't want to waste time, and he hated joint hearings and he hated conference work with the House and so forth. If a bill was going to have to require conference, it was awfully hard to get Talmadge to support it. Generically, is this a true statement?

JWG: Well, it's largely true but I convinced him that we ought to have a joint mark up on the National Forest Management Act with the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and that we also should bring in Senator Jennings Randolph who was the anti-clearcut guy. And he did that. He didn't want to but he did it and as a result, the National Forest Management Act just sailed through. There was too much talent for it to be derailed.

HKS: That brings up another question I have. You have a piece of forestry legislation and you have the ag committee and you have Energy and Natural Resources committee. Is it obvious which committee ought to handle that or is it up to the chairmen who decide over a cup of coffee or what?

JWG: Well, every committee has a mission and in that mission statement is everything that they can do. Now the ag committee had "forestry" as one of its missions, but if it was like "wilderness" or, then it was the Energy and Natural Resources Committee because they had public lands. And sometimes it was joint. A chairman could go to the floor and claim joint jurisdiction.

HKS: But forestry is not Forest Service. Forest Service has range. Forest Service has wildlife, wilderness, all these other issues. The silviculture side of the Forest Service is an ag committee concern.

JWG: Right.

HKS: I didn't understand that.

JWG: Sometimes as with the National Forest Management Act the division is very fine. You almost can't even see it. The Energy Committee was thought to be the environmentalist committee, and they were startled when they were invited to come to our mark up and I'm glad for that to happen.

HKS: Was that a fair characterization that they were green, as in enviros?

JWG: Yeah, pretty much.

HKS: Does that happen because the chairman of the committee has some influence on who gets assigned to that committee?

JWG: Right.

HKS: Who picks committee membership?

JWG: The new senators come in and they request certain committees.

HKS: But the majority leader officially makes the decision?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: With the concurrence of the?

JWG: Minority, right.

HKS: So you could have a green committee?

JWG: Yeah.

HKS: It would happen that way?

JWG: Now they weren't so green as that the majority of the committee was green. That is to say the Democrats who had the compelling votes were pretty green. They had some extremely conservative members of that committee on the Republican side. But who cares what they think? They didn't have the votes.

HKS: So the Ted Kennedys and the Al Gores would be candidates if they wanted to be?

JWG: Right.

HKS: For a committee like that?

JWG: But generally speaking they didn't want to be on that committee.

HKS: They were senior enough that they pick something else?

JWG: Energy and Natural Resources is a committee that it's going to draw westerners. That's an important committee for westerners. Scoop Jackson was the committee chairman then and interestingly enough, during the mark up of the National Forest Management Act, Jackson never showed up a single time. He let Talmadge run it and Talmadge ran it like, well, it was unbelievable. Everybody felt like they'd been dealt with fairly.

HKS: Good manager, good people person.

JWG: You bet.

HKS: I guess that's how you get elected, one of the ways.

JWG: That's right. You don't get elected for spitting tobacco, that's for sure. [Laughter]

HKS: I don't want to break up the continuity of your thinking.

JWG: No, it's all right.

Rural Development

HKS: But we skipped over a couple of years there. Maybe those two years aren't that significant, but you're working for the committee and the Rural Development Act of 1972 and you said you worked with that wonderful John Baker, who was former secretary of agriculture under Kennedy and Johnson. Well, I'm interested in the political side of the Forest Service. Give a few minutes to John Baker, why he was wonderful, as you characterized him. A nice human being or a very talented person or what?

JWG: A very wise person. He's one of the real mentors in my life. He's from Arkansas, as a matter of fact, was with the Arkansas Farmer's Union. He's one of the people who taught me what was important and what wasn't important in Washington. As a progressive and a person who had been around for a while, he was just a real important instructor in my life. He was just somebody I will always remember very fondly.

HKS: He was assistant secretary?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Freeman was secretary?

JWG: That's right, and he was assistant secretary for the Forest Service and I don't know what else because it was different back then from what it is now.

HKS: He stayed on in Washington after change in administration?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: What was he doing? Why was he involved with that farm bill?

JWG: John was hired as one of Humphrey's people on the Rural Development Act. John was a farm lobbyist and some farm lobbyists, all they can think about is the subsidy programs. John understood rural America better than anybody I ever saw. I mean the whole works, finance, the social structure, the whole nine yards and he helped me to understand it. And he helped me to understand where to go and get more information that I needed for rural development.

Rural development is a huge, huge subject area. It isn't just farming, which is kind of a small end of rural living, but it's about how people do make a living out here, what making a living says about what they think socially, and what are the things that you need to do to change the way things are in rural America economically, socially, environmentally. The only institutions I know of in the country are the Economic Research Service and the Federal Reserve Bank at Kansas City that try to do this all-encompassing approach toward the quality of life in rural America. If you're on the committee and you're going to deal with it half way intelligently, you got to have this all-encompassing view of the target that you're trying to approach. And that's what Baker taught me. He never talked much about the Forest Service, as a matter of fact, because that was and I guess being an Arkansan would make him be like that, you know, this is called a small farm state but agricultural except for rice is not very important in this state. It claims to be important but it's not.

HKS: It surprises me hearing you say these things why Talmadge preferred a small committee. You'd think there's a big story he's working on here and he would want staff to be able to supply the information. But he had other ways to get the information, even if he didn't have someone on the payroll directly. Is that what you're saying?

JWG: That's right. You go to the Economic Research Service where they have some wonderful people, and to the Library of Congress. We used the General Accounting Office. We begged, borrowed, and stole talent from wherever we could find it because the last thing that Talmadge would have agreed to is that we have the biggest staff on Capitol Hill. He just, no, no, no.

HKS: So you'd call Economic Research Service, it's a branch of the USDA?

JWG: Yes, that's right.

HKS: And you'd ask for a report or a guy that could come over and sit at your desk? How does the process work?

JWG: Well, sometimes they'd come over. You have to find out that there are people buried in the bureaucracy who know everything, or at least they know everything there is to know about some things. One of them was a guy named Calvin Beall, at the Economic Research Service, who knew more about demographics than I'll ever know. He was from Washington, D.C. How he wound up in the Agriculture department I'll never know, but if you wanted to know about population here or population there, you would see Cal. At that time the big thing that was going on was the huge migration of black people from the South to the North, and you call him up and say what happens to them when they get up there. He said they're always better off, even if they go on welfare. [Laughter] Just having that in the back of your brain is pretty remarkable. And, of course, Bob Wolf was a product of that. He just insinuated himself on us but nevertheless I'm forever grateful that he did.

HKS: How about your relationship with your counterpart in the House? At the early stages of a bill, do you talk it over?

JWG: No.

HKS: Do you get a sense of it or do you wait later until the bill floats out there?

JWG: Congressman Rarick of Louisiana, who didn't last very long, is the last man to say the word nigger on the House floor.

HKS: That's why they call RPA the Humphrey-Rarick Act. In my book on Forest Service history that came out in 1976, my footnote is the Humphrey-Rarick Act and that's what I thought it was. People were talking about RPA and I didn't know what it was.

JWG: Well, that's okay. Somehow or other there's a fuzzy period in there where that naming bills after individuals dropped out of sight.

HKS: A shift in culture more than anything else.

JWG: That's right and as a matter of fact, the only reason it was called Humphrey-Rarick is because of Nick Ashmore who was on Rarick's staff. Rarick had never had a piece of legislation that he'd sponsored get enacted into law and it was a campaign issue. So Ashmore saw this bill as being one that probably was going to be enacted, so very, very late in the game he got Rarick on the bill or to introduce the bill. I never saw Mr. Rarick. I don't know what he looks like. And Ashmore always called it the Humphrey-Rarick act, although Rarick had nothing to do with it. It was Nick Ashmore. They should have called it the Humphrey-Ashmore bill.

HKS: And Humphrey would say I protest? I don't want that clown on my bill?

More on Hubert Humphrey

JWG: Well, you don't get to say that. As a matter of fact, Senator Humphrey was...

HKS: Take a minute to talk about him.

JWG: Oh, boy.

HKS: Take an hour or whatever it takes. I mean he's such an important person historically and to forestry.

JWG: You got to understand that if you want to be a politician you have to have a colossal ego. All of them do. Even people like Senator Lugar of Indiana and Pat Leahy from Vermont who just seem like the most humble people you could possibly imagine. But they all have colossal egos. But you can be selfish about that ego or you can just use it to share your ideas with others. Humphrey is the kind of guy who had a colossal ego but he never was selfish about it. Never. I never saw him do anything ungracious towards any other individual whether he liked them or not. He would never say I don't want that racist Rarick on my bill. It's probably good that he never was president because he was too much like that.

HKS: You got to be tough to be president, to be a good president.

JWG: I think that's right. Stupid as the Vietnam War was, Lyndon Johnson was a pretty good president, and Nixon would have been if it hadn't been for Vietnam and the paranoia that got him all mixed up.

HKS: I always felt that Nixon was technically the most competent president of the twentieth century.

JWG: That's right. At one point I'll never forget, I'll get back to Humphrey in a second. But I was looking overseas to see what European countries were doing in rural development and I sent off for this report from the German embassy, what the Germans were doing about it. And the person who received it just

before me was John Ehrlichman. They were thinking about it in the White House too. Never got around to it. But Hubert Humphrey made a lot of money speaking for the people who were raising bond money for Israel. I mean he raised millions of dollars for them. And he got paid for it.

HKS: While he was vice president he did that?

JWG: Oh, no, no, no.

HKS: This was afterwards?

JWG: When he was in the Senate he did that. But these senators all keep themselves kind of aloof from the staff. I drove with Humphrey for several hours one time out in the Midwest on these rural development trips and it was like riding with your Aunt Mabel. We just chatted and gabbed back and forth. But what was surprising about him was that he knew more about the tobacco program than any of the tobacco state senators. He had an incredible mind and he just soaked stuff up. I wrote a lot of speeches for him, but if you just sat and talked with him for thirty minutes you wouldn't have to write him a speech. He'd soak enough up so that he could give his own speech.

HKS: When he was vice president I read articles about him written by journalists. I was a fan of Humphrey. I mean I thought he was an important person in American history. But they said he was intelligent but pretty superficial, like he never finished a book. He didn't go deeply into things. You're suggesting something else.

JWG: That's not true. That's not true. He knew more about anything than I did even after I'd been studying it [Laughter]. He was incredible. Some of the senators would take all the mail they get and they all get tons of mail. Everything that didn't come from their state, they'd throw it away, wouldn't even look at it. Humphrey's office answered every letter that came to his office, and this was after he was vice president and when he was getting a ton of mail, tons and tons of mail. Every letter got a personal response. Of course, there were some like, you know, five hundred letters from Alaskan loggers, they got what they called a robo letter, which was, you know, everybody got the same letter. But generally speaking, when people had concerns and wrote to him, he answered mail. I don't know what he would have done with email. And maybe what most of them do up there now is just ignore it because the lobbyists have really glommed on to that and, you know, they just flood them with email messages. All of those people are in their own way very special people, including Carl Curtis. But Humphrey was more special than all of them. I'll never forget the day he came through the Senate when he was about to go off to die. Without any exception at all, members of the Senate stood there and just applauded the hell of him. He was just widely loved I think, certainly by me.

HKS: Why his interest in forestry issues? Well, I think of them as forestry issues. He may have seen them in a different context.

JWG: Listen, man, the most important guy in forestry since World War II has been Hubert Humphrey. Multiple use sustained yield, wilderness act, boundary waters canoe, RPA, National Forest Management Act.

HKS: Boundary waters I can see but the others, did he ever make sense of why he felt this was something important as opposed to providing food? Agriculture I can understand but not forestry.

JWG: I attribute this to Bob Wolf. There was a club of people, Clinton Anderson, Humphrey, and some others who got some of this '60s legislation through and I think the cementing person there was Wolf. I never talked to Bob about this but I believe it to be true that he was the memory for that little club. He received the Schlich Award the other day in Edmonton, and he mentioned all of the members who were part of his club and whom he provided support.

HKS: Tell me a little more about the club. It would actually meet once a month?

JWG: No, no, no, no, nothing like that, very informal. They would see one another in committee meetings, that sort of thing. Time is so precious when you're working in the legislature that you just don't have time for many meetings. But if you see somebody in the cloakroom or you see somebody in the committee meeting and you share a couple of thoughts with them, that's about what it amounts to.

HKS: This is pretty trivial but I've taken a tour of Congress, both houses in action and so forth, and I've never seen a cloakroom. Is that a large room with sofas and people smoking cigars?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: I had a cloakroom in grade school and that's where you hung your jacket up. It was just off the classroom, a little narrow hallway. The cloakroom in Congress is a nice place?

JWG: Usually it's a place where you go to get your signals straight with your ally across the other side of the room so that you're not saying two different things about an issue...

Farm Bills

HKS: Farm bills have been used, from my observation, for a lot of other things. Why do they allow that? I thought you're not supposed to do that?

JWG: That's a good question because there are only two million farms in this country, and most of the people who live on those farms don't get most of their money from agriculture. They get it from off-farm income. And to tell you the truth, agriculture has become industrialized. There aren't very many family farms where people are making a living just farming. But there are some very big farms that are living high off the hog on farm payments, and so you got to get something in legislation that will appeal to just this small minority of people. So what winds up in the farm bill-- nutrition programs, school lunch, food stamps-- people that will drag the Black Caucus along. Now what you're thinking about is that, everything is supposed to be the same subject matter in a farm bill. Well, that's the appropriation. Everything is supposed to be the same in an appropriation, except that's violated all the time, as with the 1897 act. So there are rules but sometimes they're just made to be broken. But the answer to your question about farm bills is we put forestry and nutrition in there to drag in more votes for the bill from members with no farms in their districts.

HKS: So the strategy is passing the farm bill, and if forestry helps that... If it's neutral I suppose it wouldn't matter so much?

JWG: Sometimes it's neutral. Right now, for instance, a major program that was just created in the 2002 bill to merge forestry incentives and SIP stewardship incentives they put in a hundred million dollars. They collapsed those two programs and put in a hundred million dollars into this forestland whatever it is, and now they're about to let it fold. Right now you couldn't buy a vote for the environment in the Congress. Don't ask me why. As a matter of fact, it's a major point of contention and difficulty for me on this book I'm working on S&PF because how can you go from a hundred million dollar program that takes the money out of CCC, which is Commodity Credit Corporation, which is an entitlement, and then suddenly say well, we're not going to do that anymore? I can't find any kind of rationale behind it except that Iraq's got everybody distracted.

HKS: Well, the deficit I think is an issue.

JWG: It could be but that's not even as big an issue as it ought to be. I mean can you imagine a trillion dollars in four years?

HKS: It's almost like being an astronomer thinking about the numbers and can anyone imagine what a light year really is.

JWG: That's right, that's right, exactly right. Well, that's the way I feel about it.

Staff Assignments

HKS: So you're still tracking the ag committee? Oh, it's for the book. Is this why you're doing this?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: But you're not really watching what the old gang is still doing?

JWG: No, I don't do that.

HKS: Okay.

JWG: You can't do it. There is so many hours that are put in to making things change by staff and by the members that trying to keep up with it on a daily basis is very, very difficult. And I rely heavily on some guys that I know in Congressional Research Service to tell me what's going on and after having talked to them both, I don't think they know either. [Laughter]

HKS: You talking about the quality of people in that research service, that's where ag history is and it's a very, very top notch operation, really top flight people. Did lobbyists ever approach you directly?

JWG: Oh yeah, every day.

HKS: Every day? A senator is too hard to get to, right? He is just too busy?

JWG: That's right. I'm a lot more accessible than him.

HKS: Were you the senior staff member? Were you the chief of staff?

JWG: No, I was given forestry because nobody wanted it. I was originally hired as a press secretary for the committee.

HKS: Interesting how it all worked out.

JWG: And as it worked out, as a matter of fact, it was almost like osmosis. I got forestry and then I got soil and water conservation and then I got the Farmer's Home Administration because I'd worked on the Rural Development Act. Then I got Farm Credit because rural development has a lot to do with money. And so those were the things that I worked on so that all the important people on the committee could work on price supports and food stamps.

HKS: Was there a chief of staff, as it were, someone who actually ran the committee for the senator?

JWG: Sure.

HKS: Who you touched base with, how your time spent and approved what you were doing basically?

JWG: That's right. His name is Mike McLeod and he's subsequently gone on to be a successful attorney in Washington, a lobbyist for whoever will hire him. The original guys who were Ellender's staff people, were an attorney named Harker Stanton and an economist named Henry Casso. But it wasn't very long, three or four years that they retired.

HKS: Did you answer letters to constituents as it were?

JWG: Thirty a day.

HKS: Thirty a day? And you picked them yourself?

JWG: No, they got assigned to you based on subject matter.

HKS: Oh, I see. "Take care of these"?

JWG: That was the most onerous task I ever did in my life. You knew that when you got up in the morning no matter what else you did that day you were going to answer thirty letters. And then trying to squeeze the other work in was sometimes kind of tough.

HKS: It's hard to imagine. Seems to me doing that, after about three or four weeks I'd be writing the same letter every day to everyone. How to be creative and actually responsive to the question, that's tough.

JWG: There's a tendency to do that.

Political Strategy

HKS: We were talking about the farm bill and how things are added to it. I mean the strategies, and I hadn't thought about before you're trying to get the bill passed and if it makes the bill better, it's accepted?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Better in terms of passage? Because some pretty important forestry stuff has been an amendment.

JWG: That's right. That's right. I've just been noticing that in the last few days as I've worked on this book. And that's been increasingly the case since 1970s. The farm bill has been a very important vehicle for forestry.

HKS: Because there's not enough day-to-day consistency for forestry in Congress?

JWG: That's right.

HKS: It's too exotic in a sense.

JWG: That's right.

HKS: People back home don't care about why am I going to vote for it.

JWG: You know, if you can't get the environment into three debates on the presidency, what chance does forestry stand?

HKS: So forestry ought to stay in agriculture rather than interior?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Because if it was realigned it would change the dynamics in Congress substantially.

JWG: It would. As a matter of fact, it would speed the day when there would never be another tree cut in the national forest. That's what would happen.

HKS: Heading that direction now pretty fast.

JWG: That's right.

HKS: I don't know what's going on with the Forest Service now.

JWG: I hear all the rhetoric and see all the speeches because I have arranged to have that stuff kind of come through my computer, but I haven't seen any indication that there's a vastly different complexion in terms of timber harvesting than there was before. I just haven't seen all that many more trees cut. You got this Biscuit Fire out in the West, you know. They've been trying to cut in and around that for many months now, and so far the courts have blocked it. And, of course, the Clinton roadless plan, you know, that hasn't been unenacted or undone. They're going to wait until after the election to deal with that, and now it's almost four years into his presidency. So you see these bogeymen like Mark Rey come along, and Mark's been pretty limited in what he's been able to accomplish. Things are in place, and they're set in there by courts and by standard usage and changing it is hard.

HKS: The big shift in twenty or thirty years is to reduce the overall cut from the national forest during the Clinton administration, because of the spotted owl and all those things. You're saying that when we shifted Clinton to Bush that forest practices remained pretty much the same?

JWG: I think so. I think so. To not do something is easier than to do something and that's what's happening here. I remember when, what was that guy's name, who was assistant secretary from Louisiana Pacific?

HKS: John Crowell.

JWG: John Crowell, I remember when he was in there and he had this goal of twenty billion board feet a year, and I think he might have got it up to twelve or at least an allowable cut of twelve but I don't think they ever got twelve billion board feet. And he worked very hard at that. He was a single-minded man.

