AN INTERVIEW WITH

JACK WARD THOMAS

by

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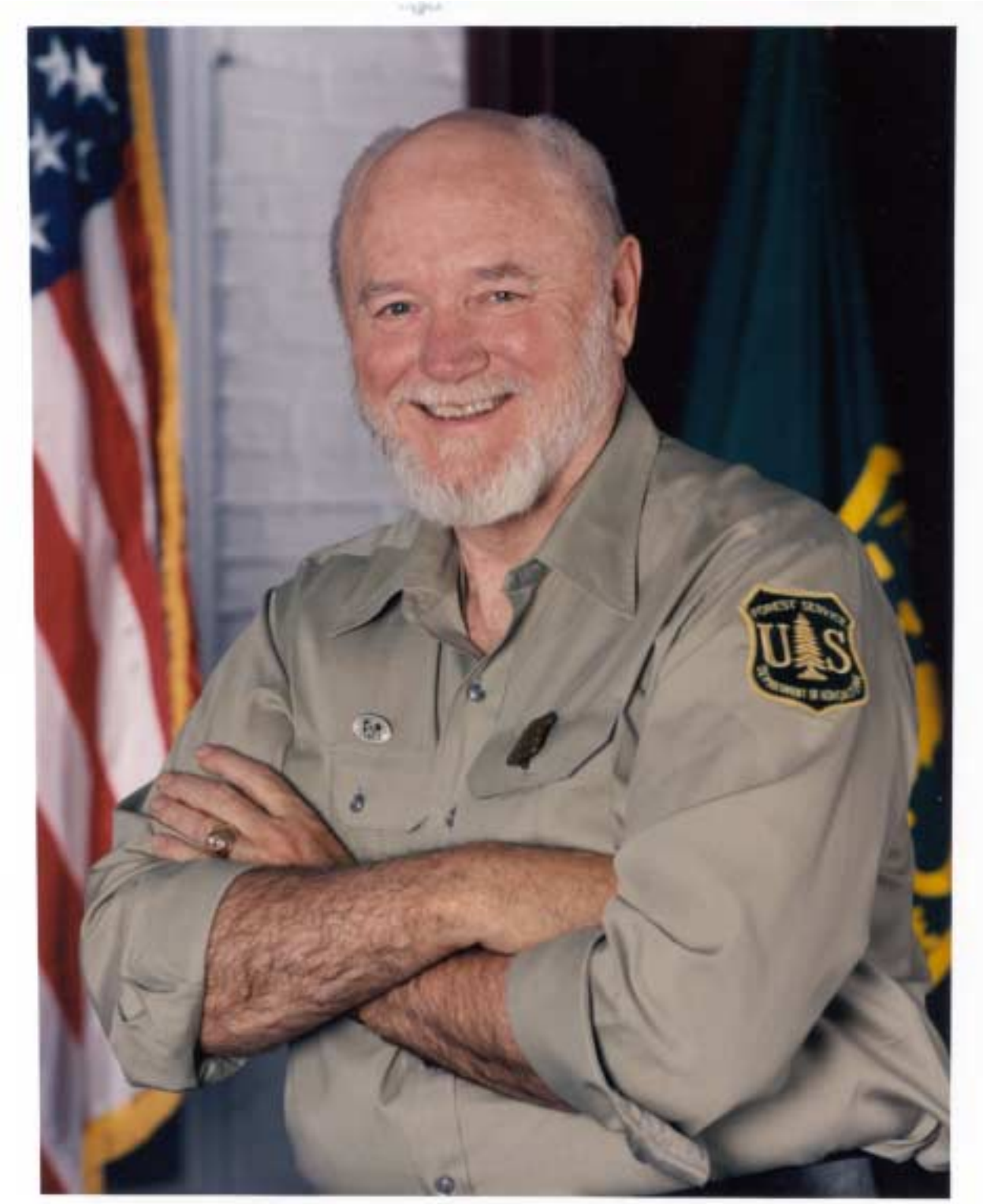

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Introduction

In the pages that follow, Jack Ward Thomas tells us about issues and events while he was Forest Service chief during the Clinton Administration. For thirty years he had been working as a scientist, advancing until arguably he was the most prominent in the agency. Then fairly suddenly in 1993 he was named chief, an appointment that he accepted with mixed feelings. It is not surprising that the transition from being an eminent scientist to being the head of a large federal agency contained many challenges. The raw political climate of Washington, D.C., was a harsh shift from that of the pleasant eastern Oregon town of La Grande.

Thomas was born in Fort Worth, Texas, on 7 September 1934. He entered Texas A & M with the intention of becoming a veterinarian but switched to wildlife management. He graduated in 1957, and for the next ten years worked for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. In 1966 he moved to Morgantown, West Virginia, to accept an appointment as research wildlife biologist in the Forest Service research program, and at the same time he earned a masters degree in wildlife ecology at West Virginia University. In 1969 he moved to Amherst, Massachusetts, as principle research wildlife biologist, and entered a successful Ph.D. program in land use planning at the University of Massachusetts. His move to La Grande in 1974 included the "dream assignment" as chief research wildlife biologist. His stature continued to grow, and in 1989 Chief Dale Robertson asked Thomas to head the Interagency Scientific Committee to Address the Conservation of the Northern Spotted Owl. Four years later, he would succeed Robertson. Thomas retired from the Forest Service in December 1996 and became Boone and Crockett Professor of Wildlife Conservation at the University of Montana.

Thomas had several spotted-owl assignments, and they all were controversial given the substantial impact they would obviously have on the culture and economy of the Pacific Northwest, and in fact of the nation. As chief, he dealt with his political bosses and he dealt with congressional committees, and he dealt with lawyers from the Department of Justice. Two of his goals were to restore morale to a beleaguered agency and to push for fuller adoption of ecosystem management that Robertson had introduced. Of course there were the by now traditional controversies to deal with, such as wilderness management, below-cost timber sales, and workforce diversity, plus newer issues--at least new labels--of forest health and timber salvage. The Endangered Species Act was always in the background, but mostly it was the Diversity Clause in the National Forest Management Act of 1976 that drove so many disputes, and from time to time Thomas refers to the "conflict industry" that worked effectively to sustain controversy, rather than to seek solutions.

I first met Jack Thomas shortly after his appointment as chief at a "reinvention of government" workshop at Grey Towers, Gifford Pinchot's ancestral home in Milford, Pennsylvania. By luck of the draw, he and I were assigned to the same subgroup to define issues, along with Gifford Pinchot III and IV. A couple of years later we spent fifteen minutes over a cup of coffee during a conference at Duke University where he was the keynote speaker. Finally, we met briefly, again at Duke and as a keynoter, this time for the fiftieth anniversary meeting of the Forest History Society, my employer at the time. And that's how well we apparently knew each other before the interview, but in fact I knew him rather well in certain ways from reading his rich and voluminous journals that I refer to from time to time.

Jack has a definite presence, a strong personality. He observes that he can be "formidable and ferocious under pressure", qualities that we can see in his journals but not in the interview. His working vocabulary is unusually large, but his speech is at times homespun; once while discussing water issues he observed that in the West, "whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting over." Despite his impressive credentials and achievements, he is at root a nice guy. The fact that we are the same age and have experienced the same history was generally a plus, but a younger interviewer might have been less understanding and more aggressive on certain issues.

He was a friendly and gracious host, during the three, half-day interview sessions at his home in Florence, a small town about twenty miles up the Bitterroot Valley from Missoula. It's one of those places with views in four directions. We conducted the interview in his spacious office that is lined with technical material and memorabilia.

Kathy Thomas, who was his deputy chief for administration when Jack was chief [they married during their last days in Washington], also welcomed me. The next day she sprained her wrist, a story told here only to explain why it fell to Jack to fix lunch for the three of us following the final interview session. Although in obvious discomfort, Kathy joined us in the kitchen, and we watched while Jack moved around in somewhat unfamiliar surroundings. He thumped six cans of various ingredients on the counter, and Kathy asked what he was doing. "Making soup." "Oh" she responded, and we continued to watch as the soup heated on the stove. Meantime, a loaf of bread, block of cheese, and a jar of mayonnaise thumped on the counter. "Now what are you making?" "Cheese and mayonnaise sandwiches." "Don't put any mayonnaise on mine." "OK". I don't use mayonnaise either, but under the circumstances I thought it better to keep it to myself. Lunch was served without pretense, and was very tasty and hearty, the sort of fare one can easily imagine Jack routinely fixed and ate around a campfire during decades of hunting seasons.

He reviewed the interview transcript with care, making extensive revisions of content, syntax, and tone. Thus, what follows is essentially his narrative, based upon the interview.

Choosing Wildlife Management

Harold K. Steen (HKS): How did you decide on wildlife management?

Jack Ward Thomas (JWT): When I was a boy, my grandfather had a farm about five miles away from where we lived in a small town. I spent most of my time there hunting and fishing and running around the woods and even getting picked up by a game warden for using pipe bombs to blow up carp in the Trinity River. It turned out that this game warden was a high school classmate of my father's. So, he didn't do much more than take me to the house to talk with my father. I don't think either one of them were too upset that I was doing away with carp in the Trinity River. My dad was a little upset that I might have blown myself up. But I became familiar with this fellow, and he would come out and let me ride with him on patrol. I think what he was doing was getting me to tell him where this was and that was and so on, but nonetheless, I came to believe that would be a neat thing to be a game warden. So, when I went off to Texas A&M, I didn't know there was any such thing as wildlife management. I majored initially in pre-veterinary medicine. About the end of my sophomore year, I realized that I really wasn't interested in being a vet and switched over to wildlife management that I had discovered even existed in the process of being there.

HKS: Is that an option at the forestry school?

JWT: No, Texas A&M didn't have a forestry school then.

HKS: Does it now?

JWT: It does now. The only forestry school in Texas at that time was at Stephen F. Austin. Where I was raised we had little oak trees we chopped down to make firewood, but forestry wasn't anything that popped into my head at that time.

HKS: It's interesting how things turn out. I wanted to be a geologist, a mining engineer, or a forester. I wanted to work outdoors. None of them really work outdoors very much, but my father was a banker, and he hated office work. So that's how I wound up in forestry.

JWT: In that regard, my dad was a little bit disappointed when I switched my major to wildlife management. I was making good grades and would have gotten into vet school. He didn't quite know what wildlife management was, and I'm not quite sure he ever thought it was honest work. He worked in the post office, and he made a living at it. Then he had another job to make ends meet. So between the two jobs we could get along. He told me that every day of his life he got up to do something he hated, and whatever the heck wildlife management was, he hoped it was something that I would get up every morning and be glad to go to work. That turned out to be true over the years.

HKS: Was it called wildlife management then? When did it end being game management?

JWT: It was called wildlife management then, but it was really game management. There wasn't any doubt about that.

HKS: But there's a name shift somewhere. In the '30s it would be definitely game management.

JWT: I don't know if it was called something different earlier on.

HKS: That was Leopold's book, *Game Management*.

JWT: That book, of course, was published the year before I was born. I don't know what the original degrees from Texas A&M said. It was one of the first schools that had a co-op wildlife unit with the Fish

and Wildlife Service and that sort of thing. But it was wildlife management when I was there. I don't know when it switched to wildlife biology.

HKS: Did you take courses that we now think of as being ecologically oriented?

JWT: Being a schoolteacher today and looking back on the coursework that I took in the mid-1950s, there's a dramatic difference between requirements now and then. We were required to take a hundred and fifty-four semester hours, and the only electives we had were twelve hours of military science. A&M was an all-male, all-military school then. Most of us used our electives taking military science courses. That is versus a hundred and twenty hours required today with half of the courses being electives. So I took everything that the students take today plus a considerable amount more. They put us through some really tough coursework that we don't require of students now, such as elementary plane surveying and animal husbandry and poultry science and a bunch of courses related to agriculture. That may be because at Texas A&M the school is in the School of Agriculture, and the school I teach in now is in Forestry with the wildlife programs being in cooperation with the Biology Department. I cannot see that the kids I teach today take anything any different. They just take a lot less.

HKS: That's interesting, because we seem to think that education now is more intensive than it was in our time.

JWT: No way. I started school on the first of September and got out on the first of June. Kids now start the fall term very close to the first of October and have a week break at Thanksgiving. Then they have a month off in the middle of the year, and then they have a week off in midterm, and then they're through in mid-May. So not only do they take fewer courses, they spend many fewer hours per course.

HKS: Of course, we had the added incentive that the Korean War was going on, and they were drafting people like crazy who didn't take their studies seriously enough.

JWT: Yes, that's true.

Texas Parks and Wildlife

HKS: So you graduated and went to Texas Parks and Wildlife, where you stayed essentially ten years. Was that a logical place to go or did you look around?

JWT: When I went to work it was called the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission. The name changed four or five years before I left. When I graduated from Texas A&M, I received a regular commission in the Air Force, and it was my intention to make a career of the military. About that time, they started downsizing in the Air Force, and so entry into active duty was delayed several times. So I got the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission to give me a job for the summer, intending to go into service in the fall. But the Air Force delayed entry into active duty. The game department kept me on, and the Air Force delayed again. Then the Air Force came back and said, you were going to have to go for three years, but now if you're going to fly, you're going to have to sign up for six. By this time, I was really beginning to enjoy and appreciate wildlife biology and working in the field. I had gotten married. I think my gung ho attitude toward the military life was beginning to slacken a bit, and I was frankly irritated that they kept changing my entry date. I signed a contract and they unilaterally kept changing that contract. So I said, I'll do my two years of active duty. I don't want to fly. There must have been a great many newly commissioned officers who told them they didn't want to fly. So, basically, the Air Force ran us all back through our physical exams. I had an old football knee injury that they'd never paid any attention to before. This time through they said, you're not qualified for active duty, and they put me on reserve status. That was the end of my military career.

HKS: So you never went on active duty? You did the two-week business?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Several times in your journals you refer to things that impressed you, experiences that added to your learning curve when you were working for Texas Parks and Wildlife that stayed with you during your whole career. Let's put that on record. It's pretty important to your growing up.

JWT: I think the first thing I learned came from my coursework under professors who had experience working in the field. They would tell us, guys this business is 90 percent people-related—90 percent people and politics and only 10 or so percent application of technical biology. Then, nobody taught us about those people things. They would say it, but nobody taught us very much about economics or social science. But they were pounding into our heads that attitude held over from the Progressive Era that said we were among the best and the brightest, and we were going to go out there and apply appropriate science to make a better world.

I got out in the boondocks to go to work—and I worked hard. What we were doing was quite rudimentary related to what we can do today, due primarily to improved technology and increasing knowledge. James G. Teer, quite a prominent man in the wildlife business, was my immediate boss and mentor. But after about a year to a half after I went to work he decided to go back to school for a doctorate, and so I became the project leader at a very tender age. I was working in the Edwards Plateau of Texas, which some people call the Serengeti of North America. And we were beginning to put wildlife and particularly deer management in place, largely by teaching people how to make money out of deer management.

I remember the first time I had to appear before the Game and Fish Commission. I got up there with my state-of-the-art (at the time) poster boards with charts and graphs and made my presentation and did a pretty good job. One old commissioner leaned forward and he said, "Well son, that's very interesting—but what's the consensus of public opinion here?" I looked at him, and in all the exuberance of my youth said, "Mr. Chairman, I'm a biologist and a scientist"; basically, I told him I had laid my pearls before swine and you now ask me—a scientist—a question about public opinion. I said, "Maybe you ought to get Roper to do a public opinion poll for you."

The old guy rapped his gavel on the table and said, "We're going to adjourn for about fifteen minutes." We went in the back room, and he looked at me and he said, in effect, you little puke, he said I don't know whether to slap you on your ass or fire you. He said look, let's get this straight. The governor appoints me and this commission to serve the people of Texas, related to their wildlife. We hire you to provide information to us that we need to make intelligent decisions. Now, this is as much a political process as it is a technical one. Now kid, when I ask you a damn question I expect you to answer me. Now we're going back out there and let's try again. We got out there and he very calmly resumed and said, "Now as I was saying, what's the consensus of public opinion?" I said, "Mr. Chairman, I don't know but within two weeks I will send you a letter answering that question." I never forgot that. That this wildlife management business really was about people and it really was about politics. Science had something to do with it. Technical stuff had something to do with it. But in the end, this is a democracy, and we're going to operate in the realm of management of material within the bounds that the citizens set for us. I never forgot that.

HKS: You probably thought about it more when you got to be chief.

JWT: Yes, by the time I was chief I really knew the social/political aspects of natural resource management. By that time, I had directed research units that did social research. I had scientists that worked for me who did that sort of thing. During my Ph.D. work, which I did while I was working for the Forest Service, my immediate boss was a social scientist. I had two people on my staff that were social scientists. And I had certainly learned the hard way that this natural resources business was more about people than anything else.

Entering Forest Service Research

HKS: What made you decide to leave Texas and go to Morgantown?

JWR: Money. I finally starved out. Salaries in Texas were pathetic. After ten years and a wife and two kids and trying to make a living—my wife and I decided she would stay home with the children. So, after essentially working two jobs and working on weekends at anything I could find, I was beginning to be recognized as having some talent in the business. I had two old cars; one weekend they were both broken down, and I couldn't get either one to start. I said there's got to be some way I can make a real living at this business. I had a friend by the name of Charles Wallmo, a very fine man with a great reputation in the wildlife business. He's been dead now for some ten years. He had been one of my teachers at A&M, and had then gone to work for Forest Service Research. He called me up and said he needed a technician; would like me to come to work for him. I said yes. He told me how to apply—i.e., to get on the federal rosters for employment. I had already published a number of articles, and so I put my application in and just asked to be evaluated. I thought I was going to be rated as a GS-9, and when the results came back I was given a score of one hundred in both research and management. I started getting job offers at the GS-12 level. I received a few offers, one being an associate editor and one in Boston with the Fish and Wildlife Service. I turned down those offers. If you turned down three you went off the roster. So, I had one more chance.

The third offer was something of a fluke. The Forest Service was establishing a new research unit at Morgantown, West Virginia, which at the time wasn't the most desirable place in the world where people wanted to live. Ken Quigley called me and described a job in Forest Service Research in Morgantown, West Virginia. He said that there had been fourteen people on the roster and that I was number fourteen. The other thirteen had turned the job down, and he was certain that I didn't want the job. He was telling me they didn't want me, but not because of anything personal. I only had a bachelor's degree at that time and everybody else on the roster had Ph.D.'s. I said no, I want the job. So that's how I got in the Forest Service.

HKS: So there's obviously some immediate pressure for advanced degrees, which you did when you were there.

JWT: Well, there was no pressure put on me in that regard. Nobody put any pressure on me except me. I was a little naïve. I wasn't used to working around Ph.D.'s. They were all down at the university. When I got to Morgantown, I suddenly realized that I was one of the few scientists in the Forest Service that didn't have an advanced degree. The opportunity for more education was just too great to resist. So I walked over to the university and asked if I could work on a master's degree while working. They said, sure—but noted a small problem. We don't have any courses that you haven't had, because we've gone down from a hundred and fifty-four semester hours to one twenty for a B.S. degree. They let me pick my own coursework and they treated me like a "grown-up" and nobody paid much attention to me. I took the hours that I was supposed to take and wrote a thesis from some work carried over from Texas concerning wild turkeys. So that's how I started my post-graduate work, with a master's degree at West Virginia. I later did a Ph.D. at Amherst at the University of Massachusetts in forestry with an emphasis in land-use planning.

HKS: Wildlife ecology, is that the degree that they offered, or is that your choice of a name?

JWT: No, that's what they called it. At one time it was game management, then the degree was called wildlife management, and now the title morphed into wildlife ecology. Circumstances moved us toward the broadened ecological concept, and I think it's true that we're no longer managing wildlife solely for hunting. We now have a broadened mandate including such as threatened species. So wildlife ecology is probably the more appropriate term.

HKS: And "ecology" by the late '60s was a fashionable term.

JWT: It was very fashionable.

HKS: So you got your degree and you were there three years and you went off to Amherst. The idea of a Ph.D., is that why you chose Amherst?

JWT: When I was in West Virginia, the Monongahela incident was exploding and was coupled with the debates over clearcutting in the Bitterroots. The Forest Service was getting sued for the violations of the Organic Act. Competition was emerging in Congress between the Humphrey bill and the Randolph bill to address problems of reforestation. The National Forest Management Act [NFMA] emerged as the solution. There was a lot of focus on our research unit in West Virginia because we were working on even-aged timber management, which used clearcutting as a regeneration technique. We laid into hunter attitudes and behavior, deer, turkeys, grouse—notice all of them are species that you would hunt—related to even-aged timber management. So I happened to be sitting there at the "eye of the storm" as that was unfolding—which was a very educational experience. As I look back on it, the guys that I worked with on the Monongahela National Forest essentially thumbed their noses at the "hillbillies" that really didn't like the idea that the Forest Service was going to clearcut their turkey woods. That was a great, great learning experience in terms of the power of the people when they really don't like something. I think that's where Forest Service personnel began to lose it in terms of coming out of the Progressive Era training that we were the masters of our fate and we are the best and the brightest, that we knew best how to manage the forests. Here we had a bunch of hillbillies who just turned the agency wrong side out. It was a great, if painful, learning experience. Of course, as a wildlife biologist I wasn't too damn enamored at what we were doing either. I wasn't arguing with my forestry friends about the appropriateness of the technique. I just thought that we were headed for a public relations disaster. Sure enough we were.

HKS: This has stuck in my mind a long time. Hubert Humphrey spoke at the centennial of the American Forestry Association, and he said the Monongahela really blew up because the president of the local Izaac Walton League played golf at a course where he could see a clearcut. Did he make that up for the audience or from truth? What do you think really kicked it off?

JWT: There are several similar stories like that floating around, and I suspect that they're all true to some degree. One that I think is true involves a fellow who was a retired shoemaker who, as I remember, lived at Gauley, West Virginia. In retirement he had taken a part-time job as the head of the local Chamber of Commerce. He and a number of his turkey hunting buddies got upset about this and decided to take the Forest Service on. Another story, which I think might be true concerns the Speaker of the House of the West Virginia legislature going turkey hunting in his favorite place. He got out before daylight and got to where he was accustomed to hunt and the sun came up to reveal that his favorite turkey hunting place was a forty-acre clearcut.

HKS: Humphrey may have been referring to the litigation with Izaac Walton versus Butz, and maybe that was true, that's how that guy got involved in this.

JWT: I suspect nearly all of those stories are true—or should be. They were just different people's reactions to something that they intensely disliked.

HKS: I think it was Bob Buckman who was telling me that he remembers Ed Cliff going out on the Monongahela and coming back to the chief and staff meeting the next Monday morning, shaking his head at what he saw. He wasn't surprised that they were in a lot of trouble. So it was certainly a turning point.

JWT: It was and remains a great educational experience for me. I was thirty-three or -four years old and right in the middle of that evolving controversy and learning a lot. I was stationed at the university and working out in the woods. So, there was this constant movement back and forth between academia and rural communities and watching the disconnects develop and worsen. But I was stunned at how stubbornly the Forest Service pursued its course of action. We'd made up our minds that even-aged management was the way to practice forestry in those particular circumstances. By God, that was our story, and we were sticking to it. We stuck to it even when it was increasingly clear we were headed for

deep, deep trouble. Our response was not to educate, and it wasn't to bring people along. Our response was just to say look, we're the guys that know best and that's what we're going to do. I think that was a huge turning point for the Forest Service. I think we have forgotten the Monongahela situation today as other things have come along, such as debates over roadless areas and this, that, and the other. But I think that the Monongahela and Bitterroot incidents were the turning point. Never again would the Forest Service so blindly adhere to philosophy of the Progressive Era.

HKS: You're a year older than I am, but we started at the same time basically. I got out of school in '57, worked for the Forest Service on the Snoqualmie National Forest where we clearcut forty-acre patches. I wanted to be a good ranger, and so I wanted to learn what the ranger was thinking. It was a sign of disloyalty to question; even though he was personally a nice guy, you didn't ask the questions.

JWT: I may be jumping ahead here, but one of the things that we see today in looking back for the "good old days," when, by God, everybody was a loyal, white male forester or engineer or whatever. When I came in the Forest Service, we could have literally held a meeting of all the wildlife biologists in the Forest Service in this room with a little space left over. To question was not a good thing. Nobody ever did anything to me for questioning, but they did look at me a little bit peculiarly sometimes. And loyalty to the agency was a virtue ... you know, the outfit was the outfit. That appealed to me. I came out of a military school, a disciplined background, and I had a really tortured relationship with loyalty and loving dissent. I admired the discipline of the Forest Service. I cherished the camaraderie—and still do. I wanted to be part of that. At the same time, I could see that we were headed, at least in the social political sense, for a helluva crash. I could look at emerging results of my research and tell you that clearcutting was good if you were interested in deer and elk—i.e., early successional species. In fact, we're suffering declines in early successional species right now because we've essentially ceased clearcutting. So I could look at clearcutting as a great wildlife technique for some species—but it was ugly and people didn't like it and they kept telling us so. Then they jumped up and down and yelled louder and louder that they didn't like it, and we just kept plowing straight ahead. Pete, I still have those feelings today. Loyalty and feeling for the organization are part of me. But, at the same time, there's a dark side to that and it can get you in trouble if not always questioned against evolving circumstances.

Urban Forestry Project

HKS: You moved from Morgantown to Amherst. Was it to get an advanced degree?

JWT: In a sense. I had decided by that time I wanted to do a Ph.D., and I became enamored of economics. So, I wanted to go to Syracuse and do a Ph.D. under Dr. Bill Duerr in forest economics. The Forest Service had seen some value in me and were inclined to be supportive of my ambitions. So I was working on getting that approved under the Government Employees Training Act. Suddenly the Forest Service was funded for a new wildlife and urban forestry research unit at Amherst, Massachusetts.

HKS: That's what that cemetery paper came out of.

JWT: Right. Silvio Conte was a very powerful congressman at that time. He queried the Forest Service if there was something in the Forest Service budget that he could direct to the forestry school at the University of Massachusetts. The Forest Service came up with the idea for an urban forestry and wildlife unit. So they called me up and told me that they would like me to go to Amherst and become project leader for that new unit. I was promised a promotion to GS-13, a project leader's job, and a chance to go to school part-time. That sounded good to me. That's how I got to Amherst, Massachusetts.

Talk about being outside the mainstream of the Forest Service. Here I was in urban forestry and urban wildlife work. The project leader, me, had never lived in a big town in my life and now I was to be wandering around in people's neighborhoods doing wildlife studies, or looking at cemeteries as recreational and open space and wildlife habitats. It was a great experience in the sense that it was not

only educational opportunities at the university but included an education in living in the midst of a lot of people where the forest and human habitat was intermixed in New England. Here was a guy from Texas who'd never seen a tree much more than thirty feet tall, introduced to a new culture in Appalachia and experiencing not only a different ecological situation but also real cultural differences. Now, here I was in New England, which was altogether different—ecologically and culturally—again. It was a similar experience to that at West Virginia University.

I went over to the Amherst forestry school and talked to them about pursuing a Ph.D. And they said fine. But they said, you know, you can't do this in wildlife. We don't have any courses in wildlife that you haven't had, and you've written more papers than most of the faculty. So we're going to have you do your degree in forestry. I said I didn't think I wanted to do a standard forestry Ph.D. They described a new program in land use planning—which was a big thing in the realm of forestry. I thought that field would be a valuable one in which to have a degree, because I knew the Forest Service was moving into planning in a big way. Basically the university let me design my own coursework program. And oddly, that has given me the background to drive the program, jumping ahead thirty years or so, that I now direct at the University of Montana where I cross train people in economics, social science, political science, biology, and forestry in order to allow them to deal with the "people part" of the problem of natural resources management.

HKS: I was in John McGuire's office in 1973 as part of my writing a book on the history of the Forest Service that came out a year or two later, and he mentioned that the Forest Service was getting interested in urban forestry. He wasn't quite sure about a definition, but he hoped to get some money out of Congress for it. Perhaps, that's what we're talking about. A year later you were in Amherst.

JWT: Within a year or so of that date the Forest Service was putting money into State and Private Forestry for urban work and moving into areas like Chicago and the Chesapeake Bay area where they still have very strong programs.

Article on Cemeteries

HKS: When I first looked at the list of your thirty-one most important papers, I saw the one on cemeteries. I thought why in the world is that there? Then I read your journals, and that's one of the most reprinted articles in that journal's history. Maybe we ought to talk a bit about that.

JWT: Go back in time. Think about yourself, or anybody who was a standard wildlife biologist, a forester, and suddenly thrust into work in the urban arena. The first question is, "What am I going to do here?" Well, some obvious subject began to quickly emerge. One of my colleagues in that urban forestry unit was Brian Payne, a forest economist. Brian immediately undertook a study along with Richard DeGraaf to determine how much money was being spent on bird feed. Results from that study are still being quoted today. I can't remember what the dollar amount was, but it was many millions of dollars. I looked around as the ecologist in the research unit and asked, "Where's the open space?" Look at a map of Boston or Chicago or some other city and it just jumps out that the biggest blocks of open space in a city are one of three things—parks, floodplains, or cemeteries.

I have always been fascinated with cemeteries, the statuary, the tombstones, and the engravings and the layout. They are very different around the country. Our original office in Amherst backed right up against the old Amherst town cemetery. In the summertime, we would go out into the cemetery to eat lunch leaning up against Emily Dickinson's tombstone. We began keeping up with how many birds and other wildlife we could see in the cemetery. This led to wondering if cemeteries could be landscaped to enhance wildlife habitat. Then I discovered the Mt. Auburn cemetery in Boston, which was designed by the father of American landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted. We looked up the original documents by Olmsted laying out the cemetery. Those documents indicated that he knew exactly what he was doing. The remarkable use of the cemetery today by wildlife and birdwatchers was no accident.

He said he wanted to create a cemetery and a "pleasuring ground" for the people. It was obvious that he knew enough about wildlife to build habitat into the design. I can't believe he didn't have some concept of wildlife habitat, as it would have been simply too fortuitous. If you're a birdwatcher in the Boston area the ultimate symbol of being one of the elite among birders is to have your own key to Mt. Auburn cemetery. We chose to publish the paper in *Natural History* magazine rather than in a technical journal. Such publication outlets became one of my hallmarks in that many of my publications don't appear in highly technical, specialized outlets where only other technicians and scientists would read the material. The Catholic Cemetery Association grabbed it and made quite a big deal out of it. It was a matter of being innovative and looking for things and opportunities that others don't see. This bent for publishing routinely outside of peer-reviewed journals has been both praised and condemned by my peer review panels over the years. I listened to the praise and ignored the criticism.

Then one day we got a call, which turned out to be a real break, from the National Wildlife Federation. They were interested in publishing an article about "wildlife in your backyard," and they wanted it for their next issue. The deadline was five days away. So I sat down with Robert Brush, a landscape architect on my staff. Brush could do the conceptual design and artwork. Dick DeGraaf and I worked up the technical wildlife and plant materials. Three days later we met the folks from the *National Wildlife* magazine down at Hartford airport and sat out on the end of the runway in a private aircraft with two of their layout people. We gave them the manuscript and our ideas. Within a week they converted Brush's layout into artwork and they published the article—called "Invite Wildlife to Your Backyard." It's been refurbished and republished about three times, and has proven to be the most popular article on wildlife ever written. Reprints have run into the millions. The National Wildlife Federation has a program that was founded out of that publication called their Backyard Wildlife Program. At this point I had evolved from being a deer and turkey researcher, hunting and game management guy in the Texas Game Department to dealing with wildlife and clearcutting in Appalachia to dealing with urban forestry. I was in the steep part of the learning curve. I finally got the Ph.D. in land use planning with a dissertation focused on habitat requirements of songbirds in suburban areas of New England.

Moving to La Grande

HKS: Were you looking to leave Amherst or just the opportunity appears in La Grande that you couldn't pass up?

JWT: No, I wasn't trolling for a new job. In fact, my wife loved Amherst. She had a master's degree in music and she was in her element for the first time when we left rural Texas to go to West Virginia University and then on to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I can't say I wasn't happy. I was having a good time. But the phone rang one day and it was Robert F. Tarrant on the other end. He was the assistant director of the Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station at that time. He had spoken with Warren T. Doolittle. Doolittle had been my assistant director and then the director of the Northeast Station. Tarrant told Doolittle—his words, not mine—he was looking for the best wildlife biologist in the Forest Service to go to La Grande, Oregon, where the Northwest Station had a big unit that they wanted to get refocused and reinvigorated in range and wildlife research. Doolittle directed Tarrant to me. Tarrant called me and described what sounded like a dream job. At the time there were freezes in place on salaries and promotions. Robert Buckman was Northwest Station director. I'd like to do it, I said, but I want a promotion. He said well, we can't give you one, there is a freeze on. I replied that I was not that unhappy where I was. This went back and forth and back and forth for several weeks. Finally, Buckman said that they would give me the first promotion opportunity that became possible. I said no, I'm not going anywhere without a promotion. I think that was the first time Buckman and I ever fussed at each other. But anyway, it turned out I got the promotion and went out to the northwest, met with Tarrant and visited La Grande. I was impressed and really wanted the job. My wife and I made La Grande home and that is where I spent over twenty years of my career. I never, ever, wanted to leave there.

HKS: Quite a shift in terms of climate and ambiance to go from Massachusetts to eastern Oregon.

JWT: Here was a whole new thing for me and my family. Arriving in eastern Oregon was like closing a loop. Though it was very far north, it was very much like Texas with the additional bonus of being surrounded by public land. Dealing with public land was—I'm trying to think of the right word—almost an epiphany. I was born and raised where there was no public land. I sneaked and cheated and lied and poached to be outside in the "the cold" and to hunt and fish. I couldn't afford to buy hunting rights and that sort of thing. I remember when I got to that first national forest in West Virginia. Even today when I get out of the car on a national forest, I look around to see if maybe I ought to ask somebody if it's all right. But if you've been raised without any public land and you love the outdoors, you know what a treasure it is. That's the reason I can never visualize the American people giving up their public lands. It is just that wonderful feeling of, by God, I can go here—this is mine. As long as I don't do something totally gross nobody's going to say anything to me about what I do. This land, truly is *my* land.

HKS: What was the impetus behind creating or refocusing La Grande's project on wildlife as opposed to, I'm not sure what it was before?

JWT: The unit was focused on range and wildlife. But, there were two projects there, one in range, which was the dominant project, and the other one in wildlife. The project leaders for the wildlife unit had retired. The project leader for the range project had been moved into Portland as an assistant director for the Northwest Station. I think Tarrant and Buckman looked at the situation and decided to grasp the opportunity represented by the surge of interest in wildlife. So while we continued to do range research—and still do—the emphasis went over to wildlife habitat research.

NFMA Diversity Clause

HKS: Was that some sort of response to the Endangered Species Act [ESA]?

JWT: No.

HKS: Because '73 was the Endangered Species Act.

JWT: ESA still wasn't grabbing the Forest Services' attention quite yet. What was focusing attention on was a wildlife diversity clause in the regulations issued pursuant to the NFMA. You could write a textbook about how an obscure clause in regulations shook the agency. The Forest Service was putting the planning regulations together. As you might remember, in NFMA there was a Committee of Scientists dictated by the act to advise in the regulations. They were negotiating back and forth on the regulations between the Forest Service and the committee. There were two Forest Service biologists in Fort Collins—Steve Mealey and Dr. Hal Salwasser—that were in the planning unit. A plan came in off the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest that, in reference to some species of which they knew very little, said we'll take care of them in the Eagle Cap Wilderness. These two biologists didn't think that was what you were supposed to do to meet the intent of NFMA. They, correctly to my mind, thought that such things should be considered on a broader scale. They wrote the "diversity clause" which says that all native and desirable non-native species should be maintained in viable conditions and well distributed within the planning area. Many people think that the Endangered Species Act had the most impact on the Forest Service. Not so, it has been that diversity clause. That made more change in the U.S. Forest Service management than the ESA, and the Forest Service wrote it. Congress didn't tell us to do that. The Forest Service did it and didn't do it with any idea of producing the results it has. Viability didn't mean then what it means now. It was merely an instruction to the planners to think more broadly when considering wildlife. The diversity clause has evolved to be more restrictive on management of the national forests than the ESA. Though it would be fair to say that the diversity clause was prompted by the ESA.

HKS: Was it the Committee of Scientists? Were they the main contributor to the language you're talking about here?

JWT: No, I think Steve Mealey and Hal Salwasser wrote it and recommended it to the committee. Mealey was conversing with Dr. Art Cooper, who was chair of the committee, and said, you know, we've got to do something like this. I think Mealey drafted the language. This is one of the more dramatic events in Forest Service history. Some would say this was caused by the NFMA. No, this is what happens when the Congress gives bureaucrats too much leeway. Congress never wrote that. The Forest Service wrote that.

HKS: So was there immediate litigation?

JWT: No, it just kind of laid there like a booby trap. The thing that brought the Forest Service to grips with spotted owls was not the ESA *per se*. The species wasn't listed until we got through with the Interagency Scientific Committee [ISC] report. The ISC's establishment and work was driven by the need to comply with the viability clause.

HKS: I've known Don Flora for a long time. He was about two years ahead of me in forestry school. I stopped by his office one time; I'd never heard of the spotted owl. We had a cup of coffee and he said you know, tomorrow I'm going to Bend. He said I'm not sure if this is some kind of a high tech snipe hunt. The guys are going to show me a spotted owl. He said I'm going to play along and see if there really is such a thing. But if they're right, it's going to be serious, and maybe five years later it became serious.

JWT: Flora was my assistant director in the Northwest Experiment Station at one time.

HKS: Well, let's go back. I'd like you to talk a little bit about science in the Forest Service, intellectually as it were, selection of topics and freedom of inquiry. There's always skeptics and cynics out there about are the scientists loyal to the discipline or to the agency or a little of both. Science-driven decisions as opposed to politically driven decisions, the quality of science.

JWT: Could I just address that for a minute? I think the best we can hope for is decisions that are science-based and driven by other circumstances. After all, science is an invention of human beings. Science doesn't dictate. Science can contribute. But sometimes science will get you cornered where you have to really pay some attention in order for the extant "science" to be in compliance with the law. But I don't think we've ever come up and said, as a basis of a decision, I have to do this because science dictates it to be so. I think it's a real cop out and always has been for politicians to talk about "whatever the science says that's what we're going to do." Hardy-har-har. Nobody's going to do that, not you, not me, not anybody else. We're going to use science to guide actions, but we're going to base our management decisions on a whole lot of different things. So a decision may be science-based but driven by political circumstances.

HKS: I'm not teaching anymore, but I used to ask my students if they wanted a science-based environmental program for the country or a politically based one. They all wanted science-based. Somehow that's cleaner I guess.

JWT: Well that might be a good thing, if we knew what "science" was and what "the science" is. I think it's a cop out that people use that who don't know what science is. But what is science? One of our biggest problems is wanting all decisions to be science-based. I use an analogy in speaking about this. Take all the journals on the library shelves and then all the books and journals in the Library of Congress and printed in all the languages in the world, in all the different specialties, and then consider every single article as a brick. We're busily building more and more bricks and throwing them up on the pile helter-skelter. This pile of bricks gets bigger and bigger at an ever-increasing rate. But this only means something in the management when you turn around and use the brick to build something. Until then the pile of bricks increasingly resembles a modern-day Tower of Babel. These bricks just keep landing on the pile faster and faster. The hardest thing for "science-based management" is sorting through the bricks

and building them into some kind of a platform to support our political decision process. And it gets more daunting by the year. There seems to be a new scientific journal that starts up every few months. How do we put all of these bricks together to build a platform on which to operate? Then what's the plan for making modifications in the platform as new startling bricks hit the pile? I think we're in the process of being, if not overwhelmed, at least whelmed by our rapidly increasing scientific knowledge base. Our big challenge in bringing "science" to bear appropriately in natural resources management, as in other areas of human endeavor, is how do we build those bricks into a platform.

Freedom of Inquiry

HKS: That maybe leads into the selection of topics and freedom of inquiry. I don't know how many projects you actually designed and you went to somebody to get money and there was a review process.

JWT: When our newly formed research team got together in Morgantown, West Virginia, there was nobody that told us specifically what to work on. Our bosses told us to look at the extant array of problems that would be within the scope of the wildlife habitat research unit and put together a problem analysis. Administrators will review and approve your assessment, which they did. We were charged with putting together study plans for specific studies. Basically, we couldn't take the money that we were allocated to go out and study things unrelated to forested wildlife habitats. We had to study wildlife habitat related to forestry. But within that general arena we had leeway to select our own problems. Now I assume under the rules somebody could have said no. But they didn't—maybe because there was nobody in administrative ranks over us that had any knowledge of our field whatsoever.

HKS: Does wildlife research generally require anything other than a lot of salaries and mileage on vehicles?

JWT: It does today. For example, there are satellites and radio collars that transmit animal locations and computers that record the data. Such can be very, very expensive. In the old days we didn't need much but salaries, vehicles, a notebook, calculator, binoculars, and a little money for incidentals. Some of the wildlife research today is incredibly sophisticated and quite expensive. Back to your earlier question, we were given a mission which confined us to a general arena but we had considerable freedom within those bounds. We had significant leeway. That has been true in Forest Service Research everywhere that I ever worked. As I got older and more experienced in "the game," I learned how to attain money from other than government sources through cooperative arrangements with universities. We learned how to parlay a little money into a lot of money. Some Forest Service researchers were very good at that game and some never learned. Or, maybe, they didn't want to enter that competitive arena.

HKS: Earlier you described the stubbornness of forestry to accept what was going on; clearcutting, by God, was right and that's what we're going to do. That's kind of what I'm getting at. When your institution has that kind of thinking, how do you start studying things that in effect have the potential of challenging the status quo?

JWT: One of the most fascinating things about the Forest Service is the integrity of the research division. It is one of the agency's greatest strengths—and always has been. Researchers are not directed by the regional forester. They are directed by a research station director. I have seen instances when people in line officer's jobs in the National Forest System really did not want researchers looking at some of the things at which we were looking. But we proceeded anyway. Managers, generally, acceded to the researcher's prerogative. I always thought that this was quite an incredible circumstance that it was a real strength of the Forest Service. Look at the Park Service. Scientists in the Park Service work for the park supervisors, and their research reflects that. I'm pretty sure I would have studied different things than I did study if I'd been working for the forest supervisors or for a regional forester rather than for a research station director. Much of the research that caused the Forest Service its biggest management pains have come out of its own research division. That is a huge strength of the Forest Service.

HKS: But if you want to develop a project, let's say it would cost two million dollars. At the budget level people are paring the numbers down and talking to Congress; you didn't have a sense that if it was going to be controversial that the agency might not push as hard for it?

JWT: That never entered my mind, it really didn't.

HKS: Good, I'm glad to hear that.

JWT: That doesn't mean that the Forest Service always succeeded in getting the things funded that it wanted. But, the "try" was there. I can tell you just one small story in that regard. When I first got to La Grande the Forest Service was in the midst of preparing what turned out to be the last broadscale application of DDT for insect control. Researchers set to work to look at some of the effects on songbirds, etc. Anyway, the regional forester asked us to delay some publications. Boyd Whitman and Dr. Torolf "Torgy" Torgerson and Dr. Richard "Dick" Mason and a few others were there looking at tussock moth ecology and DDT operations. They had some publications ready to go that very seriously questioned whether this application of DDT was either necessary or apt to yield desired management effects. I was the lab chief at La Grande laboratory. These other guys were from the Corvallis lab, but they were temporarily in the La Grande lab doing their work. When I first arrived, the pressure was on from the regional forester for them to hold their publications back until after the DDT application. We scientists looked upon that as a transgression of our integrity as scientists and a test of the Forest Service's integrity. Station director Bob Buckman asked us if we would hold up the publications. We went to see Bob and said "ain't no way we can live with this," and he backed us to the hilt. He stood tall that day. He was a man of integrity and a good leader. We had some differences, but he is a man I much admired.

HKS: It's interesting because I interviewed three deputy chiefs of Research, and Bob was the one who talked the most about external interference in research.

JWT: I wouldn't dispute what Bob said. I was a project leader at La Grande, Oregon, and that's all I could see from my place in the trenches. I went through the spotted owl brawls and the "old-growth" wars. Unexpectedly, I was made chief of the Forest Service from my position as a senior scientist. I didn't have either the curse or the good fortune to have sat in Bob's place as a station director and deputy chief for Research. He was looking at things from a level that I never occupied. I'm just saying I can only talk about my view from two levels—when I was the chief of the Forest Service and when I was a Forest Service scientist. As a Forest Service scientist I never felt pressure, so I'm assuming that Bob and people like him shielded us from that pretty well. As chief I never exerted any influence over scientists nor did I knowingly allow any such to occur.

HKS: I interviewed Russell Train, who was head of EPA [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency] at the time that the tussock moth was going down. He said he had more political pressure on that issue than any other that faced him when he was at EPA. The congressional delegations really worked him over to give the permit to use DDT on that.

JWT: I think that's right. I was protecting these fellow scientists that were entomologists and didn't even work for me. We were fellow scientists and we thought that attempted pressure was wrong. I think the easy thing for Buckman would have been to accede a request for delay until the spraying was done. The publications in question were station publications and under his control. When we made our case, by God, he backed us up. But, what focused the spotted owl/old-growth problem? Forest Service research. What caused this problem or that problem? Forest Service research. Research focused more damn problems and helped the Forest Service make more advances than anything else that I can think of. Why? Largely because research objectives were not selected by the National Forest System. They were selected by the research division. To be really useful researchers needed to be thinking years ahead. Administration is focused right there and right now. Research is supposedly looking way further out than that. This is simply the way things are and will likely remain.

Forest Health

HKS: Talk about fire exclusion and forest health, because the Forest Service was certainly involved in both ends of that. Did you have any first hand observations of that issue when you were in La Grande or any time in the Forest Service? Habitats are certainly affected by keeping the fire out, so I thought maybe you looked at it as a scientist.

JWT: Let me frame this answer. No, we didn't look at it. We just assumed that's the way the world was, what it had evolved to be. None of us had ever seen what the forest looked like before we had fire exclusion.

HKS: Do you have any insights to how it broke? Everyone is talking about "fire is good" now and the Forest Service has been "wrong" for so many years. Did that come out of the Forest Service, a press release or something?

JWT: Oh, I think our fire researchers were responsible for the emerging vision. In 1910 following catastrophic fires, fire control made a lot of sense. Trees are considered stock in a warehouse to be preserved and protected until "harvested." We were into economic efficiency and effectiveness, and we were going to protect the trees in the warehouse until we could cut the trees and make them into wood products. I don't think that foresters of the day thought much beyond that. On the other hand, it is easy to look back with twenty-twenty hindsight and be a brilliant critic. I don't think there was anybody much arguing about the philosophy of fire protection either internally or externally for quite a long period of time. I think the situation is probably exaggerated related to "letting fire assume its rightful place." We're not going to let the forest burn wholesale as dictated by "nature." That's not politically, socially, nor economically acceptable. I think what managers are going to try to do, and I think it is reasonable, is to put a lot of resources into, not into "fireproofing" things, but in trying to be able to deal with producing circumstances where fire burns on the ground and not in the crown—slow not fast, cool not hot.

You don't have a situation such as the Los Alamos fires of 2001 more than about two or three times before somebody in power says, "I don't think so." For example, in the Bitterroots in 2000 when stand-replacing fires were burning, nobody quite understood how close we were to a real catastrophe. Firefighters put out hundreds of widespread fires on initial attack where less than five acres burned—hundreds of starts! Then, fires burned hot and extensively anyway. During that burn period an average year would have had at least five days of winds above forty miles an hour. We had none! Now, what if firefighters had not extinguished over a thousand fires on initial attack, and there were five days—back to back—of forty-mile-an-hour winds? Such circumstances may well have made 1910 look like a small time fire year. So we are where we are, and we have to adjust to that. They can't fight fire everywhere, so firefighters are going to have to be very selective as to how they use resources—and to what end.

But on the other hand, I fear this sudden focus on fire in the ecosystem is something of a flash in the pan. We're all geared up. Congress has given agencies more money than they've ever seen before to deal with fire. Of course, next year they've already decided to cut that back. What if we have fewer fires this summer—and next? Can attention to fire be maintained in the absence of fear? When the world seems to be burning, attention is focused. When it's not burning, focus is lost. So it will be a long pull out of this hole and we must be very, very selective as to how resources are devoted. But I think most of the effective new knowledge, understanding, and approach will come right out of Forest Service Research. The fire researchers were plowing right along all these years putting out "bricks" of knowledge, so we have a base upon which to build our programs.

HKS: People living in the forest have certainly caused a management problem. If their house burns down, it's much more important socially than a few acres of trees burning.

JWT: That's true, and I don't think such is altogether a technical question. It's a political question. We don't like telling people what they can and can't do with their own property. But on the other hand, we

have a weird social circumstance of people saying don't tell me what to do, but protect me from my own accumulated foolishness. A situation of damned if you do and damned if you don't.

HKS: We have regulations now about building in floodplains, and maybe we'll have something about fire.

JWT: Oh, I think we will—eventually. I think what will finally change is that insurance companies will quit issuing insurance for houses in vulnerable circumstances and fire departments will get really tough about what fires they will fight. With GPS they can create maps and they can pinpoint properties they will attempt to protect and then they won't be based on firefighter safety considerations. The statement may well be—OK, you provide a way in and a way out and you provide defensible space around your property; we simply are not going to come in here to fight fire. You're on your own. We will not risk our lives to save you from your foolishness. Or, if the insurance companies quit having blanket insurance and went out and actually looked at each property and said we won't insure you unless you do the following things. If not, it's going to cost you some number of times more than somebody else who is in compliance for fire insurance. Some people in the valley where we are sitting prefer to live out in the middle of nowhere and will not even allow road signs so that firefighters or the cops know where they are. That's fine with me, but they shouldn't expect firefighters to risk their lives to go in there and save them from their own foibles.

HKS: I know our homeowner's insurance is substantially more expensive living on the coast than it was when we lived in Durham. That's part of what you're saying, and it's having an impact. Realtors are always complaining about rapid increases in the cost of insurance.

JWT: If you choose to live in harm's way, you should pay whatever the premiums are to suit the circumstances or assume individual responsibility.

HKS: I keep thinking about that. I'm living on one of those islands that Dan Rather discovers every hurricane season.

JWT: We've learned how to do this related to life insurance. If you want a big insurance policy, the company will have the doctor check you out. And if you've got a combination of negative health problems the insurance company will tell you that your insurance is going to be a helluva lot higher than otherwise. These premiums on property will be increasingly based on individual factors rather than blanket premiums by area.

Game vs. Livestock

HKS: Let's move on to predator control. Leopold made his big contribution, at least one of them, working on that years ago. Was that still an issue when you got involved in wildlife, whether or not we should still have bounties on mountain lion and bear and so forth?

JWT: When I first started out there was relatively little controversy related to predator control. There weren't any large predators in the Edwards Plateau. Bear, lions, wolves, and coyotes had been extirpated. One of my first jobs in the Texas Game Department was providing support for pilots in super cubs shooting eagles out of the air. I rode around in my Game Department pickup truck for about three or four years with a set of golden eagle talons dangling from my rearview mirror. I finally read "Green Fire" in Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* and decided that wasn't the most sensitive thing I had ever done. I was reared with the philosophy of intensive predator control and I never thought much about it until years later.

HKS: Was it unusual to work for an agency that manages habitat and another agency manages the game? As a scientist you didn't worry about those administrative boundaries?

JWT: I don't think much of my personal research could be called anything but applied. I was interested in studies that would have usefulness in the management arena. However, my Forest Service experience was almost a total "flip-flop" from working for a game department in a state agency. The state agency had essentially no public land at their disposal. So the private landowner had control of what happened on the land and control of who hunted. The only thing the state agency could do is set seasons, establish rules for hunting and bag limits, and issue permits. When I came over to the Forest Service, that agency was the landowner now, and we had responsibility for habitat, but the state was in ownership and total control of the wildlife. However, everywhere I worked there was close cooperation between the state agency and the Forest Service related to wildlife issues. It was constantly improving because there wasn't much other choice.

HKS: Where I worked on the Snoqualmie, what I remember was the state through some process set herd size of three thousand elk in this area, numbers like that. I guess the livestock people are a part of helping set that size. We're talking about habitat and food supply and so forth; how does Forest Service science deal with that overlap?

JWT: Considerations of ungulate wildlife say deer and elk and cattle do overlap as they occupy common space and have some degree of dietary overlap. Management action—say a timber sale—provides habitat. Habitat, then, produces wildlife, and then the wildlife influences habitat. For example, you can put in a modified grazing system for livestock to benefit riparian zones. Suddenly elk begin to winter in the riparian zone because of its increased attractiveness due to your altered livestock management. When elk show up they will have affect on the vegetation. So management of habitat has feedback loops. Manipulations produce habitat conditions. Habitat conditions produce wildlife conditions. Wildlife conditions feedback on the habitat and produce an effect. So it's just an always-changing set of causes and effects.

HKS: I worked on the trail maintenance crew two summers while I was in forestry school. My opinion of elk is based upon the extraordinary damage they did to the Pacific Crest trail, because they cut across switchbacks and they're always breaking the tread down. I guess that didn't enter into the big picture but it provided work for me, something to do.

JWT: This illustrates that wildlife has an effect on its own habitat. They are not benign. Increasing ungulate wildlife numbers have effect. Decreasing numbers would have another effect.

HKS: You said you were working in the applied area of research, so maybe this question doesn't really apply to you. The concept of carrying capacity, which I think of as livestock and sustainability, is sustainability different than sustained yield or carrying capacity?

JWT: Yes, I think sustained yield and sustainability of an ecosystem are two different concepts. Sustained yield, of course, simply means a yield of outputs occurs in a sustained fashion. Sustainability is the ability to maintain a habitat condition or an ecological circumstance—broadly defined—over time. We were previously discussing applied versus basic research. This is basic research that has not entered the realm of management. The idea of carrying capacity is how many animals can be carried without deterioration of habitat. This is one of the oldest lines in research. This led managers to application of what ecologists refer to as Lybig's Law of the Minimum. This simply means that an animal's population is limited by the availability of habitat, which is limited by the availability of the first of the key elements that goes into short supply. For example, if there was a plethora of summer range for an elk herd and limited winter range—the key factor for the manager would be to increase winter range capacity if the objective was an increase in the herd. That's one of the oldest concepts in wildlife biology.

HKS: But has carrying capacity for elk versus cattle been impacted by the newer thinking, sustainability, the same way that sustained yield has? A sustainability of all species, plants, and so forth?

JWT: Yes, I should have said in the beginning, you qualified what you said when you related that to livestock. I don't. I relate that to animals of any kind.

HKS: Is carrying capacity a term that you use in wildlife population?

JWT: Yes. In fact, I think it emerged out of the livestock business. Carrying capacity as a concept is no different in its application between wildlife and livestock. The only thing you're doing in every case is looking at overall capacity as the bottom line. You can jerk portions of the system that are limiting around to increase the overall capacity. For example, you might have a carrying capacity for a hundred head of livestock. Examination reveals that the cattle use only one quarter of the forest because there is no potable water on the other three quarters of the forest. You could increase the overall carrying capacity for livestock if you put water holes in place, and the livestock would use areas that they hadn't used before. However, the whole idea is that you would increase those numbers without environmental degradation.

HKS: So wildlife management includes the idea of moving salt or water around to move the herd, so the other area recovers in some ways?

JWT: I would say not "wildlife" but ungulate management—e.g., deer and elk. We discussed early on that many wildlife biologists of my generation started their careers worrying about deer herds and hunting and ended up dealing with ecosystem management—e.g., dealing with three hundred and thirty-nine species in the Blue Mountains of Oregon at the same time. That's been the evolution of the profession. I have likened this as growing from managing a deer herd to, stealing a line from Aldo Leopold, managing a deer herd to "moving a mountain." In other words, I'd say that wildlife biology related to management of game species was the thing that moved biologists into the realm of ecological concern. We have now arrived at where we are looking at things in a much more inclusive fashion—all species of wildlife and their habitats.

We learned a lesson about this as we came to grips with the developing "old-growth" associated management problems in the Northwest. First, I led a team to address the issue of how to deal with the welfare of the northern spotted owl, which was on the way to being declared as a "threatened species." Our report dealt specifically with spotted owls. Then the judge came back and asked about thirty-nine other species. I told the chief's office that you really ought to let my team deal with all such species associated with old-growth forests—well over a thousand. So in dealing with that one issue we'd gone from a focus on a single species to ecosystems as required to meet the laws. We talked earlier about deer and elk. Hell, what are the concerns over species that turned our world upside down? It was spotted owls and such unlikely species as short-nosed suckers. Within my professional lifetime there was a quantum jump from a focus on individual species and individual stands of vegetation to landscape ecology and conservation biology—ecosystem management, if you will. I've been in the natural resources business for only forty years. Probably the most significant change in scientific thinking related to our life on earth that has ever occurred, and it's taken place within my professional lifetime.

HKS: It's certainly a big shift, and I've watched it from outside of forestry. I went into history about thirty-five years ago. Pick a project that you'd like to have on the record, some elk or deer thing that you did that you think represents the nature of your research, or maybe all the projects are so different you can't pick a typical one.

JWT: There have been several such projects. Maybe the one the most dramatic resulted in a publication titled *Wildlife Habitats in Managed Forests – The Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington*. By taking advantage of a fortuitous circumstance, we broadened our thinking to meet the new requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA], and what we thrust upon ourselves in the form of the "diversity clause" in Forest Service regulations is in the evolving aspects of the application of the Endangered Species Act. That effort took place right after I arrived in La Grande. The Forest Service was about to lay on the last big DDT spray job and mount a large-scale salvage program of insect-caused tree mortality. In order to meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements and those related to the diversity clause, it is essential to take a different approach than what had occurred before. Forest supervisors called me in—Kenny Williams of the Malheur, John Rogers of the Wallowa-Whitman, and Herb Rudolph of the Umatilla—and explained that they intended to mount a large-scale salvage program

and they could not ignore producing the required documents. They simply did not have the information required, the knowledge at hand. They asked me to put together a team and organize extant knowledge upon which to base their environmental assessments. And with no money, no real mandate beyond the supervisor's request, we gathered up a hundred or so biologists from Forest Service Research and the National Forest System and from state game departments and elsewhere. These folks would come into the La Grande lab on weekends. Some slept on cots in the basement of the laboratory. We put together what we could related to habitat association of three hundred and seventy-nine vertebrate species. Those working documents evolved into the final publication. The typescript report started traveling around the wildlife world via Xerox machine. Finally my acting assistant director (a deputy to Bob Tarrant) Robert "Bob" Hand saw the broader application and encouraged us to dress up the working drafts for formal publication. We published the material under the title of *Wildlife Habitats in Managed Forests – The Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington*. That material led to similar efforts around the globe related to having to deal with an applicable array of species all at the same time. This, in my opinion, was a huge jump towards ecosystem management. It was an accident—simply a fortuitous situation for me and my associates. Here was a need and here were some people with some special knowledge and the gumption to try something new and we seized the opportunity. I think that was probably "the biggie" in changing concepts that led to the considered movement toward ecosystem management.

HKS: Obviously there's enough slack in the research programs that you could stop and do these sorts of things.

Interagency Scientific Committee and FEMAT

JWT: I worried a bit when we were going to get badly "jerked" for the *ad hocracy*—but we never did. In fact we were praised for our flexibility. This started off a series of efforts, a process that required more and more such efforts on faster and faster schedules. All of a sudden the federal land management agencies were up against the wall related to dealing with the spotted owl/old-growth issues, and they called for the Interagency Scientific Committee. The Forest Service had lost its credibility in dealing with that issue and simply couldn't move due to political/legal gridlock. So, they said Jack, put together a team and give us "the" answer. They gave us the money; let me divert the very best people and keep them diverted for six months. All the agency (Forest Service, BLM, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Park Service) heads agreed to exercise the management suggestions. Then Cy Jamison, who was head of BLM [the Bureau of Land Management] and had political aspirations to be elected to Congress from Montana, decided to get his political ticket punched by the administration, and he pulled BLM out of the agreement. That's when Judge Dwyer in Seattle shut down old-growth logging across the range of the spotted owl. He instructed the agencies to respond to the ecosystem aspects of the approach. Judge William Dwyer had read the ESA and knew that the purpose of this act is the *preservation of ecosystems* upon which threatened or endangered species depend. He noted that the Forest Service reported that maybe thirty-nine other species might be associated with old growth; how about those species? So Jim Overbay, who was the deputy chief for National Forest System, asked me to put together a team and to answer Judge Dwyer's questions. After I put together the team I went back to see him and told him—Jim, it ain't thirty-nine species, it's hundreds of species. Are we just going to do this piecemeal or are we going to step forward, bite the bullet, and do really what we'll have to do in the end?" He told me to go ahead. The Scientific Assessment Team [SAT] report considered nearly a thousand species—vertebrates, invertebrates, plants. In the meantime we had the "Gang of Four" operation (Norm Johnson from OSU, John Gordon from Yale, Jerry Franklin from University of Washington, and me). Right in the middle of that Congress puts us together and says give us an array of alternatives here. We're going to deal with it. This group was put together by the House Agriculture Committee that asked us to put together an array of alternatives to address the emerging old-growth, forest-related questions in the Northwest. As we were going out the door, Congressman Volkmer, the chair of the sub-committee, yelled out—"Don't let us get surprised by some damn fish!" So we laid some forty alternatives on them.

James “Jim” Lyons, who was to emerge as the undersecretary of Agriculture over the Forest Service was the chief of staff for the committee. I suspect this whole effort was his idea. Congress—primarily the Agriculture Committee—never had the nerve to address the issue politically. But nonetheless we had moved another step down the line in dealing with the old-growth issue. This became a political issue in the presidential election of 1992 between George Herbert Walker Bush and Bill Clinton and Ross Perot. I think there is good reason to argue that President Bush may have lost his election over spotted owls. With Perot being in the mix, he lost Oregon and Washington, and maybe California. President Bush campaigned on an issue of “owls versus jobs” and promised to take on the ESA after the election. Mr. Perot was making less than intelligent statements, such as “when everybody is out of work nobody will care about spotted owls except how to cook them.” And Mr. Clinton essentially said “I feel your pain.” But he promised that he would do something to develop a solution right after the election. And he did, which was to hold the Forest Summit in Portland. A key event emerged from that Forest Summit that we might come back to later in our conversation.

When I testified in front of the Forest Summit, I said, “Mr. President, I think the Forest Service is screwed by circumstances and in that we no longer have a clear mission. The mission has emerged to be the enhancement and protection of biodiversity and sustainability. This is exactly now what the new Committee of Scientists appointed to give advice to the effort to revise the Forest Service’s planning regulations have identified as *the* mission.” I said to the president, “If we don’t get questions over mission straightened around we will just continue to flounder.” The president called me in later and said, “Okay, now I want you to put together yet another team and bring me alternatives from which I will select to address this problem. The result, in ninety days, was the FEMAT [Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team] report. The president picked Option Nine. Option Nine projected one point two billion board feet of timber cut. But then something happened that no historians or anybody else has ever picked up on. After the president picked Option Nine, it was turned over to other teams to do the record of decision and the associated EIS [environmental impact statement]. The FEMAT produced an array from Option One (the “green dream”) to Option Ten (the “brown bomb”). Many participants in this new group had never “bought off” on Option Nine. They manipulated Option Nine to, essentially, become Option One. In the process the team projected one point one billion board feet of timber. When that report came back we listened to the report in Katie McGinty’s [head of the Council on Environmental Quality] office and I said, “Hold it. This is not one point one billion board feet. This is essentially Option One and the timber yield will likely be two hundred to two hundred fifty million board feet per year.” And she looked at me and essentially said, “Well, you figured that as you were sitting here?” And I said, “Well, yes but that is what it is apt to be.” That is what it turned out to be. That is one significant, untold story. Option Nine was manipulated and morphed into Option One.

HKS: Is Option Nine close to the “brown bomb”?

JWT: Option Nine was not ever close to the “brown bomb.” Options Nine and Ten were developed very late in the process, after we saw that with the exception of the “green dream” the other options were not much different in terms of timber yield. There were only subtle differences in those options.

HKS: Did you have a sense that Al Gore was really doing the homework on this, and Clinton signed off on it, or that Clinton himself was paying attention? He had a lot of his plate obviously as president.

JWT: I have no sound facts on that. The only additional time I ever spent with President Clinton was when he welcomed my wife and me to Washington. He was very kind to have us come to the White House. She was dying from cancer, and he and Mr. Gore graciously visited with her for nearly an hour. I shook hands with him a time or two after that. I never again had a private meeting with the president nor with Mr. Gore related to business. The “White House contact” that we dealt with was Katie McGinty. I had no doubt that she had the muscle and the confidence of the president and vice president to make decisions. I couldn’t tell whether she was conferring with the secretaries of Agriculture and Interior in making these decisions or not. But it was very clear to us she was in a significant decisionmaking authority role.

HKS: She was Gore’s selection though? Didn’t she come out of his senatorial office?

Figure 2: President Bill Clinton (left), Margaret Thomas (center), and Jack Thomas (right) in the Oval Office, The White House, Washington, D.C.; November 1994.

JWT: Yes, I believe she worked for him before he became vice president, though I am not certain of that.

HKS: Okay, I've looked at some of these reports of yours. It's hard for me to know the importance as they go along. You've got 1990 Interagency Scientific Committee report and then there's FEMAT in '93 then the Scientific Assessment Team. Is that the right chronology?

JWT: No, in order it was Interagency Scientific Committee [ISC] and then the Scientific Assessment Team [SAT] and then the Gang of Four and then the Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team [FEMAT] report, which evolved into Clinton's Pacific Northwest Forest Plan.