HKS: It was probably unfortunate that it happened just that the spotted owl was coming down and really made what happened much harder to get there.

JWG: Yes.

HKS: The Reagan administration couldn't agree to that. Max Peterson talks about in his interview the resistance to accepting the reality of the Endangered Species Act.

JWG: I used to get mad at Max because he would frequently lie to me but recently I have begun to appreciate what a terrible, terrible box he was in.

HKS: He lied to you because politically he couldn't tell you the truth?

JWG: That's right. He was balancing too many balls in the air at one time and I always resented that, that he wouldn't tell me the truth. He not only didn't tell me the truth, he didn't acknowledge that he needed to make some changes in order for things to come out the right way. For instance, I said, we're reinventing the way we do forestry on the national forests. You need to be training these folks. And he just kind of passed that off. That was the last thing he was going to be able to do.

HKS: This is an important point because it's gets at one of the reasons for the interview: the relationship between the executive branch and Congress. The chief is the front man for this relationship. I know deputies do a lot of it too, but did he lie in a sense that he withheld information or did he say something that was untrue?

JWG: A little of both.

HKS: Both? All those guys say when you testify you got to tell the truth. McGuire said it, Peterson said it, they all said that when I was asking how do you testify. You've got to tell the truth because if you don't and they find out, I mean your credibility is in the toilet. But apparently with staff it's different.

JWG: When Max was floating two budgets for the Forest Service around after the RPA was enacted, a high bound and low bound, he knew that that wasn't going to fly. He knew that at the bottom line he was going to have to respond to the Appropriations Committee and the Appropriations Committees only. But he was pretending that he was responding to the goals of RPA, which wasn't, and got a whole bunch of us authorizing Democrats to get all excited about this high bound program when it didn't mean anything at all.

HKS: These are important points you're bringing up, and so I want to say here just in case it makes a difference in what you say. There's a standard process not used very often but it's available, that if you really want to say something but you're reluctant to because you know Max, that can be put under seal for a certain number of years

JWG: I don't worry about that. As a matter of fact, I thought Max was a wonderful chief, and he did the things that he thought were the right things to do and I suspect that's the way he would justify it in his own mind.

HKS: This two budgets, was he open about it, everyone know he had two?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Okay. And one was if I had the money, this is what I could do?

JWG: That's right.

HKS: But here's the one I'm stuck with.

JWG: Yes.

HKS: So what was the problem with the two budgets?

JWG: Well, the problem was the president under the RPA was supposed to come forward and say, this is the program for the national forests and this is what it's going to cost to do it right. Well, we never got a statement out of the White House in that regard at all. But Max told us about the knock down drag out sessions he had at OMB and how this was the most that he was able to get out of them.

HKS: Now this was on a one-to-one basis?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Or he's testifying?

JWG: Oh, no, not testifying.

HKS: Oh, he's talking over a cup of coffee, sitting in an office talking to you?

JWG: That's right. Back in those days we really thought RPA was important. I mean John Zivnuska who was with Resources for the Future back then, he used to go over there and sit at the feet of the Forest Service economists and computer jockeys that were sifting all this data back and forth, and John and I agreed that this is really important what's happening here. Well, it was important because it created and stabilized the planning system that has since prevailed. But in terms of really changing the way the Forest Service does day-to-day business, probably not.

HKS: I was at Resources for the Future conference in Washington in 1981 the day that President Reagan was shot, which disrupted the conference.

JWG: Sure.

HKS: But it went on for about a day, and every speaker but John Zivnuska got up and trashed RPA, that it was unworkable. These are academics mainly from universities and so forth. It was the worst piece of legislation in terms of its effectiveness, not its goal but in terms of how it was working, that had ever come down the pipe, and Zivnuska got up and defended it. And that always stuck in my mind. How could one law not have any followers? Somebody must be in favor. It's law of the land, but it was certainly trashed at that conference.

JWG: The thing about it is it had supporters but nobody was avid about it. I mean how can you be avid about a process that doesn't save lives or educate children or do something? But in building consensus for legislation, which is one of the most important things that I did, you've got to get people to sign on and say we're for this. We're not going to go out in the street and clap and sing and say we're for this, but we're for this if anybody asks. And that's the way the consensus was built for RPA and that's the way the consensus was built for the National Forest Management Act. You'd set down with a little list, take the same legal pad out every day and look at the list and see how many have I got signed up. And the critical number seemed to be ten. Ten national organizations had to be willing to say we think this is a good idea. You take that around and show it to the senators. They may never have heard of any of those damn organizations.

HKS: But they can count to ten?

JWG: They can count to ten, and as long as there wasn't a spate of mail saying we're not for this legislation, you were okay. And that's how RPA got passed. Despite a lot more thunder and fury, that's how the National Forest Management Act got passed. I'll never forget one day I was holding a hearing all by myself because I ran out of senators. I still had about ten witnesses to go and here was a former supervisor of the Monongahela National Forest telling me about how he'd high graded that damn forest, and how that was the real way to run a forest, not all of this clearcutting. So I sat there.

Senate Workload

HKS: There's a lot of committees in Congress. And each member of Congress and each senator is on a lot of committees. It seems to me to be a legislator is an impossible job. I don't know how many committees Talmadge was on. You can only chair one committee, right?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: But you can be chair of many sub-committees?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: The subject knowledge and issues and the workload just sort of boggles the mind and just trying to think how any one person can keep their priorities straight, remember who people are. Like you say, you take this list of ten to the senator, he may not have heard of them. Well, I can understand why he hadn't heard of them. He's on the sub-committee and this is not his primary job. Were you overall generally impressed with the intellectual capacity and the physical energy required to be a senator?

JWG: Absolutely. I remember one time coming back from one of these rural development field hearings out in some place, and those were just really grinding. They were so difficult because you had to set them up and you had to make sure who the witnesses were going to be and what they were going to say. We flew back home and we were on what was once called Air Force II but it was a jet prop airplane. We got home and I just went into the bed and collapsed. I woke up the next morning and saw in the paper there was Hubert Humphrey in a tuxedo at some party the previous night. Boundless energy. Humphrey could remember everybody he ever talked to in his life. I never saw anything like it. I knew some who were very good but he was just incredible.

HKS: The physical demands of the job are incredible?

JWG: You bet. Here I was twenty or thirty years younger than he and I couldn't go anymore and he was out partying.

HKS: I guess that's how you get to be in those positions. The weak fall by the wayside.

JWG: That's right. Oh, that's right. I probably shouldn't mention any names, but you see people come in there for their first term in the Senate and there is no second term, and that's because they shouldn't have been there in the first place. [Laughter]

HKS: It's a hard job.

JWG: Yes, it is.

HKS: Campaigning is a terrible thing.

JWG: Yeah, and begging for money is the worst.

HKS: I worked on a congressional campaign at the primary level when I lived in California. The work the candidates do, I mean it's not a human job we're asking. I may not like a member of Congress for whatever they do but I respect them for the capacity to hold that job. It's impressive.

JWG: That's right. Oh, I want to go back to this question about planning and the effectiveness of the RPA. I've been reading a lot of Pete Steen lately.

HKS: I know. I keep sending you stuff.

JWG: I first start seeing the word planning come up in McArdele when he was with forestry research. I can't remember where right now. Carolina or some place?

HKS: He was director of the experiment station in Asheville before he went to Washington as assistant chief.

JWG: I could see it in him that this was a deeply felt feeling that he had that you just can't go trying to deal with a huge piece of land without doing some serious planning about what's going to happen there. Wolf has said it to me but I didn't believe it at the time. I look at McArdele as the father of forest planning and I still believe it. I still believe that it's an important process that the Forest Service has to go through and that he's the guy who got it off the deck.

HKS: But you look back at how different the world was when he was chief. You don't know how successful he would have been if he took over let's say Mike Dombeck's job, much later in the process. But I suppose we all are malleable enough that he would have done just as well then as he did earlier.

JWG: Could be, it's hard to say. You know, I was a little bit critical of Max Peterson but would John McGuire have prospered as well in the Peterson time frame? I don't know. I don't know. How long are they going to let you sit back and look wise?

HKS: John inherited tough jobs, but the new level of toughness didn't happen when he was chief. I mean like the spotted owl, which really you've got to deal with and be the first at bat as Max was with endangered species. That's a tough shift.

JWG: It sure is. Notwithstanding the comments I made, I've got enormous respect for Max Peterson. Well, I won't say anything about his predecessor or his successor.

Politics of Selecting Forest Service Chief

HKS: Max had a tough task in that a lot of folks thought Associate Chief Doug Leisz, the former regional forester in California, should have been chief. And there was a bitterness there that I detected years and years later that Doug was in Alaska on detail and Max was in Washington and that's when Max became chief. There may not be any truth to that but in that close culture of the Forest Service, people liked Doug a lot and felt that he should have been chief. That must have hurt Max, hindered him in certain ways at the chief and staff level, dealing with regional foresters and so forth.

JWG: I have a story about that. From time to time I would leave Capitol Hill and go up to the Department of Agriculture and check in on the people that I was supposed to be overseeing, just to see what they were up to. Friendly chat, this sort of thing, but also see what they were doing that their bosses thought was important for them to do. I was in the administration one day, and Bob Bergland came out of the big cage there on the second floor of the administration building, and he said I have a message for the chairman, Talmadge.

HKS: He knew who you were?

JWG: Oh, yeah. He was from Minnesota and so he was associated with Humphrey.

HKS: I see.

JWG: He said I think I've decided to make Doug Leisz the chief. Would you please ask him if that's all right with him. I said well, Mr. Secretary, I just know that he'd want to appoint a career guy in that spot so it doesn't make any difference to him who it is. He said well, okay, we're going to name Doug Leisz. Then I went back to the Hill and a few days later, here comes Max Peterson. I don't know for a fact, but I suspect that there were a bunch of westerners like John Melcher and like that who knew Max Peterson and didn't know Doug Leisz and who influenced that selection. But Doug Leisz was going to be chief.

HKS: Doug Leisz, who I know slightly; was regional forester in California.

JWG: Right.

HKS: Before he went back to Washington so westerners should have known-- maybe they'd known him in a way that wasn't productive to the selection process.

JWG: The regional foresters are such that if they choose to stay in the confines of their regions, which this case was California, nobody else knows who they are. Now in the more distant past the present chief and Elizabeth Estill and a couple of other regional foresters have met together to conspire against the Washington office so that the policies that were being formulated would be less onerous to their regions politically.

HKS: This was done openly?

JWG: Openly enough so they got caught and Elizabeth got shipped off to the southern region and I don't know, something terrible happened to one of the others.

HKS: I lost a bet. I bet that she was going to be the first woman chief and she wasn't, not yet anyway. Sally Collins might be the next chief but I guess it depends on who gets elected. Well, that's intriguing, back to Doug Leisz. So you'd have to speculate here. Congressmen and senators call Bergland and say we don't want Doug Leisz or they prefer Max?

JWG: Yeah.

HKS: Whatever they said, so Bergland shifted. It was handled in that way probably.

JWG: That's my guess. I don't think they'd even say we don't want Doug Leisz. They would say we want Max Peterson.

HKS: Or they might call the White House directly if they knew somebody.

JWG: Could be.

HKS: Whatever route that they would use to get to the secretary.

JWG: But Max was in a job where he was very visible on Capitol Hill. You know, he had that.

HKS: But so as the associate chief. He's very visible. I'm not debating you. I'm just trying to figure out why people would pick one over the other at the distance.

JWG: It's the kind of person they are. Doug Leisz a kind of a person who kept his own counsel and he was a man who handled a staff beautifully. His staff in California loved him but nobody else knew who the hell he was. Max was widely liked too but not for the same reasons that Doug was liked in this respect. Max was like Willy Loman, you know. He was well liked. But Lietz was an internal administrator who stuck to business, to stuff the manual said you were supposed to do. And he interpreted that manual in ways that employees generally respected and liked. He wasn't well liked in that same respect that Max was.

When the deputy chiefs and the chief were all up on the third floor of the South Building, they could step across the hall and talk to one another. I would be fascinated to see what the relationship of those people are today now that they're all so spread out and separated in the Yates Building. That was a very special kind of a situation where the chief's door was never closed and neither were the doors of the deputies. If you were looking at the organizational chart of the Forest Service you would see, well, the chief has got these three or four deputies to run interference for him and who are themselves senior executives. He can go out and waive the flag and be well liked if he wants. I would be willing to bet that it's more adversarial between them all now than it was. I know that Research feels that it's left out. State and Private feels that it's left out. And they are, you know.

HKS: I interviewed Keith Arnold up here at Hot Springs Village and Bob Buckman and others and I asked him about chief and staff meetings. They were part of the leadership group and they went every morning to the chief and staff meetings, but Research never had anything controversial so they never had anything to say. And State and Private Forestry generally is not controversial. They don't have spotted owls and clearcutting and all of the.

JWG: That's right.

HKS: And so you have the deputies for National Forest and Programs and Legislation, they are the ones that dominate just by the nature of the assignment.

JWG: You're right.

HKS: And I can see how he would feel left out. He never had anything to contribute except personnel. They were involved in selecting regional foresters and forest supervisors, very important with the personnel selection. Maybe the most important job a deputy does is personnel selection.

JWG: If you are a student of government organization as I have been, you look at how things have evolved. Pinchot didn't particularly want a research branch, even though he was given a good research base by Fernow and Hough. And it was finally given to him and it took Clapp to come in and make some organizational sense out of it. State and Private probably wouldn't be with the Forest Service today if it hadn't been for the creation of the Soil Conservation Service and the Forest Service said, this is our baby. Even though after 1905, you know, State and Private was almost nonexistent.

HKS: Except for fire fighting.

JWG: That's right. But you look at the Soil Conservation Service, that guy who's name escapes me right now, the guy who.

HKS: Hugh Hammond Bennett

JWG: He wanted a research branch and they wouldn't give it to him. They said no, we'll just let agriculture research do that. As a result there's no soil and water conservation research that's being done at all except the plant material centers, which were given to them in certain parts of the country to develop new plants to hold down the soil. I could make a pretty good case for taking State and Private, giving it over to the Natural Resources Conservation Service minus fire and health. You know, keep fire and health as a part of the national forest system or something like that. But things often evolve strangely and not for any particularly good reasons.

HKS: Well, it's intriguing that you're saying this because maybe it was John McGuire said that having the word private in the title makes it tough in Congress. Because why don't the states take care of it.

JWG: Right.

HKS: The notion that State and Private Forestry doesn't belong at the federal level. But the Forest Service has held onto it but it's been challenged apparently frequently at budget time maybe. I'm not sure what other times it would be challenged except budget time.

JWG: This is why I have a hard time understanding what's going on right now. I mean here in 2002 you take two modest little programs, which hardly had ten million dollars between them, SIP and FIP, and you say we're going to call that forestland enhancement program something and we're going to give them a hundred million dollars from the Commodity Credit Corporation. Nobody's ever given State and Private Forestry a hundred million dollars for anything except fire. Why all of a sudden all this largess? But you know, despite the fact that it has never had any money to speak of, State and Private Forestry, in many ways I look on it as the most effective and efficient part of the Forest Service in terms of what you get back from the landowners versus what you put in. It's about nine dollars to one, nine dollars of private money to one dollar of federal money. Now that's not too bad and it's done by willing landowners. Dale Robertson wouldn't do anything for the private landowners because he didn't want to be accused of trying to take their land by regulating. He was spastic about that. He wouldn't allow State and Private to be included in what do they call it? New perspectives or ecosystems management, no, don't want to do that. Don't want to be seen as regulatory.

HKS: He wasn't opposed to it conceptually, but it politically it wasn't the way to go?

JWG: I think that's right. I think that's right. I thought he was wrong. I mean here you've got all these thousands of landowners willingly giving up their rights to their own property so they can do the right thing toward nature. What the hell? Fly in the face of that or ignore it? Well, anyway. These state and private foresters are meddling in people's land all the time [Laughter] and people are glad to have them.

HKS: Well, that may be one reason it survives because the local congressmen like this federal money in their district and maybe that's enough to keep it there.

JWG: That's just barely enough. That's right. That's exactly right. Oh, well, where are we?

Resources Planning Act

HKS: We skipped lightly over RPA and the National Forest Management Act. Let me ask it this way. LeMaster's book goes through in some detail. He cites you a dozen times in that on how those bills fared

in Congress and so forth and a little bit of the aftermath. I think you should talk about it a little bit because Denny was standing in one place and you were standing in another at the time so it looks different.

JWG: When we started working on the RPA Denny was lobbyist for SAF. And he was one on my list of ten. We did just fine until Hardy Glascock showed up and then we didn't do so good.

HKS: SAF was politically a respectable organization? If they were for something or opposed to something, it made a difference?

JWG: No, not much but it made the list of ten.

HKS: Okay.

JWG: If you needed a list of ten they were one.

HKS: Got to start somewhere I guess.

JWG: But you know just from the way they operated that they couldn't call forth any legions to smite you on the brow if you didn't do what they wanted you to do. You'd only have Hardy there to nag you. That's hardly enough to matter.

HKS: There's so much animosity toward Hardy because of the Wild Acres tussle that it colors people's thinking the way Watergate colors our thinking of President Nixon. It has nothing to do with Hardy but he was seen as the bad guy by most foresters I talked to.

JWG: He was just not a very effective person and the Wild Acres complex put a stress mark on that. He blew it but he had blown a lot of other things previous to that. But anyway, LeMaster left SAF and got a job with the House Agriculture Committee where he got his own lessons in how to get legislation enacted, and he did a very effective job there. The RPA was a bill that only Bill Towell wanted. Bob Wolf and a few other people on the Areas of Agreement Committee who thought that if you're going to hold a hundred and ninety-three million acres in public trust, you ought to have some plans for doing it. And I didn't know what the national forests were. I didn't know the difference between the national forests and the national parks. All I knew was that I had a couple of bosses who wanted to see this bill enacted if it could be enacted.

That was a big part of my job, sitting down with people hour after hour after hour, working line by line through the bill. Sitting with the timber industry, sitting with the environmentalists, trying to come up with something that they would all buy off on. That's when you start building your list of ten. Wildlife Management Institute comes to mind. Until you get that list of ten developed so that you know that if it goes out, the bill goes out to the Senate floor you're not going to get clobbered by somebody on the right or the left, then you haven't done the job. And that's really the important job. Those senators do not like conflict. They do not like conflict even though that's supposed to be the greatest debating society in the world. They like to like one another or at least be perceived as liking one another.

HKS: How do you decide, how do you get a sense of which of the environmental groups are the important ones? There's a Wilderness Society and there's the Audubon Society and Izaak Walton League and some are "militant" and some are members of the club and so forth. The environmentalists have got all these groups, large membership groups, lots of money and they don't agree with each other.

JWG: That's right. You have to sort them out and to tell you the truth, when I was first starting out to do that work I only chose the ones that wouldn't try to kill me. [Laughter] From my list of ten, usually wildlife groups were pretty manageable. I shouldn't use the word manageable because I don't mean that in any way. We sat down and partnered. I could fill up the whole room with timber lobbyists and did on some occasions. But usually we did working sessions around the main committee table and there'd be ten or twelve people at the table. Any more than that it just got unworkable. That isn't to say I was always

successful. I'll never forget when we were working on that eastern wilderness wild areas act; it didn't have the word wilderness in it was akin to God's cursing you.

HKS: Wild areas was okay but wilderness was going too far for that list of ten?

JWG: Well, no, they wanted it to be called the eastern wilderness act and when it all came down to push and shove, they didn't care that there were roads and mines and railroads and stuff in those areas. They just wanted more wilderness. So when the quality of wilderness ceased to be an issue, that's when the bill left us. We didn't have anything to say about it anymore.