HKS: So each of those assignments had a different set of marching orders, as it were?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: I looked at the roster of people who were members of those teams, and I assume that not everyone was as active as others? They're representing points of view, but they don't necessarily go to all the meetings. Is that a correct assumption?

JWT: The core team on the Interagency Scientific Committee were basically "fastened together at the hip" for six months. They were always present—always working. The Scientific Assessment Team was much the same, though we were not always in one place working. We'd all go back out to our field location and do work and come back together from time to time. That effort only took several months. In the case of the Gang of Four effort I was the only one there all of the time. Franklin came and went. Gordon came and went. Norm Johnson was pretty steady but worked frequently at Oregon State University doing his magic with numbers. In the case of FEMAT, there were several core teams focused around different subjects that were there all of the time. There were others that came in and out as their services were required. But the FEMAT effort ultimately involved over six hundred people.

HKS: All these people were by their credentials scientists as opposed to policy people in the institutions they represented?

JWT: Yes, but it's hard to not think of Jerry Franklin or John Gordon or Norm Johnson or Jack Thomas as not being both policy people and scientists. I think that comes along with our more senior status.

HKS: The Bureau of Land Management was represented scientifically on the ISC effort?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Was this person as objective as one might be given Cy Jamison's attitude?

JWT: Yes, the BLM representative on the Interagency Scientific Committee was Joseph "Joe" Lint. He was a straight shooter and a senior biologist. In fact, I knew Joe when I was at West Virginia University, and he was an undergraduate. But our world is sort of a small world, and we were to meet again and work together. He played it as all of us did—a straight arrow. He went right down the line dealing with science and the situation to the best of his ability. They don't come much better. Besides, Jamison's attitude did not become apparent until the final report was issued.

Spotted Owl Assignment

HKS: Dale Robertson said he had to lean on you pretty hard in order to take the assignment. I think maybe you read the interview.

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Did he have it about right, your selection? That you didn't really want to get involved? I guess it's a disruption is how you saw it.

JWT: You know, you look back at things and see things differently than perhaps you viewed them at the time. I hesitated to take the assignment. First, because I was getting my "dream study" started at La Grande that I thought was very significant. I didn't want to leave it. I really didn't want to spend six months away from home. I really didn't want to spend time working a management problem concerning a bird that I'd never even seen. I knew that my life would never be the same as I suspected the required alteration in forest management would be dramatic. I knew if I stepped into this thing and I recruited the right people to do the job that we were going to do a good job and that the results would cause dramatic changes. And that would set off reactions. I could visualize the chant, "Hey, hey, JWT, how many jobs have you cost today?" It wasn't my ambition to become notorious—or even famous. It was obvious that this was not going to be a matter of walking in, dropping a scientific report on somebody's desk, and fading back into obscurity. This was crossing the frontier between science and management.

HKS: There was litigation pending or in progress during all of this?

JWT: Yes, but legislation was more a threat than anything else at that point.

HKS: Didn't you undergo some depositions during this as a scientist, or was that later?

JWT: That was an interesting process because we were given our marching orders to deal with spotted owls and spotted owls only, though we disagreed with the narrow mission and said that this was not the right question. It was not a question about spotted owls—it was a question about the old-growth ecosystem. It was the wrong question, and we were going to come up with a single solution—not an array of alternatives. But we were told to proceed anyway. We learned a lot in the process. We did that one solution and we should have dealt with several alternatives. As Cy Jamison later remarked, we were "judge, jury, and executioner."

Dwyer, being the truly intellectual fellow that he is, understood that this concentration on spotted owls was not responsive to the real question of the myriad species reliant on the old-growth ecosystem. The agencies said, no, we just don't want to deal with thirty-nine species—we want to do them all. We set out to do just that. We kept on with out assigned task all the while questioning the appropriateness of the assignment. When we got to the FEMAT exercise, the instructions were to deal with public lands alone—i.e., the problem was to be solved on public lands alone. Then right after we had completed our assignment and Option Nine was selected, the Fish and Wildlife Service expanded to state and private lands. If we had known they were going to do that we would have come up with a different plan that included those lands. It was a steep learning curve. Our instructions tried to confine the damage to timber yields and public lands. By the time we were through we had arrived at "ecosystem management." I was part of that transition—from ISC to SAT to Gang of Four to FEMAT to ecosystem management. That sequence of events changed the way natural resource managers viewed the world. And, I don't believe there is any going back.

HKS: When you were working with other agencies that have different legislative mandates, is that in itself a problem for agencies to sit at the table and try to work toward a common goal? Can they really do it?

JWT: You've got to remember, I wasn't carrying out these assignments representing an agency, nor was anyone else on those teams.

HKS: Well, you said offhand the Fish and Wildlife Service began applying this to private lands. You didn't expect that.

JWT: That's right, but the people that were on those work teams were not saying, "Jack, the position of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is so and so." Nobody ever used those words. The teams that I led were teams of scientists. It didn't make any difference what their agency or university was. I don't think I ever heard anybody say, for example, "BLM's position on this is so and so" or "Fish and Wildlife Service is so and so."

HKS: Did you get any phone calls late at night from someone in the Forest Service saying Jack, we've got this problem?

JWT: I take it that you mean a problem with the process or the developing outcome. The answer is no.

HKS: No?

JWT: No.

HKS: Okay.

JWT: In fact, the rules for these efforts were different from any such drill in the past. The management arms of the agencies were not included. For example, there wasn't anybody from the National Forest System or the Fish and Wildlife Service there saying we can do this or we can't do that. By that point management agencies had lost credibility to the point that they were excluded by political decision. I think in retrospect that was probably a mistake. But I wasn't making those decisions, and I don't know if I would have disagreed at the time.

HKS: The whole spotted owl issue, there's a huge paper trail. I'm not trying to replace that. If some historian wants to study the spotted owl, they have to go to the library and to the National Archives and all the rest.

JWT: Well, they would, Pete, but I'll tell you what. If you followed the paper trail you wouldn't get to the right conclusion. Most of the interesting twists and turns are not documented in that paper trail.

HKS: It's in the meetings, just not written down?

JWT: There were no notes kept for most of the meetings and conferences. Such were occurring at a rate of several a day—working group meetings, core team meetings, team leader meetings, meetings between individuals.

HKS: It's decisions you guys made?

JWT: Some of it's written in my journal, some of it is likely elsewhere, but in thinking of a paper trail, I've never had a single historian or inquisitor ask me a question about any of that. I read about what I was thinking when I did this, that, and the other in books that have been written about the episode. And the only thing I can assure you is I don't know for certain anymore what I was thinking at what point. But, almost certainly it wasn't that. But I've not ever had a single interviewer ask me what I was thinking at various stages of the process.

HKS: Is that right?

JWT: I've never dealt with anyone who has made a really serious effort to pursue these steps—one by one—through to conclusion. Steve Yaffee did a good job but his efforts ceased before the concluding decisions were made.

HKS: Historians don't have the scientific background to be able to follow a technical answer very closely. Is the spotted owl—the studies you did, the various teams you were on—is that high-level science, technically speaking?

JWT: This was not "science" *per se*. Science is a testing of a hypothesis. These efforts were assessments, management planning and development of alternatives by a group of scientists. But it wasn't science in and of itself. We hired the best-qualified people in the world to collaborate and go through an extremely important planning exercise. That's not science. That's scientists doing planning.

HKS: When you were going through those, we'll call them the thirty-nine bricks, one for each species, was it pretty obvious that some of those bricks were pretty flimsy, you didn't really know enough about some of those species?

JWT: Yes, and we admitted that we didn't have complete information. For example, in a decision that was later misused, the FEMAT team report assigned risks to individual species of the proposed series of actions. There ratings were high, medium, and low. Sometimes the risk was high, not because we knew that something negative was going to happen, but because we knew very little about the species in question. That got misused when critics said this alternative had a high risk for all of these species for which information was lacking. When you turn such documents loose partisans start picking out and twisting points to support their position. The people that wanted to force a zero cut of timber looked at the ratings of these species at risk. Well, maybe most of those species were at "high risk," not because we knew that they were at high risk, but because we simply didn't know enough to predict response to management alternatives. There was a risk associated with a lack of knowledge and not a risk associated with knowledge. Those are two different things. If I had to do it over we would have made that differentiation.

HKS: Dale made, I thought, a pretty profound statement. Maybe you'd heard him say it before. He said after you get through all your speech making, no matter what side of the issue you're on, you have to admit that multiple-use management as practiced by the Forest Service has created endangered species. That's in my interview with him, that the way we manage the national forests created endangered species. We can't defend multiple use. You have to change. He was talking about the switch to ecosystem management.

JWT: Clearly, Dale was right. He knew what was happening, but changing was like yelling "full right rudder" to an aircraft carrier at full speed. A big organization takes time to respond to rapidly changing circumstances. The agency wasn't prepared to adjust quickly, and Congress and the administration had to be brought along. However, in many cases, Forest Service management didn't create threatened species. The national forests were a reservoir for many such species due to unexploited conditions in many areas of the forests.

Forest Service Research Division

HKS: When I went to work for the experiment station in Portland, I was working on a project on the impact of slash burning. In the Washington Office of the Forest Service twenty years before that, a couple of people said we shouldn't do that kind of research because it might lead to an answer that was anti-policy.

JWT: Well, such attitudes are exactly why the research division is independent of the National Forest System. The researchers went ahead and did it anyway. Right?

HKS: That's right.

JWT: I'll say it again, the biggest blessing (or maybe a curse) that the Forest Service has going for it is a research division that has the authority to conduct research independent of a veto power from management types.

HKS: When I asked John McGuire about several serious attempts to merge the Forest Service in some way with the other land management agencies, probably Interior, he said one of the biggest problems would be how to move the research arm because none of the other agencies had that and probably it would stay over in Agriculture under ARS, as opposed to moving with the Forest Service. A fundamental loss of a merger with other agencies would be the loss of the research arm.

JWT: I am in absolute, total agreement with Chief McGuire—a very wise man for whom I have much admiration. I think the thing that makes the Forest Service the strongest of the land management agencies is its research division. I don't think it would be the same, nor as effective for conservation, if it was located in ARS. But we have more and more made use of the research division in ways that I think has to be reversed or altered. When the managers got themselves in deep trouble or were unable to comply with court-mandated actions, they looked to the research division for salvation—not to do research but to employ scientists in doing what should have been a National Forest System job. The research scientists should never have had to be called in to deal with spotted owls or any of the ensuing sequence of events. The National Forest System simply didn't have the horsepower or the credibility to meet new demands. The horsepower had not been developed and cultivated within the National Forest System to take care of what was evolving for the use of science and cutting-edge technology as part of their mission. As a result, managers had to turn to the research division for help. Well, that's okay in an emergency, but not as a routine matter. We should have learned a lesson. But the interesting thing is there are more Ph.D.s working in the National Forest System than now work in the research division. This indicates the National Forest System ought to have the horsepower to be able to do those kinds of work without robbing the research division.

HKS: Are they generally in staff positions?

JWT: Most of them are in staff positions. The Forest Service is simply so wedded to hierarchal staffing they can't bring themselves to deal with using such highly qualified people appropriately. The National Forest System, in the end, is going to learn something from the research division about how to deal with highly educated, highly trained, very bright, high performing people. These people are going to have to be paid appropriately. Ultimately, they will have scientists on national forests that are paid more than the line officer-supervisors, very much as it is now in the research division. In the National Forest System, you may move up in staff rank, but you will never be paid more than a line officer because of the traditional hierarchal arrangement. I was a grade seventeen when I was in the research division, and I reported to a grade fourteen. So what? The research division has three work units in which staff scientists make more than the project leader. Until the National Forest System can break out of that hierarchal gridlock, they are not going to be able to retain people on staff that have the kind of muscle, expertise, brainpower, and skill necessary to do those kinds of technically sophisticated jobs. If you're routinely pulling your top scientists over to do management work, research work will suffer. They're the leaders in development of new knowledge. They're the guts of your research organization that are training, stimulating, and mentoring younger scientists. They garner research money and are moving out in attacking the wicked problems that will surely come tomorrow. If they're being continuously diverted into emergency assignments, the research division is crippled in the long term and, consequently, will not be a place that top grade younger scientists will want to work.

HKS: I remember being on a fire where we were clocking a lot of overtime. There were two issues, safety, how many hours can you work and still be safe. The other was no one was allowed to get a paycheck larger than the forest supervisor. So we weren't allowed to work more than a certain number of hours because of that. So that really was built into the system.

JWT: That was true. But it begs the question—"Does that make any sense?" The answer is "no." The worker is worthy of his hire.

HKS: Is there anything more on the spotted owl issue, broadly defined, that you'd like to talk about now? I know it's going to come up as we go along.

JWT: There's a great book written by Steven Yaffie called *The Wisdom of the Spotted Owl*. The only trouble with it is the book stops too quickly. I'd like to see him undertake a revision to bring it up to the present day. There were great lessons learned there along the way resulting in significant changes. Dale Robertson would receive the accolades he deserves for espousing ecosystem management. He really hasn't gotten yet his just desserts. He recognized that the paths we were following were "gone with the wind." The days of thirteen point five billion board foot cuts per year were over. The Forest Service had to move into a new management paradigm. He was trying to take us there. Unfortunately, his string ran out before he quite got the agency there.

Impact of Wildlife Biology

HKS: The term he used was that "forestry hit the wall." Let's go back a step. You've mentioned this more than once in your journals, the increasing influence of wildlife biology on forest policy. Of course, there are other fields that have affected it too, but wildlife biology turned out to be the major one. Was there a lot of ill will on the part of the old line foresters as you guys came online? Maybe you didn't see that so much because you were in research.

JWT: Yeah, I was in research, but as I have said earlier, my research interests were always very pragmatic and aimed at real management problems. So I always had very, very close contact with my counterparts in the National Forest System. I don't think there was any animosity toward wildlife and fisheries biologists to begin with. I think they just blew us off. We were considered, I think, interesting people but not really part of the operation as we moved more and more into the agency's timber era.

HKS: You referred to a meeting you went to in Portland, and Dale was the new chief then and was making the rounds, and for some reason you were in the audience. As I recall, you said he talked about wildlife management and recreation as problems for the Forest Service mission, rather than being part of the Forest Service mission. Is that a fair estimate of the way most in the agency saw wildlife?

JWT: That might not have been fair, but that is the way the biologists in the audience heard him. I think older Forest Service personnel saw us as necessary but something of a pain-in-the-ass. That was logical enough. They were normal human beings that had been very successful and very well rewarded and very much appreciated for pursuing a course of action in hitting ever-increasing timber targets. They were "can do" people. Then suddenly they have to deal with people who may not have been in total agreement with that approach or fully appreciative of the consequences. Some old-line Forest Service folks got either irritated or they wanted to brush us off. That was not because anybody was evil. That was a normal human reaction. Most of the old hands were foresters and engineers. They were inculcated with the philosophy of the Progressive Era. They were a group with much to be proud about. Biologists weren't in the club—at least not yet as full members. The club was dominated by engineers and foresters from very similar university experience. Biologists didn't necessarily come from forestry schools. I think that comment that you read in my journals pointed out the fact that there were several biologists sitting in the audience, and we all heard the same thing. I don't think Dale thought that way particularly—at least now I don't. I think that's the way more experienced foresters thought; we're going to have to change our ways because of these guys. Nobody likes change nor change agents. Now you can interpret that two ways. One was that we were bringing something to the table that they absolutely would have to pay attention to. Or that we were a problem that was going to have to be dealt with. One way or the other, we were certainly a catalyst for change. But I think it was just that the times were changing. We just happened to be the designated catalyst. Those changes were coming anyway directed by the requirements of the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the requirements of the emerging planning regulations.

HKS: Do you think the typical wildlife biologist is more open-minded than the typical forester?

JWT: Oh no. All professionals have their chauvinistic behavioral patterns. Wildlife biologists have a tendency to talk to foresters like they're retarded. You know, "I see the broad picture of the world in the ecological sense, and you are over there simple-mindedly mowing down trees." The same foresters sit there thinking, "You little jerk. Don't you understand that we build houses out of trees and that I have timber targets to meet." I think they just talked past one another because the forester has the charge to get out and get the job done. He's not looking at a biologist as somebody who's helping get that done. Every time he looks up, the biologist seems to have done one more thing that makes it more difficult for him to do that job. And that's come about because we defined the jobs inappropriately.

HKS: Is wildlife biology really that broad? I mean the ecosystem has a lot of stuff that's water and air and soil. I realize it certainly adds a dimension to forest management, but what other disciplines are there?

JWT: We happened to be talking generically about wildlife biologists. We might as well have talked about hydrologists, soil scientists, or social scientists in that same regard. In my reply I was referring to wildlife biologists in a more generic sense that included other newly employed specialists—the "ologists." All those "ologists"—herpetologists, ornithologists, ethnologists, biologists, and so on. The old-timers must have thought that every time they looked up there was a damn "ologist" standing there telling them you can't do this, that, or the other. I can be somewhat empathetic with that. But those situations are fading into the past.

HKS: What I see is a turning point that never happened. In the early '60s there was a very substantial debate led by the Society of American Foresters [SAF] on forestry education, whether or not forestry curricula should be revised to teach multiple-use forestry, the term that was used then, as opposed to traditional forestry. By referendum to the members a vote of ten to one, let's stick with what we've been doing. Could not imagine forestry without silviculture being the driving force behind setting the priorities of what we did. I still see that language in angry letters to the editor of the *Journal of Forestry*.

JWT: Oh, absolutely.

HKS: That silviculture is still what forestry is about. You're talking about stubbornness, there's a lot of evidence that silviculture is important but it's not the only thing that foresters ought to consider.

JWT: Another way to view that is that you can do silviculture to achieve myriad objectives. I remember getting into a vigorous exchange with one of the grand old men in forestry about "scientific forestry," etc. Foresters, to my mind, work for a landowner—whether that is the feds or Potlatch or somebody with a woodlot. If I am a forester, I apply my skills to achieve legitimate objectives of the landowner. That can be a standard silvicultural practice; it can be a contrived approach, or a modified one. As a forester I manipulate forest vegetation to achieve objectives. Some of those objectives may be inclusive of things other than maximization of profit or maximization of board feet. For example, if I owned a piece of forested property, I would, among other things, be a speculator. Even the biggest timber corporations—if the price were right and the circumstances were such that they could make more money out of selling their land than they could out of maintaining it or keeping it—would sell. They are entrepreneurs. They are in business. In many cases in considering private forest land, landowners want silvicultural practices applied that maintain an aesthetic quality because it may be worth more with aesthetics intact than it is when managed to maximize wood production. Sometimes trees standing are worth more than trees lying prone—depending on the landowner's objective and circumstances. But all of us in the private sector are speculating in land—or, sooner or later, our heirs will be.

HKS: I know that for some years, if you read annual reports of industry, Weyerhaeuser's real estate division is the biggest profit center that they've got.

JWT: Yes. I was attacked as being the chief forester of the United States and not being a forester *per se*. That was, superficially, reasonable enough. But we will see more chiefs of the Forest Service that are not traditional foresters. But it's almost painful how we hang on to the past instead of looking to the

future. There is a split in the Society of American Foresters of those who cling to traditional forestry and those that think that forestry can be and is more than that.

HKS: Could you have been a member thirty years ago? You weren't a graduate of an SAF-accredited school.

JWT: I don't know. By the time I joined SAF, which was after I went to work for the Forest Service in the '60s, the Society was debating whether people such as I should be allowed to be a "real" member or merely a "hanger on." I, along with a number of others, made it clear that I would be proud to be a full member but that I would not participate at some second-class status level.

HKS: Associate member, whatever they're called.

JWT: I think some of that attitude continues to exist today. But I think forestry is much more than silviculture. I have used the following story in teaching: Let's say the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest just went up for sale—and I bought it. I bring potential managers in, one at a time, to interview as my manager. This will be a top-paying job. My question is, "If I hire you what are you going to do for me?" A forester says, "I'm going to make you a lot of money. I'm going to maximize growth and yield and profit from growing wood." The wildlife guy is going to make an elk behind every bush, and so on. All these people are equally qualified. Finally a lady shows and answers, "I don't know, Jack, what do you want?" Who are you going to hire? You're going to hire the last person, because the property owner is the one who needs to be satisfied. But I think this is a retreat to the older *forstmeister* days. I will come in here and I am a forester and I will maximize your return or whatever. That's not what you do. You walk in and say what do you want and what can I do to help you get there. That can be wildlife emphasis, can be water, can be aesthetics, could be a number of things.

HKS: I think consulting foresters traditionally have been more responsive to what the landowner really wants, and they work with him. They want to keep their view from their summer home and that sort of thing.

JWT: Absolutely.

Selection as Chief

HKS: I don't know the sequence to ask these questions about your selection as chief. I'll start with, somewhere you met with Jim Lyons, because he was significant in your selection as chief.

JWT: Jim Lyons has been a significant player in conservation matters in this last decade, period. Whether you agreed with what he did or didn't agree, he has certainly been a significant player. The first time I met Jim Lyons was when I was visiting at Rutgers University. I had dinner at Professor Jim Applegate's house. There were a number of his students there for an informal seminar. Jim was one of those students. The next time I encountered him was after his graduate education at Yale when he was working for SAF. He put together a seminar or a working group on—notice the words—"the scheduling of old-growth timber harvest." Now implicit in that title was that there was no question about whether or not we were going to cut the old growth. The question was how that cut would be scheduled. My colleague Dr. Jerry Franklin was on that committee. Dr. John Gordon, recently arrived at Yale, was on the committee. Anyway, the final report came out and didn't really talk about scheduling. The report surfaced the idea that, just maybe, old growth might be more important for other reasons than making boards. That emerged from a prolonged squabble. The next time I dealt with him, he was chief-of-staff for the House Ag Committee and handled forestry issues. He was the guy, I think, that put together the Gang of Four. After Clinton's election he staffed, along with Tom Tuckman, the Forest Summit in Portland. Then it became clear that he was the president's choice to become the undersecretary of Agriculture over the

Forest Service. After I was appointed chief of the Forest Service in late 1993, he was my immediate supervisor.

Sometime in the fall of 1993, Lyons called me and asked me if I wanted to be chief of the Forest Service. I was torn about that. The first reason was that though we were not great personal friends, I had very warm and strong feelings toward Dale Robertson and George Leonard. They had stood by me and my team dealing with spotted owls and old growth when powerful people in the administration would, I'm sure, loved to have choked me. They never flinched in the support. I was appreciative of that. I also realized that this would be the first time somebody had jumped from a field position directly into being chief. But I think the new incoming administration thought it was time to make a change. They wanted somebody in the chief's job with scientific credentials. No matter what my response, it was clear that Dale would be replaced as chief.

HKS: When Lyons contacted you, did he say Dale's out, there's no question, you're not going to change that, they were looking for a replacement? How blunt was this?

JWT: It was probably blunt, but as I remember the initial discussions, I advised them that they really ought to rethink this. I thought that we were making the necessary turn in management and Dale had come out with ecosystem management and that they might want to consider giving him a chance to adjust to a new Forest Service direction. And, my wife of thirty-seven years had been diagnosed with cancer and was slowly dying. There were no illusions about that—she was dying. I think she had conversations with somebody that I never knew about, because she really took me to task about being hesitant to take the job. And my comment to her was something to the effect of "you have the right to die in your own home." And she replied, "I'm not really interested in discussing where I'm going to die. I want to talk about where we're going to live." Then she said, "You know, I've entertained your grubby friends around my dinner table for thirty-seven years, and you guys always talked about how you could do things better. Now you have that opportunity and you're scared. I don't think that's becoming to you, and it's certainly not becoming to me." The decision was in limbo.

Margaret and I were at a meeting in Nova Scotia and Lyons called for a final decision. I went through all the reasons why I thought they ought to do something different than what was proposed. I suggested others. Lyons made things crystal clear. "This is not a matter of if you don't come Dale stays, because Dale's going; we're going to replace him. And you need to consider that the president is not inclined to stay inside the Forest Service with this appointment unless you're willing to do the job." So I said I would accept and do the best I could.

HKS: Part of the process was very public. There was endless stuff on the DG [the Forest Service's internal computer network], Forest Service people talking about this. Max Peterson was making public statements, calling on Jim Lyons to pick someone from the Senior Executive Service. There were several months of gossip, just plain gossip, going on. One of the things that I heard was that Bill Clinton called you twice, is that true, to encourage you?

JWT: No, I never talked to the president. I think the president talked to my wife, but I don't recall ever personally talking to the president about it.

HKS: Did you monitor all the gossip on the DG? It was there all the time.

JWT: Well no, not unless it came directly to me. I had better things to do.

HKS: That stuff just came pouring through, a tremendous amount. We're going to merge the Forest Service with the Soil Conservation Service [SCS], because Dave Unger's name appeared on the horizon. I mean it was just rumors.

JWT: No, I guess I really wasn't in the loop for that gossip.

HKS: Okay.

JWT: I was aware that the scuttlebutt was flying about Dale being replaced. I was aware that later my name began to emerge as one of the people who might be asked to be chief. I initially thought that it was ridiculous. I had been given opportunities to be in the Senior Executive Service, etc., and I had rejected them. I was approached to be in the first class to be trained in the Senior Executive Service. I declined as I wanted to remain a research scientist. Bob Buckman, my old station director and then deputy chief for Research, told me one time I was one of the people my age that could conceivably be chief of the Forest Service. I said I didn't want to be chief of the Forest Service. Bob and I had sort of a love-hate relationship. He saw in me somebody who could be a good administrator in the Forest Service, and I did not see myself in that role under any circumstances. Maybe his vision was better than mine.

HKS: What would you have to do? What kind of experience would Buckman have arranged for you if you had agreed to be in the Senior Executive Service [SES]?

JWT: Initially he wanted me to come to Washington in a staff position in Research. We had a little tiff about his signing my promotion to grade fourteen or fifteen. He told me that if he signed my promotion papers it was with the understanding that I would come to Washington when I judged the time to be right. I declined the offer. I started looking for a job and had one lined up. I accidentally ran into Bob Tarrant on the flight from Washington to Salt Lake to Pendleton to Portland. I had been down interviewing at Texas A&M for a job and was on my way home to ponder the offer. I told Tarrant what was going on. I don't know what happened, but within a few days I received a phone call telling me I had been promoted. My Forest Service career continued. Buckman was most kind to me and, maybe, saw things in me that I didn't. He believed I had potential to be "somebody." I wanted to be "somebody," but I didn't want to be an administrator. I wanted to be the top-graded scientist in the Forest Service. That was my loftiest ambition.

Qualifying for Senior Executive Service

HKS: I don't want to get ahead of the story, but you were chief for more than three years. You weren't eligible to be a member of the Senior Executive Service. You certainly had three years' administrative experience as chief.

JWT: This gets to be interesting. I told Lyons when I took the chief's job that I had no intention of being the first politically appointed chief of the Forest Service. I was promised that I would be put in the SES if I would come and do the job. That was a dead serious promise. So I accepted their word and put in the application for SES. I ran afoul with a new rule from the Office of Personnel Management that said I could be appointed in the regular SES in any other job of the U.S. government for which I applied, except the one I held. In other words, you could not be politically appointed in a job and then have it converted to the professional SES ranks.

HKS: Oh, okay, all right.

JWT: I considered this significant enough to resign over it. I was made promises that were important to me and to the Forest Service. I don't think anybody intentionally lied to me, but they were naive and promised me something that they couldn't deliver. I was told that I could go back to La Grande and the job would be advertised so I could apply for it and be selected. I said I'm not going to go through that. It would be demeaning to me and would embarrass the agency to boot. I looked at all the options. I had given my word to the people in the Forest Service that my appointment would be in the regular SES. But, in the end, I decided it was worse for the Forest Service for me to leave than it was to stay. But I felt betrayed by that, because I did have promises that were now broken and now came back to be an embarrassment to the Service. Again, I don't think I was made promises that were not made in good faith. Hubris of a new administration misled us both.

HKS: You wrote in your journals, and as I recall this was before the spotted owl, that Buckman was leaning on you to bolster your resume as it were and be eligible for SES. You said something like: the Forest Service doesn't have any leaders. It has managers. I'm not sure how accurately I'm saying what you wrote, but that the Senior Executive Service is one of the things that eliminates leadership and replaces it with managers. And I thought this is kind of ironic because in a few more years this Senior Executive Service business is going to become a major issue.

JWT: I don't recall the entry exactly, but I do remember the circumstances being put forward. Basically they just told me I had been selected for the first SES training class. I was appreciative because I had not applied for it and did not intend to do it. I think that was about the time I was concerned (and I still am today) that we had got all kinds of managers. I thought we ought to be emphasizing leadership. This idea was when you go into the SES you are qualified to manage anything in government. There was this technocratic emphasis on management. I wasn't interested in that. I came out of a culture and a school—Texas A&M—where we thought and were taught about being leaders, and how leaders were produced and cultured. The last thing I had any interest in was managing a research program or being a regional forester. Evan as chief I was bored with managing the Forest Service on a routine basis. You know, most of the management was by people who were trained managers who liked to manage. I conceived of my job as trying to lead the Forest Service into a new era. The people in the Forest Service were shaken by the perceived instability in the agency and the rapid shifts in process and direction. I spent most of my time trying to lead, trying to tell the employees that things were going to be all right, and trying to tell them where we were going in a philosophical sense. I focused on those things.

HKS: So for you to have been made eligible for SES, you would have gone to a series of classes and had an administrative assignment, probably in the Washington Office. Then you would be eligible to be SES?

JWT: No, if I had applied for SES and tabulated my managerial experience with IST, SAT, and FEMAT, I could have been declared qualified on the basis of experience. Bob Buckman, who I think the world of, had a different view of me than I did. I think we'd even gotten down to negotiating some way that we could agree. We couldn't. But the man was consistent in what he wanted to do for me and what he wanted me to do for the Forest Service. The SES simply wasn't in my five-year plan. I was pretty stubborn about it. He was pretty stubborn about it. But I think we came out of it with admiration for each other. I had certainly appreciated his leadership as a station director and deputy chief for Research.

HKS: It fits with some of the comments he made in the interview I did with him, that one of the most important jobs people like the Buckmans have is grooming people to fill positions, not just wait for chance, to make sure the right people are there.

JWT: He makes an extremely good point. And I think that's something that the Forest Service is weak on. We came into and through the Forest Service in bunches. Hiring in roughly equal numbers per year was a dream. We were hired in bunches and moved through our years of service and went into retirement. I don't think in spite of all the training programs that we have been nearly as good at it in the more modern era, as they were in the past, in the cultivation and training of leaders.

HKS: A couple of more questions on your selection. Was Secretary Espy at all involved in this, so far as you could tell, or was this strictly Jim Lyons? I mean, did Lyons have the authority really to push it through?

JWT: I don't know, but I do not believe that Secretary Espy had any particular interest in the Forest Service or in me. When I got to town I never talked to Mr. Espy via phone or in person. I arrived and the president of the United States welcomed my wife and me. I got to my office and had my executive assistant, Sue Addington, call over and tell the secretary of Agriculture's office I was in place and I would like to have an appointment with the secretary. The message came back thanking her for the information and saying that he would be in contact when he needed to see me. I was over half of the USDA employees, and the secretary didn't think it was important for me to come over and say hello. So I gathered that Secretary Espy had little interest in me or the Forest Service. I never had anything to do

with him until the stuff hit the fan over the cancellation of fifty-year timber sale contracts in Alaska. That's the only time I ever dealt with the man.

HKS: So Jim Lyons organizes the process, but officially it's the president's appointment?

JWT: I think so.

HKS: It went up to some hierarchy in the White House then?

JWT: I think so. I went through a vetting process with some White House folks.

HKS: From where I sat, I have no idea how accurate anything was that I was seeing. I knew Dale, he had been on the board of directors of the Forest History Society, and I liked him a lot. I thought he really got a crappy deal. He was really treated poorly as a human being who'd dedicated his life to a career in the Forest Service. Did you share that assessment that it was pretty clumsy?

JWT: It was clumsy. It was demeaning. I resented it then, and I resent it now.

HKS: Okay, I didn't know if maybe Dale was behind the scenes fighting this, and they had to push him out.

JWT: I have no doubt that Dale Robertson and George Leonard, if they had been called over to the secretary of Agriculture's office and been told the administration desired to make a change, they would have been absolutely, totally professional and asked what can we do to make the transition work smoothly. These two guys were dedicated, hard-core Forest Service professionals. Their treatment was disgraceful, and I cannot imagine what justified it.

HKS: Jim Lyons must have been essential to that is my supposition.

JWT: I don't know.

HKS: You don't know?

JWT: I don't know. One might suspect that, but I really don't know. But there was no excuse for shabby treatment of such highly qualified, dedicated professionals.

Selection of Dave Unger

HKS: How about the selection of Dave Unger as associate chief? Were you consulted in any way or were you surprised?

JWT: Yes. No. Unger was acting chief. When they moved Dave and George across the street, Unger moved up into George's office and was acting chief until I got there. It gave me some time to make my own selections. I did not know Dave before I became chief. I can't ever remember having met him before that. But I thought he had done a good job in a tough position, and I didn't want to jerk things around anymore. I wanted things to settle out. He was in position and so I asked that he be retained in that position. We needed somebody in place that had some idea of how the chief's office functioned. I was never sorry for that decision.

HKS: What is your sense of his basic qualifications and track record that made his name prominent enough to be selected for that job? I assume that Jim Lyons was behind that decision, too.

JWT: I don't know, but I would assume that was so. Dave was not a long-term Forest Service guy. In fact, he had come into the government as a political appointee over in the SCS, and then had come over to be director of Watershed in the Forest Service. He was in the regular SES.

HKS: What job was that?

JWT: I don't remember exactly what job he had. He was a soils person by training. He had been a program manager, and I saw him as a thorough going professional and as a guy that I liked. I got along with him very quickly. He was eager to help me do whatever it was that I wanted to do and learn. He seemed to know how to get to everybody that I needed to know. And he knew how the world worked in the Washington Office. I didn't see the sense in making any more changes, and the Washington staff was conditioned to him in that role. I was never sorry that he was in the associate's role. He was steady. He was smart. He was loyal. He helped me every way he possibly could. His was a voice of reason when sometimes I was more impetuous. I think very, very highly of Dave Unger.

HKS: I heard you at Grey Towers commenting about Dave Unger that he was much better prepared to tweak budgets, that was a term you used, and he did those sorts of things. You went out and rallied the troops and you had a real sense of a morale problem within the agency. I have a question on dealing with this, the division of responsibilities with Dave Unger. Did you ever sit down with him and say, Dave you're going to do these things and I'll do that, or is it a day-to-day reaction to events?

JWT: I think it was more a day-to-day reaction to events. For example, I didn't know how the personnel shop worked. I don't think I even wanted to know. I didn't know about the mechanisms of process that made the agency function on a day-to-day basis. I told him we were going to be a team. I concentrated on the troops in the field. I led out in dealing with the change in direction for the agency that we could see coming. I took care of the stuff on the Hill. I took the lead in dealing with the Congress and the administration and other agencies. I wanted Dave to run the Forest Service on a day-to-day basis.

HKS: So if I'm in the Washington Office in some program, and I need a signature on something, probably I'd go to Dave Unger for the routine? The agency knew how the system worked?

JWT: Well, he was my alter ego. He had complete authority to sign documents in my stead.

HKS: I asked George Leonard about that, how that worked with Dale. He said basically they took whoever was there, but he guessed they probably shopped around a little bit. George would probably say yes in these kinds of things and Dale would say yes in those kinds of things, but basically it was what you said.

JWT: I might have been more manipulated than I thought I was. But if it was something that was brought to me for signature and I wasn't up to speed on it, I asked Sue Addington to tell Dave not to sign off but to advise me—should I sign off, or should we send it back for more work. We worked closely in that manner. We were friends, but we weren't close friends. We didn't know one other before my arrival in Washington. But we worked together well because he was totally honest and had no reluctance speaking truth to power.

HKS: Did he travel a lot?

JWT: No. He traveled very little.

HKS: You did the traveling?

JWT: Yes. I did most of the traveling.

HKS: I don't know if this is significant or not. Reading through your journals; his name doesn't appear until about page five hundred and it appears maybe four or five times. Lots of names appear. A lot of the

Forest Service people like Hal Salwasser appear in the journals much more than Dave Unger. I'm supposed to ask you for your interpretation, but my interpretation is your journals focused on your frustrations and Dave Unger wasn't a part of your frustrations. There was no reason to put him in your journals. Is that a fair assessment?

JWT: I think that is a fair assessment. Dave was steady doing exactly what he was supposed to do in agreement with what I wanted done. There just wasn't much to comment about. He didn't give me any reason to be frustrated or angry or disappointed.

HKS: Okay.

JWT: I can get angry, usually quietly angry. But, you know, Dave was steady as a rock. Sometimes he had to bear my frustrations. But these frustrations were very seldom directed at Dave.

HKS: Did he remain as long as you were there?

JWT: Yes, he was acting chief after I left until Chief Dombeck was in the saddle.

HKS: Then he retired?

JWT: He retired. You'd have to ask him whether he was ready to retire or if Chief Dombeck wanted some changes. I don't know. But he retired shortly after Mike came.

A Typical Day as Chief

HKS: This is kind of an impossible question, but it's really what this whole interview is about. A typical day, you get up in the morning and you're thinking about the job. Today I'm going to go in and deal with maybe something on the Hill. What happens? What control do you have over your time? You probably start with a chief and staff meeting of some kind and then do things.

JWT: I would usually go in early, arriving by 7:00 a.m. or so. I liked to have an hour or so to myself before things started to heat up. Sue Addington, my personal assistant, would ordinarily be there when I arrived. It seemed to me she was always there when I got to work and when I left. She would tell me what was on the agenda for the day and the remainder of the week. I would think about what I was going to do for the day. And, then, if it was a good day things proceeded as planned. But chiefs are at the beck and call of people in the political hierarchy above their level. Sometimes, I would be diverted from my schedule to run over to see Undersecretary Lyons or to go to a meeting with the secretary. Or suddenly there would be a meeting at CEQ or there was a rush meeting on the Hill. So the "typical day" simply didn't exist. It was something akin to controlled chaos. So many people can control the chief's time. For example, I remember that I had a trip planned to Indonesia which was cancelled at the last minute as I was waiting to board the aircraft. The difference in what made up a day was the shifting demands. Bureaucrats—the professionals—came to work, in the Forest Service at least, about six or seven in the morning and went home at five or six at night or later. The politicals don't show up until mid-morning or later and then they work until eight at night or later. So there was a constant tension between agency people and political appointees.

HKS: Is there some explanation why they worked the late hours? All the parties they have to go to or what?

JWT: I don't know. Now one of the things that I'd say about the political appointees that I worked with was that they worked hard and long. They were dedicated, and they worked hard. Sometimes because of young age, etc., they lacked managerial experience. I called some of their actions as "lurch management." Bureaucrats tried to proceed methodically to carry through some program while trying to

respond to the politicians whose power and presence was transitory, and it was somewhat difficult. But that's our system.

HKS: You talk about the political appointees. At the last SAF meeting they had the chiefs' reports and Lynn Frye of the BLM had just resigned. I thought it was interesting; he characterized himself as a political appointee who had made a difference, and he was proud of that. He says most of us appointees don't make a difference. I guess he really wasn't in very long at BLM, but he didn't see himself as a career civil servant. He was a political appointee. The kinds of expectations they'd have are different than any of us who go to work for an agency and stick with it for a while.

JWT: I think the story you tell about Frye is a very good one. He thought of himself as a political appointee. Forest Service chiefs, however you want to state it, are political in the sense that they are picked by political appointees. Chiefs are political appointees—and have always been—in one way or the other. But they don't think of themselves that way. I remember having a messenger from the administration show up at my office one time. She shut the door and said, "Jack, we don't think you're one of us." Well, I wasn't offended. But that was the first time it had dawned on me that I didn't think I was "one of them" either. I'd just never thought about being "one of them." I thought I was chief of the Forest Service and apolitical. That might have been naive on my part. Probably most chiefs have not thought of themselves as politicals. The chiefs think of themselves as professional conservationists. The troops think of the chief that way. I think the people of the United States, at least to some degree, think of chiefs that way. But it is an interesting conundrum because chiefs are obviously carrying out political instructions. Chiefs carry out instructions from Congress. Chiefs keep political types happy and still hue to a good professional line. Ultimately chiefs work for the administration in power to carry out what they want done so long as it is legal and ethical. That may be a mixed blessing, as many people think chiefs have a lot more authority and a lot more capability of achieving objectives than is indeed the case.

HKS: Did you have a sense that the other agency heads at the Park Service, BLM, Soil Conservation Service, and so forth were part of the team?

JWT: Yes, much more so than I was.

HKS: They accepted their job. There was a political agenda. Clinton is president and we're going to carry out his agenda. So when they met with Katie McGinty, they didn't have this philosophical battle about who they were working for?

JWT: I think that was at least partially true in my case. I realized that we worked for the administration. But I would really argue vociferously when I thought they were wrong or didn't really understand what they were asking for. Sometimes, the politicals did not interpret that as a consequence of hiring good, solid professionals that they are supposed to give you apolitical advice. After Clinton's election, there wasn't a week went by that somebody wasn't calling me in La Grande for advice. Once I was the chief nobody above the undersecretary ever asked me for advice again.

HKS: Interesting how that works out.

JWT: I found it slightly bizarre—but real nonetheless.

HKS: If I could go back and re-interview Max and John McGuire, I'd certainly ask questions a bit differently about how they felt. I did ask John, and he was very open about it. The secretary sent him over to the White House to see if anyone over there had any objections to him becoming chief. He was associate chief then. No, but they said better check with the Hill. So he trotted over there and no one on the Hill objected to him becoming chief, and so he became chief.

JWT: Consider that carefully. All chiefs, to one degree or another, have been political appointees.

HKS: Yes.

JWT: Pinchot, most obviously, was a political appointee and a pure political animal. His successor was from outside the Forest Service. The new chief had been in the Forest Service but was on the faculty at Yale when he was brought back to be chief. I can't believe that there has ever been a chief appointed that wasn't politically vetted. In recent years, you know, there have been some tremendous surprises in the case of chief's appointments. Most folks I knew expected Doug Leisz to be chief of the Forest Service when Max Peterson succeeded Chief McGuire. I don't know any of the particulars of that appointment—but it was a surprise to many. Max, who I admire greatly, was an outstanding chief. But the idea that the outgoing chief picks his successor is mythology. You wonder when you're chief in an agency like the Forest Service where there is so much myth whether to tell people myths. When do you just let the myth persist? Remember that old movie, *The Guy Who Shot Liberty Valance*. The hero tells the truth about what really happened thirty years before. The newspaper guys folded up their notebooks. The hero asked if the reporters weren't going to set the record straight. The answer was "no, when myth becomes reality, print the myth." Chiefs are sometimes faced with a strong mythology and I wondered whether or not you ought to debunk mythology. Or do you just let the myths persist.

HKS: I suppose myths and *esprit de corps* go hand in hand.

JWT: Yes.

HKS: And *esprit de corps* in the Forest Service, certainly when I was there, is extraordinary.

JWT: It was as extraordinary when I entered the Forest Service but has faded somewhat in the last several decades. When you were in the Forest Service it was composed of all white males, most from accredited forestry schools. The Forest Service had a mission, you understood that mission, and the public applauded. You can read Kaufman's *The Forest Ranger* and understand that. Young men went to work on a ranger district and the Forest Service family took him and his family in. Then moved to another place and they took them in. And you did fire fighting and had other experiences that were bonding experiences. The organization was much smaller and pretty soon "a band of brothers" emerged—an extended family. You looked alike. You were educated alike. You talked alike. I came in on the tag end of that era, and I liked those attributes. On the other hand, one wonders whether this was really all that healthy, to be so insulated from society as a whole. That doesn't exist any more. But there is extant mythology about the "good old days" that one finds very appealing.

HKS: Well, I'd been out of the agency a long time, but I was stunned when *Inner Voice* came out. I mean, Forest Service employees publicly criticizing the agency and all that. I can't remember the guy's name in Oregon now who ran that.

JWT: His name is Andy Stahl. Well, of course, there is a great mythology related to the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics. Most of the people that belong to the organization are not Forest Service employees and not former Forest Service employees. They sail under false colors. Forest Service employees are a minority of the membership of that particular outfit. I'll tell you this, I never stepped forward and publicly criticized the agency. I worked internally with my criticism and concerns. I was sometimes laughed at but always tolerated and sometimes listened to. I figured if I was going to work for the Forest Service I was going to work for the Forest Service. When I was unhappy I was going to tell somebody internally. I never allowed anything to go on around me that I thought was illegal or ethically wrong. If you're going to work for an outfit, work for them and do the best you can to make changes. If you can't take it, get out.

HKS: It must be generational, because my feeling was, you don't like your job, leave the job. Don't have the job change to meet your likes. But that's no longer a valid point of view.

JWT: No. You're getting old, Pete. [Laughter]

Dealing with Congress

HKS: I know we'll deal with Congress in a variety of ways when talking about specific issues, but describe the chief's dealings with Congress. Do you testify on everything or do deputies? Does someone from the Forest Service testify that's not the chief?

JWT: Yes, sometimes others do the testimony. Sometimes Congress will say exactly who they want to have testify. Sometimes you can negotiate over who is to testify. Some chiefs like to do most of the testimony. Some chiefs don't like testimony, and so they send other people to do it. Personally, I relished testimony. I loved it. When people ask me about what I miss about being chief, I identify two things: the people and testifying in front of Congress. Testimony was an exhilarating experience. It was much like a doctoral exam. I was thoroughly prepared on details by staff. I knew this stuff and had been working in the field for forty years. It was all I thought about. So, it was a game, a sophisticated game at which I excelled if I do say so myself.

Remember, the Republicans took over both houses of Congress shortly after I got there. So the Democrats on the committees we dealt with, most of them anyway, either lost interest or simply didn't know how to behave in the minority. So they dropped out and left us to the tender mercies of the Republicans, who were severely agitated by declining timber harvests. The Democrats didn't even come to the hearings anymore, at least most of them. The House Committee on Energy and the Environment in the House was chaired by Don Young from Alaska. We got along fine on a personal basis, but he came after me like a tiger during public hearings. To start his first hearing as chairman, he looked at me and said, "Chief, I've thirteen mad Republicans and no Democrats. I think that this is going to be a very long day for you." I replied, "Mr. Chairman, as I count there are fourteen, counting you. That makes the odds about even. Let's get on with it." Fortunately, he admired my chutzpah and laughed. I found it stimulating. I think they enjoyed the exchange because I wouldn't slip their questions. When they asked me a question, I forthrightly answered it and enjoyed the exchange. I thought we got a lot of questions out on the table.

HKS: Did generally Jim Lyons or maybe Adela Backiel have an opening statement to establish policy and then you said why?

JWT: I don't remember ever testifying with Adela. Sometimes Lyons and I would go up together to testify. I kind of flinched when that happened because there were people on those committees that intensely disliked him on a personal basis. That sometimes poisoned the hearing. Their chance of being able to get an issue on the table for appropriate examination was modified by their personal attacks on Lyons. Lyons had some IQ points on several of the attackers and could come out on top of those exchanges.

HKS: Because he's obviously a Clinton appointee, or they just didn't like him for other reasons?

JWT: I really don't know, but I think it was because they thought of him—and he was—as a Clinton appointee. He was the point man for administration policy in the forestry arena. He was a bit more adept than I—or a bit more inclined—being experienced in Washington, to slip and slide around issues. I had more of a propensity than he to go straight at them. I had the problem—so far as the administration was concerned—of not looking at Congress with its Republican majority as the enemy. I thought of them as elected officials. I thought they ought to have the information that they wanted without reservation, and I tried to respond to them. When I left office I received several very nice letters from Republicans that said something like "I didn't always agree with you. But you were forthright and honest and we appreciated that and good luck." I don't think I got a single note from a Democrat. Of course, they didn't come to the hearings, either, with the exception of a few people from Washington like Norm Dix or Bruce Vento from Minnesota. If Bruce Vento came to the hearing, it was a performance. He could take on ten Republicans and fight it to a draw. After a hearing, some of my staff would come up to me and say, "You shouldn't have told them this or you shouldn't have told them that." Well hell, they asked me, and I

answered them. I wasn't going to tell them I didn't know the answer when I did. I wasn't going to tell them something that wasn't true. That was just my personal standard.

HKS: When Congress de-funds Jim Lyons, what does he do to earn his salary? Is that just a fiction and they don't really prevent him from doing his job?

JWT: No, they're just paying him from somewhere else in the Department of Agriculture budget. Congress can say that Jim Lyons has no authority over the Forest Service. But, as long as the president of the United States thinks he has authority, as long as the secretary of Agriculture thinks he's got authority, then I, as chief, know he's got authority. It was a political joke, but it was a marked expression of displeasure by the opposition party. I think that Mr. Lyons considered it as a badge of honor.

HKS: I'm assuming that people like Jim Lyons don't fill out a time sheet. I mean, that was just a gesture on the part of Congress.

JWT: As far as I know, Jim got a paycheck and he was still doing what he did before.

HKS: So there wasn't actually any change?

JWT: I don't know, I wasn't there, but not so far as I could tell.

HKS: Okay. I don't know if I ever heard anyone say that the minority party didn't attend hearings anymore. Do you have a sense that this was an unusual situation that you faced?

JWT: Well, I'll tell you when I first got there, the Republicans were in the minority and they came to the hearings.

HKS: I remember you commented on that, maybe at Grey Towers, that this was a strange world you were dealing with.

JWT: When I first became chief, the Democrats were in power. I had been at a lot of hearings before becoming chief and members of both parties would be in attendance. But in most of the hearings that I went to when I was chief, it was mostly Republicans with only token representation by the Democrats.

HKS: I also heard you say that when you first became chief you went over to the Hill and you made the rounds to the various committees, just introducing yourself. You said not one committee chair talked about the environment. They talked about jobs and roads and the mission of the Forest Service. I related that story to someone else. They said well, he talked to the wrong committee chairs. Are there other committee chairs that were more environmentally sensitive than the ones that the Forest Service dealt with?

JWT: Some of the folks that those people thought were environmentally sensitive really weren't when push came to shove. They still wanted to talk about the things that I mentioned above. I think that I talked to all of the committee chairs and all their number two guys and the senior minority members. I didn't pick and choose them. Quite obviously there were congressmen who were strongly pro-environment. But, most of those from the West, where most of the national forests are located—Republicans and Democrats were more inclined to be concerned about jobs and economic impacts.

HKS: It's an interesting commentary on how the government works at setting the priorities. Obviously the White House and Congress can be far apart.

JWT: Absolutely, but I think it's also a matter of scale. For example, if you look at the roadless area issue of such interest today and took a national poll, it would be overwhelmingly supported. If you took a poll in Montana, for example, it's not nearly as much of an okay thing. So response depends on scale. If you're talking to Senator Larry Craig of Idaho, once chair of a subcommittee on forestry, he will talk in general terms, but what Larry Craig really cares about is Idaho and surrounding states. Former Speaker

of the House Tip O'Neal was right. All things are political and all politics are local. When you get past the rhetoric and the bullshit, you get down to talking to individual members of Congress about problems in his or her district, they are concerned about who is winning and who is losing. All politics are local. You go around and talk to these people and they'll give you the environmental rhetoric. But, when push comes to shove, they don't want your actions in the name of the environment to cost any jobs. When we were dealing with appropriations, it was easier to deal with Congressman Sid Yates in appropriations because he was from Chicago. He didn't care how many trees we cut or how many roads we built. What did he want to talk about? The answer was urban forestry in Chicago. It comes down to local questions and concerns. Congressmen talk a lot on the record about the environment, but when they had the chief cornered the conversation shifted to jobs, etc., in "my" district. There were exceptions, such as George Miller from California and Bruce Vento from Minnesota. They were constant stalwarts for the environment. Others said one thing in public and quite another in private conversations with the chief and undersecretary.

HKS: So the reorganization of the regions eliminating Region 1 or whatever that was on the agenda, that's really a congressional concern, the losing of jobs in Missoula?

JWT: Absolutely. The Forest Service has several times wanted to close the office in Missoula for reasons of efficiency. Some of the politics surrounding office closure gets really personal. For example, Lyons and I went over to talk to Senator Max Baucus about closing the Region 1 office in Missoula and folding that region into other regions. We were waiting for the senator and visiting with their "white-white shirt" aides in their power ties and their suspenders. They cut loose on Lyons. I guess they had served in the House together as staffers. Max's boys got fairly pointed and even obscene. Finally I lost my temper and I looked at this kid and said—he didn't realize I was making a semi joke—"Kid, are you talking to me? He said, "No, I'm not talking to you." I replied, "Well, I want you to understand something. You had better not be talking to me because I'm going to grab you by your power tie, drag you over to this side of the table, and teach you some manners." Some of these exchanges would really get vicious, and I was not very tolerant of it. Lyons could just let it roll off his back. But I am a southerner and believe you should be polite and respectful to others—particularly when you talk to a senator or congressman. They are elected officials. I always tried to treat them with due courtesy and expected the same in return. That is what usually took place. There were exceptions such as the exchange described earlier.

HKS: In your journals you wrote about a phone call with Secretary Glickman and it was something about damn it, Dan, this whatever you said, and you called him by his first name. Can you do that? Can a bureau chief become friends with a member of the Cabinet or Congress like that? Or do you always call him senator, even if you're out on a wilderness show-me trip?

JWT: If they called me Jack, I called them by their first names—but never in a formal setting.

HKS: It works okay?

JWT: If they called me chief, I called them senator or congressman.

HKS: So they set the tone?

JWT: They set the tone. I would never be so presumptuous to call a senator or a congressman or a secretary by their first name unless they called me by my first name. But I've always been a great believer in equality of courtesy. For example, if I go to a medical doctor and he or she alls me Jack, I reply in kind. If the physician insists on being called doctor, I insist on the same treatment. But, I always let the other person have the call. Sometimes you call people by their first names in private and formally in public. I would never call the secretary of Agriculture by his first name if there were anybody else in the room. In such circumstances I would always use his title.

HKS: I understand that, it's just that certain lines can't be crossed and some can.

JWT: Well, you can cross those lines and I don't think anybody would fire you over it. But there are times in human interaction where decorum is appropriate and custom mandates actions.

Dealing with the Secretary of Agriculture

HKS: Let's switch over to dealings with the secretary. I think Dale said he never met Espy, except he rode in a car with him once. Espy obviously didn't think that the Forest Service was important to his mission. What happens to an agency when the secretary is under indictment? Is there a morale problem? Is it a joke? I mean Espy wasn't important to the Forest Service in that sense.

JWT: The Forest Service in general thinks that the Forest Service is a "department"—and that is sometimes a problem.

HKS: Okay.

JWT: The Forest Service thinks highly of itself and that frustrates secretaries of Agriculture, and it certainly frustrates employees in the USDA that don't work for the Forest Service. The Forest Service exercises a certain amount of independence. For example, it drives people in USDA nuts when Forest Service employees say they work for the U.S. Forest Service. The politically correct title is "USDA Forest Service." I mean that sounds so silly, but there have been scalps taken over that particular issue. But, in the end, the people of the United States almost unanimously refer to the U.S. Forest Service—not the USDA Forest Service.

HKS: I never see USDI Park Service. I see National Park Service.

JWT: It bothers people in USDA because Forest Service folks, by and large, don't think of themselves as working for USDA. Forest Service people identify themselves as working for "the Forest Service." It's a bone of contention. Maybe everybody ought to just relax.

HKS: I was working with an attorney for the Department of Justice at the time Ed Meese was making headlines. She said it was just so embarrassing because the attorneys on the other side, whatever the other side was, were always razzing them for having this smarmy character as attorney general. Did you see any of that when Espy was in trouble?

JWT: No, I don't think anybody in the Forest Service thought that much about him one way or the other. I think Forest Service people knew he didn't appear to care anything about the Forest Service. As a result, they didn't care much about him. I don't know how to explain it, but I knew that I worked for the secretary of Agriculture and the Forest Service had over half the employees in the department. I didn't know what was going on in USDA. I really wasn't interested in food stamps and agricultural subsidies and that sort of thing. Maybe I should have more strongly felt part of the Department of Agriculture, but I really didn't.

HKS: But when Glickman became secretary it changed.

JWT: Yes. The change was like day and night.

HKS: Partly, I assume, because of the hearings they had in Congress, and he promised to pay more attention to the Forest Service, but obviously his management style was different than Espy's.

JWT: His style was very different.

HKS: He would have done more anyway, probably.

JWT: I think he would have done more just because he was Dan Glickman and Mike Espy was Mike Espy. I couldn't tell you how much attention Espy paid to the Soil Conservation Service or to any other agency in USDA. He was considerably more aloof than Dan Glickman. I think I shook hands with Espy at some award ceremonies and other such functions, but the first time I remember about dealing with him at all was when the Alaska congressional delegation were upset over the cancellation of the fifty-year Alaska pulp company contracts.

HKS: What happens to your job when you're now connected to a secretary who's paying attention to what the Forest Service is doing? Is that a real help on the Hill and other places when people know that the secretary cares about the agency?

JWT: I couldn't detect that it made very much difference. Congress treats the Forest Service as the Forest Service. When they are talking to Dan Glickman, they're usually not talking about the Forest Service. They're talking about programs in agriculture.

HKS: Here's my guess that because of Espy, Babbitt got his foot in the door in the way he wouldn't have. This may be wrong, but I'm sort of phrasing a question here, that McGinty and Babbitt worked out what was going to happen, and Espy either was never at the table or said sure, go ahead. It seems strange to me that a secretary would give up any turf at all, just as a matter of principle. So Glickman came in and he said wait a minute, this is the Forest Service, I'm going to be a part of this decision.

JWT: I can only tell you that I saw a whole lot more of the brass in USDA after Mr. Espy departed than I did before. I suddenly saw a lot more of Secretary Glickman and his staff people. I felt a lot more confident that if I wanted to talk to the secretary then that could be immediately arranged. He might have to work me in, but he would certainly see me on short notice if I asked to see him on a priority basis. I wasn't inclined to go and see the secretary. I would usually go see Undersecretary Lyons. He was the guy that I reported to. I assumed Lyons would talk to the secretary if that was deemed necessary. I think if I had it to do over I would have seen more of the secretary. Access is power.

HKS: Scheduled a monthly meeting, or only if there was an issue?

JWT: No, I would ask to see the secretary only if there were an issue. I was invited to USDA staff meetings. I would almost rather eat worms than sit through a general staff meeting in USDA. The Forest Service was half of the department's employees, but 95 percent of the conversation would concern farm programs, food stamps, and other such topics. There was almost never any discussion of Forest Service matters.

HKS: Roughly how many agencies are there in USDA?

JWT: I don't know and didn't care. The Forest Service is by far the biggest agency in Agriculture.

HKS: But it seemed as though a secretary of the Interior was making decisions that affected the Forest Service without any resistance, until Glickman became secretary. Is that a correct assessment?

JWT: Certainly the secretary of the Interior was a more dominant player than the secretary of Agriculture, related to public land management. I'm not sure whether this was power moving into a vacuum or whether that was an intentional decision on the part of the administration, for Secretary Babbitt would take the lead on wildland conservation matters. I think it was probably a little bit of both. In the realm of government, power abhors a vacuum and power is everything. Every agency and every department resembles an amoeba shooting its pseudopods into spaces that have been vacated.

Dealing with the Council on Environmental Quality

HKS: CEQ went without anyone at the head for quite a while after Clinton came in. He was pretty slow appointing a lot of people. I was interviewing Russell Train at the time, and he had been head of the CEQ under Nixon. He was concerned because the Clinton administration was making noises about abolishing CEQ. Anyway, that didn't happen and McGinty becomes director. Is CEQ the main route to the White House if you're in an agency?

JWT: I don't think that the approach to the president and vice president before Clinton was through CEQ before McGinty's reign. The relationship, I suspect, was between Vice President Gore and Ms. McGinty. George Frampton succeeded her, and I was gone by the time that occurred. I don't know what's going on now, nor do I know how much punch CEQ now has. The standard policy professor would get up and lay out how government works. I can say, well, let me tell you how it worked when I was chief. The real organizational chart didn't look like the one in the textbook. I watched Katie McGinty make decisions that directly affected Forest Service operation, and there was no doubt that she had the authority to do it. There were no secretaries of Interior or Agriculture sitting in the room when I watched her make critical decisions. How much coordination she was doing with the secretaries I have no idea. But it was my general impression that she was exercising authority and making decisions that we were going to execute.

HKS: Officially isn't CEQ an advisor to the president, and that's why it was created?

JWT: That's the description, but I do know she had authority. She made direct decisions that we executed.

HKS: I remember when she was appointed there was a lot of concern that she was a very strong-willed individual and kind of bitchy in general as a human being. You read a lot of things. You don't know if people who say things have a vested interest. This may come out of the industry side, but they were concerned about McGinty as a person. Characterize her as a person.

JWT: I found Katie McGinty to be charming, tough, probably one of the smarter people that I've ever dealt with.

HKS: Knowledgeable?

JWT: That depended on the subject. Sometimes she was not as knowledgeable as she thought she was. However, I did not find her "bitchy" at all. I found her quite strong-willed. But, you wouldn't expect a person at that level not to be a strong individual. She lacked experience, but you can't have any more experience than your years allow you. I liked her. I didn't like the arrangement, but I liked her. She always treated me with courtesy and respect. Frequently, she did not take my advice. But, that was her prerogative.

HKS: Did you have any other dealings with the White House officially other than through McGinty?

JWT: Only socially.

HKS: So that was the conduit; this is what the president wants or the vice president wants?

JWT: I had no way to know who wanted what. I had my suspicions and operating assumptions but I'm not going to say something that I don't really know is true. But I do know that Katie McGinty had authority. She exercised that authority openly and we recognized it as the "word from the mountain top." I never saw an instance of her decisions being questioned—even by one of the secretaries.

HKS: When you think of the range of issues that CEQ deals with, for example, it's interesting that she had enough time to really pay attention to the Forest Service, I mean timber sales and salvage.

JWT: It could have been the political weight of the subjects that solicited her attention. In other words, she seemed to deal with what was hot. What was hot and what was not? And if it was a hot political issue she

dealt with it. My assumption was that she was very sensitive to the environmental constituency of the Democrats. I believed that Vice President Gore held the portfolio for dealing with public lands management and the environment. I believed that Katie McGinty was the means of exerting the power of government with that constituency in mind.

Dealing with the Fish and Wildlife Service

HKS: How about Mollie Beattie?

JWT: Mollie Beattie, the director of the Fish and Wildlife Service during the first year or so of my tenure, was one of the real sweethearts of this world. She was a remarkable human being—bright, beautiful, wise, tough, competent, and motivated. It was a sad, sad day for me when she died. I felt very close to her struggle with cancer as my wife had succumbed to the same disease a year earlier.

HKS: So it wasn't her death that immortalized her, she really was the nice person?

JWT: She really was. I miss her—conservation misses her.

HKS: How did she work in this political system? She was a political appointee and she accepted that?

JWT: I think she exercised her responsibilities with integrity. I only worked with her for a while before she became ill. I thought highly of her from the very beginning of my tenure. Her personal mission and her motivations in directing the Fish and Wildlife Service more closely fit the preservationist leanings that identified administration policy than what the Forest Service was doing. After all, the Fish and Wildlife Service wasn't cutting any trees or digging in holes in the ground. They were doing primarily environmentally friendly things. So I don't think she had a tendency to engender conflict.

HKS: Does the Fish and Wildlife Service "manage" the wildlife refuges?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Other than protect them?

JWT: Some of them they do.

HKS: Habitat manipulation in some way?

JWT: Well, they do significant habitat manipulation in some refuges. They grandfathered such things as hay fields in some refuges. They build dams and manipulate water levels. Yes, they intensely managed some refuges but most of those manipulations were not nearly as big-time economic social issues as manipulation of the national forests.

HKS: Were there controversies about the Fish and Wildlife Service in the way it managed the wildlife refuges as far as you know?

JWT: Oh, yes.

HKS: Wasn't doing a good job or what?

JWT: They got their share of criticism related to enforcement of the Endangered Species Act. Questions abounded about whether they were appropriately listing species as threatened or endangered. Of course, they are charged with the impossible task of carrying out the ESA with inadequate resources. In many cases they would have to be sued in order to force attention to some species. There was no real

consideration of what they were facing in terms of inadequate resources. So I think that was her biggest problem. But I think in many cases that many law suits were what you might call “friendly suits” to make something happen. Suits were more unfriendly under the preceding Republican administration.

HKS: Was there a noticeable shift at your level when Beattie was gone and was succeeded by Jamie Clark?

JWT: We talked frequently and had a good relationship. But I’d say the Forest Service’s relationship to the Fish and Wildlife Service under Jamie Clark was not as intense as it was when Mollie was alive. That may have been due to my relationship with Mollie.

New World Mine and National Park Service

HKS: The New World Mine strained your relations with the Park Service. Other than that, were relations professional and collegial?

JWT: Park Service director Roger Kennedy and I were friends. My only conflict with the Park Service was over the New World Mine. I had no problem with Roger. The park superintendent at Yellowstone, Mike Finley, gave the Forest Service a really cheap shot that we didn’t have coming. The issue was the quality of an environmental impact statement being prepared by the Forest Service that was taken at face value by the administration. The solution was to buy out the mine. The first mechanism proposed was to turn over land from a national forest in exchange. I fought that off, but it cost me credibility in the administration. A later review that I ordered of the EIS came out clearly refuting Finley’s allegations. But it didn’t matter; the Forest Service lost credibility with the administration. Finley, in my opinion, was careless and wrong. But the administration took his word at face value. That was a travesty.