To go on with your point, you start out like you're in a room like the New York Stock Exchange, you know, just bedlam. [Laughter] The first thing you notice is the ones who are carrying guns and the ones who aren't carrying guns. These people are not out to do anything major. They want to help you pass a good bill. I put the timber industry in there too and John Hall was with them. Gene Bergoffen was then working for the Forest Service, and he would come around periodically and he would tell me that we already have the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act. We don't need this bill. And ironically he was the person who was assigned to write the first RPA program.

The timber industry seemed to feel that if you do responsible planning on these national forest units that some of the land is going to be used for timber sales, and they thought maybe most of it and that's why they worked with us. But they were really good. Some weeks I wouldn't talk to anybody but timber industry lobbyists because they had the best lawyers. But then on the environmental side too, you start to pick and choose. Do you want to deal with Brock Evans of the Sierra Club who just wants to scream at you across the table or do you want to deal with somebody who's willing to sit down with you and work out a reasonable compromise on the bill so that real multiple use and sustained yield is taking place. And that's how you build a list of ten. You start with Bill Towell and American Forestry Association, Wildlife Management Institute, sometimes the National Wildlife Federation, sometimes not.

HKS: So this list was pretty stable then? Once you worked it out and it worked you tended to use that or each bill had its own list of ten?

JWG: Each bill has its own list of ten. But often they're the same ones. Responsible people tend to stay responsible. [Laughter]

HKS: You said something that struck my interest. There's a conventional thought that I was exposed to many times from the industry side. The consensus was over the years that the good people stayed on with the companies and those that really didn't have it went to the trade associations. But you're saying there are some pretty good people with trade associations.

JWG: Oh, yeah, yeah. Ralph Hodges finally got rid of him because he was too fat, but John Hall was a marvelous lawyer. His father had founded the Association of Consulting Foresters. He knew his stuff. One time I had a lobbyist for Sears Roebuck call me and say seems to me like we have a stake in the national forest management act because we sell so much furniture. And I said well, certainly you do. She said well, I don't know anything about any of it. So I put her and John Hall together at lunch and had him go back into the bowels of the history of forestry and why it's important to the furniture industry and he just did a wonderful job. They are really, over the years the people in NFPA, we used to call it back then, were just outstanding.

HKS: Mark Rey came out of that group.

JWG: I used to be friendly with him. [Laughter]

HKS: So you knew him? He's a major figure in Jack Thomas' journals where he goes from industrial flack, which Jack calls him when he first meets him, to a guy who is going to be the next assistant secretary as soon as the Republicans get in office. He wound up respecting him and had a friendly relationship. Some called Rey "the prince of darkness".

JWG: Well, that's a good phrase. That's what we used to call this neo-con Richard Pearle who's one of the instigators of the Iraq war. Let me say this to you. Never denigrate an eagle scout and Mark is an eagle scout. He was as good as the others were at the NFPA. He took it to a different level. He took seriously his degree from Michigan, his relationship with Sally Fairfax, and when he was made vice president there to represent all the smaller mills, he represented them in a major, major way. He tried to get the deans involved. He got me involved. He was going to take science and make science prove that we needed to do something. I don't remember what we were trying to do then. Probably get more timber out of the national forest. But he was a very creative man. Still is as far as I know. But he's getting mean.

HKS: You mentioned Sally Fairfax. Was that a significant story? Was she a problem to him?

JWG: Well, no. I think that he had a lot of respect for her to take that book on forest policy.

HKS: Oh, that book, all right.

JWG: They met at Michigan and I didn't have as much respect for her scholarship as Mark did but nevertheless.

HKS: She was pretty careless.

JWG: That's right. That's a good word.

HKS: With Dana you could be sure. I think I found a middle initial that was incorrect, a Supreme Court judge. That was about the only factual error in that book. With Sally, there are a lot of them. But the theme, the sweep of the book, it was invigorating. I'll put it that way. But I guess McGraw-Hill wanted her to do that.

JWG: Yeah. The book is her monument.

HKS: She's an invigorating person.

JWG: That's right. But I'm trying to remember what the hell, he had me organizing the deans of the forestry schools to do something. This was when I was with the Pinchot Institute back around '89. I don't know. I can't remember. But no, I've never underestimated him. He's a very clever and intelligent man who knows all the resources out there and how to call on them. When he couldn't get past a bill passed that would change the National Forest Management Act, I knew it couldn't be done because he could have done it if it could have been. It goes back to this point I was making before. People up on the Hill tend to want to leave things alone if they aren't broken. And so getting RPA done in the first place was difficult because nobody could see why you needed it. Why don't you just plan? You don't have to have the Congress tell you that. Although very little was broken by the Monongahela-Bitterroot controversy that couldn't be fixed by normal day-to-day operations, it appeared to be broken and so that's how we got that passed. But if the world isn't coming apart, why legislate?

HKS: Was RPA officially repealed or just put on the shelf? It hasn't been used recently, has it?

JWG: It's used. As a matter of fact, almost every section in the National Forest Management Act is an amendment to the RPA.

HKS: Oh, I understand that but I've been told that the formal statement the president sends to Congress, the Assessment and Programs.

JWG: Oh, yeah, that's gone.

HKS: That's gone?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: So RPA is dead, as it were, in that sense, when we think of RPA?

JWG: That's the thing that few people understand about legislation is that very frequently, like common consent, laws are just ignored. And it's certainly true of RPA.

HKS: And Congress zeros the budget for that and it solves the problem with the agency?

JWG: Yes. But to give you an idea, the Forest Management Act calls for an annual report by the chief, qualitative and quantitative report, on how they're doing with their management plans and whether they're being successful. And the first one has never been sent to Capitol Hill. We raised heck about it and they never sent it to us. They just ignore us. So that's possible when they can get away with it.

HKS: Do you have a sense of why they ignore it? It seems to me they would like to keep Congress happy. The information is there. I don't know how burdensome this request was to compile and produce this report.

JWG: It would have been burdensome, but they would simply say that's the chief's annual report, which isn't true. We don't know how many millions of dollars were spent on trying to re-forest some Doug-fir plantations out in the West that were facing certain directions, because they replant them every year and they'd never regenerate and they still aren't regenerating. But the Forest Service is never an agency to share its problems with anybody. They always know what's right. [Laughter]

Congressional Oversight

HKS: Oversight is obviously a very important part of what Congress does and we don't hear much about it. We hear about the laws. Roughly, how much of your time was in oversight?

JWG: A lot, a lot. They didn't like it. I think if you ask John or Max Peterson when he hated me most [Laughter] was when we were doing oversight. And we knew a lot of what they were doing.

HKS: Is there a formal oversight process or is it relatively informal in most cases?

JWG: We did it with hearings. Melcher did it with hearings.

HKS: That's formal then. That's a record and all the rest of that.

JWG: Yeah, yeah. But it takes days and weeks and months to go into those hearings knowing the right questions to ask because they know what the right questions are. So the trick is to see how much you can get out of them that they don't want to tell you. And it used to drive Peterson just nuts because I was good at it. [Laughter]

HKS: How do you do your homework on something like that? You have to ask people in the Forest Service, which is a problem if the chief's unhappy or they know their chief's going to be unhappy if they say this.

JWG: This guy Seymour Hersch, the journalist who's now at the *New Yorker*-- he broke the story on the My Lai massacre years ago and most recently on the prison atrocities in Iraq-- and he was asked a question like that just this week. He said there are a lot of people in the military who want to do the right thing and who know what the right thing is. They're very skilled and talented and they don't care whether I'm a hawk or a dove. They just want to make sure that I get it in the paper right. Well, that's the way it works.

HKS: I see. It's not a whistle blower type thing?

JWG: No, nothing like that, nothing like that. You just put little pieces of information together until you get a nice big healthy chunk to throw. The thing is, there are no rewards for it. We don't make big headlines doing that. But it's important work to do because if the agency knows that their friends are looking over their shoulder to make sure they're doing what they say they're going to do and what the law says they're going to do, it makes them perform better. It's the most important part of being a congressional staff member I think.

HKS: George Leonard when I interviewed him went into some detail on the fundamental flaw of National Forest Management Act was the creation of the Committee of Scientists. They were supposed to be advisors. This is what George said. And they wound up setting up planning process that was beyond the capacity of the routine bureaucracy out on the ground. In this scenario, oversight would look at that and say this is not the intent of Congress. Assuming that George is correct, why doesn't oversight pick that up?

JWG: George does this all the time. I'll never forget hearing him complain and moan about the appeals process. Who invented the appeals process? The Forest Service. Who gave these scientists that much authority? The Forest Service. The law doesn't give it to them. The law says all they have to do is advise the Forest Service and go home. Who made it a complicated process? The Forest Service. It is a complicated process. It's a stupidly complicated process.

HKS: An example he used is the biodiversity section that that went really off the charts, and that's what caused the Forest Service so many problems in court. It was never the intent of Congress. I guess it was Bumpers that wanted to protect the eagle and so forth.

JWG: Well, all I can tell you is the overriding consideration for both bills was how can we help the Forest Service by not imposing too much regulatory hardship on them. This was what Bill Towell was after the whole time, showing that the Forest Service needed a heck of a lot more money to do its work and it knew what to do. Well, we subsequently found out that it didn't always know what to do. And if it created situations on its own through administrative process that made it difficult for them to do business. It was their call. Nobody imposed that on them.

HKS: Maybe my definition of oversight is too fuzzy, but if they're not carrying out what you feel is the intent of the law, why wouldn't this come up? And maybe it did in the oversight process and tell the Forest Service you're causing these problems. That's not very diplomatic. Maybe Congress doesn't do that.

JWG: No, we don't. When you're doing oversight you're looking for negative things. You're not looking for self-created problems. That's I guess the way to say it. Those aren't the kinds of things that come to the Hill. Nobody told us that the committee of scientists was doing them wrong.

HKS: George is a very articulate guy, a forceful personality. He laid it out. This is what was wrong. It was a good idea to have this as an advisor to the Forest Service and help work it out but they wound up writing the regs as it were and that's where it fell apart.

JWG: Well, that was never the intent of Congress. It didn't say it in the law. And I don't know who made that happen. I really don't. But George is a good "blame" guy.

HKS: Let me ask this question. I've been an expert witness for the Department of Justice, and my role was to testify for several days in water court in Colorado on the intent of the Organic Act in terms of water. That's what the litigation was about. And it was impressed upon me that finding the intent of Congress that's not obvious is one of the things the courts do. So why haven't the timber industry supporters sued saying the National Forest Management Act is administered beyond the intent of Congress, because it's shutting down the timber industry in the Pacific Northwest?

JWG: Well, the timber industry has never been a very litigious bunch. They always relied pretty heavily on Congress. They've had big PACs, political action committees. But unlike the enviros who get millions of dollars out of foundations to sue, they just haven't done that very much and I don't know why.

HKS: Maybe that's too cumbersome. You don't have enough control but if they have some good friends on the Hill, that may be their strong suit and that's the way they handle stuff.

JWG: I know for a fact that's true. It's hard to tell that association of X thousand companies that you're going to get them into a multi-million dollar lawsuit. That's not the way to gain members. But I don't know the answer to your question. It used to be back in the early days of my time on the Hill people would say we got to get a bill passed or get a law passed that will do this and this and this. I would almost always say stop and think about that, if you really want a law. Make sure you really want a law, because you don't always know how that law's going to look when it's finished, and it may be the worst possible thing that you could do because a law always calls attention to a certain circumstance and then people start tinkering with it. That's really dangerous. I think the legislature is a nice place but they don't always do the right thing. [Laughter]

HKS: Well, the requirement of compromise, especially if you have very close balanced Republicans and Democrats. The farm bill is an example. You've got to get those groups together to get that clout.

JWG: One of the problems the Bush administration's had is while it has a lot of legislative accomplishments, by and large this Congress hasn't done anything. They haven't even finished all the appropriations bills yet and they're through for the year. So for a lame duck they're coming back in November. I don't know why the timber industry acts the way it does but it's capricious. You've got companies just like the environmental groups. You've got companies like Weyerhaeuser. You work with them day in, day out. No problem at all. And then there are others like Louisiana Pacific used to be where nothing was right, nothing. I never kept it on paper but I always had a second list of ten [Laughter] for the timber industry.

It's best to keep any stuff from going over to the Justice Department because that's an unknown quality over there. You don't know whether you're going to get an assistant attorney general who's going to be with you or against you and you just got to take your chances. On the Monongahela decision, the Justice people were certainly not in favor of the position taken by USDA.

HKS: When I was editing his journals I could identify with Jack Thomas. I could imagine sitting in the chair that he was sitting in, and I would be even angrier than he was. He just couldn't take it.

JWG: That's right. He just, he's a wonderful guy but he just wasn't equipped to be chief of the Forest Service in any way, by training or.

HKS: To take a bench scientist and put him in that maelstrom called Washington, D.C.

JWG: That's right, that's right. It wasn't fair to him and, you know, he'd go out in public places and say things like I don't know if I can keep the Forest Service together. You don't say that. That's not what you're paid to say. And doing this crazy stuff like hiring a special plane for some injured fire fighter, that was a wonderful thing to do but.

HKS: That's in the journals too. He's proud of that episode.

JWG: He's kind of a John Wayne kind of guy and that's not what you need for an administrator.

HKS: He went over to Glickman and said I quit. Glickman says you can't quit til after the election. They kept him on a year longer. Jack wanted out and they kept saying stay til after the election as though if the chief resigns for health reasons, that somehow Al Gore's presidency would be in jeopardy. The Forest Service doesn't have that much visibility nationally and half the people would have said, fine, Clinton wanted him so the Republicans would say it's a good deal. Let's get rid of Thomas.

JWG: Why did he want to get out?

HKS: Because it was killing him.

JWG: Oh, it was affecting his health?

HKS: His health and he just couldn't take it anymore. He just didn't want to deal with that anymore. He wanted to back to La Grande. Actually, he was old enough to retire. He had his thirty years in and all the rest. Anyway, it was interesting that they wouldn't let him go when he wanted to.

JWG: I don't understand that.

HKS: He was causing the problems and embarrassment obviously by the things he was saying. He's so outspoken.

JWG: Yeah, I know, but he was Jim Lyons' guy and that's a fellow you ought to talk to sometime. Boy, if anybody ever screwed up the Forest Service, he did. [Laughter]

HKS: I'd like to but I've been told to stay away from him because he's poison.

JWG: Lyons got rid of Dale and George Leonard in a very unceremonious and undiplomatic way. I bet it was closer to home than Al Gore. Al Gore couldn't have cared less who the chief of the Forest Service was. But Lyons really covered himself in dirt when he got rid of Dale. I didn't think Dale was a particularly good chief but he didn't deserve the treatment that he got. But Jim Lyons is the guy who politicized the Forest Service for the first time. You point this out carefully in your history book how each chief decided to leave at exactly the right time politically so that the new guy wouldn't feel like that was a political job..

HKS: How much difference does it make if the chief is truly a political appointee? Each administration comes in and puts in a new FBI guy, a new head of EPA, and all those guys change all the time. It's not the end of the world. Mike Dombeck says it's not as drastic as the Forest Service culture makes it out to be, and the level of controversy on the Forest Service is so much higher than it was when McGuire was chief that you almost have to have a political appointee to be effective. If the White House said this is our boy, they'll stick behind that person, so there's a real benefit to having a political appointee. Could Mike be right on that?

JWG: I do but I don't agree with it. I think that's very good logic but having the ability to watch one individual or a group of individuals progress through their career path in the Forest Service, having sent people through senior executive training, you have an opportunity to see what the likelihood is that this person is going to succeed in a pressure situation. Being a forest supervisor is not, you know, chopped chicken liver. It's hard work.

HKS: Yeah, ask Eddie Brannon.

JWG: Yeah, that's right. [Laughter] Look at the Soil Conservation Service. It's been mostly political there and the quality of the people who are in there is less than the Forest Service. Some of them are there just because they're a farmer and any old good farmer could handle that job. Well, that's baloney. It's not true. And whether or not I like it that Max was telling me fibs, the chiefs at the Forest Service with two exceptions have really been outstanding people, you know, as individuals and as executives. I just don't agree with him. I like Dombeck a lot and I think he was a pretty good chief for what he had to work with under the circumstances, but I don't think that's right

More on Farm Bills

HKS: Earlier, we talked about why forestry's in the farm bill.

JWG: They're very eclectic because you got to get enough into the farm bill to get it passed, and so there's got to be something in there for just about everyone when it goes to the floor, especially in the House. So, as we discussed, there's child nutrition, food for peace, food stamps. Food stamps has become an enormous program. They used to give commodities away, you know, raw commodities away to the poor people. I remember going to see people standing in line waiting to get their cheese and butter, and now we have this very sophisticated food stamp program and it's good because it really reaches down to the poorest of the poor.

HKS: Is agricultural surplus still an issue?

JWG: Sure. It will always be an issue. Arkansas produces more rice than the world needs, and if it weren't for the price support programs the rice program couldn't survive. Well now, you could say, so what, if you don't eat much rice. I remember back in the mid '70s when the Russian wheat crop and soybean crop collapsed, just totally failed. And at one time we had about two years of crop surpluses moving on the railroads in this country simultaneously to get this grain to Russia. It would have been a tragic situation if we hadn't had it. What they call in the Bible every normal grainery or something like that. It costs a lot of money to store all that grain. It costs a lot of money to subsidize those farmers. But there was a time in the '70s when it was problematical whether or not the world could feed itself, and if it hadn't been for the United States and its more than normal grainery it would have been a very tragic situation.

HKS: There aren't that many states that produce rice. How does that maintain a subsidy price support?

JWG: Because there's too much of it.

HKS: I mean it's strange to go to the arid Southwest where the Bureau of Reclamation provides water ten cents on the dollar to the farmers. It wasn't supposed to be that way but the Congress has insisted that you couldn't charge what it costs. They grow food that has price support and also subsidized water. I mean how does this ever get going?

JWG: The West, which wants to be so independent and free of the federal government, from cradle to grave, they're being subsidized, just the entire West, California, all of them. And the big subsidy is water. And every once in a while you bring it up and put it on the table and let it roll around there. They get so defensive about it that, you know, the westerners are subsidized with water, but the reality of it is that they also have by federal law control the water, not the federal government who owns the water. You can't sometimes get enough water to maintain the national forests because the state's got control of it and decides when it's going to flow and where it's going to flow.

HKS: The linkage between the Forest Service and agriculture in Congress is dramatic. You mentioned earlier that so much forest legislation is attached to farm bills and so forth. If the Forest Service left Agriculture and went over to Interior, it would materially affect its ability to obtain funding. Do you agree with that or would the Congress realign in some way that the forest legislation would be attached to some other important legislation that Interior has?

JWG: It would change things quite a lot I think. Interior has no similar kind of bill, you know. When they enacted FLPMA it was a major act that probably won't come along again in another fifty years.

HKS: Does the fact that the Forest Service budget is in Interior and Related Agencies have any impact on the amount of money it gets?

JWG: I'm not completely sure why the Forest Service budget was shifted over to Interior and Related Agencies, but it meant that the westerners were able to control the purse strings for the Forest Service. And that's very important. The priorities would be different. I don't know if the money would be all that much different. But here you've got non-industrial private forest lands, which represent the majority of the forest land in the United States, getting a ten million dollar program here and a ten million dollar program

there and the National Forest System is dragging down five billion dollars a year. I think those priorities would be changed quite a bit if it were part of the ag appropriations.