HKS: Is the Yellowstone ecosystem the only really controversial ecosystem that both agencies manage?

JWT: If you look where the Targee National Forest meets up against Yellowstone Park, Forest Service folks with some real lack of sensitivity clearcut right up to that border. You can see that boundary from space! Some Forest Service actions—much as this—have been contentious, and they ought to have been contentious. Such actions were really dumb, “in your face” decisions. There have been other situations where the Forest Service dealt with the Park Service very, very well. I had a lot of admiration and personal affection for Dr. Roger Kennedy. We still stay in touch. The most contentious issue in my dealings with the Park Service was the New World Mine and associated cheap shots from Yellowstone superintendent Mike Finley. I was, and still am, appalled by his careless, unprofessional allegations.

HKS: I worked on a ranger district that was adjacent to Mount Rainier Park, and we had a buffer zone. I can’t remember exactly what it was, a quarter of a mile, some such as that. I was laying out timber sales at that time, and we walked to the park boundary and we paced whatever the buffer was and put up our signs. I don’t know if the sale ever went down or not.

JWT: The big flap during my tenure was the New World Mine. The Forest Service was very badly used in that situation. This was a great public relations operation by Mike Finley. By the time he and environmentalists got through you would have thought the New World Mine was located in a pristine wilderness and that the water was going to drain out of the mining site into Yellowstone Park. In reality the area had been mined since the 1870s and the water flowed away from the park. It was likely that the valley would have been better off after the mine closed than it was when it was opened. But my consternation was that the Forest Service was sacrificed as a real whipping boy in that operation. That was one of my big splits with the administration, when I simply announced in no uncertain terms that trading off national forest lands to buy out a mine was going to take place over my dead body.

HKS: Let's do the New World Mine now because it's rather an incredible story. As I understand it, the controversy began when the Forest Service commissioned a state-of-the-art environmental impact statement to really be sure all their ducks were in a row before anything went forth. Is that correct?

JWT: Let's back up a little. A Canadian company announced they were going to reopen the New World Mine. The company owned the rights. The Forest Service could not prevent the company from exercising its rights. Under the 1872 Mining Act the company was on sound legal grounds. Given the sensitivity of the issue the Forest Service commissioned preparation of an EIS to be done by one of the best firms in North America. The EIS was being prepared when Mike Finley made a speech in which he accused the Forest Service of not doing an appropriate job. He said the process was a stacked deck and that this was a crooked deal. He never talked with me, nor the regional forester, and according to Roger Kennedy, not with the director of the Park Service.

I guarantee you that if one of my Forest Service forest supervisors had said something like that about Finley, I would have had his fanny. But Finley got away with it. I thought—and still think—that was slanderous. The administration had made, with no consultation with me, the political decision they did not want New World Mine to occur—no matter what. A political decision had been made while the EIS was being prepared. The administration knew the company was going to court and that the company would likely win. It was now necessary to keep faith with their environmental constituents and buy out the mine. Having a low budget and a commitment to cut the federal budget they were in a tight spot. Somebody floated the idea of trading the company some national forest land. That solution was backed by the governor of Montana. I objected, rather vehemently—internally and externally—and I didn't even wait for my speeches to be cleared. I went after that trial balloon big time and said in effect, "No way are you going to trade my birthright in federal land for pottage." So the administration decided to use the Land and Water Conservation Fund resources and the Canadian company's mine. The company couldn't lose in the carefully orchestrated game of "chicken." They gave the environmentally sensitive a Hobson's choice—let them mine the mine or mine the treasury. It was a horrible precedent.

HKS: Could that land exchange have taken place under the rules of exchange, equal value and all?

JWT: I think they would have just asked for congressional approval. The standard process would have taken years and set off a fury of protest. I thought the land exchange was a truly bad idea. Some of that is more an emotional than an intellectual discussion. But I was willing to throw myself on the sword over establishing a precedent of allowing politicians to start trading off federal lands for political problems *du jour*. In the meantime, the EIS just kept percolating along. All of a sudden the EIS was completed. Roger Bacon, a deputy regional forester, was incensed about all the manipulation of the issue and about the Forest Service getting jerked around. He made some politically unfortunate—but quite true—statements about what had taken place. The EIS had been completed as bought and paid for. Well, we hired a consulting firm to evaluate it.

About that time Katie McGinty was about to go before a congressional committee and say the administration was forced to act by this bum EIS. The review we had commissioned said that not only was this a good EIS, it was among the best of its kind ever done. In other words, the tactic of scapegoating the Forest Service in this issue was about to collapse. This let the cat out of the bag. She had to back off the hearing and didn't like it. The administration was not happy with Mr. Bacon or the Forest Service.

HKS: Can you imagine why it was that important to Gore, McGinty, whoever, to push it that hard rather accepting an acceptable impact statement?

JWT: Oh, I think they'd already cut a political deal with the environmentalists, and they were going to keep their word. Though I would be hard-pressed to prove that my interpretation of events is correct. My impression was that environmentalists made this a premier issue. President Clinton showed up at Yellowstone to announce the purchase of New World Mine and the salvation of Yellowstone Park—though there was no threat to Yellowstone Park whatsoever. The ceremony took place in the park with Park Service officials on the platform. Forest Service folks, including me, were ordered to be present. But, we

did not sit on the platform. Odd, as the proposed mine was on national forest land. The whole thing left a bad taste in my, and many other Forest Service employees', mouths.

HKS: Clinton came out to whatever ceremony there was. First of all, explain what the ceremony is and the president himself as opposed to Al Gore? The vice president is certainly qualified to represent the president in some less than an international crisis like that, but it was big time if Clinton himself participated.

JWT: Well, he was already in the area spending two weeks on vacation.

HKS: Okay, he was there.

JWT: This may have been a political target of opportunity.

HKS: For the record, what was the ceremony?

JWT: You mean physically or what?

HKS: No, I mean what did the president announce, just the buying out of the mine?

JWT: Yes, that we were going to buy out the mine.

HKS: Okay.

JWT: I was ordered to be there along with all the appropriate Forest Service people. In fact, there's a picture over there on my desk of us all. And the Forest Service guys were so angry about being scapegoated that they were furious. I wasn't too certain that some of them just might say what they thought. They were all standing around with their arms folded out and their jaws jutted out. The body language was obvious. Finally the president showed up and just completely disarmed us. He must be the most charming individual in the world. He basically told us that he realized that we had kind of gotten the short end of the stick but he would make it up to us later. That's the way it goes sometimes. By the time he left we were all standing there somewhat mollified. But he certainly took the edge off the tension—the master politician.

HKS: I'm impressed that the government can move that fast. It never got to court, and they can negotiate a settlement of quite a bit of money, I would assume, and it all worked out.

JWT: It was a terrible precedent, though. Within a short period of time after that there was to be people wanting to open up mines in sensitive areas. The strategy was to mine the mine or mine the treasury. It was a terrible precedent.

HKS: It sounds like that there's a process to evaluate, but it's hard to understand how the politician sees it.

JWT: I don't pretend to know everything there is to know about the incident. But it looked like to me, then and now, that it was a political target of opportunity. The environmentalists seized the issue and the president, being a very smart man with a bevy of smart people working for him, figured out how to convert this into a political win.

HKS: So the mine area just sits there now? It's under the supervisor of the Gallatin National Forest?

JWT: It's just sitting there continuing to bleed acid into the river. If they had gone ahead with the New World Mine, they would have plugged all the old shafts and a whole bunch of other stuff. That whole canyon remains a disaster area.

Figure 3: Left to right – President Bill Clinton, Deputy Undersecretary of Agriculture Brian Burke, Deputy Regional Forester (Region 1) Richard Bacon, U.S. Forest Service Chief Jack Thomas, and Gallatin National Forest Supervisor Dave Garber at Yellowstone National Park; 1996.

Bureau of Land Management

HKS: Your relationship with BLM varied a bit and when Dombeck was director. Were there issues with the BLM other than the spotted owl and Cy Jamison's political rendering?

JWT: Before my time as chief our research unit did work for BLM. I always got along with BLM in fine fashion. My conflicts with Cy Jamison have been covered. By the time I was in the chief's chair Mike Dombeck had replaced Jamison. Dombeck and I knew each other from our days in the Forest Service, and our relationship was good. I didn't understand why, when we dealt with the salvage rider, the administration chose to scapegoat the Forest Service and let BLM off the hook. We were pressed to move aggressively and we did. BLM held back. The Forest Service indeed was being essentially left hanging out to dry. BLM escaped the hits. CEQ had us over there once a week or so to check on progress on meeting the targets. I was expected be present. Dombeck was seldom, if ever, present.

We were going to make the salvage targets, and CEQ insisted that I be there along with top staff dealing with the National Forest System. BLM was represented by a third level staffer, and they never caught any pressure or criticism or anything else relative to the salvage rider. I never quite understood that.

HKS: I always felt that BLM was spread pretty thin in terms of trying to manage anything.

JWT: They weren't spread thin on their O & C lands [Oregon & California Railroad grant lands], and that's where the salvage rider was coming to bear. They were adequately staffed on their O & C lands, and they simply didn't become part of the equation of pressure from CEQ. We were constantly pounded to meet the salvage targets. At first I had asked the administration not to sign the salvage rider. The administration never conferred with the Forest Service about it. We found out about it accidentally. I said they ought to veto it. They didn't and told us that we were expected to meet the targets and we saluted and said "yes sir." We got half way to the target and all of a sudden the administration stuck a political wet finger in the air. The wind was blowing the wrong way—i.e., the enviros were coming unglued—and they reversed gears and scapegoated the Forest Service. I was a tad bitter about that.

Department of Justice

HKS: This is not an agency, it's a department, but I've worked as an expert witness for the Department of Justice on water rights litigation in Colorado and Idaho. So I have some sense of the organization. The Department of Justice attorneys, you write in your journals, are pretty political people and I thought that was bad. Then I looked back at let's say the Kennedy administration. Bobby Kennedy was attorney general and civil rights and labor racketeering are two chief things. From where I sat then it looked like a good thing that the Department of Justice would work aggressively to integrate schools and go after labor racketeering. I assume there was labor racketeering. Time passes, and now Jack Thomas is writing in his journals about highly politicized attorneys in the Department of Justice, and I thought I've got to be consistent. If it's okay for Bobby Kennedy to have a political agenda, how can I say it's wrong for the attorney general under Clinton to have an agenda? Straighten me out on this.

JWT: The Department of Justice [DOJ] is a political arm of the government. They can decide, if I were sued as chief of the Forest Service, whether or not to defend me. That was not my decision. There lies great political clout. For example, the Forest Service was sued, I believe, by Friends of the Animals to require us to do an environmental impact statement on bear baiting as a hunting technique. We couldn't capitulate on this suit as, by long-standing agreement, the states have prerogatives to handle hunting regulation over non-migratory wildlife and the land management agencies deal with wildlife.

They sent over two litigators, both of whom were very young, and as far as I was concerned, very naïve. They announced without talking to me that DOJ was not going to defend the Forest Service in this case. I

probed to see if they understood the ramifications of the case. They said that they thought that shooting bears over bait was abhorrent. I said, "Ladies, it may be abhorrent but it's a hunting technique that is approved by the state. The states set hunting regulations—the Forest Service doesn't do that. Do you not understand what this is about? This is about forcing the Forest Service to do EISs on hunting regulations. They just picked this issue because shooting bears over bait 'ain't pretty.' But if they can force a federal land management agency to do that, they can have us do one on deer hunting and all other hunting regulations." She told me that we could assume that authority. I said, "Lady, I don't want that authority. We have operated with these agreements since Hector was a small dog. I do not wish to set off a jihad with the states over who sets hunting regulations on the national forest. It works just fine the way it is—and has for an entire century." They finally came back and said well, we will defend you. I asked who would be the litigator, and she said she was. I didn't have the feeling that their efforts would be very vigorous or adept considering the litigator's youth and the quality of the lawyers on the other side.

We called Max Peterson, chief emeritus of the Forest Service and head of the International Association of Game and Fish Commissioners and told him what was going down and expressed the need for an intervenor. He, as usual, was already on top of the issue and did arrange for an intervenor. The intervenor did a fine job and won the case. The DOJ attorneys performed as expected. This would have turned out to be a huge political issue and a tremendous shift in policy. The fate of the issue was in the hands of a very young litigator from the Department of Justice. She had no recognition—at least initially—of the fact that this wasn't a case about bear baiting. It was a case about forcing the feds to take over hunting regulations. I found that very frustrating.

Now the enviros focus on suits about roadless areas. The government was not vigorously defending entry into roadless areas as authorized by forest plans. They go into court, the DOJ attorney walks in, sits down, and says essentially nothing. The government essentially capitulates. I don't believe that's the way legal decisions ought to be made. The citizenry ought to understand the political power vested in the DOJ in their ability to defend or not to defend or how vigorously. And the way that agency heads are controlled is by the DOJ's ability to decline to defend you when you get sued in your personal capacity as opposed to official capacity. Ordinarily the government will defend you if you are sued in your personal capacity. But they don't have to. If you get sued in a matter that may stretch over years it could cost a fortune. That could wipe me out financially and it wouldn't take long.

HKS: Did you ever think about having insurance?

JWT: Yes, but the affordable amounts wouldn't touch a major case.

HKS: OK. Attorneys from the Office of General Counsel [OGC] in the cases I've worked on as a witness were always lurking around; they weren't very popular with anybody. They were sort of monitoring what the Department of Justice were doing to make sure that Justice did a good job representing the Forest Service.

JWT: DOJ is Department of Justice. OGC are the counselors to the agency. As far as I am concerned they were the "good guys." I admired and liked the OGC folks I worked with.

HKS: OGC, that's right. I rode on a bus with an OGC guy one time and we were out looking at some streams as part of a water rights case. He said he was monitoring thirty-three cases. I thought well, there's part of a problem right there. I mean, how can anyone really watch dog thirty-three cases and do a good job.

JWT: Remember the OGC is the internal counsel. They are the Forest Service's lawyers and provide advice. If it comes to litigation, it's DOJ that does the job.

HKS: He was just an observer of the Department of Justice attorneys, but he said he was there to protect the Forest Service interests, to make sure the Forest Service was getting a good job done. Now that's what he said. I assume it's correct. Does the Forest Service sue very often?

JWT: The Forest Service litigates frequently, mostly in the form of bringing charges or in the form of defending an enforcement action.

HKS: The Forest Service itself gets sued.

JWT: We don't sue much, if at all. That DOJ is significantly involved in politics is not something that is well understood. For example, DOJ was vigorously defending roadless area protection under the Democrats. The DOJ would show up in court and have nothing to say to defend Forest Service actions. I remember sitting in a meeting one time when an undersecretary of Interior and a DOJ attorney walked in and announced that though every effort had been made to lose a case the Forest Service won it anyway. That was not exactly encouraging. I'm not sure that is the world's greatest way to run a railroad.

HKS: George Leonard told me about when he testified to Judge Dwyer. He brought the Bush administration's policy that the Northwest plan was not inconsistent with the Endangered Species Act. The judge said, you lose and that really wasn't what I directed you to do. Are the Department of Justice attorneys probably somewhere in that mix? When you have a highly politicized decision from the administration that directs George Leonard, their agent, out there to testify a certain way, is this all vetted to the Department of Justice, do you guess?

JWT: Yes, they are the government's litigators. He was testifying on the part of the government. In that very same case the scientists that were part of the Interagency Scientific Committee. We were instructed to show up in Seattle several days before the trial began. We sat down around the table to help DOJ prepare their case—two or three days before we went to trial! The government did not have a fully prepared case four days before going into court. There we were, a bunch of biologists sitting around and helping to formulate the case. Of course, as you might assume, the government lost. I think Judge William Dwyer was a bit irritated at the obvious lack of careful preparation. It showed.

HKS: George was saying that he couldn't get a decision out of the administration as to what the position should be on that. It was just too tough.

JWT: The Bush administration had said the land management agencies would operate in a manner not inconsistent with the recommendations of the Interagency Scientific Committee. That was both tortured rhetoric and a smokescreen. It was embarrassing and, of course, Judge Dwyer didn't buy it. It was incredibly lame. But that was not the fault of the Forest Service or the Fish and Wildlife Service. Those decisions took place at levels above the agency heads.

More on the Spotted Owl

HKS: I have a couple of questions I want to bring up on the spotted owl situation. As I recall from your journals, you became pretty frustrated toward the end. I don't think you were in line to be chief yet, but at how political it became, how kind of mean it became. You were back in Washington with Dale, and the two of you went over to the secretary's office. There was a lot of waffling going on. Is that a fair rendition of the situation?

JWT: I think so. Chief Robertson had come to grips with the situation when he took the lead in putting the ISC team together. In my mind, I'm certain that he knew whatever the ISC team delivered, it was going to be impossible to ignore it. He must have known that going in. But I don't think the politicals in authority were equally ready—understandably. They were coming up on a presidential election and there were job-loss estimates floating around of a hundred thousand or more. Economists hired by the timber industry were making statements such as "Oregon and Washington and northern California's economy is going to be a pale imitation of that of Albania." That quote stuck in my mind. The concerns were legitimate. The economic/social impacts shouldn't have been taken lightly. The social and economic face of the Pacific Northwest was changing, and we knew it. I didn't blame the politicians, at least in

retrospect, for being very concerned about people's jobs, the status of mills, the regional economy, and international trade. But I was distressed that they just couldn't bring themselves to come to grips with the situation. Dale had done that. The idea of the ISC team—and my leadership of that team—likely originated with Robert Nelson, director for Fish and Wildlife. But nonetheless, Chief Robertson had the gumption to "make it so." That took a lot of nerve. So here he was with an essentially irrefutable technical report in hand. The administration simply had to act. They were between a rock and a hard place. There was no easy way out.

HKS: In his interview Dale said that Sununu wanted to have him fired because the spotted owl proposal that was coming down the pipe was unacceptable.

JWT: I have no doubt about that. Another key player that emerged was Undersecretary James "Jim" Mosley. I came out of that experience with absolute admiration for Mr. Mosley. He was a political appointee serving the administration, but he did everything he could to assure that our integrity was not impugned and that we were not "punished" for doing our assigned task.

Right after the ISC reported our findings, Mr. Mosley was assigned to head a committee whose objective was, in our minds, to refute what we had done and to discredit us and/or our efforts if that was at all possible. I remember sitting over in the USDA South Building with my core team undergoing questioning. There were some politicals sitting right behind me. The third presenter was up—as I remember, it was Dr. Barry Noon—and one guy leaned over to the other guy and said, "You know, we're screwed. I was told these guys were a bunch of lightweights. These sons of bitches are heavy hitters." And the vigor of the review just faded away. We were not upset by the review. There was a lot at stake. It was appropriate to review our actions. We should have been checked out. Believe me, we would have been delighted to have been proven wrong, and all of the social/political fall-out would not have been necessary. But at the time it seemed a bit like crucifixion—it wasn't a hell of a lot of fun.

HKS: It may have been the first day you were chief, you sent a message out to the field, obey the law and tell the truth. At the time I thought that's a strange thing to say. Of all the things you might have said, I didn't expect something like that. I got to wondering from your journals if you saw the truth and obeying the law being kind of bumped around pretty hard during your spotted owl experience. You wanted to be sure that the Forest Service didn't think that was the way to go. Why did you come up with that particular sentence?

JWT: I can't give you the burgeoning numbers of lawsuits off the top of my head. But suing the Forest Service had become quite common, and we were losing much of the time. By definition, when you get sued and you lose, you didn't obey the law. We were losing too many times. We kept being told time after time, you're not in compliance with the law.

I thought it was time to say that though we may not like the law and may not think the law makes much sense, we will obey the law. I also thought we should be more open. That statement caused some consternation in the Forest Service, and I got some fairly pointed letters about my statement and the intimation that we weren't obeying the law and telling the truth. What I was saying is much like the Ten Commandments. I was told when I was seven years old not to commit adultery. I wasn't about to commit adultery at that age, but it was still a good message. My message to the troops was that we were losing too many legal challenges too frequently. That meant to me that we're disobeying the law too frequently, in one regard or another. We needed to come to grips with that. And when we screw up we need to say we screwed up. We should tell the truth, the whole truth, to everybody. I didn't mean it to be insulting. I meant it to be that's what had come to me as the very best way to operate. It was a simple statement—obey the law and tell the truth. That seemed simple enough to me. I should add that I got many more compliments on the statement than complaints.

HKS: When I interviewed John McGuire, maybe ten years ago, I don't remember the numbers exactly but this is pretty close. I said the Forest Service has been sued a hundred and forty-two times on wilderness, and you lost a hundred and forty-two times. I said first of all, are those numbers right. He said well, I'm not sure about the exact numbers but they sound pretty close to being right. We talked a

little bit more about that. So the Forest Service losing in court had been going on for a long time. Later I thought I wasn't quite aggressive enough to say well, how about that. Obviously a very clever attorney for the environmentalists can choose a court where the judge traditionally would decide a certain way. They set the agenda and that accounts for some of the numbers, but not a hundred and forty-two to zip.

JWT: I don't know about "a hundred and forty-two to zip," but we were running heavy to the losing side. There is no more clear statement of not being in compliance with the law than being sued and losing consistently. I believe that, by the end of my tenure, we had turned that around and were winning more cases than we were losing.

HKS: Does it matter if the majority of those decisions against the Forest Service are because of procedural deficiencies, improper construction of an impact statement or forest plan, as opposed to the substance of what the plan said?

JWT: I discern a great difference between those two things. Losing on process is one thing. Losing on the substance of the issue is another. I was speaking of losing on substance. Losing on process is not willful disobedience, at least ordinarily. However, doing the same thing over and over and expecting to get a different result is either stupidity or arrogance. But after you get busted several times for the same procedural error, an intelligent organization or person would say we we're not going to make that mistake again.

HKS: Do you think the traditional decentralization makes it more difficult to shift the Forest Service around and actually cause change? Some regions would go along with something and others won't.

JWT: Well, I'd almost change your question. This is a lingering question about centralization versus decentralization. The Forest Service has recently been accused of being an increasing centralized organization, when it prided itself on being a decentralized organization. The Forest Service has to be centralized in the sense that lower level line officers can't be allowed to make their own decisions on everything. This is why the Forest Service manual exists. On the other hand, sometimes that's a little bit too constraining. So there is a ying and yang that goes on forever. That has come and gone throughout my career. Likely, that ying and yang will continue.

I came in to office pledging that I was going to press on decentralization. For example, I quit holding money back in the Washington Office. I sent it out. Almost immediately that got me in trouble when the secretary of Agriculture wanted to pull off a political deal for the Quincy Library Group by cutting them some extra money and I had difficulty complying because I had no money at my disposal. But anyway, I kept trying to push money and dollars down in the organization. Oddly, the people I was working for were, whether they thought about it or not, in a centralizing *modus operandi*. So, I was in conflict with the administration about that, though I don't think we argued it out quite in those terms. I was trying to push authority and money down at the same time the politicals were questioning decisions being made at the forest and district levels. I would be called in and asked, "what about the XYZ timber sale?" I said I really don't make timber sales in the Washington Office. They would be distressed that I didn't know about the XYZ timber sale. It would take me a half hour or so after I got back to my office to start running the chain until I could find information on the XYZ timber sale. I was not used to questioning a timber sale at a district level. The people I worked for would sometimes order a sale withdrawn if some appropriately placed constituent so demanded. If there is an extreme example of centralization, that's it. I didn't like it, but we got overrun more than once on such cases.

HKS: McGuire gave a good example, I thought, of how the Forest Service is really decentralized, as opposed to the agencies in Interior. Talked about the when Bonneville Power Administration rights-of-way cross wild lands. When they cross national forests, they get a use permit from the district ranger. When they cross Interior lands, it's signed by the secretary of the Interior. A huge difference.

JWT: But that's a question that's never ever going to be ultimately settled. There should be national policy, but in my mind the Forest Service of today is far too centralized. It needs to be decentralized, and I think that's the process in the current administration.

HKS: Did you find that when an issue gets really hot, say timber salvage, that the people in the field turn to the Washington Office for shelter and buck the decision up? Or were most of them really doing their job; it was just another thing on their plate?

JWT: Mixed bag. Some people grabbed that authority and that direction and went after it with vigor. Others were not so aggressive and tried to play both ends against the middle and were constantly looking up the chain of command for reinforcement. Unfortunately, the administration was concerned. They gave us clear instructions to be vigorously responsive to the law and to be aggressive. Then, later, the people who were aggressive sometimes were called on the carpet at the behest of the environmental constituents who had the ear of the administration.

Roadless Areas

HKS: I was reading this morning's paper, it's the May 11, 2001, *Missoulian*, about the judge blocks roadless rules, and here is this allegation that the Department of Justice threw the case.

JWT: They did simply by showing up and saying nothing. Obviously, the intent was to signal the judge that they no longer were pursuing the objective of upholding the action of the previous administration.

HKS: So that fits in? You're not at all surprised?

JWT: No.

HKS: But I can also see it's a process for Bush implementing a change without being open about it. I'm not being critical of it. It's a method of achieving a goal.

JWT: It is a method of achieving a goal. What happens if the incumbent president has done something that his opponent, who is elected, disagrees with? Is the new president morally bound to fight that case through with the same vigor that his predecessor would have shown? Is it ethically right to "throw" the case? I don't know. I can see both sides of that. But rather than showing up and remaining silent I think it would have been more honest to have just walked in and announced that the plaintiffs are correct in this matter and we ask you to rule in their favor. Obey the law. Tell the truth. Don't skate. Don't slip. Don't slide. Just face matters forthrightly. This "tricky" stuff confuses the public and destroys their faith in both government and the judicial process.

HKS: I presume that the article is generally accurate in what happened, but that may not be the case either.

JWT: That may not be the case, but it is probably correct. Talking about roadless areas, the Forest Service was essentially through entering roadless areas in 1993. The writing was on the wall. We lost our road budget and finally got some of it back by one vote in the House. We were digging ourselves into a deeper and deeper hole on deficit timber sales and associated roading. But from the stories you read about the recent court decision you would believe the bulldozers are at the edge of the wilderness revving their engines. Baloney! They are not going to enter any roadless areas. This has been a huge political game since its very beginning. That game is over for the time being. I mean, if the Forest Service prepared such an entry into roadless areas it would take many years before they could get through all the procedures, appeals, and legal actions. Then, if they decided to do it they would be looking at dramatic levels of civil disobedience.

I think the entire movement by Chief Dombeck, whether it was his initiative or that of the Clinton administration, was aimed at getting roadless areas cleared off the agenda so they could get on with the new round of forest planning. This matter has been absorbing energy and time for twenty-five to thirty

years now. Congress could solve the argument anytime they chose through legislation saying the national forests are in the multiple-use land base. But they don't want to do that, so the Forest Service is hung on the petard of flexibility for which it fought so long and hard. We fight for flexibility. We say we want flexibility. Then that very flexibility eats us alive. So Congress can constantly step aside and say well, you know, that's the Forest Service inappropriately exercising its flexibility. They could step in at any moment and say we want a minimum of six billion board feet a year off the national forests. And this is going into wilderness, and the rest of this is not in any study areas or anything else, so it's released. They could solve the argument, but they won't do it. They simply would rather let the bureaucrats twist in the wind. The Forest Service, and I don't say this lightly, may have become more valuable as a political "whipping boy" than as a producer of goods and services.

HKS: So even the congressmen from Idaho, Montana, or Washington don't propose legislation that would do that, even there where it would be well received?

JWT: Oh, some propose, but weakly and with no real hope of significant change. To satisfy supporters, you merely have to look as if you are fighting the good fight.

HKS: I should say here where it would be well received.

JWT: There is a congressional custom for additions to wilderness areas. The only requirement is for unanimous congressional approval from the state or states involved. They could move anytime they wanted to, but they just prefer to let the bureaucracy take the heat.

Relations with Regions and Stations

HKS: From the chief's desk, how do the regions and stations look? You have quarterly RF&D meetings?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: And ad hoc get-togethers with regional foresters and directors as the need arises throughout the year?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: I guess we'll talk again about decentralization. Are some regions chronically out of step with priorities, but change the regional forester and everything gets fixed, or is it much more complicated than that?

JWT: It is much more complicated than that. The pressures are not the same between regions. For example, Region 6 (Oregon and Washington) and Region 1 (Montana and Idaho) are subject to lightning strikes and more fires. Regions 6 and 1 have more forested area and mean a lot more in local economies and local cultures. You never hear much political flack out of Region 9 (the upper Midwest) because they have pretty good administrators and the national forests are not that big a deal in that part of the country. There is different pressure in different regions for different reasons. There is more heat over grazing issues in the Southwest than in the Northwest. Some regions have the spotlight on them all of the time. Sometimes regional foresters are replaced because of lack of results, but not always. You might relieve someone over a civil rights issue that hasn't anything to do with natural resources. In fact, one of my great shocks when I became chief was the discovery that more of my time was taken up by such things as civil rights, dealing with the union, litigation, and covering political homework.

Relations with Other Institutions

HKS: Other institutions, let's start with the Society of American Foresters [SAF]. I brought up their web page a couple of days ago just to see what policies they have. Below-cost timber sales, biodiversity, ecosystem management, endangered species, and timber salvage. Is it useful to you as chief to have the professional organization take a stand on something?

JWT: Not much. Such groups—including The Wildlife Society—don't pack the gear. Who pays attention to them?

HKS: That's what I was wondering.

JWT: It's nice to have such organizations on your side. It is certainly better than the other way around. But I never discerned that they had any particular political muscle. People would use the statements if it suited their purposes. Of course, opponents would use a differing statement from another organization to offset it. I did not see that SAF had any more punch than any number of other organizations that were playing the game.

HKS: Bill Banzhaf testifies on the Hill from time to time. My casual observation is generally SAF is compatible with what the Forest Service is doing, but I suppose there are times it isn't.

JWT: Over the past eight years (i.e., the Clinton years), the testimony tended more and more to be in opposition to suggested Forest Service actions. There are political tides in the affairs of such groups. There is a struggle inside SAF between old-line foresters who wish to return to the "good old days" of commercial forestry and the "new age" folks who are concerned with such things as biodiversity, sustainability, and ecosystem management. There were a few years there when the production foresters held the leadership spots. This struggle can be expected to continue.

HKS: The roadless issue.

JWT: The roadless issue is a good example. I see a real split developing in SAF between private or commercial foresters and foresters on public lands, both federal and state. At one time, let's face it, there was no one that held any power in the Forest Service that wasn't a forester or civil engineer. That's very obviously no longer the case. I think the Forest Service is in a somewhat schizophrenic position of trying to figure out who and what they are. We talked about that earlier. There was a time when I could not have been a member of SAF because I didn't have the proper credentials. I had another set of qualifications of equal or greater rigor. Dombeck could not have been a member for the same reason. Think about that. A "forester" with a B.S. degree and no experience could be a member, and a fellow with a B.S. in wildlife, an M.S. in ecology, an M.S. in land use planning, a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology, and thirty-five years field experience could not qualify. So, professional groups are much like the Forest Service. They're going through a phase where they're not quite certain what they are.

HKS: Well, I suppose the constant decline in membership makes the SAF rethink in a pragmatic way how to keep the dues coming in. The other organizations, I don't know which ones are important. I know you and other chiefs give speeches at other annual meetings. You're invited to a lot and you accept a certain percentage. I think you spoke to Wilderness Society.

JWT: Yes, I have.

HKS: Are you carrying the flag, or is this useful to the mission of the agency to do that?

JWT: The Wilderness Society has a lot to do with conservation—not solely wilderness issues. I am a big fan of wilderness, but I was really distressed that the Wilderness Society and other such groups would not do anything to help us get the appropriate budgets to manage wilderness. Basically they pushed vigorously to get a wilderness dedicated and then that was the last we saw of them except when they

bitched about our management. Wilderness area designations irritated some western senators and congressmen that were on the congressional committees that handled our budgets. They were perfectly willing to punish wilderness aficionados and the Forest Service through the budget for actions they didn't approve of.

Wilderness Management

HKS: I walked on the Missoula campus and looked at the administration building. There's a wilderness institute in there. Now is that an academic organization?

JWT: No, it's the U.S. government. It's the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Institute and it is a joint venture between the BLM, Forest Service, Park Service, and the university. I challenged George Frampton, undersecretary of the Interior, at a meeting of wilderness buffs to join the Forest Service in making that institute a reality. He accepted, and it happened.

HKS: Is it a think tank?

JWT: No, it's a research unit.

HKS: It just happens to be in that building, that's where physical space was, I suppose. It's not next to the president's office for some other reason?

JWT: No, that just happened to be able to fit a space that the university had leased to the Forest Service on a long-term basis. Right next door to it is the Forest Service's Wildlife Sciences Laboratory. As I mentioned earlier that was one of the things that I did when I appeared before the Wilderness Society. I pledged that we were going to pay more attention to wilderness. Then I came up with the great idea that we were going to place the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness under one manager as opposed to its being managed as a sideline by several national forests. It would be a core management unit in and of itself. I was new in the job at the time and I didn't understand that I needed to kiss all the right rings. Essentially the guides association shot me down. Senator Craig from Idaho inserted a line in the budget that said no money could be used to execute that decision. I thought it was a really dumb thing for the guides to do. But it was my fault as I should have talked to them first. That was my fault. I simply thought that it was such a great idea that nobody at all could possibly oppose it. And boy, was I wrong.

HKS: Dale thought the Forest Service was too rigid on its interpretation of the Wilderness Act. An example he gave was that packers who operate in the summer, it makes a lot of sense to have a cache in there for certain basic things. The Wilderness Act says a man is a visitor who will not remain, and they were "remaining" there. Do you feel that's a generalization that has some merit, that the Forest Service ought to be more flexible in making wilderness accessible?

JWT: I do. A similar issue emerged on Max Peterson's watch related to snow pack surveys. They wanted to use helicopters to do the job and Max said no. I overruled the regional forester in the Southwest when he prepared to issue a special permit to allow bulldozers to dig water tanks in the Gila Wilderness. There's a tight line that you walk in dealing with wilderness. I sometimes think we hew too tightly to that line. Another example from my watch; there was a Boy Scout troop hiking on the Gila Wilderness and one—an Eagle Scout—got lost. The Forest Service authorized a helicopter search. They flew up and down the canyons, back and forth, and finally found the kid. He had set up his tent. They radioed back and requested permission to land. They had been hovering at thirty feet. The dispatcher asked about his condition. The search crew replied that he looked okay. They were told to drop him a note and tell him to stay where he is and that a trail crew will find him in the morning. The next morning he was not there. The trail crew either got an incorrect location or the kid left. Now the young man is out for a second night and we were looking for him again, and the request came to reauthorize a helicopter

search. By now this whole episode is being talked about as the government idiocy *du jour* on the Rush Limbaugh show.

I called John Twiss, who took care of wilderness matters in the Washington Office. I said, "John, we authorized that helicopter search, and this time, whoever is in the helicopter is the incident commander. They have the authority to make a decision on the spot to pick that kid up or not." John, a man that I very much admire, started to argue with me. I said, "John, what part of my instructions do you not understand? From now on if we authorize a helicopter search, whoever is in that helicopter is the incident commander and has authority to make decisions on whether or not to land in the wilderness. And he damn well better err on the side of safety." Think of the ridiculousness of that incident. The helicopter has been flying for several hours, two or three hundred feet off the ground, and then it was hovering thirty feet off the ground, and the pilot has to have permission to drop another thirty feet, land, and check this kid out. Some restrictions can become ridiculous in short order. We don't have adequate money to maintain trails. What would be wrong with announcing that, say, between June 1 and June 4 we're going to be clearing a specific section of the trail here? A two-person crew can clear many more miles of trail per day with a chainsaw. If you're offended by the sound, we can have more people work all summer long to do the same job. I think wilderness restrictions are too rigid. Money, too frequently, doesn't come into the argument. Some of these absolute purity arguments are quasi-religious in nature. We're trying to apply pragmatic, practical sense to a "religious" discussion, and it simply doesn't fit very well.

HKS: I think maybe it was Keith Arnold who told me the story about someone who fell and was injured, had a broken leg. The ranger refused to authorize a helicopter lift, and it took three days to pack him out with great discomfort, you can understand that. Keith couldn't understand how someone could make that kind of a decision. It could have been life threatening. I suppose shock could set in. But the ranger's decision was it's a wilderness area and you pack him out the old way.

JWT: If the guy had died or lost his leg the real wilderness aficionados would have said that's the risk you take when you go in the wilderness. If you don't want to take that kind of risk, don't go. I might even say that cold sober while I was in good shape. But if I broke my leg—or one of my kids were hurt—I might want to reconsider my position. My old wilderness partner, Will Brown, broke his arm in the Bob Marshall Wilderness when his horse rolled with him. It took him four days to get out, and he was not about to allow anybody to airlift him out; that would have been a violation of his deepest held principles.

HKS: This probably has happened to some extent anyway, but Bob Marshall himself when he was head of Forest Service recreation in the late '30s proposed a hierarchy of wilderness. The really pristine isolated remote areas. Then he had larger areas where you could hear the sound of trucks on the highway, for example. You're not going to legislate trucks off the highway. If you're up on the rocks and there is a highway down in the valley bottom the sound of trucks are going to get up there. He had I think three categories of wilderness. Obviously that's not what the act talks about. Does something like that from a management point of view make a lot of sense, or is that just opening a can of worms?

More on Roadless Areas

JWT: I think it does open a can of worms. But I think it makes a lot of sense, too. One of those categories that we keep discussing is "backcountry." Most of the roadless areas will remain roadless. We will, in the end, have to call them something besides "roadless." We will have to have some management objectives beyond excluding roads. In fact, the "roadless" regulations that were just challenged in court merely talked about roads—or, really, the absence of roads. At least in initial stages it might be possible to log in roadless areas provided it was done with a helicopter. We will ultimately have some classification of roadless areas as "backcountry" or something else that is not the "pure" wilderness. That will occur either *de facto*, or it will be a matter of regulation.

HKS: It's pretty typical. I'm not sure what it represents, the administrative mind or forestry's mindset but we call things by what they're not. We have non-economic, non-commercial, roadless. We don't say what they are, we say what they aren't.

JWT: Non-game wildlife is another example.

HKS: Because we don't have a label for them that works in our model somehow. It's probably significant, the subtle interpretations that we make because of the vocabulary that's assigned to them.

JWT: Wildlife biologists used to use the term "wildlife" to include all wildlife. Then we discussed "game" and "non-game" wildlife. Historically most budgets that supported agency biologists concerned game. When new thinking led to attention to all wildlife we were faced with developing resources to deal with that expanded mission. The original focus on "game" came from the fact that resources—i.e., money—came from license fees paid by sportsmen.

HKS: But you're suggesting that roadless areas ought to be named something other than roadless?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: They are something.

JWT: They are "something", and that something has to do with a management purpose. They are backcountry, backcountry recreation, watershed areas—something—but not just roadless. The other thing about "roadless" is that it has always sounded a bit goofy to me. Are we going to make roadless areas? No. God made roadless areas. We make or create road areas. That entire issue harkens back to the first round of forest planning. The Forest Service was pushed by the Reagan administration for higher and higher levels of timber cutting. The only way that could be done was to make the definition of a suitable area for timber production so that it allowed inclusion of vast areas that we would likely never log and haven't yet—which is proof that many of these should never have been declared suitable for timber harvest. That, in turn, caused us to go too hard and too fast with logging on the areas that were actually suitable for timber production. We get to the end of logging on those areas and there was nowhere to go except into these more marginal "roadless" areas. So, on paper it looks like a lot of land with significant capability of producing timber was held off-limits to logging when that land was never really suitable for timber production in the first place.

HKS: High development costs for one thing.

JWT: Oh, development costs relative to potential yield are huge. Road standards, of course, have increased over time due to increasing environmental concerns, and the more stringent the road standards are, the more expensive the roads become. Besides that, this required building roads into really tough country. So road costs per unit were increasing at the same time the timber production per unit of land was decreasing. It simply didn't make ecological, economic, or political sense to build roads into many, if not most, such areas. It was over starting in the early 1990s and almost completely over by 1993 due to Congress balking over the budget requests for roads. The Forest Service's road building era was drawing to a close. And so we have "roadless" areas—wilderness, not backcountry recreation. "Roadless" implies nothing positive. These areas are simply just roadless. That is merely zoning. Something is going to happen to force an additional classification. I really believe that. For example, in spite of its title under the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act, we no longer practice "multiple use" anymore in the original meaning. We zone. We zone wilderness. We zone roadless areas. We zone national recreational areas. We zone national monuments. We zone wild and scenic rivers. The only thing that we haven't zoned is the timberland. Probably a lot of this argument would cease if we zoned it all. I'd like to tell you I invented that idea, but I think Marion Clawson gets the credit. He believed that to have any stability in production of timber from the federal lands, some of the more productive lands would have to be zoned for the primary purpose of timber production.

HKS: Then basically this roadless ruckus, headlines day after day, the players are pretending to have something to talk about when really the backcountry people have what they want, no matter what judges say in most cases.

JWT: And not so much because of their actions, but largely because of pure economics. Entry into most roadless areas simply makes no sense—economically, ecologically, aesthetically, nor politically.

HKS: But they're still lamenting.

JWT: Oh yes.

HKS: That's part of the posturing of the organization that goes on.

JWT: I don't doubt that they really believe in their mission and the righteousness thereof. They don't like economic arguments applied to matters of the spirit. But the issue has been largely solved because the economics don't pencil out. Then you can add on top of that social judgments and politics and religion and other factors, such as civil disobedience, as likely and pure pragmatism. Basically, roadless area considerations have been dictated by economics.

Wildlife Society

HKS: I don't know the name of the organization, I'll call it The Wildlife Society, is that the name of it?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Okay. You spoke to them, I'm sure, from time to time.

JWT: I was once president of The Wildlife Society and have been a member since 1957. It is the professional society for wildlife biologists.

HKS: Does that organization think that the Endangered Species Act interferes with management prerogatives in some way?

JWT: I don't know that The Wildlife Society has taken any such position. The Wildlife Society has been much less inclined historically to be involved in political matters than SAF and the Range Society.

HKS: Is what The Wildlife Society does useful to the Forest Service mission?

JWT: Yes, particularly in terms of publication of the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, *The Wildlife Society Bulletin*, and *Wildlife Monographs*. They do have an employee that deals with government issues. But one man can only do so much.

HKS: Is this an academic organization largely?

JWT: No, it's a combination of wildlife-focused academics and practitioners. The society's bent is more in the wildlife science and management realms. It has a political arm, but it's not particularly effective due to its size and very limited resources.

HKS: Are there other organizations that are significant, like Audubon or the Izaac Walton League? It used to be. When McArdle was chief and wilderness was coming online they touched based with the Izaac Walton League. That was the only organization that the Forest Service saw as significant, represented that mindset as it were. But they didn't talk to the Sierra Club in the '50s. They talked to Izaac Walton.

Organizations that Support Hunting

JWT: The Forest Service talks to the whole array of such organizations. But, the array is much greater now than it was even twenty years ago. There may be thirty or so such organizations today relative to three or four or five major players in existence twenty-five years ago. I don't really know how much power they have. They testify. They lobby. They sue agencies—and do other such actions. Of course, each organization claims significant political muscle. Over the last year, the Boone and Crockett Club—headed by its president, Dan Pedrotti, and executive director, Stephen Mealey (an old Forest Service hand)—provided impetus to formation of the Wildlife Conservation Partners, which is composed of over thirty conservation organizations with roots in the American hunting tradition. Rollie Sparrow of the Wildlife Management Institute and Paul Hansen of the Izaac Walton League were also highly instrumental in that effort.

HKS: I thought the National Wildlife Federation would do that.

JWT: National Wildlife Federation began de-emphasis of connections to hunting some twenty years ago. The have become more of an environmental organization. They are quite entrepreneurial and they saw environmentalism as the growth arena and hunting as static or declining. Forty years ago most wildlife biologists I knew belonged to the National Wildlife Federation. Now, most that I know don't. Concomitantly, there has been a rise of organizations such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Mule Deer Foundation, the Wild Turkey Federation, Quail Unlimited, and Pheasants Forever, and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep to name a few. Such organizations of hunters have seen huge growth in participation. Now they've organized themselves under the encouragement of the Boone and Crockett Club. They call it the Wildlife Conservation Partners, which represents something like a half a million people. I think they'll become more of a pragmatic voice in conservation. The ones that are punching it out now seem to be fairly doctrinal and fairly separated and not much of a capability to come into the middle.

HKS: You wonder how they can be economically viable, all these organizations. I'm not sure I'd pick elk over deer if I like wildlife, but they're obviously finding people, tens of thousands of people to join.

JWT: Yes. Many of their members belong to more than one of these organizations. For example, I belong to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, the Izaac Walton League, Boone and Crockett Club, and the Pope and Young Club.

HKS: A species specific-organization.

JWT: The organizations center around interest in select species. But there is not a piece of ground that does not provide habitat for many species. So, for example, when the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation acquires a key piece of habitat, it benefits many species besides elk. There is more and more recognition of that. I am on the board of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and am co-chair of the Lands Committee. We have protected, through easement or purchase (usually with transfer to a state or federal agency) many areas that are as valuable, or more so, to other wildlife species than elk. My point is that these species-focused organizations can't help but benefit other species at the same time they do something for the species upon which they are focused.

HKS: The Elk Foundation had a meeting in my hotel yesterday. There was something on the board about it. Did you go down?

JWT: No.

Figure 4: Jack Ward Thomas at a hunting club in New York State; October 1995.

HKS: You wrote in your journals after you gave a speech at I think it was to The Wildlife Society about how much younger the members were than in the Society of American Foresters.

JWT: Yes.

HKS: How significant is that? Is it harder for young foresters to get travel money?

Changing Times

JWT: No, I think there are fewer foresters relative to other natural resources specialists that are increasing in number. For example, at the University of Montana wildlife biology is in the School of Forestry, but there are more students majoring in wildlife than in forestry. They have many more applications for graduate school in wildlife than in forestry.

HKS: Are they more optimistic about the future, that things are "going their way?"

JWT: Wildlife students have a broad array of interests and ambitions. Specialties range from conservation biology to the classic wildlife biology. I don't know if wildlife students see themselves as the future, but there seems to be more employment opportunities for them than for folks in classic forestry. These things shift over time. Most young people that have been out of school for five years or so are not working in the field in which they focused in school.

HKS: I taught at Duke University for fifteen years. I started out teaching a course called "Forest and Conservation History." The school asked me to take "forest" out of the title because students at the School of the Environment didn't want forest on their transcript, not because they were anti-forest but pragmatically they thought it reduced the appearance of their versatility. Out of a hundred students, five would be majoring in forestry and ninety-five would be in environmental management, even though most of them tend to work in the field as opposed to work in the laboratory with a master's degree. I thought it was an interesting insight that the forest is seen as very narrow. I suppose in some sense it really is, but I always thought if you look at all of the issues that a forester dealt with it's pretty damn broad, too broad for a forester to handle.

JWT: I don't think there's any doubt that forestry is a very broad field. On the other hand, if you were applying for a job that didn't have anything to do with forestry and you brought in "forestry credentials," they might ask, "Why should I hire you? You're a forester, not an environmental manager." The courses the forester took included ecology, hydrology, botany, wildlife biology, range management, chemistry, etc. If I'm a forest ecologist some might assume that I would not be able to work in the field of range ecology, which is untrue. Why should we put such descriptive terms on such courses? Unfortunately, there is word association in many people's minds. If you have "forestry" hooked onto your title, it means that you prefer your trees prone and on a log truck instead of standing. That is both ridiculous and untrue, but perception is critical.

HKS: "Forest" means logging to a lot of people. It really does. I tried without any success at all of changing the name of the Forest History Society, because the average person doesn't anticipate what they actually experience when they visit the office. That we have nothing to do with logging directly, although historically logging was pretty important. The board of directors thought I was some kind of an idiot for proposing that. But I didn't have a good new name for it. I was going to call it the Durham Institute for Advanced Studies or something. Don't say what it does. Make it prestigious.

JWT: I can see it both ways. Part of that really pains me as I have a Ph.D. in forestry and was the nation's chief forester and worked thirty years in the U.S. Forest Service. It pains me even worse when fewer and fewer students want to call themselves "wildlife biologists." I made an appearance at Yale recently, and they offered me a ball cap as a souvenir. I had a choice between on emblazoned with "Yale

Forestry" and one that said "Yale School of Environmental Sciences." They were covering all the bases. The older fellows took the "Forestry" hats, and the younger ones took the "environmental" caps.

HKS: Is that right?

JWT: Many wildlife biologists call themselves conservation biologists or wildlife ecologists, etc. They don't want to be thought of as somebody who grows animals to hunt. Many old-line conservation professions are faced with that. Range is another such area where some would rather be known as grassland ecologists because "range" implies livestock grazing, and practitioners visualize themselves as being broader than that and not servants to that particular demand.

HKS: The civil service roster, does it have a list of fields that this is a significant issue, not you're a wildlife biologist or wildlife specialist?

JWT: I don't know. I really don't know that much about it.

HKS: I'm just trying to think pragmatically of how does it matter.

JWT: In my youth young natural resources professionals were constantly irritated at the civil service requirements. We thought they were too broad and allowed too many people entry into the conservation business who really were not qualified. Today, many would turn that around and praise the diversity that is common. In my youth diversity was not universally praised. I don't mean that in a racial sense. If one did not come from an accredited forestry school and you weren't acculturated, the Forest Service really didn't want you. There's something to be said for that. Those were days that historians say were the days when the Forest Service was the most respected and most praised. And the agency simply was not diverse as judged by training, color, experiences, and ethic. The Forest Service was very tightly organized with a clear mission and a narrow focus. Now the agency is much more diversified in all of those attributes. The mission is increasingly unclear and leads to more floundering about than was true in the past. I think that is a fair assessment.

HKS: Ed Brannon had a degree in landscape architecture, and he was an assistant ranger on some district. Went to Harvard and got his master's in public administration, and he came back as forest supervisor of the Flathead. That wouldn't have happened a generation ago.

JWT: No, it would not have been likely. The supervisor on the Flathead National Forest at this moment could very well be a black female social scientist. That would not have happened thirty or forty years ago. Some look at such as a significant leap forward. Others, perhaps as many or more, look at that as absolutely awful. They would view her as not knowing, through formal training, anything about forestry, wildlife, or whatever. They would not admit that natural resources management is more about people and business management than it is about technical forestry matters. A social scientist or business manager could be a most suitable choice for leadership.

HKS: We talked about a half a dozen or so organizations that have a lot of interest in what the Forest Service does. Anything more to say about that other than they keep changing and evolving? For a while they tried to have the Big Ten, like the Sierra Club and so forth, and that didn't work very well because they couldn't agree on priorities. I don't know if they still operate as the Big Ten or if that fell by the wayside.

JWT: In all such organizations, there are members and there are "hired guns." Many such organizations are big time businesses now. For example, I just saw some material about salaries in such organizations yesterday. The CEO of Ducks Unlimited makes two to three times the salary of the chief of the Forest Service. This is big business. Many members that are true believers and put up a lot of money to back their vision don't believe these are true corporate entities, but they are.

HKS: Somebody published the list of those salaries a few years back, and there was a ripple in the press.

JWT: A reporter for *The Sacramento Bee* recently published a series of articles that listed those salaries. Now imagine that the chief of the Forest Service makes a hundred and thirty thousand dollars a year, and the heads of these organizations make three times that much or more. What's wrong with this picture, if anything? It seemed so off base to me that I decided I am not sending in my dues. I'm not naïve. It takes good money to get good people. People that head these organizations should be paid generously. But when the head of a conservation-focused organization makes more money than the president of the United States, there is something wrong—at least in my opinion.

HKS: I guess the answer is you have to pay that much to get the kind of talent we need to be effective in Washington.

JWT: I guess that's conventional wisdom, but I don't buy that. I don't believe, for example, that we would get any better chief of the Forest Service if we paid them triple the current salary. I will guarantee you that Dale Bosworth, who just became chief, didn't take the job because he got a damn raise. Likely, he took the job because he considered it his duty—and it was an honor. In fact, I think we might get the wrong people if we paid that much money. Quality and dedication and soul and spirit is not always related to how much money you pay somebody. Sometimes the reverse is true.

HKS: That's certainly true.

Staying on As Chief

HKS: You had decided early on that you didn't want to be chief, but they persuaded you that it was in the best interest of the Forest Service if you stayed on until after the election. Didn't you stay longer than after the election, or was it really literally right after the election?

JWT: The election was in November, and I left on the last day in December. That was that was the appropriate time for me to retire in order to maximize the effect of my retirement on my financial welfare. I had been working for the Forest Service almost exactly thirty years at that date. There are some intricacies about what time of year you retire to maximize benefits. But the election and my departure were close together in time. The election was in November and I was gone in December.

HKS: But your resignation was on file basically, the secretary of Agriculture on down knew your intentions.

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Did you feel it had an effect on relationships with the people you worked for when they knew you were a lame duck?

JWT: No one in the Forest Service knew of my decision. So I was not a "lame duck" in terms of the agency. I was a lame duck way before that with the administration. When they sent somebody over to talk to me who told me that they didn't think I was "one of them," it was pretty clear I was a lame duck so far as they were concerned. Several weeks before that I had been told to relieve five of my top staff. I refused. Logically that called for my resignation. I showed up the next day with resignation in hand. The secretary changed his mind and said for me to go back to work. This was just before the election. I knew it was time for me to go.

HKS: The selection of Mike Dombeck, he was your choice?

JWT: Let me go a little bit further with that answer.

HKS: Sure.

JWT: I stayed longer than I would have liked given the circumstances, but I didn't think it was good for the Forest Service to lose another chief that fast. The matter was already politically charged and I thought if I departed after a year and a half or two years then it was really going to get worse. I would have probably stayed longer, but I knew when they asked me to dismiss those folks and I refused that my tenure was at an end. It was time to go. In addition, I had a heart problem that was sapping my strength. The doctors tried to repair the problem via an angiogram and angioplasty. I had a violent reaction to some of the drugs they used and ended up in intensive care for a couple of days. After a second angiogram without the drugs they decided that doing nothing was the best course of action. It got worse and it was wearing me down. It was repaired after I retired.

HKS: You're referring to the dismissal of Grey Reynolds and so forth?

JWT: Grey Reynolds, yes.

HKS: Traditionally chiefs have served eight to ten years. That's pretty much of an average. And sixty-two seemed to be sort of the target retirement age, and in between changes of administration to help buffer the tendency to replace with a political appointee. If, in fact, there's a new tradition that the Clinton administration started and a chief's tenure tends to be substantially shorter. How bad is that or does it really matter?

JWT: There was a period when chiefs served longer than I did, but they came into the chief's role at a much younger age than I did. You know, they could go in at fifty-four and go out at sixty-two and serve eight years. I came into the job at age fifty-nine. Well, if you look at the new chief, he's not going to work until well past age sixty-two. I'm not sure it is such a bad thing that tenure is shorter. Things move faster now and are more volatile. The pressure is much worse. It is not just chiefs of the Forest Service that have shorter tenure, either. If you look at state game department directors, you will see the same phenomenon of decreasing average tenure. This seems to be a result of natural resources themselves—wildlife and everything across the board—becoming more and more and more of a political issue. If you look back at Forest Service chiefs of the past, some of their tenures did overlap changes in political administrations. Some of that overlap is largely illusional. They kept the incumbent around for a year, and then the chief departed (retired) and left behind a list of people that he considered suitable to be chief, and they usually—but not always—picked off of that list.

HKS: Looking at other agencies, did you have a sense in watching BLM and the Park Service that the relatively shorter tenure of their chiefs had an impact on management?

JWT: I think it meant that they didn't have much impact at all. The bureaucracy just ran itself while making appropriate bows to the director. There were exceptions. Today's Forest Service people see Dale Bosworth as the new chief, and they know good things about Dale—that is, he's a Forest Service guy—and most feel good about that. BLM employees look up and see that it's Joe Blow today and Sam Smith tomorrow. Many of their directors have no natural resources credentials so the employees have no reason to respect them at all except for the fact that they hold the position. The employees will salute the position but say quietly that we are not brothers. We are not fellow dedicated civil servants who have paid the dues and will be there when the latest political appointee has moved on. Probably most of the employees can't even name their chiefs—certainly not previous ones. I can name all the chiefs under whom I served, and so can most other Forest Service folks. If you ask six BLM guys two years from now who was the director of BLM in 2000, they're going to have to think about it, and many of them won't know. For good or ill, Forest Service chiefs are icons. Not because of their individual personalities but simply because they are "the Chief."

HKS: Does the normal political posture of Congress become more pronounced if the bureau chief is a political appointee? In other words, if Clinton appointed you, are the Republicans a little harder on you because you were appointed by a Democrat. Then we have Bush appoint someone and so the Democrats

go after Bosworth? I mean, did you see that sort of bias? I'm trying to figure out if all this really matters as long as you've got good people.

Selection of Mike Dombeck

JWT: Yes, I think they went after me. I don't think they stayed after me. They went after me initially, but not because Clinton appointed me. They went after me, I believe, because the timber cut off the national forests had dropped from thirteen point five billion board feet per year to about four billion board feet per year. The westerners didn't like that. Most of them were Republicans. They didn't seem to notice, or care, that the vast majority of that decline took place during the Reagan and Bush administrations. They also identified me as the "spotted owl guy" and then here I was the "Clinton guy." So yes, they were attacking whatever they could. I don't think personal attacks on me lasted long, though. Mike Dombeck was identified as a "political appointee." Well, under our system he was probably the best qualified person to be chief that we ever had. He had a Ph.D. He came up through the ranks in the Forest Service. He was loaned, because he had so much promise, to the director of the BLM. In the meantime, he became SES qualified, and then he served as acting director for BLM in his early fifties. Then he came back to the Forest Service as chief. That is probably the best qualifications of any natural resources professional that has ever been chief—and he gets tabbed as a "political appointee?"

HKS: If he was SES qualified, why was he labeled a political appointee?

JWT: People that didn't like the appointment made those comments. The appointment may not have been popular in some quarters, but to say he wasn't qualified and was a "political appointee" was way off base. Unless one realizes that all chiefs are appointed by the secretary of Agriculture and all are, therefore, political appointees.

HKS: I see what you're saying.

JWT: I was a Schedule C appointment. I wasn't SES qualified in that I had not been to SES "charm school." On the other hand, I was a thirty-seven-year veteran in conservation work with twenty-seven years in the Forest Service. I was the highest-ranking research scientist in the Forest Service. I had a record of leading a series of science teams under huge pressure in the Northwest. I had been given virtually every conservation award in our business. Nobody in Forest Service history could match that record—and I was tabbed a "political appointee." We are living in a dream world if we assume or believe that all chiefs prior to my appointment weren't political appointees. Gifford Pinchot, the first chief, was one of the most consummate politicians in the United States. The second chief came to the chief's job from an appointment at Yale. Others were selected from within Forest Service ranks that were not the choice of the departing chief.

HKS: Sure, sure. Pinchot was a consulting forester and had only a couple of paying jobs before.

JWT: Every chief ends up compared to Pinchot. It is well to remember that Pinchot was independently wealthy and a personal close friend of the president he served. I don't believe any of the chiefs following Pinchot were wealthy. They were civil servants. I think no one should become chief of the Forest Service until they can retire. Pinchot said the chief had to come to work every day prepared to be fired. That was easy for him to say; he was independently wealthy. For a civil servant to have an equivalent status to Pinchot's wealth is the ability to retire. Because there will be a time when everything goes gunnysack and you've got to stand up and say "no." You've got to stiffen your spine, and you've got to say not only "no" but "hell, no" and take the consequences. Being able to retire makes that easier to do.

HKS: Mike wasn't appointed chief until after you left, right?

JWT: That's correct.

HKS: But it was apparent he'd be chief?

JWT: No, I don't think so.

HKS: It was still up in the air?

JWT: I left behind a list of folks that I considered qualified to be chief. Mike was on that list. Secretary Dan Glickman and Undersecretary James Lyons interviewed several folks besides Mike Dombeck. Hal Salwasser and Elizabeth Estill were interviewed. I think they made their choice rather quickly, as far as I know.

HKS: Did you have any unofficial discussions with Mike about, you look pretty good for chief and here's my thinking on certain issues?

JWT: No, we had a good relationship—probably the closest of any chief and a BLM director. When he was head of BLM we talked frequently. We tried to present a united front when we could. So we were in touch quite regularly both professionally and socially. We also had another connection. Robert "Bob" Nelson, who was director for Fish and Wildlife with the Forest Service, probably was instrumental in formulating the ISC. I believe he was influential in getting Chief Robertson to ask me to do that job. Dombeck was on Nelson's staff and was one of Bob's protégés. Bob and I had been friends and colleagues through this time, so he was constantly working behind the scenes, and I figure that he had a lot more to do with evolving events than most people know now. Most of the socializing that Mike and I did during the time I was chief and Mike was head of BLM was organized by Nelson. We shot and did other things together, largely through the "Nelson connection." Nelson knew everybody in the wildlife and fish business, and many in the environmental community. He was, and is, a masterful political operator. But he hid his brilliance behind a façade of a low-key demeanor. He was always hustling for what he considered the welfare of wildlife. He went a bit far in a few cases, but he was a real operator.

HKS: Well, some of the photos you have are you and Nelson hunting.

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Head of fish and wildlife with a gun in his hand. I don't know if that's blasphemy or what.

JWT: No, no. Nelson, like me, came into spending a lifetime working on behalf of wildlife through hunting and fishing.

Alaska Situation

HKS: The Alaska situation. When I talked to McGuire he said that no agency should be able to commit the United States to a fifty-year agreement on anything, that Congress should have been involved, and he said Alaska is going to be a problem. As far as I know it wasn't much of a problem when he was chief, but he saw it as an example of where the agency was hanging by a thread and something was going to happen. Well, it did happen. In the '30s when the Forest Service really began to be serious about Alaska, they used the language it would be the "Sweden" of the Forest Service. It's a place to experiment on social forestry, because of the need for substantial federal subsidies of one kind or another to make it viable. They were excited about having this experiment in the Chugach and the Tongass. Well, it kind of went sour. Was it already in bad shape when you became chief?

JWT: When we talk about Alaska I have to be somewhat circumspect because there are lawsuits that are still going on related to Alaska matters. I will tell you, though, when I am not being forthcoming. But the stuff that hit the fan during my tenure was in full bloom before I came upon the scene as chief.

Alaska Pulp Company [APC] closed down their pulp mill. When I visited the mill it was empty—all the equipment had been removed and all the workers terminated. We, the government, contended that APC was obligated to run a pulp mill. The government wanted APC to continue logging under the fifty-year agreement and ship their pulp sticks down to Ketchikan and continue to ship the logs to their mills. It was our conclusion that they had breached the contract. So, we closed out the contract. Since that time they have sued the government. They maintain they were trying to put together a medium density fiberboard plant with financing from the state of Alaska. The judge in Alaska ruled that APC didn't have any obligation to maintain a pulp facility. It will be interesting to see what DOJ will do now that there has been a change in administration.

HKS: The mill is Japanese-owned now?

JWT: It was. The mill no longer exists.

HKS: Who is suing? Who is the plaintiff?

JWT: The plaintiff is the Alaska Pulp Company, which no longer exists except on paper. They have no mills in Alaska, but they are the ones that are suing.

HKS: Are there other litigants involved in some way?

JWT: I don't know.

HKS: The state of Alaska is obviously concerned.

JWT: I don't know enough about it, off the top of my head, to discuss the situation in detail. But, essentially, there were two fifty-year timber sale contracts in Alaska. Ketchikan Pulp Company held the second contract, but they closed out on their own volition because they had a terrible environmental mess developing, and they had other financial problems. They just essentially stepped out of the contract. This was in contrast to the situation with APC in which the government held that the company breached the contract and held the contract null and void.

HKS: From my reading, three burrs under your saddle were the Alaska congressional delegation. Was that related in part because of the mill or just other issues? Those guys are everywhere in your journals.

JWT: Senator Frank Murkowski was chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee in the Senate. That committee dealt with Forest Service matters. Senator Stevens was chair of Senate appropriations, which gave him considerable power over the Forest Service budget. And, then, Don Young was the chair of Natural Resources and Environment in the House. These three men from Alaska had power and the Forest Service had to deal with them on a continuing basis. They were on the Forest Service like a bad suit. Their chairmanship of these key committees gave them the platform and the power to give us a hard time—and they used every opportunity to do just that.

HKS: Is Stevens still in Congress?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: He's still chairman of Senate appropriations?

JWT: Not since the Republicans lost the majority in the Senate.

HKS: Murkowski, I know, is still in; I see his name.

JWT: Murkowski is still there but is now the ranking minority member on the committee.

HKS: So, in part, they were representing their constituents, which is what their job is.

JWT: You can certainly understand why they were involved in these matters up to their ears. This was a big constituency issue for them.

HKS: But they were also critical of the Forest Service on other issues as well.

JWT: My general impression was that was just part of the game, but their real concern was Alaska.

HKS: Is there a dollar amount that's being asked for damages?

JWT: Yes, it's over a billion dollars. I don't know what it is exactly.

HKS: How long had the contract to run?

JWT: It had another fourteen or fifteen years to run.

HKS: Okay. Were people in the White House, McGinty or somebody, did they have a view on what the Forest Service should do?

JWT: No comment.

HKS: Were you being guided?

JWT: No comment. I just simply can't go much further than that because the suits are still active.

HKS: Alright. We talked about the New World Mine before, and it seemed to me it was pretty thorough. There's another issue there. It was settled out of court as it were.

JWT: Yes, it was an amicable settlement. The government bought them out with funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was my recommendation once the decision was made to buy them off. If they were going to buy them out, that was the thing to do. This was for national forest land for the mine. What a disastrous precedent that would have set.