HKS: McArdle explained that when the Public Works Committee got the Bureau of Reclamation appropriation from Interior during the 1950's, the Forest Service appropriation was moved from Agriculture to Interior to balance it out.

The ag committee attaches RPA to the farm bill and it gets enacted. How does the money side balance that? I mean why are they influenced by this brash action of the ag committee?

JWG: Well, there's a story there that's very important I think. What we did when we worked on the RPA is impinge on the responsibilities of the Appropriations Committee. And what that means is, we said you have to turn in these reports and they have to mean something. But all that information that we asked for was information that the Appropriations Committee is supposed to ask for. And so what they decided to do was ignore the RPA and that was the beginning of the end for the RPA. My point is that the appropriation committees just decided to ignore RPA. If it had had to stand alone it would have been in trouble, but Congress coupled the law with the National Forest Management Act and so RPA lives on today in this way:

RPA has a requirement for an assessment of the condition of all of the forests in the U.S. Then it calls on the Forest Service to dream up a program for the best management of those forests. Then it says that the president must accept the program as his own and send it to Congress. That's a little too simple, but it will do for now. Remember now, most of the proponents of the bill thought good science and reality would get the Forest Service more money for management.

Trouble is that you can't write legislation that commits the President or the Congress to specific amounts of future spending—especially if they don't want their hands tied. RPA was the first bill to cross Gerald R. Ford's desk when he became president. He was going to veto it, but he was urged by his staff not to do that with his first bill. Instead OMB staff called me to see how mean we were. I promised we would make nice. But the appropriations committees didn't want their hands tied either. The information that might be contained in a good assessment and program was the same data they should be getting every year, but the allowable cut was their primary concern. For instance, they overlooked the huge swell of recreation use that was overwhelming all other uses of the forests. So they ignored RPA. The president didn't send up his wish list and it looked like RPA was dead, because no one was buying Max's Plan A and Plan B. But along came NFMA and the planning process called for in RPA became an integral part of day to day business for the Forest Service.

Mark Rey can abandon Clinton's roadless scheme all he wants, but the essential structure of how the Forest Service does business is still in law, and judges tend to look to the law before they think about Mark Rey. So while the money for NFS did go up big time, it was not spent for better forest management. And while the new regs punch NFMA and RPA into the background for now, the law is still the law. I think of how brutally Judge Haynesworth and his three judge panel wrecked the Forest Service on the strict construction of the 1897 act in the Monongahela case. I always advise people to first find other solutions other than legislation to solve their political problems, because the law is the law. It really does mean something—some day.

HKS: So it didn't work in part because of the way that it's structured?

JWG: That's right. I'm convinced of that. Bob Wolf is smart enough to have known that, but he doesn't acknowledge it to this day. He just decided we're going to steam roll the Appropriations Committee and they decided that we weren't.

HKS: The other legislation, the three little bills and National Forest Management Act, got the same kind of a situation. Appropriations basically does accept this fait accompli and now they've got this program that ag came up with and it works okay generally?

JWG: Yeah. But the three little bills were more kind of expansions on existing laws. As a matter of fact, to get that subject out of the way, by the time we got to the three little bills I was totally exhausted physically. And LeMaster just took those bills and ran with them, and all I did was look them over and say yeah, yeah, that's okay, that's okay, and that's okay and the Senate just accepted them. But we didn't have much real work. I don't think we ever held hearings on those bills.

HKS: Apart from the culture of Congress, other than appropriations, does it matter which house starts a process, introduces the bill and works on it? Does the Senate usually take over certain kinds of things and House other kinds of things?

JWG: No, not necessarily. Of course, the House takes over appropriations first. But other than that it's whoever wants to take the initiative. And sometimes you get a member who is really hot to trot on an issue and he'll really work hard. But if they're not willing to work hard, they should just show up and vote because it's hard work to do it and do it right and make sure that you've got something that means something. That National Forest Management Act, the quibbling and bickering and debate that went on over that bill was just enormous. I'd go home at night and just collapse on the bed. But fortunately except for that one day where I had to hold the hearings myself, I had enough members to help me get it through. That's pretentious to say that but it works that way. The staff's got to back up the senators and if they're not there, the staff's got to fill those gaps whenever it's required. It's hard especially if you have people in the room who are knowledgeable about why, you know, that you shouldn't be holding that hearing.

HKS: I was going to say, was it illegal to do what you did? Could the courts declare that law invalid because?

JWG: I don't know about that. It never came up and nobody ever brought it up so I didn't press it. I just had to get those witnesses out of there.

Appropriations

HKS I'm fuzzy and maybe it changes back and forth over the years. Congress passes a law and usually the law says so many million dollars a year will be the authorization. Sometimes there's an authorization committee as well as an appropriations committee?

JWG: The Senate Agriculture Committee is an authorizing committee.

HKS: Are all the committees authorizing committees, if they pass a law they're authorizing amount?

JWG: Yes. Sometimes they leave it open. Congress shall appropriate such funds as may be necessary, or whatever they think. They usually leave it pretty loose so the Appropriations Committee has room to do some decision-making. But the committees on Public Works and Interior and Related Agencies or Energy and Natural Resources, Agriculture, those are all authorizing committees. They put forth programs in law, and it's up to the appropriations committees to come up with the money to fund them.

HKS: So the law as passed has some statement about how much money is available?

JWG: Right.

HKS: Either as much as necessary or an actual dollar amount?

JWG: Right.

HKS: Each year when the chief goes up, does the ag committee deal again or is it strictly an appropriations? Because when I interview the chiefs sometimes they talk about going to an authorization hearing and then the appropriations hearing.

JWG: We generally did not. We paid quite a bit of attention to the Forest Service budget as offered by the White House but we didn't actually hold hearings. One or two years we might have. After the Budget Act was passed back in the '70s, we would occasionally hold a short hearing on what do those big numbers mean in terms of program activities. But we, the authorizing committee, never held hearings on the budget numbers at all.

HKS: You handle it indirectly I suppose through various oversights to see how the money was being spent?

JWG: That's right, that's right. But, you know, they called Jamie Whitten's sub-committee chairman on appropriations the College of Cardinals and it's not for nothing, because each one of those guys had enormous power over spending. If you think about it very hard you see that except for the personality of the individuals who are involved there, an authorizing committee doesn't mean so much. It doesn't have very much power. The most powerful committees in the Congress are the two appropriations committees, Finance Committee, and Ways and Means. They determine where the money's going. The authorizing committees are not so important unless you've got people who are serving there who have got a lot of give and take, a lot of power as result of their personalities, people like Talmadge and Dole and Humphrey and McGovern, all serving in that one small space, and people respected what they had to say. But other than that, the agriculture committees are not very potent.

HKS: If the ag committee made a mistake based upon whatever research goes into how much money is required and too little was authorized, Appropriations Committee can or cannot exceed that? If it became obvious that the National Forest Management Act required more money than was originally authorized, do you need to go back and the ag committee has to pass a new law or can appropriations override that? I don't know if that ever happens.

JWG: I can't remember that ever happening, but I think the appropriations committees can do anything they want to. They really do have an enormous amount of power. And as I say, what's the ag committee do? It passes a farm bill every four years or five years or six years. I can't explain how insignificant we were except insofar as we chose to be powerful, that is, to assert ourselves and do what we wanted to do. And because of who we were and the kinds of people we had on that committee we got away with it. We had during the Helms era and the Lugar era where neither one of them was particularly interested in agriculture but were on the committee simply because they were from farm states. The committee has really declined in its ability to get things done.

HKS: As a civilian, someone outside the beltway, I always thought ag would be automatically powerful because of the political importance of agriculture throughout the whole country. That's why we have all these subsidies and things that don't make any sense at all. Subsidizing tobacco, for pity sakes, and they're finally now trying to buy out the farms, something that ought to have been done a generation ago but it wasn't possible.

JWG: In 1980 I said that there would never be another farm bill. They're just crazy. They don't make any sense. But because we have larded on all this other stuff, like the nutrition programs, it got a new audience. As a matter of fact, in 1996, if I recall correctly, everybody said this is it. Never going to do another farm bill. And so they did another farm bill. I don't know how to end it.

HKS: How about HEW steps in and says we want the nutrition program? I don't know what the competition is, but it's an example that comes to mind and you could break up those add-ons and people would still get their food stamps and all the rest but not through agriculture. But maybe it has to do with just the seniority of the people involved.

JWG: Yes, a lot of that. As a matter of fact, it would be logical for HEW to come over and ask for those programs, except they never would. The agencies never tromp on one another's turf. The only thing that I could remember was Ickes' attempt to get the Forest Service back in the '30s. But that was so unusual it's memorable.

HKS: Forestry becomes more vulnerable, if it doesn't have the sheer momentum of the farm bills and the ag committee and all that pulling for it. And being a part of the USDA will be a detriment rather than a plus that it seems to have been since its inception, because the secretary doesn't really care about forestry, generally speaking, and it's been more independent.

JWG: The Forest Service likes the Agriculture Department because they leave them alone. The secretary of agriculture likes the Forest Service because that's half its payroll. But there's very little love lost there between the two of them. And now that they've got the Forest Service moved over to the Yates Building, I wonder how long that relationship's going to hold up, because the secretary of agriculture could pretend that the Forest Service just isn't there and he'd be just as well off. There isn't any gut reason why the Forest Service belongs in the Department of Agriculture except as far as I can figure out all the programs in USDA are proactive. They go out there in the country and they do something. And that's great. What makes the Agriculture Department so strong is that it's got people out in the field who do things and they are visible doing things. But all the passion that Pinchot worked up over that issue, it's hard in this day and age to figure out why he cared one way or the other, as long as he had the president of the United States in his back pocket.

HKS: Well, he claimed it was the corruption in the Department of Interior and the fraudulent distribution of public lands.

JWG: I think there's something to that. Several years ago I was named chair of a committee to promote Science Day, which was a day that they have through natural resource organizations like SAF and the wildlife people. They hire a hotel and the Forest Service and SCS had liberal leave policies so that their employees could go to this thing and learn something about science, the new developments. And let me tell you, there have been a lot of new developments in scientific knowledge just in the thirty years that I've been fooling with this stuff.

At that time Doug MacCleery was the deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for natural resources. I went to him and I said all right, you have got to go to your buddies over in the Interior Department and let them give their employees some time off so that they can come to the science day thing. And so he did. He was a very fine person, you know, and he came back and he said you know what they said to me. Said what good does that do for the president's program? Now that's a completely different way of looking at things than they do at USDA, and it was a very revealing comment to me. We had one or two people from the BIA who showed up at science day but that's about all. What good does that do the president's program? At the USDA the daily mission is foremost in everybody's minds. They don't think about presidential politics over in USDA's resource agencies, almost never.

HKS: While you were saying that I was thinking well sure, over in USDI they've had political appointees running agencies for some time now but it's much newer to the Department of Agriculture. I guess the Soil Conservation Service went that way in the '80s or something, had the first literally political appointee. And so the culture is different.

JWG: But even though NRCS has had several political appointees now, what's important is still getting the soil saved and not what the White House thinks about anything. I saw a difference when Katie McGinty went in at...

HKS: CEQ. Before that she was the president's advisor on environment or some such.

JWG: Yeah, Council on Environmental Quality, that's right. And she did an awful lot of meddling in the resource agencies, both Interior and Agriculture.

HKS: Jack Thomas has lots to say about Katie.

JWG: [Laughter] Oh, she was terrible.

HKS: He liked her as a person and she was courteous. She wasn't abrupt or demeaning but she was purely political. That to Jack was, this is no way to run a government. You're supposed to be serving the people, and not just the half that voted for the president.

JWG: [Laughter] Well, and who was another meddler? The guy that had been with an environmental organization previously was over at Interior and then they moved him over to CEQ. I can't remember.

HKS: George Frampton. Actually, Dombek liked him when he was at CEQ and talks in detail about how important it was to the Forest Service's success of getting along with these guys. He wound up going over to the White House to CEQ once or twice a week and sitting down with the presidential chief of staff, Leon Panetta. For Jack Thomas these people were meddlers and time wasters.

JWG: That's right.

“Senator” Sam Thompson and Bob Wolf

HKS: Let's backtrack. We've agreed not to go through the details of RPA, but in your discussions and the memos you wrote to me about Senator Eastland and his aide, Sam Thompson, who is the third senator. That should be on the record in as much detail as you care to give.

JWG: Senator Eastland is a guy who used to make a pretty good income for himself giving speeches throughout the South during the civil rights movement on the mongrelization of the races and that sort of thing. As he started running out of gas getting older he gave that up, but he also gave up going to the Senate. I never saw the man in person, even though he was the chairman of the sub-committee that I was working for. And the fellow who he sent to work with me, a fellow named Sam Thompson, great big fellow with a deep southern accent and he and I got along just famously. Finally it got to be known that if Sam Thompson said it then you had the Eastland vote. Eastland vote always came in the form of a proxy so that's why I didn't see him. I don't know if Senator Eastland cared one whit about forestry or soil conservation, but Sam did and so that's probably why he got to be chairman of the sub-committee.

HKS: There were no official rules on attendance and absenteeism and so forth in Congress?

JWG: Sure but nobody pays any attention to them because as you pointed out earlier, being a senator is such a complicated piece of business you could have three committee assignments and all three of them have got the drop dead bill up that day and you got to make a decision about which one you go to. So they come in late. They don't show up. And sometimes just getting a quorum, which is required, is the toughest thing you do. You're calling all over the place to drag a senator out of mark-up session he's having over in finance so he can come over and vote on the bill we're working on. It's hairy, just hairy. And it's confusing. It borders on chaotic sometimes.

HKS: Where did Sam Thompson sit during hearings?

JWG: Well, he sat with the staff.

HKS: Oh, behind the senators?

JWG: Yeah.

HKS: Empty chair.

JWG: [Laughter] You'd go into a meeting with my groups of ten and if Sam says yes or Sam says no that's really important and everybody in the group of ten knows it. Thank heavens Sam wasn't some sort of right wing crazy or we'd really been in the soup. But fortunately his interests were in soil and water conservation and a good national forest system. It was like somebody hired me a brother, and if anybody gave me any trouble I'd just trot Sam out there. Especially some of the western industry people would

come into town for a couple of days to oversee this National Forest Management Act and they'd try to be tough, you know. This is the way it's going to be. I said we're not going to write a bill for the West Coast. And they'd say what are you talking about and I'd just say "Tell them, Sam," and he would. They figured it out pretty fast that he had the say so there. So between Wolf and Sam and I we were a pretty good team. We each had our little puddles of interest, our areas of influence, and we exercised them and we knew one another well enough so that we knew how to play one another against the other.

HKS: So far as you know was Bob Wolf's activist role unique in the Congressional Research Service?

JWG: I think it absolutely was. I can't talk about other divisions but in that one division that's agriculture, soil and water conservation, forestry, wildlife, he was absolutely unique. He was so incorrigible they just let him go. They didn't pay any attention to him, and as long as nobody complained about him they'd just let him go.

HKS: He was there a long time.

JWG: He sure was and he was very influential there. He probably could have been division chief if he'd been a good boy but he wasn't.

HKS: And his main transgression was being an activist?

JWG: He never did anything on the Hill that no one wanted him to do.

HKS: Were these technical violations other than he's supposed to wait to be asked a question?

JWG: That's part of it.

HKS: And he came over with an answer for questions that hadn't been asked yet?

JWG: Sure. Well, how was he going to deal with a guy like me who didn't know anything about forestry? I never saw a tree cut in my life. So he was more than helpful, but he was helpful in informal settings where the two parties weren't in the same room hacking it out and he's interfering in the discussion. He would always do that kind of work ahead of time.

National Forest Management Act

JWG: let me tell you about the Forest Management Act. You know the Church guidelines for clearcutting are in that bill. Those guidelines were produced with Bob's help by Leon Cambre, who was a Forest Service guy who went on to become forest supervisor of the Mississippi forest and the Mark Twain in Missouri. But here's this Forest Service guy cranking out these guidelines for clearcutting for the Forest Service without any authorizations from his bosses, and then finally it winds up in this law. As a matter of fact, you might say they're the centerpiece of the law.

HKS: Why are they called the Church guidelines? I mean how did Senator Church get a hold of this?

JWG: They had this program called Legislate where every year they would send a few of their employees up to the Hill to learn how the Congress works. And Leon got detached to Church's office, Senator Frank Church of Idaho, and while he was there Church was holding these hearings on clearcutting, totally unauthorized hearings that were never linked to any legislation and nobody would have dreamed except that down the line after Leon had come back to Missouri to run his forest, it turned out to be in law. And I wonder where that came from, where those guidelines came from. Well, could Wolf have had something to do with it?

HKS: I don't know.

JWG: I do. [Laughter]

HKS: Dale Robertson and Jack Thomas and Mike Dombeck agree that the real turning point after National Forest Management Act was that the Forest Service ignored that clearcutting was to be an exception. It could be used but only as an exception. And if the Forest Service had read the law the way the next three chiefs said it should have been read-- that would have been McGuire's ballpark-- the turning point in the clearcutting controversy would have been earlier and on different grounds than spotted owls and so forth.

JWG: This goes back to what I was saying earlier about Max Peterson not being truthful with me. They would frequently take provisions in the law and just ignore them. And they were only cutting off their own nose to spite their face, you know. But the Forest Service has always been bigger than life. They knew best. They knew what was the right thing to do. And we fools on the Hill, what we didn't know wouldn't hurt us. Except that when we found out what was going on or not going on, mostly it was sins of omission, not co-mission, then trouble developed. But you know it's a judgment call on any chief's part. How do they know they can trust me? How do they know they can trust the next guy that takes my job? And especially these days in Washington when nobody trusts anybody, it's most destructive.

We used to have situations in the committee where you could have sat there for hours and never told who was a Democrat and who was a Republican, and now everything is partisan politics, everything. After the 1980 elections, Ronald Reagan hired Elizabeth Dole to go to K Street where most of the lobbyists kept their offices and warn them the Republicans are in control of this town now and you'd better not be hiring any of these Democrats who are losing their jobs, including me. And that same policy has prevailed ever since. Ever since 1994 when the Republicans retook the Congress, that same policy has been going on so that if a Democrat wants a job he'd better leave town because they're not going to be in Washington. That kind of partisanship didn't happen even under Nixon, as partisan as that guy was, certainly not under Carter. We couldn't have worked if we had been as partisan as they are today and they don't get much done. They spend all their time fussing with one another over this political point or that.

HKS: Maybe that's why Mark Rey hasn't been that successful in overturning Clinton's policies.

JWG: I think maybe that's true. I think it's true.

HKS: Political scientists studied Reagan administration a lot. According to their score sheet, the Reagan administration delivered more of his campaign promises than any other president. He really did what he promised to do, whether you like it or not.

JWG: Bush is that kind of a president too. Lord knows, he didn't have a mandate to do all this stuff he's been doing.

HKS: I haven't read much of it, but Bob Wolf has an oral history he did at Missoula and it's online.

JWG: I've got it on my computer.

HKS: I read a couple of chapters. I can't read for squat on the screen and I didn't want to print it all out on my little two-bit printer.

JWG: Bob's pretty selective about what he has to say.

HKS: So when he retired he was replaced by a guy who followed the rules and changed the dynamics?

JWG: Absolutely, completely different. That fella named Ross Gorte, and he had been at National Forest Products Association before he went to the Library of Congress and now he drives AFPA absolutely crazy with the stuff that he sends up to Congress. He's a very effective fella but in a just completely different way than Bob was. And really it's just a function of you put a piece of paper in some congressional staffer's hand, whether you send it by mail or whether you go up there and talk to him, talk to him about

all the nuances behind that piece of paper that they handed you. I'd have been lost without Wolf. I really would have.