HKS: Did the people of Montana have an opinion? Was it editorialized, page one stories and stuff?

JWT: As I didn't live in Montana at the time, I'm not familiar with what was printed in the papers. I know that Governor Mark Racicot was in favor of the land exchange for the mine. I think his position was that the state would have more direct ability to tax that land. And I suspect they thought it would probably be more directly and heavily managed for resource production in private ownership, which would have been more of a feed into the Montana economy.

HKS: Did New World Mine have the infrastructure to make use of forest land if there had been an exchange?

JWT: Oh, they could sell it to somebody else who had the capability. Land is just another currency. I never had any impression that they wanted to be in the business of managing land. It was most astutely executed by the Canadian company. They certainly mined the treasury. Would they have actually cranked up a mining operation? Who knows?

Ecosystem Management

HKS: I heard you speak a couple of times, and my interpretation was that you were a little pissed off that people were saying “ecosystem management, whatever that is.” You were by God going to change that, just

get rid of that last phrase. And you went out in the field. Do you feel you were successful in getting people to drop that "whatever that is?"

JWT: I was not completely successful. Some people that are dedicated to old days and old ways didn't like the idea period, and they were not going to change. Some just don't grasp larger concepts. This was a complicated matter, and it was a dramatic change. I remember that Senator "Night Horse" Campbell from Colorado asked me in a hearing, "What is this 'ecosystem management' stuff?" He didn't think he liked it. He said, "Where do you see in the law that you have either the responsibility or the authority to do this?" The only place that the word "ecosystems" occurs in the law is in the Endangered Species Act—"The purpose of this act is the preservation of ecosystems upon which threatened or endangered species depend." I replied Senator, this was litigated in the Pacific Northwest. One of the questions in the litigation concerned the legality of "ecosystem management." Judge Dwyer ruled that, indeed, "ecosystem" is not only legal but mandatory if all the applicable laws were to be simultaneously obeyed.

What I said then, and tell students today, is that ecosystem management is a concept, and concepts are always fuzzy. In concept we are going to think at broad scale, across boundaries, for a longer time frame, include an expanded number of variables ranging from social and economic to biological and ecological. Then, when the concept is applied to a specific place and the area is defined because of these reasons, these are the time frames because of these reasons, these are the variables to be considered. At his point the concept is now in context and no longer nebulous. All concepts must be placed into context before they become meaningful—and that is not just in the case of ecosystem management. I ended up telling Senator Campbell, "You might want to pass a law prohibiting ecosystem management. You can change the name. You may not like the word, but I suggest we go to a beach and stand there and practice yelling at the tide to go back. Ecosystem management is here, whether you like that name or not. It is not going away. That is the way it's going to be, simply because it is a concept whose time has come.

HKS: George Leonard argues persuasively. I mean, he's a persuasive kind of guy.

JWT: Yes, indeed he is. George Leonard is a formidable man and one of the brightest folks that I ever worked with.

HKS: He argues that ecosystem management is not a goal, it's a process; that multiple use is still the statutory goal of the Forest Service. Ecosystem management is an overlay of how multiple use is to be achieved. Is he fighting a holding action of the old school, or is it that simple?

JWT: No, I'd buy George's statement. Ecosystem management is a concept—an over-arching concept. If we define multiple use as some array of uses, whatever they happen to be, a multiple use will emerge from any forest management operation. What those multiple uses are is altogether different. I argue that we will get "multiple use" from nearly any piece of ground. But as it was originally designed, the concept has been largely replaced by zoning. We hoisted ourselves on our own petard when we went for the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act to ensure the agency's flexibility and authority to deal with fish and wildlife, recreation, water, and range—all of these things simultaneously. We wanted to preserve maximum flexibility to determine how those multiple objectives were to fit together. And, so, given this maximum flexibility, we would do the "right thing"—it was right out of the Progressive Era. Then we realized that in order to achieve that we would need to plan it. So, a forest planning requirement was added to the National Forest Management Act [NFMA] to tell us what to do and how to do it. NFMA gave the Forest Service the edict. This gave us the mechanism to do the planning, and then the Forest Service was mandated to execute RPA [Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act] in order to influence the budget. RPA failed to influence anybody about much of anything inside or outside the Forest Service. Budgets never matched the plans. Therefore, not one single plan was ever executed as put forward. Frustration with the inability to execute plans led to zoning of the national forest, which if the roadless area decision by Dombeck had stood was very nearly complete. Actually, the roadless areas are zoned *de facto*. *So* we replaced multiple use with zoning to some significant degree.

Planning never worked as envisioned because it is disconnected from the budget. So the three-legged stool that we built is broken. Now we're going back into the preparation of a whole new series of plans, and we haven't made any real changes in the process or in repairing the disconnect. Why would we expect any different result from this round of plans than we did from the last one? If you keep doing the same thing over and over and expecting to get a different result, some call that insanity. We really need to sit and look at those broken three legs and get them repaired or determine if that's what we want to do or if we're simply going to go right back into the same loop. Without change, that is foreordained. RPA is still on the books, and nobody pays any attention to it. Multiple use, which has been replaced by zoning, is a disconnect to the budget. Over and over and over, no good result.

HKS: Is there a possibility of a legislative solution to this, or is Congress just too polarized? Do they make it harder to do intelligent things on the land?

JWT: I think there is a chance for a legislative solution, but it won't be easy and it won't be short-term. What we need is an approach related somewhat to the Public Land Law Review Commission of 1964. This time, instead of having a commission of big names that doesn't know much about the issue, the Congress and the administration should jointly appoint a commission that is relatively small and composed of high-powered folks with knowledge and experience in the natural resources arena. The desired outcome would not be a treatise that sets on the shelf only to be consulted when suggestions for alternative legislation are needed. The real operating world of the agencies centers on the regulations Congress describe in legislation, and agencies prescribe the regulations they write. Each agency writes its regulations so as to maintain maximum flexibility and maximize their power. So the agencies are playing the natural resources game. The Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries, Forest Service, BLM, Park Service, and EPA all promulgate their own regulations, and they don't match.

If I were the president, I would call the agency heads in and announce the beginning of a process to revamp and revise the regulations of all agencies simultaneously. I would name a "czar of regulations" and demand completion of revision in two years and require that they fit together like finely meshed gears. An administration could do that. For example, the Forest Service has obligations under ESA and the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act and this act and that act, but none of the other agencies charged with carrying out such legislation have any obligation to pay any attention to the Forest Service's needs to meet its multiple-use objectives. Such is a one-way street.

It is easy for a regulatory agency to jerk a land management agency around. It takes a lot of nerve for them to take on a corporation like Weyerhaeuser or some similar entity. When you reach out and start slapping people around that are not public land managers, you get a backlash from people who have political connections due to campaign contributions and voting blocks. When you start hitting private entities—individuals and corporations—with these sorts of things, the political consequences can be severe. As long as the land management agencies are convenient "whipping boys" to take as much of the hit of the environmental regulations, they will be essentially unable to achieve much of anything in terms of land management. That gives a lot of politicians shielding from consequences of inaction in good natural resource management and provides bureaucrats the opportunity to scapegoat for real or perceived failure in federal land management.

HKS: My understanding is one of the primary reasons why several attempts over the years to merge agencies has failed is because Congress won't buy off on it. They're more turf-driven almost than the agencies themselves, the various committees. The Congress doesn't see any advantage to Congress to have the Forest Service and BLM be a single unit, for example. This is my understanding of part of why this has never happened. The alternative would be to get the regs to be in sync in some way.

JWT: I personally don't think trying to merge the land management agencies is worth what it would cost. Their organic acts and how the agencies do things are very, very different. Bringing those agencies into synchronization, even if was done with maximum efficiency, would cost incredible amounts of money for no good purpose. The agencies could be urged to collaborate more effectively, and the Clinton administration did that. I don't have any personal objection to consolidation except that I would hate to see one third of the nation's land under one bureaucracy. The agency head would be one powerful dude.

I don't know what a merger would entail or whether such would be a solution to anything or just a way to look like you're doing something when that something is not much.

HKS: I don't know if the differences still exist but it used to be the BLM timber sales on the O & C lands had 50 percent paid back to the counties where the Forest Service has 25 percent payback. That doesn't make a whole lot of sense; its federal timber being sold. That's part of the tradition, and I put it down to the lack of political clout of BLM that the Forest Service is able to retain three-quarters.

JWT: I don't think that's what happened at all. I think the deal for BLM was negotiated by some very powerful politicians who, when the O & C lands reverted to government ownership, were able to grab that money for the affected counties. How revenues are distributed really hasn't got much to with management. It's just mechanisms of keeping books. But it does have a big difference in that basically the O & C had almost a trust mandate. Managers are not confused about what they do on O & C lands. They became confused when they were told by the president of the United States in the FEMAT exercise to consider that BLM had the same "diversity clause" applying to them as spelled out for the Forest Service in the Forest Service manual. That got in the way of their trust responsibility big time.

Below-Cost Timber Sales

HKS: When calculating below-cost timber sales, and that's an item we want to talk about in more detail, is that 25 percent included in revenue even though it goes to the states?

JWT: No, it's calculated as a cost, and I've mentioned that in several talks and publications. How do you "cook the books." It makes absolutely no sense that a payment to the states and counties is a cost; that is a little bit goofy. The same incredulous result applies to roads. The road is a cost—and that is that. Well, if that road does more things for you besides just hauling timber, it has a value. If I end up with a two-million-dollar road that affords entry for recreation and fire protection, is that road a cost or is that an asset? It all depends on how you cook the books.

HKS: Are below-cost timber sales still an issue, or has that been sort of resolved?

JWT: Oh no, it will always be an issue. Again, whether the sale is below-cost or not, it depends to some degree on how you cook the books. One of the interesting things to watch evolve is that now we are talking more about restoration forestry and fire—not solely fire prevention but fire management in the urban/rural interface. One of the problems from the past may be because we called everything that involved cutting trees a timber sale. Maybe we ought to have had another name for such actions.

Consider the urban/forest interface above where I live. If the forests are thinned so that the crowns don't touch and all the slash and accumulated material are crushed so a fire can be run through it, then they can say my house is now several times more likely to survive a catastrophic fire than it would have been otherwise. We got sixty units of timber with the thinning and it cost a hundred units to do it—there is a deficit timber sale. What if the watershed is better protected from fire as a result? The result depends on how you state your objectives and how much value you put on it. There will be opponents to any vegetative manipulation the Forest Service ever makes—and they will always scream deficit. I think Chief Dombeck was on the right track when he said we should talk about management objectives. What is the desired future condition of the forest, for whatever reasons, and how much does it cost to achieve that? Whatever timber we get out of the sale in question is a partial offset to the achievement of that overall objective.

HKS: I realize that some of the bookkeeping methods are a tactic. The Wilderness Society has an accounting program they advocate. General Accounting Office, didn't they ratify the Forest Service mathematics?

JWT: I remember TSPIRS [Timber Sale Program Information Reporting System] was signed off on by many people who declared it an okay way to calculate things. And then others said no, that's not the right way to calculate it. So results depend somewhat on the bookkeeping rules you follow. What's a benefit? What's a cost? These are critical questions.

HKS: The fact that some people still disagree is still a significant issue in terms of what the Forest Service is concerned about. I mean, has it lost its political clout?

JWT: I don't think the Forest Service has the political clout that it had at one time.

HKS: Does "below-cost timber sales" have a political clout anymore?

JWT: Oh yes, it's a great gimmick for critics, and the Forest Service is vulnerable to such criticism. It's a great one-liner—"below-cost." Look at the road system. It is a disgrace that there is a multi-billion-dollar backlog on road maintenance. Congress funded new roads at or above requested levels but refused requested money for upkeep and maintenance. In the meantime recreation was increasing dramatically—between 1950 and 2000 the amount of recreational visits to the national forests increased by some number of times. That increase was related to the road system.

HKS: Recreation increased a lot; big time.

JWT: A lot, and the Forest Service was still out there building roads. Run a correlation coefficient between miles of roads constructed and the increase in recreational use. I'd bet you that the correlation coefficient is well above 9.0, which means that more roads facilitate more recreational use. I will guarantee that more recreational use would occur in the Bob Marshall Wilderness if we built a hundred and fifty miles of road in the right locations. Is that a benefit or a cost? You can't argue at one point that increasing recreational use is a benefit related to the construction of roads, and then turn around and say that building roads are depressing recreational use. Most of the recreational use doesn't occur in wilderness areas. It occurs on the managed forest land base. Does that mean I am advocating building a road into the Bob Marshall? Absolutely not, it's a totally recreational experience. But it is disingenuous to argue that the construction of roads has been destructive to the use of the national forest by the American people when the opposite is true. So, is a road a benefit or a cost? It all depends.

HKS: Plus the road provides access for fire fighting and other non-timber stuff.

Seeking Middle Ground

JWT: Roads provide access for a number of purposes. Clearly roads provide for increased recreational use. Some people argue that road building has been detrimental to recreation when the opposite is true. But you can have too much of a good thing. A multi-billion-dollar road maintenance backlog, like the several-billion-dollar backlog on the national parks, is inexcusable. This did not happen because the Forest Service didn't ask for adequate budgets to keep up the roads. It was because OMB and Congress would fund new roads but not allocate adequate money to deal with the backlog. Somehow the bureaucracy is held solely responsible for that. So I think what Dombeck said related to roads made a lot of sense: "If you're in a hole, quit digging." Do we really want to build more new roads? I think we ought to make up on our backlog of maintenance first. Politicians that are interested in jobs related to national forests don't seem to understand that we could get more "bang for a buck" by dealing with the existing road system—upgrading, putting roads to bed that need to be closed, closing some roads off, and upgrading other roads to acceptable standards. There is probably more money in such a program for workers, for example, in the state of Montana than there would ever be in any slightly jacked-up timber program. It's the same kind of people doing the work, whether it's building new roads or upgrading old roads or putting roads to bed.

HKS: Be kind of hard to push that through right now I suppose, but that might happen.

JWT: Well, it might. It depends on when somebody in Congress who can influence the budget catches on. But let's not be naïve. Politicians know how to follow the money trail. Who makes the contributions to folks that are running for office? I doubt there is anybody out there at the moment making contributions to encourage Congress to deal with the backlog of repairs to the road system on national forests. Traditionally, the people feeding out the bucks are the people that want new roads to get to new things. That's just the way things work. But if we could get the people who need jobs and bolstered economies together with their politicians, the funding situation might change. The hired guns for the environmental group and the gun fighters that lobby for contractors and labor unions could, if they suddenly realized there were projects that they could agree upon that would benefit both the economy and the environment, get together and work for a common goal. Everybody would benefit. It would be a great day. But up to this point in the debate over what happens on the national forests, you don't get points for agreeing to anything. So far, if you're part of the conflict you get paid or are otherwise motivated to fight. Taking care of the maintenance backlog on the road system is something that all sides could get together on.

HKS: You've introduced a subject that I'd like you to talk a little bit about. I hadn't heard the term "conflict industry"—eco-warriors and other things. You've been critical of the environmentalists. You have said that they have won the war and now they're wandering the battlefield bayonetting the wounded. They're not helping anything. They're only opposing. Do you think it's because these guys are making three hundred thousand dollars a year, that that's part of why they are not doing something?

JWT: Let's not go too far with that. For everybody in the environmental industry that's making several hundred thousand dollars a year there are probably some number of hundreds working for minimum wage, if that, working for what they think is right. But it matters not what the reason is, people are dedicated to the fight for the environment. There is a time to fight. There is a time for all things under the sun. There is a time to make peace. I think the general environmental war related to the Forest Service is over. In reality, industry needs to abandon sponsoring "ghost dances" to bring back the buffalo—i.e., the good old days. Those days aren't coming back. It is time for the environmentalists to ease up. They are not going to finish off those who extract natural resources. Now we've come to where we stand today. And it is time to ask, "What are some of the things that we could agree upon?" Certainly an appropriate, well-maintained road system should be one, and there may be others. If one performed an analysis of public opinion related to the management of the national forests considering protection and extraction of resources, you would be looking at a standard U-shaped curve. You might surmise that there was no room for agreement there, but I suspect if you conducted a public opinion poll you would find that the results yield a curve that resembles a bell. This leads me to the conclusion that in a democracy decisions are made by the majority of the minority that cares about the issue. Those that care enough about national forests to participate in planning efforts seem to be split in their opinions. I don't know how we get them to middle ground, but the general public is much more inclined to accept some middle ground.

HKS: Did you ever discuss this directly, one to one, informally over a cup of coffee with the head of one of these organizations? Why don't you guys help us?

JWT: Yes I tried that, and most of those from the "industry" believed me to be prone to accept the environmentalists' view, and most of the environmentalists believed me to favor the industry position. So I guess I did not do so well as a moderator and a broker for the "middle ground." I think the American people are wearing out with this unrelenting battle, and sooner or later they will insist on some middle ground approach to management. There are management actions by the Forest Service upon which both sides ought to be able to agree. Things such as dealing with issues of forest health. Extreme environmentalists might say, "That's just another Forest Service excuse to whack down trees." I've even been told that if the trees removed were decked and burned, support for restoration activities might be forthcoming. In other words, there should be no commercial use of trees removed. Well, I think that is a bit goofy.

Here in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana you would think from reading the newspaper reports that the Forest Service is moving ahead with salvage and that dealing with forest health issues in burned areas is overwhelmingly opposed by local people. Yet public opinion polls indicate the vast majority want to move ahead with such activities. They might argue about what "something" is but the vast majority of those polled, at least at this point, are adamant that active management is required. But that is not what you would think after attending public hearings or reading the newspaper.

Agency Morale

HKS: Agency morale. When I worked for the Forest Service, from my GS-7 level I thought the agency had extraordinary morale and *esprit de corps* and all that. Is there still an unusual amount of morale in the agency, as opposed to other agencies?

JWT: Relative to other land management agencies, I think the answer is "yes." But I don't think morale is as strong as it was in my youth in the Forest Service. On the other hand, most that came into the Forest Service stayed. We have people today that go into one agency and out to another and back and forth into the private sector. I see much less loyalty today. I don't think that's related to something being wrong with the Forest Service. I just think the world has changed. People don't give loyalty to organizations—any organization—like they once did.

HKS: Well, I suppose it changes a lot. You go through forestry school, you learn how to be a forester, you work for the Forest Service, there's an expectation of longevity. When you have different disciplines, people don't go to school with the idea of working for the Forest Service or in forestry.

JWT: Studies done by Tom Quigley in the Pacific Northwest Station and Jim Kennedy at Utah State bear that out. They found that foresters and engineers thought they worked for the Forest Service. Wildlife biologists and others of the "ologist" persuasion thought they worked for their profession. These professionals didn't have the same level of loyalty to the organization as they did to their profession—which they considered different things. Foresters and engineers, when I came into the agency, were the bosses. They were horrified by the mind-set of the "ologists." The old-line Forest Service guys would talk about the "good of the outfit." Many "ologists" were immune to such attempts at suasion and were more loyal to what they perceived as the tenets of their professions.

HKS: Do you think you were successful in improving the morale, or do the people on the ground really know what the chief does in that sense?

JWT: I don't think the people on the ground quite know what the chief does, nor do I think they spend much time thinking about the chief. But the chief is an icon nonetheless. There is no doubt about that. For example, when I walked into a fire camp people would come running to me from all around. At first, you might think that they were interested in you personally. It's more than that. They see the symbolism of the chief, not Jack Ward Thomas the chief or Mike Dombeck or Dale Robertson as individuals. Some chiefs are more popular than others because chiefs have different personalities. Some are quiet and some are outgoing. On a day-to-day basis I don't think the troops know or think much about what the chief does. But they know the chief is there, and when he or she shows up in their territory they seem glad to see you and honored to shake your hand. You keep in mind always that when you're the chief you carry the burden and privilege of playing that role.

HKS: Dale was fired, and that's not a typical situation in agency history. It had to have some sort of affect on morale.

JWT: There were some of us who were very, very saddened by that while others thought it was about time he departed. Chiefs have their fans and their critics—and always have had. Chiefs recognize that they are an icon because of the position, and agency mythology is altered to deal with that. For example,

I'm not much of a drinker anyway, but once I was chief I was very careful that I never had more than one drink. I was well known for telling ribald, sometimes off-color jokes, and I really had to constrain myself. You do rein in your personality somewhat in order to meet expectations that Forest Service people have for their chief.

HKS: I stopped going to SAF meetings for a variety of reasons. One, because I think of myself as a historian who happens to have a bachelor's degree in forestry. But mainly it was such a downer experience. Everyone is woe-is-me and complaining about unfair environmentalists. You'd sit down for coffee with some people you didn't know, but you were sharing a table, and they were just pissing and moaning about how tough life was. They weren't necessarily working for the Forest Service. I'm assuming that foresters in the Forest Service, their morale was impacted because forestry is no longer the lead profession or a whole host of things like that. Other guys were getting the glory and people didn't like them anymore. They were accused of raping the land or whatever.

JWT: I sometimes feel like that around the university. I am an old-fashioned wildlife biologist, and most of the younger faculty members are engaged in some of the more esoteric aspects of mathematical ecology. I sometimes feel like a really old guy—out of touch and out of favor. For example, many of our wildlife staff at the university don't hunt or fish. We older wildlife professors moan and groan about that. Professions wax and wane. I see forestry changing—and fast. I think when forestry completes its shift to become more of an environmental concern we'll be feeling better about ourselves. When "getting out the cut" and reforesting cutover stands was what we did, foresters were widely praised. Then forestry started getting criticized for what they had been praised only a decade earlier. I think with "restoration forestry" we may see a renaissance of foresters as the good guys, the ones in the "white hard hats," the people out there extracting some products but at the same time making a beautiful forest—one more safe from catastrophic fire, etc. With the new emerging attitude toward fire and the inclusion of "restoration forestry" there may well be a chance for a renaissance of the profession of forestry.

HKS: It may be a generational shift. I think of the membership of the board of directors of the Forest History Society. The older retired senior vice presidents of major corporations were still walking around upset about the rejection of the earlier values. But the younger corporate executives, that's the way the world was when they entered it and it wasn't a put down of what they had done and they roll with the punch. We had a debate in a board meeting about whether or not we should ever use the word "environment" in Forest History Society publications. "Environment" always had an "ist" on the end in the minds of some of the older corporate people and the younger ones, of course, were used to it. It's a word.

JWT: Sure. Corporations, in today's world, probably have a "director of environmental affairs." These corporations are probably consulting with wildlife biologists—from agencies or their staffs—about how they modify their timber practices. It's hard when you have been "king of the world" and you're not king anymore. I can relate to that in my personal life. I was chief of the Forest Service and I had secretaries, speech writers, body guards when required, and every other support you can think of. So, I retired from the Forest Service and showed up as a professor at the University of Montana. I walked in and said, "I'm here, where's my parking space." They said, "You're on the list and you'll get one in about three years." So we all have to adjust sometimes. [Laughter]

HKS: Welcome to Missoula, huh? So you don't have a parking space yet?

JWT: I do, I just got one.

HKS: Just got one. Like a key to the executive wash room.

JWT: That's right. Fortunately they remembered me kindly over at the Forest Service's Forestry Sciences Lab and let me park over there.

Security Requirements

HKS: You mentioned something that I wanted to bring up. The first time I met you was at Grey Towers, and you were sitting on the veranda of that ramshackle inn where we were staying, and you had a couple of bodyguards. They didn't do anything to intimidate me walking by you to register or anything, but they were there. They were young men, well dressed. Were there specific threats against the chief?

JWT: Oh, yes.

HKS: Was it county rights type people, or a whole spectrum?

JWT: I don't know. I was never sure. Nobody ever signs up with their name and says, "I'm going to get you." This wasn't anything new in my life. I got my first death threats when I worked for the game department in Texas, and we were talking about instituting a harvest of female deer. After the spotted owl report was issued, the FBI advised me not even to go back to my home for several weeks. I was sequestered in a resort. My wife and kids were brought to stay with me, and we were under guard for a week or so. Usually, I traveled by myself, but sometimes I had a bodyguard with me. I left those decisions to others. Now think about that. How many chiefs of the Forest Service have ever needed a bodyguard? Times change.

HKS: Didn't Dale have some at certain times?

JWT: I don't know.

HKS: I asked him the question. He didn't seem to remember. There's a joke about how bureaucracies really work. He went out to some meeting with his bodyguards, and the hotel was overbooked, so they put his bodyguards in another hotel. They had to do a lot of last minute shuffling there to get them next door.

JWT: There were threats—overt ones from time to time. One I remember with some degree of amusement. This was right after the ISC report was issued. The phone rang late one night. My habit is to answer the phone with my name. I picked up the phone and said, "Jack Thomas." The guy on the other end of the line, who was obviously a little drunk, cut loose. "I'm going to blow up your house and rape your wife and kill your dogs" and all such stuff. I said, "Oh, get a job" and I hung up the phone. He called me back. By this time I was wide awake. I said, "Sir, hold it. I don't take death threats at home. We receive death threats at the office between eight and five on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and the number is so and so." I repeated the number very slowly and distinctly. I had a vision of the caller writing down the number. I hung up the phone. I remember a day or two later going out one morning and noticing that the hood on my pickup was cracked open. I looked and could see three sticks of dynamite. Well, it didn't turn out to be three sticks of dynamite, but rather three road flares. They weren't wired to anything, but the point was well made.

HKS: It could have been dynamite.

JWT: It could have been dynamite. I came home from work one night and there was a Molotov cocktail sitting on the front porch. So yes, these threats are real. I tended to want to ignore the threats, but law enforcement folks said, "Look, Jack, you have to understand that out of every hundred adult males there are about three or so that are not quite on the bubble. And maybe one out of a hundred is potentially dangerous. They make threats and one of them is apt to carry through. So you have to take these threats seriously." So, sometimes I had an escort with me and sometimes not. It depended on where we were going and what law enforcement agents were picking up out of the intelligence nets. But these law enforcement folks served in other roles, making sure transportation was squared away and that I was going to get to where I needed to go in the most efficient and safe manner.

HKS: Were they law enforcement?

JWT: Yes, they were out of the Forest Service law enforcement division.

HKS: Okay.

JWT: I think initially after the spotted owl stuff there were some of them that were federal agents besides Forest Service law enforcement personnel.

HKS: Did that go all the way through your tenure as chief?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Continue with Dombeck?

JWT: I don't know.

HKS: I've never seen them with Mike.

JWT: Well, that time you noticed them being with me was because of the isolated circumstances. If we had met at the Hilton in Washington you would have never known they were there. They were trained to be as invisible as possible.

HKS: That's true.

JWT: In fact, they consider they failed if you picked them out of the crowd.

Law Enforcement

HKS: Well, they were the best dressed people at Grey Towers for one thing. Let's talk about law enforcement when you were chief. I guess it's always been kind of controversial. Dale had problems. What's your sense of the law enforcement division? Obviously it seemed necessary. Is it the way to go?

JWT: I don't think the agency has any alternative to a skilled and effective law enforcement branch. Either we have law enforcement professionals or we have all Forest Service people playing a role in law enforcement. When I first came into the Forest Service we all played in that role. If I was out on the experimental forest and somebody was spotted doing something wrong I took care of it, and I could even write them a ticket. You wouldn't do that now in a million years. You would be liable to get killed at worst and sued at least. So that's why we have law enforcement officers.

People do all sorts of illegal things on the national forests. I mean, they kill people, dump bodies, steal timber, poach wildlife, commit rape, drunks in campgrounds have domestic disputes, run stills, grow marijuana, etc. This is not minor league stuff. There's probably more money made in marijuana growing on the national forests than the Forest Service makes harvesting trees. There is no option but to have law enforcement people. I don't like it. I wish we didn't have to have them. But the world has changed, and there is no going back. Every law enforcement problem that occurs on big city streets—and a few more—happens in national forests.

HKS: Wasn't it a problem that they didn't report to the ranger, the supervisor, they had their so-called the stovepipe organization?

JWT: Dale put in the "stovepipe organization." There were accusations that law enforcement was overlooking timber theft and a number of other things, because the district ranger wouldn't want to cause a problem with somebody that was a local contractor, etc. I've looked back at it, and I don't really

think that perception is political reality. But it was perceived as being rampant. So Dale "stovepiped" law enforcement up to the chief. The cops didn't work directly for the line officers in the Forest Service. Dale established the Timber Theft Investigations Branch as TTIB. It worked out in the Northwest on some high profile timber theft cases. They broke one case, looked closely at another situation.

Then personnel problems began to surface. I went out and met with representatives of the TTIB. The recommendation from the director of law enforcement was that it was time to put the TTIB back in the regular organization. I put that decision on hold until I got back to Washington. I went over to the Office of Inspector General [OIG] to discuss the matter. The Forest Service was conducting an internal investigation, which would have been fine except that nobody was going to believe we would be objective in investigating ourselves. So I had asked OIG to take the lead. OIG looked into the matter and came back and recommended disbandment. So I did that. Some members of TTIB went public and said we were covering up timber theft in disbanding the TTIB and made a number of other accusations. I think that flap has about played out now. Certainly, as far as I know, there was nothing to the accusations. In fact, I think we bent over backwards to try to make sure that there was nothing wrong there. Of course, accusations made the press, and we were unable to respond to accusations because of the rules of the "personnel game."

HKS: Did you see that TV interview with Dale? I heard that it was really a hatchet job, where his answers were edited and so forth. They made Dale look like an idiot, quite frankly, a very bad thing. But it had to do with law enforcement, and his answer to everything was, "it's a technical violation." Like somebody strays across a property line, is that really theft or is that an accident. I suppose that kind of television journalism doesn't help clarify the situation.

JWT: I watched that tape. I had several such opportunities to meet with *60 Minutes* and said I would do the interview live—no editing. They refused. We all have things at which we excel and others that are not our "bag." Let's face it, Dale was a good chief and a fine man—but a TV performer he was not. Most of us aren't so gifted, and he certainly wasn't. You live and learn. I declined to appear on *Night Line* or some other program unless the show was "live"—i.e., there was no chance to edit my replies. Of course, one of the things they train you to do when the interviewer catches you by surprise is not to respond immediately. Dale did that and they showed him sitting there thinking about what he was going to say. It made him appear as if he was a deer caught in the headlights. They really did a hatchet job on him. But I learned from his experience. Of course, they would announce that I had refused to appear on their program. Such statements are true enough but are designed to leave the impression that you had something to hide. Dealing with the press can be a very tricky thing.

HKS: I guess they treat everyone like that. It's not some environmentalist attack. They're attack people.

JWT: James "Jim" Caplan, my director of public affairs, frequently traveled with me. One of my fortes was dealing with the press, or dealing with questions and answers and that sort of thing. Jim helped me learn how to deal with those circumstances. He even put me through a five-day training period with a retired media personality that taught me all the interviewer's tricks, so I could recognize them when I saw them.

HKS: I heard other stories about Dale and the TV cameras on him. He doesn't come across as the engaging person that you and I know on a one-to-one basis.

JWT: Well, he can be quite personable. But how many people are born and raised—or want—to be a TV personality? It makes you look bad to the camera when you have bright lights in your eyes, and it is worse when you have on glasses. He wears glasses. They can butcher you, and the *60 Minutes* crew did a number on him. I never worked around anyone that was more of a gentleman than Dale, but *60 Minutes* really did a number on him.

Workforce Diversity

HKS: Diversity. I'm not talking about having biologists and foresters, I'm talking about the civil rights aspect and all that. It started in the '60s, hiring more blacks. If you look at the interviews we did with Forest Service deputy chiefs for Research, Research caught most of the pressure on that. It's easier for Research to hire a minority, because they tend to be urban and they didn't have to hire just foresters. So the people who are deputy chiefs of Research during the 1960s spent a substantial amount of their interview time talking about how difficult it was, and how they dealt with the mandate that they had to help the agency meet some sort of a quota. But it's gone way beyond that. It used to be equal pay for equal work and that's been dropped, I think. That's not a question. Respond as best you can on what you do when you inherit a difficult situation.

JWT: It was a difficult situation. What happened was that the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] came to bear at the same time pressures were building related to workforce diversity. There were very few female foresters and engineers. But meeting the requirements of NEPA meant that the forest Service needed to broaden its workforce to include social scientists, landscape architects, geologists, ecologists, botanists, soil scientists, wildlife biologists, fisheries biologists, etc. As we began hiring these new specialists we found that women and minorities were more common in these professions than in forestry and engineering.

Here were these new employees who were from "outsider professions" and who were minorities and women. That all started to come down at the same time. The Forest Service still struggles with those workforce changes today. The Forest Service has done very well with women but has not done nearly so well with minority groups. I don't think that has come from any lack of trying. The agency has tried to meet a social objective placed on top of a system that should be blind to all but hiring the best-qualified people. In theory we wouldn't hire a lesser-qualified employee because of racial reasons. Well, I think anybody that won't admit that we "stretched" it a bit to meet racial and gender hiring goals wouldn't be quite honest.