HKS: You read from time to time that the nation would be well served if Congress had larger staff. I mean that issues are technically so much more complicated and one of the ills of American legal life is Congress passes a law in 1980 without looking back at all the other laws that are impacted and now what do you do when you're a forest supervisor and you're disobeying one law when you're obeying the other. How do you straighten this out?

JWG: That's right. It's very hard.

HKS: I mean there's interaction between the Endangered Species Act and the biodiversity section of the National Forest Management Act. There's a linkage there. I don't know if anyone said hey, there's a linkage here. Do you remember the biodiversity section? According to Max there wasn't a lot of debate whether this was going to be a good thing or a bad thing. It seemed like the thing to do.

JWG: Well, that's right. Everybody was talking about managing the resources. Stop managing just for timber. Manage for the entire natural resource that's out there. And everybody agreed that's what we were supposed to do. It certainly was not controversial.

HKS: What I remember about when the bill was going through was the non-declining flow stuff.

JWG: Non-declining, even flow?

HKS: Yeah. Was that smoke and mirrors or were people really concerned which way that was going to go?

JWG: There sure was an awful lot of debate about it and I could never figure out why it was important. But the industry just thought it was the most important thing in the world.

HKS: It jeopardized old growth logging because you take a hundred thousand board feet off an acre, there isn't any way of waiting five hundred years to regrow it.

JWG: The way I looked at it at the time was that the industry was getting steam rolled. Even the Republicans acknowledged that you couldn't manage the national forest the same way you managed privately owned timber. It simply wasn't the same kind of an entity and that you had to be more balanced in your approach towards what you did on that land so that wildlife and other things wouldn't be adversely affected. And so the industry it seemed to me was just snatching at straws to make its position known on some things when those things weren't always very important. They were not well led. I spoke earlier about how good they were, the staff at NFPA. But they didn't come with a strong point of view, a single industry position and that may be a function of there are so many companies. Weyerhaeuser and International Paper were willing to go for some things that some of the smaller companies would just go nuts having to support. They were not well led and, as I say, I think that's pretty much a function of their diversity.

HKS: I had always understood that the big clout that the industry had was people like Hatfield and so forth, that that was their effective entrée to Congress was through some key senators and congressmen as opposed to the company itself testifying directly on issue or talking to you over a cup of coffee or whatever the process might be.

JWG: They were at real odds with one another. There were about ten companies that had their own representatives in Washington and they used to drive the people at National Forest Products Association absolutely crazy because they didn't play by the book. They played by their company's book and there was a lot of dichotomy there. Art Smythe, you know Art Smythe who was the Weyerhaeuser lobbyist?

HKS: Sure.

JWG: He did everything he could to get Ralph Hodges fired and you wouldn't think that Art Smythe would do anything like that. I mean that's just not the kind of fella that he comes across as being.

HKS: That's right.

JWG: And he isn't that kind of a fella but he did nevertheless and he didn't think Ralph was a very moral fella.

HKS: They were a major supporter of the association financially.

JWG: That's right.

HKS: We discussed the interaction with Forest Service staff. There's the formal interaction that chiefs testify but was there a lot in the National Forest Management Act with you on, I'm not sure formal and informal are the right terms to use, but they'd give you a call, "Jim, can we come over and talk about something?"

JWG: Sure.

HKS: A lot of that? It might be a half hour discussion on a particular section of the law and so forth?

JWG: Right, right. We did that an awful lot.

HKS: What did they ask you to do or did they just want clarification usually?

JWG: They'd come up with ideas about what they wanted in the bill or what they didn't want in the bill and we tried to be helpful to them, you know. This was a very complicated situation. We wanted to give them as much flexibility as we possibly could without just turning it over to them and saying go run it the way you want to. And so Gene Bergoffen or somebody would be up there almost all the time. As a matter of fact, they really should have gotten into a lot more trouble than they did because at various times there had been edicts sent down from the White House, do not go to Capitol Hill unless the White House knows you're going. They just ignored that and either the chief or one of his flunkies would come up and spend hours and hours with us. But as much as we were trying to manage the Monongahela decision through legislation, we were also trying to protect the institution of the Forest Service and that was in the back of everybody's mind, even Tom Barlow from the National Resources Defense Council who hated the Forest Service or did from time to time.

HKS: Is that because he came out of BLM or did he have some antagonism he brought with him or what or do you have any idea why?

JWG: Well, it's this business of saying yeah, yeah, sure, sure to Congress and then going off and doing what they were going to do in the first place.

HKS: Part of his activist role. It really wasn't his job to have those opinions but.

JWG: That's right. [Laughter]

HKS: Personalities matter so much, how well people can work together.

JWG: Absolutely do. If the chemistry's wrong, forget it.

HKS: McGuire talks about when he was sitting in during mark up on the National Forest Management Act. There were some significant changes made or additions made to the act. Talmadge turned to him and said chief, what do you want, and he said like make the national forests permanent by statute and things

like that. Is that really what happened, that he was sitting back on the second row and did he really sit at the table and does it matter?

JWG: Sat right at the table.

HKS: Right at the table?

JWG: Talmadge did this two times, once in the formal mark up and once when we went to conference on the bill. This is a reflection of what I was saying a minute ago that above all we wanted to protect the institution. We didn't want to give McGuire anything that he didn't feel he could live with. And so on twenty or thirty different points he would always turn to McGuire before he'd gavel one subject closed. Chief, can you live with that, and in almost every event McGuire said yeah.

HKS: The Forest Service had a lot of interaction before that?

JWG: Oh, sure.

HKS: So if they had serious problems, John would have been well aware of that, been flagged in all kinds of ways. So he wouldn't have been surprised other than being asked at all.

JWG: Yeah, that's right, but it's in a slightly different context because there you're in front of all the principals, House and Senate, Republican and Democrat, and you can't weasel to them. You've got to tell it like it is. And so it was gratifying to hear him say the kinds of things that he said. We had somehow or other been faithful to what we were trying to do in the first place and he made people feel good. I don't know what it is about McGuire but he never said very much, as indicated by the short tapes that you have on him, but people trusted him, just looked at him and trusted him.

HKS: His integrity was just sort of overpowering. You just knew that he wasn't going to lie to you. Maybe if you grow up in research as he did, he didn't have an administrative job until he became deputy chief.

JWG: Yeah, isn't that strange?

HKS: John handled the political interactions and didn't drive him nuts the way it did Jack. It's not just the scientist.

JWG: Oh, that's right.

HKS: It's who the scientist is.

JWG: You know McArdle was a scientist too.

HKS: That's right.

JWG: And he had that same special quality as far as I'm personally concerned. I knew when I met that guy for the first time that I was going to be able to trust what he said.

HKS: Of the five chiefs I've interviewed and they're all bright, intelligent, hard working, thoughtful people, but John's intelligence was the most dominant. I mean he was always at least a step ahead of anything I was doing in the interview and it was so gentle. I would imagine him handling testimony in Congress, a question and answer period, how effective he would be with his short statements and always could deflect what was going on. I don't know if he was actually in terms of IQ points if he was the smartest chief in American history but he had to be near the top of the list. I mean this is the sense you had with him, and I liked John a lot.

JWG: Me too.

HKS: And no one has ever said anything bad about McGuire that I've ever heard, no sour grapes from a deputy chief or anyone that he was this way or that way.

JWG: That's right. Just think about it this way. The term chief is a pretty pretentious title and notwithstanding that he wore it well. He seemed to deserve it.

HKS: Max says it made a difference the way Congress handled the National Forest Management Act having John so widely respected by Congress. No one was concerned that he wasn't talking straight when he answered their question.

JWG: I think the Forest Service has been pretty well led, when you think about it, think about some of the people who have been in charge of the institution.

Senate Agriculture and Energy Committees, Plus the House of Representatives

HKS: I have a sub topic here. It's the interaction between the ag committee and Energy and Natural Resources Committee and negotiations between the committees on language. In the interviews with Max and John there was a lot of controversy between the two committees, a lot of these details to be ironed out. It wasn't easy.

JWG: That's right. They were thought of as the green committee and they were. Talmadge didn't really want to meet with them and share this bill with them. And I convinced him that he should not only do that but bring in Jennings Randolph as well. But we had the votes. This goes back to my little list of ten. As a matter of fact, it got to be about twelve for the National Forest Management Act. When we went to the floor with that bill and Randolph started offering his amendments, he offered two and he got wiped out twice and he knew then that two full committees of the Senate had already come to an agreement on what should be in that bill and not without some enormous difficulty. We had as much trouble with the Interior Committee as we had with some of the environmental lobbyists.

HKS: On things like clearcutting?

JWG: Clearcutting, yeah.

HKS: Non-declining flow?

JWG: Yeah. But it was more there than that. There was a basic animosity between the members of the two committees. Our members didn't like the way Scoop Jackson ran that committee, and the Energy Committee thought Talmadge was a redneck, who wouldn't know how to spell the word liberal. And they didn't know what to make of Hubert Humphrey and George McGovern being on our committee and voting with us, but they were.

HKS: And that helped.

JWG: It sure did.

HKS: How typical is it that two committees get together?

JWG: Unheard of.

HKS: Unheard of? And that was a strategy that was effective because you made sure that the environmental side had thorough hearings?

JWG: Absolutely.

HKS: Well, there will always be sour grapes no matter what you do, but for the mainstream it was well handled. The sensitive points got a lot of spotlights on them and was dealt with properly and all the rest. How about the House side?

JWG: They were kind of overwhelmed by us. Just as I didn't get involved in Denny's three little bills, they didn't much get involved in the Senate effort. The conference committee was pretty tame compared to everything else that had gone into the bill because we took all the work out of it. We made it a passable bill, a bill that could be enacted. We were talking earlier about what's important about legislation is that if it can pass.

HKS: Was the House version a lot different?

JWG: No.

HKS: Relatively minor stuff that had to be ironed out?

JWG: Matter of fact, I think they took our bill and started working. They started working with it but they didn't do much to it. I don't know what to say about that procedure that took place except that there aren't very many circumstances where if I as a staff member would suggest it to the chairman because it was kind of radical. It was really radical for Talmadge. He'd never heard of anything like that before and he didn't exactly like it because he was afraid that he would lose control of the situation, which he never would like to do. But on the other hand, Scoop Jackson never showed up. So Talmadge was in charge the whole way.

HKS: It surprises me that Jackson wouldn't show up given he's from Washington state.

JWG: He tried to come and the staff talked him out of it. And it wasn't as if he wasn't well represented there. I mean, Dale Bumpers was there and several other prominent Democrats who carried his water for him. But I think his staff didn't want him in there doing nice things for the timber industry. They wanted to keep the green complexion of that committee.

HKS: Other than the kind of a strange little section on sealed bids on timber sales, what else has been overturned that you know of in the National Forest Management Act?

JWG: Nothing.

HKS: That's a pretty good act.

JWG: Not bad.

HKS: I mean this many years and all the controversy it's still there, basically in the same form it was in 1976.

JWG: The only thing the industry got together on was sealed bids, and that was after the bill was passed. If they could have stood back and watched their power, which was considerable, and how it made that sealed bid bill go through like a shot out of hell, they would have seen what they could have done on the National Forest Management Act. But they didn't. When they came up to see me and said we got to get that sealed bid thing out of the bill, I said come on, we've been through all this stuff and what's wrong with sealed bids. That's pretty standard operating procedure for government work. Can't have that. Absolutely can't have it. It didn't make any sense to repeal that part of the act. But they got it done in record time. And by the way, you've got to harvest all the Doug-fir tomorrow. If we'd put that in there they would have got that passed too.

HKS: [Laughter] Yeah. To your knowledge, the rationale for making National Forest Management Act an amendment to RPA was because of the part of the management act that deals with planning?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: That was the logic for it?

JWG: Yes, that was the driving force.

HKS: Is it any other reason that it's somehow easier to pass an amendment? I mean almost no one realizes or cares if it's an amendment.

JWG: Go back to what you were talking about a minute ago. It's always best when you're writing new legislation to be able to tie it to something that's been done previously so that Congress isn't wary about whether it's something that's coming like a bolt out of the blue or whether there's some precedent for it. Precedence is very important and so even though the RPA wasn't so old and steeped in tradition, as it were, it was at least something that Congress looked at and considered previously and approved of. And so it was better to tie this new bill to that older one. Does that make any sense?

HKS: Sure, we were talking about earlier that Congress isn't able to or doesn't care to look back at all the other statutes that are getting bumped around by the new thing that they're talking about. But the agency is still bound by all the statutes that enables those who are opposed to Forest Service practices to sue based upon the violation of some law that has nothing to do with the National Forest Management Act.

JWG: Well, we tried to do that but some of those laws were written by other committees in different contexts. You know, we ran into the clean water act and the clean air act.

HKS: I mean EPA has been using since it's inception an 1899 statute on water pollution because it still works and yet I don't know how the lawyers even found they had that law on the books. It had never been enforced.

JWG: Well, John Baker wrote the Rural Development Act of 1972, and he started it out originally about how the Department of Agriculture is going to give out free seeds and all this stuff and that language was from the Organic Act for the Department of Agriculture and USDA called us up and they said do you really want us to start giving out free seeds. [Laughter]

HKS: The 1876 rider that created what is now the Forest Service was attached to the seed distribution bill.

JWG: Is that right?

HKS: That's what the language says. This forestry project that Hough headed up was enabled by the distribution bill.

Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation Service

HKS: Do you want to talk at all about the Soil Conservation Service? By the way, why was the name changed? Was there a real reason for that?

JWG: Soil conservationist Hugh Hammond Bennett. The Soil Conservation Service was originally started as an organization that would be in the field and would help farmers with their erosion problems. As time went on the possibility that they could provide personal service to every farmer in America it just became ridiculous. But these people who specialized in that kind of work were people who knew an awful lot about water and what it did and what it wouldn't do. And small town mayors were suddenly discovering these people with all this capability to help them with their water supply and quality problems. And SCS was becoming less and less able to service individual farmsteads. That's kind of too bad but it's also the reality of what's going on out there right now. Water is too important for a part-time mayor to just go winging it out there, in terms of quality and quantity. So it was felt that since-- this was during the Reagan

years-- since they couldn't fulfill that old task of just working with individual farmers, that they ought to start redefining their mission and they ought to do it with a new name. And as far as I know, it's working out all right. I'm not as close to them as I used to be but there's another well run organization.

HKS: Was there a new organic act or was it just more simple, change your name to reflect a broader mission?

JWG: Yeah, that's all.

HKS: Kind of a cumbersome name.

JWG: Yeah, it is.

HKS: Doesn't roll off the tip of your tongue really. Doug Helms called me and told me the name had been changed and he said we do everything but forestry now.

JWG: No, they're doing forestry now. They've got control of this new forest land bill that has been where the money's been impounded. That's their bill, not the Forest Service anymore. Forestry incentives was also part of what's now called the Farm Service Agency.

HKS: I asked McGuire and probably some other chiefs the difference between State and Private Forestry in the Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service. He said the Forest Service doesn't actually put people in the field. They're one step away. They're advising at a higher level. Is that a good enough definition of the difference?

JWG: Sure. Almost all the laws that are written for State and Private say they have to work through the state foresters or similar state agencies. That's absolutely true. Their numbers are so few that they could never provide landowner assistance. But that's a complicated picture, you know. The companies have done it and have provided service-- Weyerhaeuser, IP, Mead-- then you have the tree farm system which was created to spite the Forest Service. Everybody's involved in it in some way. The wildlife agencies are involved in it. And some days it's pretty hard to figure out. It's what I'm struggling with right now is trying to figure out what they did in the 2003 farm bill that juggled up all these programs. Are there as many programs in the Soil Conservation Service and other agencies that deliver assistance to forest landowners, or are there more than there are in State and Private Forestry? There is a lot of overlap.

HKS: I suppose the administration looks at what needs to be done and picks an agency. Maybe a cabinet member makes a difference?

JWG: I don't know. It's hard to tell. You know when Congress goes out and creates a new program with a hundred million dollars of guaranteed money in it and then two years later abolishes that program, trying to figure out what's going on is very hard. The only thing that I can figure out is that it's the Iraq war.

HKS: The money, they've pulled back everything they could pull back.

JWG: Yeah.

HKS: Has an enormous impact on the lives of the people out there in the field doing work, whether or not they're promoted and all the budgetary questions that come up and buyout for retirement.

JWG: Right.

HKS: You mentioned in your memo whether SCS wanted an RPA of their own and the chief, Norman Berg, said yeah, and they were planning in it.

JWG: That's right.

HKS: Is there a lot to that story or is that pretty much the story?

JWG: That's just pretty much it, because if you put in anything that smacks of land use planning into a bill for the Soil Conservation Service it's going to affect their ability to go out and work with landowners in the field. I went to a meeting of the Midwest state fish and wildlife directors in Antwerp, Ohio one time and they were complaining to me about how they couldn't get the farmers to plant the right kinds of grasses that would provide good habitat for wildlife. And I said well, I don't understand what your problem is because most farmers that I know anything about really feel that soil and water conservation is good business. It may be the fact that you walk up their driveway with a gun on your hip and they see that gun and that's all they can see. I think there's a very delicate balance based on whether or not the landowner feels that his own prerogatives are being impinged on in some way. It's very important. It's like the Forest Service S&PF. They were first called inspectors. They went out to inspect to see whether or not the states were doing what they were supposed to do with regard to protecting from fire and what have you. And it took a couple of decades for the term inspectors to go out the window and for more mutual respect between the agency and the state foresters came to be more parallel. I know from talking to people who have dealt with landowners on the ground that that's a very sensitive point, that that is the farmer's land and you have to treat it and talk about it as if it was the farmer's land and not yours.

HKS: So nothing happened? There was no bill or even draft for an RPA?

JWG: We gave them a very good bill, and what it became for them was it strengthened authorities that they already had to do a national environmental assessment of all the lands in the United States. And they're still doing it. They don't talk about it very much.

HKS: Is it controversial that people worry about they're going to find an endangered species on their farm and then shut them down?

JWG: No, I don't think that ever came up during that thing. It was a process much like RPA and so it didn't say that this is going to be the end result of your work. It just said go out and do the inventory.

HKS: The 1924 Clarke-McNary Act had some very important segments and one was the forest survey where the Forest Service goes out and surveys the forestlands of the U.S. The forest survey was handled by research. For some reason it was in the experiment station in Portland where I worked. It was the largest single division that we had. That was in the '60s. Is that still going on? The Forest Service is looking at the forests?

JWG: No. You know, that's one of those things that they don't do. We told them in the RPA that they had to go out and look at all of the forests of the United States too. But if you go to the Forest Service research guys you learn that they don't know. They don't have information that's tradable from forest to forest so that you can compare what's going on at this forest with that forest. And just from reading your stuff, I've deduced from that that this is primarily a function of the National Forest System not telling Research what to do. This goes back to the old Clapp thing, you know. But they don't know what's going on in the private forest. There's one guy in the Northeast area office of State and Private who probably knows about as much about private forestland as anybody in America and even he'd tell you that's not much, insofar as the national forests are concerned. One of the reasons that Bob Wolf has always been at war with the Forest Service is they don't understand the productivity of their own lands and what are legitimately called, you know, timber forests and what are really just sagebrush. That's an exaggeration, of course, but you know what I mean.

HKS: When I started for the Forest Service in 1957 on a big timber forest in the Cascades, I looked at the district's forest plan and it was rather out of date and this just speaks volumes to the whole thing. The Forest Service was using Weyerhaeuser yield tables for its guideline to determine the allowable cut on that national forest, forty-three million board feet. It's probably more like 4.3 million now. And I thought you mean the Forest Service doesn't have enough expertise to come up with its own yield tables on its own forests. And no, it really hadn't developed that at that time. Nothing shabby about Weyerhaeuser's work, but to have to go to the private sector and look over their shoulder to find out how many trees we

can sell you is a conflict of interest. There's a lot of things going on there. But these inventories just never yielded that kind of information.

JWG: That's really too bad because there are all kinds of ways you could use that data, first of all, to see how well the timber sale plans of the various forests really hold up in the light of the real world. When you talk about selling national forest timber nobody ever talks about what the marketplace wants. It just isn't done. It's automatic well, we stop buying Canadian wood except that we put a tariff on it and we stop cutting the national forest. So somehow or other the marketplace for wood is remarkably changed and we just go on as if nothing happened. Nobody talks about it. Nobody talks about the high cost of plywood. It's not what in fact the market wants the Forest Service timber. And that's kind of too bad I think. If you have been re-planting the same tract of land with Doug-fir for thirty years and it still hasn't started growing any trees, seems like you probably ought to start thinking about putting something else on that dirt.

HKS: I think the technology of reforestation was very primitive, handled mostly by very junior foresters like me, three days out of forestry school with pickup labor with no particular skills except had strong backs and could swing the equipment all day long. But that bothered me too and I used to ask questions about it. One of the things we had to do was go out two years after planting and find the Douglas-fir seedlings. Well, you couldn't find any Douglas-fir seedlings because the natural reforestation was hemlock, which is much more vigorous, crowded it out and you have hemlock head high on this land and no Douglas fir. So I asked, naïve person that I was at the time, trying to be educated so I could be a good ranger myself someday, why we planted. Well, we had to. We collected Knudson-Vanderberg money on the timber sales so much per thousand board feet, and we had to spend it on those acres.

JWG: I have always thought it was kind of dangerous business for the Society of American Foresters to always push science above all. But golly, there isn't much science we knew for the first fifty years of the Forest Service. It was, you know, counting trees pretty much before it got into the real nitty gritty on what makes things grow and where they do and when they do and what kind of habitat these animals need. And I think we're still learning an awful lot. To say science above all, that's a little risky.

HKS: Where I worked there was railroad land grant land so every other section was owned by somebody else, either Weyerhaeuser or St. Regis. You drive down the logging road and you could tell which was the national forest land that had been logged and the private land that had been logged because the private land had this vigorous stand of regeneration, and the Forest Service land was often just barren. And the difference was the Forest Service by mandate that was absolutely irrefutable and you couldn't even ask why, had to burn the logging slash, and it killed all this natural regeneration. Weyerhaeuser didn't care if hemlock came in. That was free fiber growing on the property. They didn't have to do a thing. All they had to do was accept risk for two years. The government, of all operations, refused to accept risk that this logging debris, which is very flammable for two years, would catch on fire. I'm simplifying I'm sure but still, these are some of the issues that just drove me nuts and you couldn't ask why, because I wanted to be wiser. I wasn't being a radical. I just wanted to understand.

Congress, you can tell from the testimony of some of the chiefs that there's skepticism on the other side of the table from the chiefs, do you guys really know what you're doing. And a lot of questions McGuire said were about reforestation. Every year, chief, you come here and you still have the same twenty-five million acres that need replanting and it never goes up or never goes down. And John chuckled and that's sort of the end of his analysis of it.

JWG: Well, that's what you call oversight and they were challenging them. But, you know, this is the kind of thing that Jack Ward Thomas doesn't understand to this day. There are skeptical questions asked by your enemies and then there are skeptical questions asked by your friends. If you deal straightforward and honest with your friends you're both going to be happier for it. Most of the questions the Forest Service gets are skeptical questions from their friends. If they don't see it that way as useful and friendly, that's too bad but that's what it is.

HKS: That's why John always said you've got to tell the truth. There's no long term benefit from lying to Congress, because if they find out you're not trustworthy there's no use even going to the hearings anymore because they're not going to pay any attention to you.

JWG: Jack used to spar with the members of Congress and there's nothing to be gained in that. He thought it was cute and he thought he was cute. He used to flirt with the lady who used to be a congresswoman from Idaho.

HKS: Helen Chenoweth. She figures large in his journals. She married that stockman, Wayne Hage. Made quite a team. If she wasn't an elected official, I would have taken some of this stuff out because we might have been sued for libel or blasphemy or something or other, saying she's stupid and she's an idiot and things like that.

JWG: I didn't have much to do with the House but after I retired she held a hearing here in Hot Springs and it was a for show hearing to help a member of Congress named Dickey get reelected from Arkansas, and she was pretty dumb.

Eastern Wilderness Act

HKS: The Eastern Wild Areas Act, do you want to talk more about that? You mentioned it. It just sort of steamrolled through because the environmentalists wanted it and we have eastern wilderness areas.

JWG: The only reason we got that bill in the first place was because it was called wild areas. If it had been called wilderness it would have been solely under the jurisdiction of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. When it became clear after a lot of informal sessions with the enviros that they weren't going to accept anything unless it had the word wilderness in the title, then it was reintroduced as the Eastern Wilderness Act and sent immediately to the Energy Committee and there they took care of it. And I was glad to see it gone. There was no wiggle room in it. Rupert Cutler, who was assistant secretary under Carter, said after that bill passed, wilderness is whatever Congress says it is. It has nothing to do with criteria that the Forest Service used to carry along, you know, got to be five thousand acres of no roads and this and that. It's whatever Congress says it is. And I'm still a pretty big supporter of wilderness but I'm a little cynical about it too because there's one wilderness that we created in Georgia, for instance, the Cohutta. It's got a mine in it, railroad tracks, roads. You know, it's Week's land that was abandoned and it's not wilderness by any stretch of the imagination.

HKS: Dale and Jack and Mike were very critical of the Society of American Foresters and Forest Service people in general on the purity issue, as it was called. That the purity issue really had nothing to do with a place qualified to be wilderness under some reasonable guidelines. They were just anti more wilderness and it was a way of keeping the acreage down in the West as well as the East. Is there a linkage there? Is that something you want to respond to? I don't know anything about the specific areas, but in their minds the Forest Service went way off the charts on the purity issue and really harmed its credibility.

JWG: Well, that's right. There wouldn't have been an Eastern Wild Areas Act if it hadn't been for the Forest Service insisting that if it's wilderness, it really has to be wilderness and that means untrammelled by whatever. We were fighting the Forest Service's battle there and it was pretty clear that we weren't going to win it because what the public recognizes as wilderness may not necessarily fit the criteria that they used to have for wilderness. Now they're taking people on trips to the mine.

HKS: It's become an archeological site.

JWG: That's right.

HKS: There have been studies done by sociologists about wilderness, what wilderness means to the people who actually use it, and you have the extremes. Somebody from downtown Chicago flies to the Quentico Superior and wants motorized portages for their canoes and if he has a plaid shirt on and gets

bitten by a mosquito he's had a wilderness experience and that's all it takes. It's a sincere reaction on the part of this city dweller what wilderness is and who actually would be frightened to go into a real wilderness area in the West where you're lucky to have a trail you can walk on.

JWG: Herb Schroeder is a guy who works for the Forest Service in Evanston, Illinois and he studies urban attitudes towards forests and this is primarily what he does. Sid Yates set up this research facility in Evanston when he was chairman of the Interior and Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations, and they know an awful lot about what Chicagoans think about the woods. They've got laboratories for them to know about that because Chicago is surrounded by forest preserves, just land dedicated to forests. Some of the findings are really fascinating. There's another sociologist at Riverside, the fire lab, who travels those California forests to see how people are interacting with the forests when they go into the Angeles and those forests. There's somebody in the Forest Service who'd do anything I think. Sometimes it's not what you want them to do but they can do it.

HKS: In 1963 when the wilderness bill was nearing passage I was at the experiment station in Portland in fire research, and the people in the next cubbyhole were doing wilderness research. A sociologist Ph.D. student was writing his dissertation on why people used what was going to be the Three Sisters wilderness area. Wilderness was so controversial then that the experiment station director and others got involved in actually trying to control his research. It became a minor upheaval on ethics of research within the experiment station, whose side are you on. I went to coffee with him twice a day every day because he was a nice guy. I didn't pick him for his ideology. I don't know how much it's calmed down since then.

JWG: It's a lot better. I'll tell you. You know, we're going to get a new wilderness area created in Utah I'm pretty sure. And here's that Republican state with a Republican Congress and a Republican president and they're going to enact more wilderness. So I don't think it's a big deal anymore. To tell you the truth, back in the '70s John Beuter, who eventually wound up as assistant secretary, wrote a paper at Oregon State about the decline of timber supply for the Pacific Northwest timber industry, no matter what happened on the national forest. And he had no more written the paper than Georgia Pacific moved to Georgia. But Beuter looked at things like markets.

HKS: I know John. We were at the station at the same time. He was in economics research.

JWG: Oh, is that right?

HKS: Hadn't left for his Ph.D. yet. We used to play volleyball on Thursday nights, so I know a famous guy.

Three Little Bills

HKS: On the three little bills, which I have written down here there's a research bill, co-op forestry, and extension forestry. What's the difference between co-op forestry and extension forestry, other than what the bill says? To me it's the same thing.

JWG: Co-op forestry goes to State and Private Forestry and Extension has a little side bar there that says forestry and they've got to go out and do exactly the same thing as the state foresters do. There's been a conflict for decades between the state foresters and the extension people. The industry helped create some of this conflict when they decided back in, oh, I think it was shortly after World War II that they were going to side with the Extension Service against the Forest Service and the state foresters. I recall reading in one of your books the head of the National Lumbermen's Association threatened to put the state foresters out of business if they didn't come around to their way of thinking on national forest timber. It's a bill I've been focused on because I'm writing this book.

HKS: But this is extension foresters in the Forest Service?

JWG: No, extension foresters in the Cooperative State Research and Extension Service on the ag side.

HKS: Okay, I thought that was a Forest Service bill but it's not. It's a forestry bill?

JWG: Right.

HKS: Okay, I didn't understand that line. And where is this agency, in Interior?

JWG: It's in the South Building.

HKS: Oh, so it's an agricultural agency?

JWG: Yeah, there's a guy named Larry Bales.

HKS: And are they a spin-off from Natural Resources Conservation? Are they handling that?

JWG: No, the extension service was created in Illinois by the National Farm Bureau Federation and they can do anything. They'll tell you what kind of grass to grow on your front yard. They'll help you manage your timber. They'll tell you which kinds of crops to plant and how to take care of them. And they have hundreds of bona fide honest to gosh foresters working for them who go out in the field and talk to people about how to manage their woodlands, in direct competition or in cooperation with universities who are doing the research and the state foresters, who think that's their job. And when they both finally figure out that neither one of them have got enough people to get the job done, that what they ought to do is cooperate with one another, it works out pretty well and it's just about at that point right now where they're not at one another's throats all the time.

HKS: I guess I'll have to go back and read Denny's book more carefully. I missed that point of where that activity takes place. It struck me as strange. It looks like such overlap with co-op forestry, which the Forest Service has been doing for a long time and this extension forestry.

On the research little bill, the part I want to explore-- and feel free to talk about any other aspect that you want-- is international forestry. All the chiefs told me that Congress doesn't like international anything because it's like foreign aid. It's an unpopular thing. It doesn't have a constituency. You don't get any votes. And yet in 1978 there appeared a deputy chief for international forestry, which lasted about ten years before Congress pretty well stripped it down to zero. But do you have any insight on how that happened and why?

JWG: Sure. It was Jeff Sirmon's idea. He saw that this foreign aid program was getting big in the Forest Service. I can't recall, but a lot of Forest Service people were traveling overseas to work with the Agency for International Development. That agency works for the poorest of the third world countries to mostly try to improve their economies. Well, in addition to the foreign aid, the State Department was coming over and asking the Forest Service how to do this and how to do that and how to do this and so he dreamed up the idea of creating a deputy chief for international forestry and he got away with that.

He got away with that for three or four years until Jesse Helms found it. And Jesse Helms absolutely despises foreign aid of all kinds and so they kind of killed it, except they kept an office open in an office downtown in Washington, D.C. with a few people in it and it's still operating. You hear people talking about the Kyoto environmental treaty and all that stuff, well, the Forest Service stamped that, the Forest Service international forestry people. And that's how the U.S. government has kept its arm in as far as environmental politics in the world are concerned ever since, with these few people in this tiny little office in downtown Washington. And, of course, they still provide assistance on AID work too.

Really the Forest Service has been a major arbiter in what sustainability means here in the United States and abroad. Dombeck I think was named to be head an interagency task group to talk about the qualities of sustainability and what does that mean in many kinds of endeavors for many different kinds of federal agencies. But also, the State Department has relied heavily on this international forestry office, which, as I say, is continuing to operate without a deputy chief. It was a good idea, still is a good idea, and it's good we've got them there because if the United States just chose not to show up for some of these

international meetings, someday somebody is going to do something at the international level that the government of the United States doesn't like and we'll get a shiv in the ribs.

HKS: I asked Bob Buckman what was the rationale for having international forestry under Research as opposed to State and Private Forestry, which is intellectually set up for outreach. And it struck me that researchers aren't really good at outreach. That's not high on their list of performance review. Why not put it over where it's more welcomed? He thought that just wouldn't work because almost all the questions are scientific questions and State and Private Forestry would be coming to Research for all the answers and you wind up with Research running the show anyway. Do you have any sense of that?

JWG: This is one of those anomalies. As a matter of fact, for budget purposes, international forestry shows up in the budget of the State and Private Forestry.

HKS: Really?

JWG: Yeah, but the state and private forestry doesn't consider them to be a part of them. [Laughter]

HKS: Okay. I guess they wouldn't like my model either. They don't want that research stuff.

JWG: I don't know. I don't know the present fellow who's the deputy chief for State and Private, but when I saw that it really was there, and I only learned that in the last couple of days, I didn't know what to think. Because it's been like a dangling participle over there in that little office downtown but they do good work.

HKS: I know one of the guys, one of the survivors because he was brought out of Idaho in 1989 or something to head up the 1991 National Forest Centennial, a guy named Rob Hendricks.

JWG: Rob Hendricks.

HKS: Rob Hendricks. And somehow when the centennial ended he wound up in international forestry and he was astute enough, fast on his feet. He was a survivor. He wound up over in that secret building and he's still there I guess, as far as I know.

JWG: Matter of fact, I talk to him pretty regularly on the computer. He really is a survivor, and I'll never forget one time I was trying to help him on that centennial celebration and so he took his program, his plan for the centennial to chief and staff one time. He read it all out for them, all the things he was going to do, books published, and etc. and he said now, what do you think of it. And nobody said a word, not one damn word. So he just turned on his heel and went back to his desk and did what he thought was right and he pulled it off. He did a marvelous job I may add.

HKS: He had a pretty good budget. I don't know what it was but he did some expensive things in joint with Pepsi Cola or something, a lot of big, big things for advertising and then all the rest. He's a great organizer.

JWG: That's right. I think I would have broken down and cried. [Laughter]

HKS: When an agency plans a centennial or some other anniversary and wants to spend it must be five million, ten million dollars, the Appropriations Committee doesn't say why are you doing that? They accept the need, institutional vanity and pride and all the rest?

JWG: Yes, unless an agency's in trouble, you know, like Ginny Mae and some of these others are right now. But generally the Forest Service although bathed in controversy is still very well thought of on the Hill. By and large they get what they want.

HKS: Is that different than the other agencies you're familiar with? I mean when the head of National Resources Conservation Service goes up, does he get what he wants, generally speaking?

JWG: Pretty much. The USDA is thought of as a very well run organization, even those few times when it wasn't. And the reason they like it so much is because there are people out here doing things again and their home folks are writing about them and saying these folks are doing a good job. So it's a different kind of agency than most of the federal agencies.

HKS: Anything you wanted to say more about the three little bills?

JWG: No.

Senator Melcher and Zenchu

HKS: You're legislative assistant to Melcher. You were still staff to the ag committee and then you're also a legislative assistant. I don't understand.

JWG: Well, here's what happened there. When the Republicans took the Senate in 1980 then all of us Democrats were out of work.

HKS: And you were a Democrat because you were hired by Democrats. I mean they didn't actually look at how you voted for president but they just assumed that you must be a Democrat?

JWG: That's right. I needed a job and so Melcher's administrative assistant, Ben Stong, had recently died and so Melcher hired me to be his administrative assistant, which I was not. I was the legislative assistant in forestry and agriculture. And I wrote him a farm bill. I'd never written a farm bill before in my life.

HKS: But you'd seen them?

JWG: Right. But you know, from farm bill to running them out like this.

HKS: An inch or so thick, it's a big thing.

JWG: Yes. But Melcher and I didn't get along. I guess that's the best way to put it. I stayed with him a year, year and a half or so and then I got on with a law firm to become a lobbyist for the largest farmer cooperative in the world, Zenchu, Japanese. They didn't want American rice being sold in their country, and since we had restrictions on imported farm products coming into the United States they seemed to feel it was only logical that they be given the same exemption when it came to rice. That is to say, keep your damn rice out of our country, except they have always said it politely. And I worked at that for eighteen months or so, and then I saw the Pinchot job advertised early in 1989 and I took that.

On paper, Zenchu is a group of members, a farmer cooperative group of members, who receive benefits by pooling their efforts on crops, mostly rice. But when you look at what those people really are, they are indentured servants or they're sharecroppers. They really don't have very many rights as individual members. Although when they get all together they're one of the most powerful forces in Japan. It's like farmers in this country. But they clearly did have a good case. Since the United States prohibits certain kinds of products from coming into this country from overseas, why not go over and make a case for them and we did. We did a good job for them, kept American rice out for several years.

HKS: What was the rationale, U.S. price supports for rice? What do you say to the farmers not selling it?

JWG: Well, if American farmers are going to get import duties and outright restrictions on certain commodities coming into this country, they ought not to expect to be able to sell all of their commodities to all of the world. Agricultural trade is the biggest stinky mess you ever saw in your life. The European community, for instance, controls much of the pineapple that's grown in the world, and they say who gets pineapple and who doesn't get pineapple and what the price is going to be and that sort of thing. There are other kinds of commodities like that as well. We ran into conflicts like here's the Agency for

International Development going overseas and helping people learn how to grow peanuts in competition with American peanuts. And the members of the ag committee just used to go berserk when they heard about that. Free markets are for everyone but Americans.

HKS: What I was thinking about you talked earlier about the price support for rice, and then you support rice and then you take a market away. It seems like there's a little illogic in there.

JWG: Well, Japan feels that it is one hundred percent self sufficient in rice production and doesn't need anybody else's, and beef production too, which is not true. They feel that they don't need any foreign beef or foreign rice coming into their country.

HKS: But the change in Japanese diet becoming more and more westernized, maybe rice is going to be less central to their thinking.

JWG: It's still pretty important.

Tennessee Valley Authority

HKS: You jumped over your five-year tour with Tennessee Valley Authority. That's where you went from Congress and after that you went to Arter & Haddon.

JWG: I went to work for TVA for five years as a Washington representative. There was a certain little piece of the TVA budget that was appropriated money. Most of their money comes from the rate payers. But they did things like rural development. They had a good little forestry program that helped small mills get more efficient. They did all of the fertilizer research for the government. And those programs were run with appropriated funds, and my job was to make sure that that money kept coming. Well, eventually we got some Republican board members at TVA, and they just came in and wiped out the Washington office, just ripped us off, and so then I scrambled and found the job at the law firm. But it wasn't very interesting work. You'd get some forestry dignitary or fertilizer dignitary come into town and take them around on the Hill and let them tell their story about their program and how important it is. In terms of the fertilizer program, it was absolutely riddled. Nobody was doing any fertilizer research in the world except for TVA. And we did all right. We did all right.

HKS: The phosphates for fertilizer, Henry Ford was going to buy into that in a big way in the '20s and then TVA came along and I can't remember the details now but TVA, because it generated electrical power that could be used to generate fertilizer, from the very beginning of the operation fertilizer was an issue.

JWG: That's right, at Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

HKS: Muscle Shoals, right.

JWG: They have a huge facility there and it was originally built as a munitions factory. Then when World War I was over the factory wasn't needed any longer. As a matter of fact, I think the factory opened two days after the end of the war. So they accepted that as part of the TVA mission is they would do fertilizer research. That would have been 1918 or 1919.

HKS: I think the "scandal" was Henry Ford was going to buy Muscle Shoals and it was give-away prices or something. It was state and federal ownership and then TVA took it over.

JWG: They did good work there but there's a TVA dam right there at that town that was producing power. TVA is an interesting institution.

HKS: I guess they attract people from the world over to see how it works but that's the only one. Well, Bonneville is a mini version of that I guess. It never really blossomed the way that TVA did.

JWG: There was supposed to be one here. I don't know whether it was the Arkansas River or the Ouachita River that they were going to use.

Staff Assignments

HKS: The kinds of things you did in Congress, the assignments you had, kind of surprised me. I never really thought about what you guys did other than work with the Senator to help things get going. You traveled, and so forth, and the fact that your name was on a lot of rolodexes and people would call you directly, didn't surprise me that the Forest Service would because you worked closely on a lot of thing but Weyerhaeuser might call you directly and so forth.

JWG: Sure.

HKS: But the field hearings that you attended and all that so far as you know was your work fairly typical of what congressional staff do?

JWG: There's no travel involved at all this because except to go downtown to an agency or something like that. We were breaking new ground, especially with the Rural Development Act. But circumstances occurred where we flew to the Monongahela during the course of that lawsuit, for instance. We were a more active committee in that regard than lots of them.

HKS: You read the pejorative term the junkets, the congressmen always going to resorts. They travel but they don't usually have staff unless it's a formal hearing in Boise or Portland or something, then the staff would go?

JWG: That's right. For those kinds of things the staff has to go out there in advance and make sure that the hearing site's set up and you get the right witnesses and all that sort of thing. It's hard work.

HKS: What kind of budget constraints does Congress have on its activities like that?

JWG: Almost none. It sets them on itself. That is to say, one year I remember, in 1980 when the Republicans took over the Senate, they determined that they were going to cut the staff by fifty percent and they did. I don't know what good it did them or who they impressed. If you want good staff you've got to pay for them and sometimes they didn't care. I mean if your main goal is to suppress government you don't do it by hiring more staff.

HKS: I think that we've talked about this before but I don't know if I asked you specifically. Was there a salary structure across Congress that staffers earned certain grades?

JWG: No, no, that was determined by the chairman. And for instance, when I started, they thought that it was outrageous that I was asking for twenty-two thousand dollars. In less than two years I was making fifty thousand dollars. It was a period when salaries in Washington just really exploded, and I don't know what to tell you about that but I didn't ever feel like I was rich. The only time the federal salaries went up rents went up. [Laughter]

HKS: I lived in Portland and Wayne Morse was my senator and there was a big to-do in the mid '60s about how government salaries were so low, government wasn't competitive, the best people are going to the private sector and all the arguments that we hear so often. I wrote to him and I said I work for the government and actually my salary is higher than I could get elsewhere. He wrote back and said you may not need more money but I do. [Laughter] That's Wayne Morse or he had an aide that wrote like Wayne Morse.

JWG: [Laughter] Oh, that's wonderful.

HKS: So he voted for it. Everyone got a pay raise that year, whatever it was. On the executive side, travel budgets are always scrutinized, too much travel by the agencies. So that's why I was asking you if Congress has any trouble.

Technology Transfer

JWG: No but we didn't travel this much. One other thing I wanted to clear up about the extension service. The extension service is a technology transfer group. The idea was that the universities would do its agricultural research and then the extension service agents would take that technology and transfer it to the farm. But it got to where there was no end to it. They were doing forestry. They were doing nutrition education, all kinds of things and they still do but they've been reined in quite a bit. What happened over time was that the fertilizer companies and the seed companies and all of these people were also doing technology transfer and you got to relying more on your seed dealer than you did your extension agent. But it's been an important branch for the Department of Agriculture for many, many years and that's its main job was transfer of technology as quickly as possible from the lab to the farm.

HKS: I know Forest Service research prides itself in having that goal. I don't know how effective it is.

JWG: I don't either.

HKS: People on the ground know about the new opportunities to do things differently.

JWG: I don't either. I just have a very deep fondness for lots of people in Forest Service research, but I've yet to see any really indication that they're delivering the goods to the ground. That's not to say it isn't happening. I just don't know about it.

HKS: This is pretty far back but when I worked for the experiment station in Portland in the mid '60s my job was to go out and examine plots that had been established in the '40s, and every so many years someone went out and examined to see what had happened to them. Part of the protocol was to be sure to check in at the ranger station to tell the ranger you would be on his district as a courtesy and maybe get a map of the district and ask him how the roads are, whatever it is. I probably toured ten or fifteen different ranger districts, and only one ranger asked me what I was doing. I thought that was interesting because I was working on a very practical thing. The impact when you burn the logging debris, slash fires, you change the ecosystem. This was a fifty-year study on what happens when you burn next to what is a controlled plot that wasn't burned and we were comparing those two. Only one ranger asked about that. Another district was right next to the Andrews Experimental Forest so research was very prominent in that area. I stopped in and talked to the ranger to see if I could stay in the crew house. He said no, that's for Forest Service employees. You're research. You're not a Forest Service employee. He wouldn't give me a map of the district.

JWG: [Laughter] Oh, my goodness.

HKS: And I thought what's going on here. I mean these people are complaining, with some justification, that research is kind of a frill. It doesn't really affect them. But I was dealing with something that they worked with every year. They burn their logging debris. And I got back to the station and I told my boss, who told the director and they called me in and talked about it. They were very concerned about this. Ambivalence is one thing but hostility. They were shocked, just absolutely shocked that this would happen. That's just a sample of one trip around. I don't want to generalize from that, but it suggests that some people in the field don't have a whole lot of respect for research. I asked McGuire that question and he said well, we dress funny, you know, and we drive better cars than they do in the fieldwork. If we got a new sedan they got an old pickup and there's resentment in the field about researchers. They rarely go out on forest fires. If they do it's as an observer. I don't know what it's like more recent times at all.

JWG: I sense that there are some entrepreneurs out there in forestry research who are doing some exciting things. But I don't have any sense that those are, you know, that they're following goals or priorities that have been set up by somebody higher up. I just don't know.

HKS: I know one of the practical problems they had in research was more or less dealt with in the late '60s or early '70s. In civil service your pay grade depends upon how many people you supervise. Researchers might have a field assistant or someone in the lab helping but they were hitting the ceiling very early. They came up with what they called a man on the job program where you could be promoted just as quickly on the research side as the management side, without any administrative responsibilities. But it was tough to get that through civil service. You get the desk away from the wall and all the other perks of higher office.

JWG: I had an interview with a forest supervisor here when I first came here. Do you remember the story about Senator David Pryor doing a walk in the woods with Chief Dale Robertson here in the Ouachita?

HKS: I think Dale talked about it in his interview. That was part of the New Perspectives, one of those plots?

JWG: Yes, and that supposedly the end of clearcutting in the Ouachita National Forest, that discussion. Part of the deal was that they would put some research people on this forest and keep them here, which was not done then.

HKS: Dale gave the names of the researchers that were assigned to that New Perspectives plot or trial operation or whatever it was.

JWG: I didn't get any impression from the forest supervisor that it mattered that those researchers were around. And as a matter of fact, they're not around. They're down the road in Monticello, Arkansas at the university at the forestry school.

Senator Jesse Helms

HKS: Talk a little bit about Jesse Helms because he's important. I know you didn't work directly for him but you knew about him.

JWG: No, I did some direct work for him. Remember I told you that Talmadge had this policy that we worked for everybody on the committee, so I would frequently draft a letter to an agency for his signature and stuff like that. He was a very nice man.

HKS: Everyone I've ever met who has met him said he was courtly. He was really a gracious person.

JWG: That's a good word too. But he could also be mean as a snake, and he was important because he led a block of votes around that Senate. It wasn't a commanding block of votes but from time to time people would say oh, I'm not going to fool around arguing with Jesse Helms, and they wouldn't bother to fight on an issue. One of them was poor Jeff Sirmon. You know he had this deputy chief's job for international forestry and Jesse Helms didn't like international forestry because it sounded like foreign aid, as you said. So Helms put that out of business pretty fast because nobody else cared that much, except Jeff Sirmon.

Oh I don't know if I want to tell the story about his son or not, but he had a son who was slightly retarded apparently, and Helms decided that he ought to go to forestry school. I forget who used to be the dean at North Carolina State but anyway he was going nuts trying to get that kid through school because he wasn't qualified to be in college. Senator Helms was a really negative influence on the U.S. Senate and although he didn't mean to be, he was kind of troublesome to the Forest Service too. He just had some preset notions about what was right and he followed those notions til the bitter end.

HKS: Gray Reynolds, who was deputy chief, told me a story. He said Jesse is like a hog in a road. He doesn't stop traffic but he sure slows everything down.

JWG: That's right. That's a good way to put it.

HKS: But he had power. The Forest Service tried something on North Carolina national forests, whatever it was, and they tried it on other national forests too. Jesse called the Forest Service and said I don't think that's a good idea to do that in North Carolina. They just shut it down, said it wasn't worth the struggle.

JWG: That's exactly right. That's the attitude a lot of people had. And he was powerful. You know, he was chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. He was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. And certainly in that second post he was really influential insofar as whether or not the Forest Service had an international role or not.

HKS: The joke around North Carolina was we are the only state that has a foreign policy. [Laughter]

JWG: That's right, that's right. But, you know, as much as I liked him he was not very helpful.

HKS: He certainly was popular among the voters. He really was. Even when he had health problems and he couldn't campaign. He really represented the rural people. That's the way they felt.

JWG: Sure.

HKS: He was their guy in the Senate.

JWG: I know. And we did a lot of stuff for him. We went on a field hearing in North Carolina one time. We didn't try to shun him or anything like that. You dared not do that. [Laughter]

Pinchot Institute for Conservation

HKS: Okay, let's move on to the Pinchot Institute. You saw an ad in the *Journal of Forestry*.

JWG: Right.

HKS: That was something you routinely read as part of your job or examined I suppose?

JWG: I was at Arter & Haddon at the law firm when I saw this ad. The only reason I got the *Journal of Forestry* is because I'm an honorary member of the SAF, and so I always used to thumb through there to see if there was anything that interested me, although we didn't do any forestry work at the law firm. I saw this job and I wasn't doing very well at the law firm. That is to say I started there with the promise that we were going to make a lot of money and I was in the mood to make a lot of money. [Laughter] But that didn't happen and hard as we worked we still weren't doing very well in terms of getting more clients. In a law firm billable hours is everything.

HKS: Is that how you worked too?

JWG: Right.

HKS: Project by project, so many hours on this, so many hours on that?

JWG: That's right. And every time we were working on prospecting for new clients you were losing money. So anyway, I saw this opening and I thought well, there's something I know something about. I had to learn an awful lot about Japanese culture and rice, the politics of rice that I kind of knew when I was with the committee but didn't really know very much because it was separate and apart from the work I was ordinarily doing. I got a call from, I can't remember whether it was Ross Whaley or Bill Klein.

HKS: Ross I know. Bill I haven't heard of.

JWG: Bill Klein was the director of the botanical gardens in Philadelphia, marvelous man who finally just died on us. He had a bad heart. But I think I had two interviews and they seemed happy with me and I was certainly happy with that crowd. And they had a dollar figure in mind that was acceptable. It wasn't magnificent by any means. But the one thing we didn't have is nobody knew what the Pinchot Institute for Conservation Studies was supposed to be. I guess I was supposed to supply the vision.

HKS: So you worked out of Washington?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Who was at Grey Towers? Eddie Brannon's job, that's the way it is now?

JWG: Yeah. I worked with a guy named Ed Vandermillen who preceded Ed. The main boss was Mike Rains, who was the director of the northeastern area up there. Mike always wanted to know when I was going to raise a million dollars.

HKS: He was there a long time. He's been there until fairly recently. Maybe he's still there.

JWG: Well, he's been there a couple of times.

HKS: Oh, okay. I recognize the name. I've never met him.

JWG: He's a very strange fella but he's very visionary. He was really good at his job. But we kind of sparred around. We had a Pinchot session when we drafted by-laws and so forth.

HKS: You changed the name too. You dropped "studies" somewhere along the way.

JWG: That's right, pretty early on. I guess that was my fault. I wanted to make it a simpler name and they went with me up to a point.

HKS: So this was a new position, a Washington representative?

JWG: That's right, that's right. And, as a matter of fact, I wasn't even in Washington. I operated out of my home. The first four thousand dollars spent on the Pinchot Institute was my own personal money because I didn't have any. So I rented a typewriter, if you can imagine, and started writing to everybody I could think of saying we're open. [Laughter] Finally some money came through from the Forest Service, and the Forest Service pretty much supported that thing for four years, from '89 to '95, '95 I think. And then they got Al in there because Al was a proven fundraiser and he's, of course, been successful at raising funds ever since. I was also looking for projects that would define the Pinchot Institute. The first one was a conference and workshop at Penn State University on the use of amenity resources to promote rural economic development and that seemed like a nice middle of the road sort of a thing for us to get started on. And it was a good conference but it didn't get us much name recognition.

HKS: Who were the competitors, as it were, for the same dollar in Washington, the kind of middle of the road not a think tank but a non-advocacy, serious forestry operation?

JWG: Well, American Forests was probably the closest one.

HKS: And they were on the way out.

JWG: Well, they had some really serious financial problems. Their membership got old and they started running out of money. But that was as close as anything in town. I was working on an equal level with National Association of State Foresters, the State Game and Fish Commissioners, folks like that. There weren't many non-profits who were competing for the same dollars. And the niche I tried to fill was to provide the Forest Service with services that they couldn't provide themselves so that we were sort of an

adjunct to the Forest Service. And why not, I mean they were paying all the bills. But they wanted something more than that, the board of directors did, and in particular one director really had it in for me so that led to the break up. I put out a monthly newsletter and looked for opportunities for visibility. But for one time, when we first started out, it was the National Friends of Grey Towers and the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, and I didn't know which was which and which one was supposed to do what and that was pretty hard. But it's finally come into place. The Pinchot Institute is now I think, thanks to a lot of people's efforts, Jeff Sirmon in particular, has got a lot of visibility that it didn't have before and it's the right kind of visibility. Are you a think tank people ask me and I'd usually say no but, yes, we were a think tank. And we thought about things that other people didn't think about very much.

HKS: What was the timing? Ed Vandermillen left and Ed was the successor, right?

JWG: Yeah.

HKS: Were you executive director when Eddie came in?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: That must of made a shift in the dynamics at Grey Towers itself when Ed came, seems to me.

JWG: Yeah, as a matter of fact, it did. He brought his own style and his own e-line, if you will, to the operation. He sensed that the staff was very upset at Grey Towers and he sensed that correctly.

HKS: Just because it wasn't performing very well?

JWG: Vandermillen was a wonderful guy who had all the right instincts but he didn't take care of his people very well. He just didn't see their needs, and so Ed brought in this guy from Montana. We did a day long workshop, an EST sort of a workshop and it really worked good. The staff really perked up. They got to liking him. Vandermillen had a black lady there who was doing all kinds of odd, dirty jobs and somehow or other Brannon got her sent off to the University of West Virginia for a college degree. That was a good demonstration to the staff to that he was going to take care of them, that they weren't just running a little museum there.

HKS: Did the renovation really begin with Ed or was underway with Vandermillen?

JWG: Began with Ed Brannon. Ed Brannon was the driving force.

HKS: So it was sort of a caretaker job for the physical plant until then?

JWG: When the Forest Service first renovated that place the chief engineer on the job was Max Peterson, and it wasn't renovated by people who understood old structures and how to take care of them.

HKS: I know they lowered ceilings, put in florescent lights and all this stuff.

JWG: So Ed Brannon went to a firm in Philadelphia who did historic reproductions, you know, or refurbishing, and he really deserves all the credit in my mind for what that place has become. I don't know what it's become but I hear it's pretty nice.

HKS: I was there for the grand opening after renovation and it's nice with what's been done, and now they're doing the out buildings with some success and he has plans for the parking lot. I was impressed with Ed for a lot of reasons but he invited me to Grey Towers probably eight times or so to make presentations to Forest Service training sessions. He began every two or three day training session by bringing the entire staff in and introducing them, the gardeners, the whole works. And some were embarrassed and shy and wouldn't make eye contact and others were outgoing like Gary Hines. But isn't that a nice thing to do to make the staff a part and that's what you're saying, the kind of thing Ed would do.

JWG: I'm sorry to see him retire. And I was delighted to hear you say that he was worried about who his successor was going to be because when I talked to him about it he didn't seem to care very much. I thought no, no, no, you just can't put just any old district ranger in there.

HKS: It's interesting on how that has worked and the large amount of money they got out of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation. It's really a great structure for retreats and training sessions, although its accessibility is limited. You're an hour from any airport that you could call an airport.

JWG: Keeping Grey Towers and the Pinchot Institute together has been difficult because of this very thing you're talking about. We're supposed to have some sort of a linkage but it's so much easier to put on a meeting in a hurry in Washington, put together a workshop in Washington.

HKS: Get a hotel there. Everything is lined up. Couple of phone calls and you're set.

JWG: And why go to Grey Towers, and it's still a tough question. You know, that place has come so close to being closed up, back in the '70s especially, before John Gray of Arkansas went in there to be the director of Grey Towers. And I think McGuire appointed him. But OMB zeroed it out in the president's budget year after year after year and it really took some extraordinary efforts to keep it open, and I expect the only reason it stayed open is because of the efforts of that congressman from up there in Scranton, Joe McDade. He scrambled pretty hard for the stuff that was in his district and Grey Towers was definitely in his district and Brannon played that.

HKS: Talk more about the relationship between the Washington part of the Pinchot Institute and the Grey Towers part. I never really understood the difference. I mean they're interchangeable.

JWG: Ed's got the mansion, that's for sure, and he's tried to figure out, especially after the Forest Service money for Pinchot dried up, he has tried to maintain and establish linkages like a fundraising woman at Grey Towers. And they took a fellow who I didn't know but who was in the Washington office of Pinchot and put him up at Grey Towers, and I don't know what he does up there. But Ed worked pretty hard to create physical linkages between the two organizations so that there's a seamlessness there that he feels is pretty important. I think it's important too. But I'll tell you, I've driven to Grey Towers many times and that's a long drive.

HKS: I guess it has a lot to do with the temperament of the two players, the one in Washington and the one at Grey Towers and as you change a player the dynamics are bound to shift in some way because no one has identical interests and skills.

JWG: Well, I don't know. Finding a fundraiser like Al is going to be very difficult for them and if they don't that's the end of it. Neil Sampson was a wonderful director of the American Forestry Association but he didn't have the fundraising skills that Al does. And that's when Neil just ran that thing into the ground and now there's a woman named Deborah Gangloff in there now and apparently she's doing all right. She's not, you know, it isn't the American Forestry Association of 1976 when it was at its all time peak but it still exists.

HKS: It's more of an urban forestry program now I guess.

JWG: I think that's their main driving force. And it's good that they are because for a few years urban forestry was hotter than a pistol.



Pinchot Institute for Conservation Staff 1998

(front row): Kimberly Monahan, Mary Mitsos, David Tilford

(back row): Terence Tipple, Paul Ringgold, Susan Stedfast, Jim Giltmier, Jeff Sirmon, Al Sample

Potomac Fever

JWG: The Washington scene hasn't changed very much at all. I mean all the same people are still doing a lot of the same things that they've been doing for long, long periods of time. Terri Bates, who used to run National Association of State Foresters, is now working for the deans of the forestry schools. Andrea Yank is still running this umbrella organization for all the environmental groups. Bill Imbergamo, who was at the National Association of State Foresters, is working for the House some place on forestry issues I think. Anne Hiessenbuttel, who was working in the House of Representatives on staff, is now running the National Association of State Foresters. It's just a merry-go-round sort of thing.

You would be amazed. I've got a book back there. It's a directory. It's about this thick and it's Washington representatives, got the names of about fifty thousand people in it, who represent various causes in Washington, D.C., some of them venal, some of them good. And every time you lose your job you just get that book out and you start looking down the list to see if there's one for you.

HKS: Is that what Potomac fever is?

JWG: Yes.

HKS: Is that what it means, you get there and you can't leave?

JWG: That's right. Some of those jobs in that town really pay a lot of money. Although, when I was there fifty thousand dollars was a lot of money. A hundred and fifty thousand dollars isn't a lot of money anymore.

HKS: Jay Hair at National Wildlife got two fifty or whatever it was. Had an apartment.

JWG: That's right. And a limousine driver who waited with the motor running outside where he was having lunch.

HKS: Polluting the environment.

JWG: [Laughter] Oh, he used to make me mad. I just think about him and I get mad.

HKS: How was he so effective? I think he's worth talking about a little bit because personalities do matter and he turned a group of hunters into an environmental organization and that's not easy to do.

JWG: No, it's not, but he did it all right and he had a base of people who wanted that to be a crazy sort of group of, environmental group. But as long as he was bringing in money and he was bringing in money, they loved it. But when the finances started going sour they got rid of him pretty fast. In the non-profit world, money is everything. First thing that you do is go to the Foundation Center and check in and say who's giving away money today.

HKS: I know. I was very much involved in raising money and it colors your thinking a bit, especially when you're on a very tight budget because you're raising your own salary.

JWG: I know that AI is in that same boat. They keep trying to set up trust funds and endowments and all kinds of other stuff but it still works down to which foundation is giving away money this week. It's a terrible way to do business. It's the part working for Congress that I hated the most was fundraising for those candidates. I didn't have to get involved in it when I was on the committee staff but when I went to work for Melcher I was organizing fundraisers and some of the people you have to ask are not such nice people and they're usually the ones with the most money.

HKS: Bill Towell talked a bit about that. Go to these so-called receptions and it's a pretty seedy operation. It's almost shocking to see the gangsters and thugs lined up with the leading politicians. Money is money. You've got to have it.

JWG: That's right. It's the worst part of Washington. I don't know how you get around it. And the television stations' response to all of this is just keep raising the price of running the spots. [Laughter]

More on Pinchot Institute

HKS: What were your most significant contributions other than establishing a Washington presence for the Pinchot Institute? Your major programs were conferences?

JWG: Yes, yes. We'd see a subject area that needed some kind of coverage, you know, to be exposed. And the advantage that I had was that we had a money connection to the Forest Service. Too, American Forests was not doing well and I was well known. And so if I said let's go down here and work on the farm bill then a bunch of us-- some of them from the gang of ten-- would get together and we'd all sit down and work on the farm bill. And so there were a lot of legislative accomplishments. These conservation programs have just kind of grown like Topsy over the years and fortunately Nadine Block kept up that interest in the 2002 farm bill.

HKS: I didn't realize that the Institute was involved with legislation because that's kind of activist in a way. There's a danger there. You lose credibility in certain circles if you're involved in this.

JWG: Yeah, there is. There is. I never went to the Hill, but I was talking to people who went to the Hill and we would come to agreements on program changes that we wanted in the conservation titles of those bills, and so I guess they were carrying my message to the Hill. We got involved in New Perspectives and very strongly involved in that. We got involved in the anniversary of the Forest Service and I'm glad that we did because we had some conferences that were really important to lots of people in the Forest

Service. One that we held in Atlanta that was Rob's inspiration, the thing with Forest Service personnel only to ask who are we and where are we going. And there wasn't all that much certainty back then.

HKS: So Grey Towers wasn't large enough?

JWG: Wasn't big enough for that conference, oh, no. We had three hundred people. We had one anniversary event at Grey Towers with a very diverse group of people, a workshop to talk about what does sustainability mean to each of us. There was a guy there from the National Farmers Union and, you know, it was not all just a bunch of forestry types. That produced a book that Al wrote, very good little book, on conservation.

HKS: I was at one of your conferences in Duluth and the Duluth Manifesto came out of that. I don't know if that was your idea or Perry Hagenstein's idea.

JWG: That was Bill Shands' baby.

HKS: What was his relationship to the Institute?

JWG: Very close but not associated officially.

HKS: What was he when he wasn't working with you? Was he a private consultant?

JWG: Right.

HKS: Always? Did he ever work for anybody?

JWG: No and he did all right. He had a lot of good ideas. Bill Shands during New Perspectives time came down here to the Ouachita among others to see if New Perspectives really meant anything on the ground. He went to several other national forests as well and then we came out with a publication on that. We came out with another publication by George Stanky and another research type from out west about the politics of New Perspectives and how you have to pay attention to that.

HKS: What efforts did you make to make sure they're distributed to places where they would have some influence on the course of events?

JWG: We did as the best we could but not as much as we should have, you know, but back then it was just me so it was pretty difficult.

HKS: I know we at the society we have a program called the issues series, little booklets.

JWG: Oh, yeah, I remember that.

HKS: Doug MacCleery was our first one. Very successful, must have sold forty or fifty thousand copies, which for us that's an all time best seller. But we wanted to get to Congress and it's impossible.

JWG: It's hard.

HKS: Our local congressman, I went to his office. He was in Durham and I said how do I do this and he said don't mail us anything. My mail comes in on a hand-truck everyday. He said it doesn't even get opened. He said you can't do it. The only way a congressman is ever going to read anything is if someone they know hands it to them and says this is good. Your staff ought to highlight it for you and really tell you what it says. And he said there's no other way. We're too busy. We physically cannot receive mail.

JWG: Well, I talked to somebody a couple or three years ago about email and whether or not it was worthwhile to email. Don't bother. We don't read that stuff. The lobbyists have all have figured out how to do spam and so they flood us everyday. We're maxed out everyday. And so we don't even look at it at all.

HKS: You worked for Congress, now you're working for the Pinchot Institute and you see it would be nice if New Perspectives could get to the right committees. Is there some mechanism by which Congress can be approached and any systematic way to be sure that at least the staff know that this booklet is out, this conference proceedings is out that might be of use to them?

JWG: I don't know of any way except to go up there physically with your books in your hand and pound on doors. Mail's no good. Email's no good.

HKS: But when you were on the other end of the food chain in Congress and you wanted to get information, you looked around for it. Bob Wolf probably helped you find things and other people helped you find things and you would have welcomed, I would think, some kind of a database that you could control access to so you could look and find out what's going on on New Perspectives or something else. But apparently that doesn't really exist other than officially at the Library of Congress that they keep track of stuff. All the proceedings don't always get to the Library of Congress.

JWG: All I had was a mechanical typewriter. That's all. No computers.

HKS: Not even an electric typewriter?

JWG: No.

HKS: Low budget.

JWG: [Laughter] Well, that was by my choice. The IBM Selectric was never very friendly to me and so I just prefer to use the mechanical typewriter. You did have to know who to call but some people had a way of knowing where they were needed. Ken Pomeroy was the first fulltime Washington representative of the National Association of State Foresters and was the first person I met to come and talk to me about forestry and I thought, oh, my gosh, what have I got myself into. [Laughter] But without his good counsel, I would have been starting from behind the finish line.

HKS: Well, people keep saying lobbyists have a bum rap. They are a source of information.

JWG: You bet.

HKS: I mean how else is it going to get to Congress and then you buy a congressman lunch and you get a chance to tell him about what you're clients are up to.

JWG: I ate lots of lunches too, I'll tell you. But, you know, I told you John Hall from the timber industry, he was invaluable to me, both as a teacher and a source of information that I never would have gotten from any other source. I thought the timber industry was the greatest bunch of people I ever saw in my life because they were saving my life every day. I began to just discern the differences between them and the environmentalists but in the beginning they were very valuable.

HKS: So when you went to Pinchot Institute you had a lot of contacts across town already established?

JWG: Networking is everything in Washington. I told you about this book, this directory, Washington representatives. If you were to go back to my office and take a look at that thing you'd see that it's been thumbed through thoroughly. And I still try to keep a network of about a hundred people on my computer so that I can get to them in a hurry with email. Nothing in particular, it's just a habit.

HKS: Is there more to discuss while you were executive director, more specific examples? You put on conferences. You published proceedings. Al Sample's book was out and you were working to raise

money in organizing. By now Ed was at Grey Towers and that was changing, became a dynamic organization on its own right. Is there more to your tenure there that we should discuss before we get to your senior fellow era?

JWG: No. It wasn't a very happy ending for me because I felt like the board hadn't waited enough time for us to get off the dime, but Al came in and started raising money immediately, which I was not doing, and that made a world of difference.

HKS: He had the same sources that he was using as director of policy or whatever it was at AFA? He was raising money there too for his projects.

JWG: Yes.

HKS: So he just changed desks, as it were, and kept doing the same thing?

JWG: That's right.

HKS: So he was already well established as a fundraiser. People knew who he was and knew of his productivity. If you gave Al a thousand dollars you got a thousand dollars worth out of it. It's important to have that reputation.

JWG: I think that's correct. The difference between us was he was in with the big foundations, Ford and folks like that, Pew. And it really makes a difference when you're raising five hundred dollars or you're raising five thousand dollars.

HKS: Yeah, the rules change. The flexibility changes. I had a couple encounters with the Rockefeller Foundation. Through their agricultural work they have a forestry offshoot, and staff can award up to twenty-five thousand dollars on their own signature. That's a lot of money.

JWG: I think so too.

Senior Fellow, Pinchot Institute

HKS: When you sent me the memo of your publications you mentioned three; History of State and Private Forestry, Study of Forestry Education, and Study of Urban Sprawl in Ski Areas. I asked Al Sample at your suggestion if he could supply copies of your publications and he sent me this list, which is much broader than yours. The last one is Al's own book that he did while you were executive director. But there's only a couple of them that you're the author of. There's two or three authors so it's hard for the outsider to know who really wrote it in conjunction with the guys who helped you. Nadine Block was one of your associates in a couple of them. But you didn't mention most of those and I don't know why. If these are the three you want to talk about, that's fine, but there are more that have your name on them.

JWG: The education study was big and there were parts of it that I handled exclusively and then there were parts that Nadine and this other guy wrote exclusively. That was a good piece of work I thought.

HKS: Do you have a sense in the follow-up of what happened to forestry education because of the study? Did the deans get together and write you? I mean can you measure the influence?

JWG: No. I never could. But see when I was a senior fellow that meant I lived at home and didn't go to the office and so most of it was done by telephone or email. I didn't know what was going on downtown. Although we had a really good meeting of deans at the Institute, I never could really see that much came out of that, even though our study was going on at the same time that the land grants themselves were studying their structure and how they were relating to the modern world. All we really accomplished I think is to get the story across that these schools are in a world of hurt when it comes to money and that some of them are outstanding and some of them, no, we didn't talk about the ones that weren't so outstanding.

We wrote considerably about how Auburn, for instance, is surviving despite all the stuff that was taken from the politicians about spending too much money. We wrote considerably about Vermont and Oregon State and Northern Arizona where they have really outstanding programs and what made them outstanding.

At this moment I can't tell you who should have received this study because it seemed as if nobody cared, as if they're running through these young rednecks just as fast as they could and getting them through and getting them hired some place, any place. And the job market isn't there to create the kind of student that you're looking for. They can't go to the Forest Service or any place in the federal government. The federal government's going to have this great big, it's like the transmission's going to fall out one of these days very soon because of the age of its senior executives with nobody behind them of any quality to pick up. There aren't any John McGuires out there that I've seen. You have an occasional Rob Hendricks come along, you know, who's independent. He's a self-starter and he knows what he wants to do and he does it. But I don't know. After we'd done it I thought to myself who cares that we've done this. This fellow Christensen that just recently stepped down as dean at the school at Duke, the Nicholas School, he's a Rob Hendricks. He's got his own vision of what he wants to do. He steps up to the plate and he hits that ball as hard as he possibly can. And he doesn't care what they're doing at Auburn and he doesn't care what they're doing at N.C. State. Little bit but not too much.

HKS: I was at Duke when the transition from the school of forestry to the school of environment and all the ruckus from the industry, but their budget increased ten fold the first year. They got a twenty million dollar gift for their building, their share of the science building, rather than five hundred thousand they could have raised from the forest industry. I mean it was incredible the difference it made to the vitality of that school, and the SAT scores of the students applying jumped up, way up the first year. The best students are now applying to the school of environment and only about six out of a hundred took the forestry track and the rest wanted environmental management. They saw forestry as too narrow. They were in favor of forestry but they wanted options. They didn't know how their life was going to evolve and they wanted to be able to shift around.

JWG: There are too damn many companies, and as you know very well, none of them have got an awful lot of money except for a couple or three and who are running those companies. Are they foresters? No, by and large they are not foresters. I think Mead's still got a vice president that's a forester and I can't remember but it isn't there. I mean economically there's no place to send them except to consulting jobs or, consulting jobs is very big in a lot of those schools. There's no place for you to grow a career after you get out of school. And if you can't grow a career you can't be a donating alumnus.

HKS: I graduated University of Washington 1957, had ten firm job offers. People came to school and offered me that. It wasn't me. They didn't pick me out of a pack. It was all of the graduates, all fourteen of us in forest management had those kinds of job offers and only one went to work for industry out of the fourteen. I was draft bait as was everyone else and so I knew I'd be going into the service very shortly.

JWG: I just threw up my hands and enlisted.

HKS: When I was with the Forest Service we took some executives in the St. Regis Paper Company out on a field trip to show them some of the sample plots we'd been putting in for growth studies. And the guy from St. Regis offered me a job on the spot at fifty percent more salary right there in front of my boss, and he was serious. I mean everybody was just dying to get foresters. That was the last hurrah really as I look back on it.

JWG: Well, having said all that, you know, where does the future lie? I'm not sure. Sooner or later the Forest Service is going to have to start hiring again and hiring foresters too. But I keep waiting for that day to happen and it's almost thirty years later and they're still not hiring foresters.

HKS: Region 6, Washington and Oregon, hired eighty foresters the year I got out of school and now they might hire five if that.

Small Forestland Ownerships

HKS: When you got involved in the ag committee and were learning more about forestry, did you develop the sense of importance of small landowners that foresters have always talked about and half the forestland is in parcels of forty acres or less, whatever the numbers are, something like that?

JWG: I'm glad you brought that up because in terms of the work that I did on the committee in forestry that was easily half. What we tried to do for non-industrial private landowners was easily half of what we did, not the public lands. My senators were from Georgia and Mississippi and Arkansas and they cared about these private landowners who most of them down here in the south are not farmers but only own forestland. That's a result I think of the Soil Bank.

HKS: Go ahead and define soil bank for the record. Eisenhower started that, didn't he?

JWG: Yes, it was a plan by the Eisenhower administration that caused a lot of the worn out farmlands in the South to be replanted into pine trees. And it made forestland owners out of former farmers. And it's happening to us a lesser extent now under the Conservation Reserve Program, which primarily goes to farmers, the benefits go to farmers. And it's a cost share of I think it's seventy-five percent to twenty-five percent that has transferred a lot of land out of agriculture.

HKS: It's a kind of a subsidy, as it were, to agriculture. I mean it helps the farmer make the transition.

JWG: Yes, it pays them not to grow. It pays them to put their land to public use, which is wildlife habitat and other conservation uses, watershed protection, wetland protection.

HKS: Do you get support from the environmentalists for that?

JWG: Not much, not much. Some of them like it. The wildlifers like it a lot and so you get Wildlife Federation and Wildlife Management Institute, people like that support it. The state fish and game directors, they support it.

HKS: I guess their focus is on the public lands or that's where the energy seems to be going.

JWG: That's true too but they've skewed the programs around in recent years so that unless you are a farmer with an adjacent woodland you can't be eligible for a lot of these programs and that's the Midwestern influence. They saw that ten million dollars of FIP money going almost all of it to the South every year and they didn't like that very much, the Forestry Incentives Program.

HKS: Is this part of your state and private forestry story?

JWG: Yeah.

HKS: Now does the Soil Conservation Service help along these lines too or is it strictly a Forest Service program on these farm wood lots or private wood lots?

JWG: The Natural Resources Conservation Service is much more involved now under the programs of the 2002 farm bill than they were before. It all used to be in the playhouse of the State and Private Forestry but now the Soil Conservation Service, it's got six or eight programs that are for farmers who have forests, cost share programs, even one whose acronym is WHIP, wildlife something. [Laughter]

HKS: That suggests a little turf struggle between them and would Forest Service ordinarily handle those programs if they come along?

JWG: That seems to be the drift that's going on and I say that to those guys and they say oh, no, it's just the same as it always was. The Soil Conservation Service, which used to fight with what is now the Farm

Service Agency, over whether or not the Soil Conservation Service should get any of the overhead money on the conservation programs, they seemed to have solved their differences and they work together now. And according to the Forest Service, they all work together now. But it's been my experience that whoever has the money runs the show, and Forest Service is increasingly not being funded. This one program has been killed off. The one that was a combination of Stewardship Incentives Program and Forestry Incentives Program, it was created in the 2002 farm bill and then given a budget for five years of a hundred million dollars and it looks like this year they killed it, killed the program altogether. It's really too bad and lots of things are done in the name of solving the deficit problem. But if people really knew what it means to solve the deficit problem it means curbing entitlement programs. The real dough is in those entitlement programs like food stamps and farm price supports and like that.

HKS: I thought you were going to put Social Security on that. That's an entitlement.

JWG: Yes, it is.

HKS: I guess I don't know how large the food stamp program is in terms of dollars.

JWG: I'm guessing but I would say that it's probably six or seven billion dollars.

HKS: Double the Forest Service budget and that order of magnitude. The Forest Service budget has this healthy forest stuff that bumped up quite a bit.

JWG: Well, to tell you the truth, Forest Service has now got an awful lot of entitlement in it too. You know, they've got five or six different accounts and you can't tell which dollar is headed in which direction. But I always knew that the Forest Service more than anybody else at USDA always had walking around money. [Laughter]

HKS: That's what Dombeck says. Live at the BLM for a few years and then go to the Forest Service. All the lights work and faucets don't drip, toilets don't run over and all the rest of that stuff. [Laughter] That's the list. Thanks for a good interview.



Al Sample and Jim Giltmier at Jim's going away party, Pinchot Institute for Conservation, 1999.