I told you earlier I went into Washington to work on resolution of the great natural resource issues of our time. I was told very shortly after I became chief that our primary mission was civil rights and meeting the secretary of Agriculture's objectives in that arena. I did the best I could to carry out the civil rights agenda, but I thought that was going too far to make that our most important task. I think the agency is largely past that crisis now. It is common to encounter deputy chiefs or forest supervisors or regional foresters or district rangers that are women. And it is not that unusual to run into folks from various racial minority groups—though that is less common than encountering women in those jobs. Women won a court case in California—the "Consent Decree"—and that's still going on and is a very difficult thing with which to comply. We can argue whether agreement to the consent decree was right or wrong, but that wasn't my choice. It was clear what we had to do and we tried to comply. I'm sure Dale tried to comply. I'm sure Mike tried to comply. And Bosworth's going to try to comply.

HKS: That's true. You wrote in your journals "civil rights mafia." You must have had an experience that you're a little bit disgusted with. Is that your term or is that privately used around the office?

JWT: I certainly used it in my journals. I've heard other people use it under their breath. I don't know how widespread the use of the term is. It would not be politically correct to use such a term openly. There is an entire bureaucracy within the government that deals with civil rights. They are sort of the civil rights enforcers. They make the body counts and keep up with who was promoted and who wasn't and why. They determined the level of civil rights complaints and decided how complaints were settled and that sort of thing.

HKS: You were under some pressure on performance reviews.

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Give higher ratings to minorities.

JWT: Let's put it this way, if there were complaints about ratings, we certainly paid very close attention to those from minorities. If there was a complaint about a rating, I would guess that, statistically, the rating for minorities and women would be more quickly changed than that for white males. Most people were very conscious of civil rights when they were filling out ratings for employees they supervised, and race and, to a lesser extent, gender were factors. It was really unfortunate because this conflict makes it sound like the women and minorities hired weren't performing. The vast majority of them have been exemplary employees and they didn't ever miss a heartbeat in joining the agency. They did good work. They came in, worked hard, and have advanced quickly within the agency. So far as I know, no more minorities and women than white males failed to perform very well, but it was a little harder to deal with unsatisfactory performance in the case of minorities. That, of course, was not of their doing.

HKS: Political correctness. You have a little piece in your journals about one of your first ventures out on the speaking circuit. You were chastised for making a joke about, "she did a pretty good job for a woman," and the audience laughed.

JWT: Yes.

HKS: People are uptight about that language.

JWT: I don't remember offhand that specific incident, but like I said earlier, I learned very quickly about political correctness. I'm a good joke teller; I tell jokes well. People pay me good money to emcee banquets and such. But when I was chief of the Forest Service, I learned to never tell a joke—never. The thing that finally sealed me off from joking in public was when I made an announcement of the selection of a man for a critical detail. The selection was Ron Stewart, who was a long-time colleague from the Pacific Northwest Station. I said that he really was the best-qualified person I could find. He was the only person in the Forest Service that had been both a station director and a regional forester. I looked at him and said, "Besides, I like the way he cuts his hair." He was bald—and I, obviously, was bald. He laughed. I laughed. Almost everybody else laughed. But three civil rights complaints were quickly filed in reaction to that comment.

HKS: For a haircut?

JWT: The complaints came from women. I made a joke at my expense related to being baldheaded. The women who filed complaints thought the joke was that I picked him because he was baldheaded; women don't get bald and men do—so I picked him because he was a man. That was the last joke I ever told while I was chief. I have now returned to my former sinful ways.

HKS: That's a tough one, to play by those rules.

JWT: Particularly when your personality type involves a visible sense of humor. But, I never told another joke as chief.

HKS: Bill Banzhaf said he learned early if you're going to tell a joke make it on yourself.

JWT: I thought I was making a joke on myself and it still backfired.

HKS: Did you say earlier that you had some sort of a directive to spend 65 percent of your time on civil rights?

JWT: No, they told me that the most important part of my job was civil rights.

HKS: Okay.

JWT: I did sometimes spend as much as 50 or 60 percent of my time on that for some period of time.

HKS: I can see that as important, but I would think the chief would delegate and that you wouldn't spend that much of your time on it. So how did that happen?

JWT: It was mostly delegated to other people, but the secretary of Agriculture put such a high priority on it that I was compelled to put in time on the situation. About the minute that I wasn't spending the amount of time that the people who were involved with civil rights thought I ought to be spending on it, someone complained and it would be reiterated to me that that was my biggest, best, hardest, toughest, most number one job—civil rights. Realistically, I think I was pretty well suited and prepared to deal with natural resources issues, but I didn't have any particular claim on being a specialist on the politics of civil rights. I did spend large amounts of my time on the issue.

HKS: It must be frustrating, because no matter how fast you go it's not fast enough.

JWT: If you have a white male that feels unjustly treated so that somebody else can be more justly treated, they resent it. It is a program—no matter how well justified—that built employee resentment across the board. Some in minority groups sometimes—very legitimately—felt that they weren't getting a fair shake. Then somebody else—say a white male—would say, given the preferences, etc., "I'm not getting a fair shake, and I did nothing wrong." And basically he was right. I mean, this was a matter of imposing some degree of "unfairness" at the present moment to compensate for "unfairness" that occurred in the past. If you make a decision in the name of "compensatory fairness" that goes against somebody, they are mad about it. It has built not a warm feeling of brotherhood but one of resentment from everybody involved.

HKS: There have been recent debates, mainly on universities, about overturning that because the whites are being discriminated against and no longer should preference be given to minorities. I don't know if you've paid any attention to that. Have you thought about gee, it would have been nice if we could have had some of that in the Forest Service?

JWT: I don't know what the status is today. I'm sure that there is still heavy emphasis on civil rights. I saw cases settled in favor of the plaintiff that I thought should not—under any circumstances—have been settled. But again, this was one of those things that was over the chief's pay grade. These settlements, some of which made me livid, took first place in the Department of Agriculture. They were very, very sympathetic to minorities' problems and complaints.

HKS: I can't put a date on it, but I remember being in Don Flora's office in Portland. This is about the time he was going over to Bend to preview the spotted owl studies. He showed me some correspondence, some letters he had just written dealing with civil rights. He told his colleagues at Bend they'd better have a black on that payroll in a year or he was going to lose his job. Don Flora would lose his job. That was maybe fifteen years ago, tremendous pressure.

JWT: It was, and I think all these things were done for what were perceived, at the time, to be the right reasons. I can remember one example at La Grande. We had a black fellow on the lab staff that I thought of very highly and do today. La Grande is three hundred miles from a large city. He was a top technician for an entomology unit. After about a year he came and said, "Jack, you've got to help me get out of here." I said, "Well, what's the matter, has somebody done something?" He said, "No, I really like all the people here. Everybody really has been great to work with but, you know, I'm black, and there's nobody in this town that's black. The music's wrong, the food's wrong. I mean, I like you guys, but I wouldn't want to spend too many weekends with you. You know, there are real cultural differences."

We were able to get him placed with another unit in a large city where he was a bit happier. But that is one of the biggest problems in the Forest Service. Much of our work is out in the middle of nowhere. I don't know what the racial minority numbers are here in Missoula, but they must be below 1 percent. So you hire somebody, and bring them to Missoula. I don't think anybody mistreats anybody, but there simply is no one here of the same color, cultural background, etc. Some do fine, some don't. But that is a problem for the Forest Service.

HKS: If I read the captions correctly on those photos you loaned to me, [Deputy Undersecretary of Agriculture] Brian Burke is black, right?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Was he involved in overseeing what you were doing? Did he play any special role?

JWT: No, I don't recall Brian playing any more special role in civil rights than whoever was there before him and whoever was there after him. He was a great guy to work with. He is a friend of mine. I thought very highly of him. He always treated me respectfully, and we got along very well. But Brian was not the point man on civil rights.

Quincy Library Group

HKS: The Quincy Library Group. It seems rather remarkable that somehow the secretary of Agriculture was captured by its importance. Let's have a little bit on the record about the Quincy Library Group, what it actually represented.

JWT: The Quincy Library Group, as I understand it, was a self-selected small group of people in Quincy, California. They looked for a "neutral" place to meet and settled on the library in Quincy, hence the name of The Quincy Library Group. The group included environmentalists, people from the timber industry, and some in between. They saw the negative impacts of conflicts over natural resources—primarily over timber and the resulting consequences in their community. They collectively thought these negative consequences were unacceptable and began to meet to determine if they could come to some compromise. You might call it a collaborative group that was self-selected. It was a small number of people who met consistently. Some historians said both groups had grievances against the Forest Service for different reasons, but all had grievances, and that brought them together. The Forest Service was not included. They came up with a plan and were able to capture the attention of the deputy secretary of Agriculture—the number two person in the Department of Agriculture—who was from California. I received an order from Dan Glickman, the secretary of Agriculture, to divert some significant amount of money, I can't remember how much, to execute the actions proposed by the Quincy Library Group.

HKS: Millions of dollars?

JWT: Yes. I had a different view than my predecessor about holding back money in Washington. I had distributed nearly all the funds for the year to the field units. So, in order to obey the secretary of Agriculture's order, I had to pull money back from units in California to send to Quincy. Now, all of a sudden, instead of this appearing to be a "freebie from heaven," it was obvious that money was being taken from other places to go to Quincy. The affected forest supervisors, not being too loyal to the secretary's unilateral decision, somehow let their congressional representatives know that Peter was being robbed to pay Paul. I was hauled over across the street and really reamed out.

That was the only time, I think, Secretary Glickman ever spoke harshly to me. He was very upset about what I had done. The conversation became graphic, and I asked, "Where else was I going to get the money?" He said, "I wanted you to take it from 'off the top' someplace." I said, "Dan, I can't move money one place without getting it from someplace else. I had already distributed money to field units." I think he believed that I had set him up in order to embarrass him. I didn't do that. The only place I could rationally get the money to go to Quincy was from other units in that region. About that time the national environmental groups began to hop on this, and they were angry that they weren't involved or included. I could understand their frustration, as the Forest Service was not included either. The undersecretary of Agriculture, with the best of intentions, had "bought a pig in a poke." The question was, who appointed these people and gave them both authority and a priority for funds? I thought there were some really

serious legal questions involved. This was, to my mind at least, a flagrant violation of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Forest Service was turning money over to a self-appointed group for them to use to direct federal land management action. I was very, very uncomfortable with that. But that management decision was made over my head without consultation with the Forest Service and then upheld in the face of my objection.

HKS: Their proposals dealt mainly with northern California, or were they broader based than that?

JWT: It involved, as I recall, three different national forests, all in northern California. It was really shaky, in my opinion. The Quincy Library Group had a member, a very old friend of whom I think highly—Tom Nelson. He worked for a large timber company. Basically the impact at Quincy was in the timbershed of that company. I thought this whole thing was shaky, both legally and ethically. But that was my opinion. My bosses saw things differently. The group has been very broadly praised and roundly criticized since. But, when the Quincy Library Group finally came back with what they wanted to do, the number of acres to be treated was so massive that I thought the operation would run into trouble further down the line. About that time my tenure as chief ended. There have been a lot of studies done about Quincy since with mixed results.

HKS: I'd never heard of it before I read your journals.

JWT: To the people that are concerned with policy, the Quincy Library Group has been seen as an example of a fantastic collaborative effort. Others have seen it as a total aberration. It has not turned out to be as successful as some had hoped, because they began to run into the realities of compliance with the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, etc. That was the story of the Quincy Library Group, at least during my tenure. Initially, it got me into some real trouble with the secretary of Agriculture.

HKS: No matter who's chief, you can't know everything and every statute and every tradition. So something comes across your desk, how do you get the background? How did you know that it might be in noncompliance with this federal statute on federal advisories? Do you routinely have stuff you're interested in working on yourself run though some staff review, and it comes back with a memo attached?

JWT: The chief constantly confers with staff. I am a scholar—a wildlife biologist, but also a scholar of natural resources—and during my time as chief I was a widower. I had a lot of time on evenings and weekends to read. I was familiar with the applicable statutes. I was briefed periodically by folks from the Office of General Counsel as to what was happening in the legal arena. Red flags would come up in my head or emerge during staff meetings, where concerns about specific issues were being discussed. If it were a legal question, usually an OGC representative would be in the room and would be brought forward. In the case of the Quincy Library Group, the Forest Service was going to turn over decision authority over expenditure of appropriated money to be spent by a self-appointed group that is not recognized in any form or fashion. I thought that this was a "no-brainer" that was probably not in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and was not a good precedent to set. Maybe you can turn over your authority, but you can't escape the responsibility. Is "somebody" going to sue the Quincy Library Group? No, they will sue the Forest Service.

HKS: The Forest Service, I'm not sure of the right vocabulary, gives grants or contracts to various organizations, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, for example, to come up with information that's useful. But you determine their credibility and all of that, and that's in compliance with all these I suppose?

JWT: Contracting is done under contracting rules.

HKS: I suppose somebody at Glickman's level would see it as possible, surely you have a few million dollars somewhere stashed away in your three-billion-dollar budget, but you didn't.

JWT: Yes, and I think he took that as that I was trying to embarrass somebody. But basically I had distributed all of it. Anything I was holding back I thought I needed to hold back for something other than that to deal with the consequences of day-to-day management. This was a very large, very political decision, and I didn't see anything wrong with making it out in the open. I couldn't write them a check and slide it under the door. I didn't think that was right or legal.

HKS: The group is still functioning, as far as you know?

JWT: I don't know. They kind of faded out.

HKS: Well, it was fascinating to read about that, and I suppose that happens more often than we civilians can imagine.

JWT: Quincy was a clear signal that if you appoint a little group, get together and decide what you want, and catch a political appointee's eye, the government may give you some money. I did not see how we could possibly escape our responsibility. In the end we were responsible. Responsibility is commensurate with authority, and here we were essentially giving people authority with no responsibility. I mean, the military taught me that.

Reinvention of Government

HKS: The reinvention of government. I guess that was pretty well delegated to the vice president. When I first met you it was at your orientation on reinvention at Grey Towers. Reinvention, the term comes up from time to time in your journals over a several-year period. What did reinvention really do to the Forest Service, or were there other factors that really were already on track that would have done the same thing?

JWT: I think the changes that finally occurred and were rational were already on track. A number of irrational things happened as a result of reinvention, which were poorly thought out and then executed via a "meat ax." We leaped into that and then were given forced targets for reduction in personnel, and so forth and so on. Then the managers try to figure out how they can do that with the least amount of disruption, and we went into big buyouts and etc. Numbers now are right back to where they were. We probably knew that was going to happen. I thought it had almost no good result as far as the Forest Service was concerned, but we work for the administration, and that was the order, and we executed it. In the end it probably cost us rather dearly.

HKS: It always sounds good to the taxpayer, get rid of all of the layers of lard in Washington, D.C., the vision of this huge government bureaucracy. But you do really need some people there to run the organization.

JWT: The attention is always focused on Washington, but at the same time Congress wants decisions and money pushed down in the hierarchy. Congress demands more and more out of an agency. National programs can only develop and explain and defend from the national headquarters. Alternatively, we could keep a significant number from the field level working on these inquiries and reporting our programmatic actions that are required by the administration and the Congress. But as chief you learn to live with that level of schizophrenia.

I thought we ought to take the budget and personnel cuts first in the Washington Office. We set out to do that, and did it. I wasn't gone from the chief's job very long before the number of folks in the Washington Office was right back to where it was, and now it's even bigger. But I don't think the growth of personnel in Washington is because the chief feels like he needs to surround himself or herself with more staff people. There are schizophrenic pressures as we want to devolve more resources to the ground level, and at the same time, there are counter pressures to more resources and decisionmaking

up in the organization. A congressman can send over a letter to the secretary of Agriculture that he took twenty minutes to write, and it would cost the Forest Service ten man months to answer. As near as I could tell, most that asked those questions paid little time or attention to the answers. I think there are people in Congress who flex their muscles by carelessly asking questions without thinking about what it would cost to answer the questions. If I had my way, Congress would also be held accountable for costs associated with such requests. Every congressional representative would report on what he or she asked for from agencies, provide a copy of the report, and provide an estimate from the agency on what it cost to develop that report. These folks can unwittingly, or otherwise, cause huge expenditures of time and money that more commonly go to no good end whatsoever. They cause these expenditures without any accountability. But they are perfectly willing to hold the bureaucracy accountable. I met a lot of elected officials that I thought highly of, but I think many members are very careless with requests and demands.

HKS: Some of that might be just a way of showing a constituent that they're responsive to the local needs.

JWT: Yes, but if you've got the power, you can get up there and just say well, I'll really impress this guy and I'll make this demand, by God. If the congressman tries to impress a constituent and makes such a demand, he should stand ready to acknowledge the cost required to respond. If, on the cover of the report, available for all to see, was the cost of the product, and it was attributable to a congressman, those that are "badgering" would be easily identified. The chief cannot complain and must respond to every request or question. As more and more demands for that kind of stuff that's best done at central headquarters are made and answered, it doesn't do a thing for getting trees in the ground or endangered species taken care of or anything else. These chores increasingly drive up the "overhead" that many critics complain about. Much of that overhead is caused by the very same people who complain about overhead. It is part of a vicious loop.

HKS: When the reinvention list first came out in the paper, the ten most important things to the vice president, at the very top of the list was the Government Printing Office [GPO], which is flawed. I'll say that. It was on Gifford Pinchot's list in 1903 on the Committee for Government Efficiency that Roosevelt appointed him to. The Government Printing Office has stayed at the top of everyone's list. It has some constituency that makes it bullet proof, apparently.

JWT: I don't know if GPO has a constituency that makes it bullet proof, or if it is just easy to list it without aggravating someone important. It's another thing to eliminate an agency, and that requires some level of attention and persistence. Politicians are not usually very well focused. It's easy to put out a hit list. It's quite another thing to see that execution occurs. Congress' attention span is limited to one or two years, because the day they are elected they start collecting money and influence for the next election that is only two years away. Basically I thought "reinvention" was something of a bust. It kept us distracted from our assigned base tasks for a year or two. Our focus was on how to meet the "reinvention requirements" rather than on meeting the day-to-day needs of the American people in terms of the management of their national forests and the research programs, etc. Fortunately, a good bureaucracy will run almost by itself for quite some time. But the reinvention activities made it more difficult because we kept heaving a hand grenade labeled "reinvention" into this unit and that unit, and they would have to adjust in terms of reduced personnel, budgets, and that sort of thing. In the end, we were right back where we started. The work didn't change. But normal human beings react to the "unknowns" of reinvention by fretting, worrying, and "politicking." There is an old saying, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." Reinvention had the unspoken approach of assuming that the system was broken and needed fixing.

HKS: It may not have been officially part of the reinvention, but one of the things that I noticed directly was the freeze on travel funds at the early part of the Clinton administration. I was working as a member of a Forest Service committee on the agency's history program nationwide, which includes all the stones and bones folks and all that. It's really remarkable what the Forest Service does but doesn't call it history. We got halfway through, Clinton comes in, zip, all the money was gone for travel. I accept

that those kinds of decisions need to be made, and good things and bad things get cut off at the same time. But discretionary money is really pretty important if you're going to run an agency.

JWT: That is micromanagement at its worst. It is a terrible approach. The assumption was that much or most travel was wasteful. I've been through that a dozen times. It is the wrong approach. Just tell the chief to turn back 10 percent of the budget. Let the boss figure out how to do that. There is a common illusion that everybody loves to travel. I never knew anybody in the senior bureaucracy that loved to travel. It was just the opposite. That is micromanagement in its very worst form. That is treating intelligent, dedicated people as children. It's the very crudest form of management and always produces a bad result.

HKS: Apparently that has been around a long time. Dick Dickerman told the story that when China opened up he was deputy chief. He was supposed to go to China to help the Chinese forestry research program. He spent almost two months trying to get travel money, authorization for a fifteen-hundred-dollar plane ticket. A deputy chief had to be approved by the secretary for international travel. Part of this junket stuff I guess.

JWT: I'll give you one example. My deputy chief for administration came in one day, and she said she wanted to restrict having any more meetings in Las Vegas or Reno. We were getting real heat over holding meetings there. The reason we met in Las Vegas and Reno was that it was the cheapest place in the United States to meet. The air service is great and hotel rooms are cheap. The food is cheap. The meeting rooms are cheap, and often they will give them to you free of charge. But the illusion was that if you meet in Reno it's because everybody is pounding the slot machines. Almost nobody I knew that was in one of those meetings gambled. That wasn't what we were there for. We were there to work and we were there because it was cheap. So we had our meetings in more expensive places. It cost more, but nobody suspected anybody of having a good time.

HKS: That's right.

JWT: You don't know whether you want to laugh or cry sometimes.

Fire Fatalities

HKS: I was very touched by your several essays, more than several, on the fire fatalities in 1994. That should be on the record as something that a chief does, and also the OSHA [Occupational Safety & Health Administration] ruling and how things actually play out in the real world.

JWT: I had been chief about six months. The phone rang in the middle of the night. Lamar Beasley said the first reports suggested we might have lost as many as forty people in a fire on Storm King Mountain in Colorado. It turned out that it was fourteen fatalities. I was there the next day, and so was Mike Dombeck, the head of BLM. We were there to deal with the survivors. Investigation teams were already there. Investigation wasn't our role. Some of the folks involved I knew from my earlier days in the Forest Service. Some of them were from Prineville, Oregon; kids that had worked for me on the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range building fence and that sort of stuff. Anyway, some of the people I knew. When Dombeck and I arrived the survivors were on the hotel's patio drinking beer and holding something of a wake. I just gave the bartender my credit card and told him the party's on me. The survivors were stunned and scared to death that they or their supervisors were going to be scapegoated for the tragedy. I assured them that wasn't going to happen. I asked them what they wanted. They said they were tired of talking to headshrinkers and just wanted to go home. I issued the order that night to let them go home the next day and to send them home via a chartered airplane. I also directed that the bodies that were going home were to be accompanied by a regional forester.

I went to see the kid that survived—Eric Hipke—to determine what we could do for him. His parents were there and they wanted to take him to Seattle. I asked the doctor if Eric could make the trip, and he said he could, but it would be expensive as a pressurized ambulance jet and attending medical personnel would be required. I said, "Okay, get it done." The staffer that was with us said, "Chief, we can't do that." I asked him what it was about my instructions that he didn't understand. He kept shaking his head. I asked him to give me his notebook. He gave me the notebook and I wrote out my instructions and signed it. I said that I have been informed that I lacked authority to give this and that this is not the right thing to do, but I was doing it anyway. He said, "All right, but you may end up paying for this." I said, "If I do, fine, but I can't believe that will happen. If we sent out the story on e-mail I'm pretty sure that I wouldn't have to pay for it as Forest Service people would help me out. Anyway, we got that done, and there were no questions asked.

Thirty-four people died that year fighting wildland fire—thirty-four. Everybody that dies, dies all by themselves. As that fire season went on I was more and more shaken as the fatalities mounted. It seemed that there had to be something very wrong with what we were doing. Statistically, events occur in clumps, not on an even flow. So we really bore down on revisions of our safety programs. I think that it paid off. During the fire year of 2000 only one person was killed—and that was in an aviation accident. That difference showed dramatic improvement. But we really poured on the emphasis on safety for the next two years.

HKS: I was having dinner with some longtime friends in Missoula two nights ago. They were commenting on the recent fires. The crews used to go by their house on the way to work. There's no night shift, which to me was new. Used to be you worked at night, because the fire was down, but that probably is part of what's safe and what isn't safe? No more night work?

JWT: I don't know that there's a blanket order against working at night. But, clearly it is more dangerous due to falling snags, rolling rocks, and that sort of thing. We were dealing with a philosophy of "safety first—every fire, every time." There was a politician, who will remain anonymous, that was raising hell last summer, here in Missoula, about a lack of aggression on the part of the firefighters. They weren't on the line at night. I called him up and I told him if I could take every dime I have and get one kid back that died fighting fire on my watch I would do it. I said, "We can buy houses, we can buy trailer houses, we can buy stuff. We can't get these kids' lives back." I said, "If I hear anymore about this 'lack of aggression' I am personally going to go public, and I will embarrass you beyond tears. You need to think about what you're saying here. Inappropriate aggressive behavior can get young people killed."

We had been, in my mind, too aggressive in some instances. We had trained firefighters to be aggressive—maybe too much so. I mean, you have to be aggressive to fight wildland fire successfully—but within reason. I told supervisors in training sessions to obey all the fire fighting orders and lookout signals but that they were ultimately in charge. If the hair is sticking up on the back of your neck, you get your people the hell out of there, and I'll back you. I think it paid off.

HKS: OSHA probably routinely investigates any accidents of that magnitude.

JWT: Yes.

HKS: And they accused the Forest Service?

JWT: I accepted their report. I told them that I was responsible—that ultimately the buck stopped here. I didn't buy their report. I don't buy it today. I think they were covering their ass. It is simply too easy to say that all accidents are preventable. Some of my people were a bit unhappy with my accepting responsibility as it was a BLM fire and under BLM jurisdiction. But, the folks that died, most of them, were Forest Service. That made them my responsibility—at least, in my mind.

HKS: It's almost like every fire I was on was the first fire that was ever fought, because the confusion level was extraordinary the first twenty-four hours.

JWT: Oh, these were judgments made by OSHA people who get paid to make judgments. They nearly always make judgments that the fault lies with whoever was in charge—whether it's in a factory or somewhere else. To them there is no such thing as an unpredictable phenomenon. You could look at all the available information and ask what if this and what if that and what if the other thing in that particular instance. In the end, when you get down to it, nobody had seen anything like that for a long time and it got to them. Not that there were not some things wrong, but OSHA gets paid to investigate and assign blame, and that is what they do. I can't remember the exact wording of their report. I was not so upset about the conclusion that there were problems and errors. I was quite upset with what I considered to be an outrageous insinuation that we didn't care.

Fire Management

HKS: Well, does this suggest lines of fire research? I was in fire research in Portland thirty years ago. There's a fire lab here in Missoula. Better technology to assess these kinds of conditions and get the word out to the troops? The big thing was we were told that a front's coming through, there's going to be a wind shift of ninety degrees. That was a big breakthrough that you could move yourself around a little bit, but obviously there's conditions that still surprise us.

JWT: Might still surprise us and probably always will. The technology related to fire management gets better and better and that will help. Remember the statement about fire fighting being the moral equivalent of war? When you're out there where the fire is, there are indeed great similarities; organization, group command, command and control. All those things are reminiscent of what I learned in the military. I don't know about moral equivalents, but there are similarities to war planes in the air and squads on the ground, tactics, attack, mop-up, confusion, and an enemy to fight and overcome. In the end, like war, it's going to be dangerous. In those circumstances, and no matter how well you do it, it's still going to be dangerous. What you try to do is make sure that you're accounting for those dangers. But we will have people die in the years to come. In contrast, we have people die fighting structural fires every year in spite of all their training and all their breakthroughs and all their equipment. If you do dangerous things, if you go in harm's way, sooner or later somebody gets hurt. What we want to do is just minimize that inherent danger to the extent we possibly can.

HKS: Maybe part of the change needs to be have a new name. Don't call them hotshot crews because that's sort of been a macho thing.

JWT: You need to be careful when you deal with symbols. Spirit, *esprit*, legend, mythology—all those things are very powerful forces that determine how they think of themselves. What would we call them instead, the "Prineville pansies?" No, it is dangerous work. But I wouldn't suggest we change those names. Pride and tradition reside in a name. Pride is important. Tradition is important. But, tradition and pride must be inclusive of safety.

HKS: I was on a hotshot crew, and I kept my bag packed. I'd cruise timber in the day and then I'd drive down to Boeing Field. They'd fly me to Lewiston, Idaho, and I had a local crew I supervised.

JWT: When the public thinks of wildland fire fighting, they think of the Forest Service. The Park Service has fire crews, the BLM has crews, and states have crews, etc. Still, most people connect wildland fire fighting with the Forest Service. Wildland fire fighting has an incredible role in the evolution of the old Forest Service that is now breaking down. Fire fighting was the crucible in which *esprit de corps* and the reputation as a "can-do outfit" were put together. I am an old-timer now myself. Listen to talk among old-timers my age and older at a reunion, and it will inevitably turn to fire fighting. "Do you remember old so-and-so?" Or, "How about the time when the pack string bucked off down the hill." That was the crucible in which that *esprit* was formed, and we have yet to replace it with anything else. I remember one time in a regional forester and station director meeting, I think it was late in '94, Bob Joslin, who was regional forester for the southern region stood up and asked how many people in the room had a fire

card, a “red card.” There were two people in the room of over a hundred people that had a red card—Joslin and me. No one else in that room had a red card. Twenty years earlier that would not have been true.

HKS: Times change, don’t they?

JWT: Times change. In that meeting I tried to get the message across that we really needed to make some connection with our past, and that more people needed to be involved in fire fighting and management. But I don’t think I made much progress in that direction. We need a fire management organization—not a fire fighting organization. We need people to direct fire management that are in it full time. It should not be collateral duty to something else. In the years where the cadre needs to fight fire, they fight fire. In those years when they are not required to fight wildfire, they would do controlled burns and educate people and work with homeowners or other agencies. We need to quit pretending. We have developed, with the best of intentions, a longstanding collusion with Congress in how we deal with fire budgeting. We pretend that big fire years are just “an act of God” and not something that could be anticipated. The Forest Service has never been allowed to build a realistic fire management budget. But then when a big wildfire year comes along, the money starts to flow, and fire fighting becomes top priority. We act as if this was another act of God and we got by it one more time. That is ridiculous. We—the agencies and the Congress and the administration—are conning ourselves and conning the American people as to what the actual land management agencies’ budgets truly are. Fire management should be addressed by a cadre of people that are full-time personnel related to fire management.

HKS: To the extent that you know, what’s this big chunk of money that Forest Service just got for this year on fire, a billion dollars or something?

JWT: Part of it was for new equipment, etc. The other is for addressing forest health questions in the urban/forest interface with the idea of planning and institution of treatments of vegetation that will make fire more manageable. It’s not “fire proofing.” The intent, for example, is to hold a fire on the ground instead of the crown and make it burn cool rather than hot, move slow rather than fast. Ultimately, this will give firefighters places where they can make a stand to protect things that really need protection. Conversely, areas and circumstances would be identified where we shouldn’t invest much in fighting fire. We now straddle the old and the new worlds of dealing with fire. Putting every fire out obviously has not been a great idea. But given the current situation, fire fighting will be part of what we do for a long time. For example, here in Montana last year there were over a thousand wildland fires ignited. The vast majority were controlled upon initial attack. We were very, very lucky in that on average there are five to ten days during that critical fire-prone period of forty-mile-an-hour winds. Those days of wind did not materialize. I shudder to think what would have happened if they had not been so successful in initial attack and four or five days of forty-mile-an-hour winds had occurred. So, fire fighting is going to be part of Forest Service responsibilities, even as we start to try to move forward to the fire management era.

HKS: Probably each generation it gets harder and harder to find a local workforce that has experience using hand tools.

JWT: That’s true but personnel can be trained to handle tools fairly quickly. It’s not only agency personnel that must be trained in how to use hand tools. In heavy fire years military battalions are brought in to help. It takes about three to five days to get troops trained up to the point where they can perform useful work. But even then fire bosses wouldn’t put them in tough situations. They would be used as mop-up crews and for constructing fire lines and that sort of thing. The nation is blessed with having an incredible bunch of people that deal with wildland fire. We are in a transition from being a fire fighting organization to becoming a fire management organization that includes wildland fire fighting as a part of its mission.

Forest Health/Balance of Nature

HKS: Maybe this leads us into a discussion of forest health. Is "forest health" a buzzword, to use the analogy with "ecosystem management, whatever that means"? "Forest health, whatever that means"? Is that the same kind of a thing?

JWT: You're exactly right. Forest health requires a definition, and that definition is easily derived. The question is, healthy enough for what purpose. What is the vision of the future for this piece of ground? Is it to grow trees rapidly for market? Is it to shade a stream? What is the primary vision of the future of that piece of ground and does its present condition make it compatible with achievement of that vision? Once those decisions have been made, the question "healthy enough for what" places the concept of forest health in context.

HKS: I'm not sure I read the right things, but what I see generally attached to this is the notion of a natural ecosystem, rather than the artificial one that we've created by fire exclusion.

JWT: That brings us into considering the "range of historical condition" and that sort of thing. I don't believe that this concept means we cannot have stands whose conditions lie outside the range of historical conditions. Plantations would be an example. However, in considering the general forest landscape, if stand conditions lie within what has existed in the past, the theory is that some predictability as to the future of such stands and some capability of maintenance of forested conditions exist. If stand conditions lie outside that range of variability, we have less knowledge to predict the consequence of a prepared action. So the idea of a range of historic condition is actually a benchmark, not an idea, of what should be. Some want the forest and rangelands to look like they did before Columbus came. But, if we judge a ponderosa pine stand's condition and note that it is undergrown with white fir, we would question if that is within the range of historic variability. Most would say that was unlikely or stand replacement fire would have killed the ponderosa pine before it attained such relatively old age and large size. So, fire exclusion has caused some aberrances in stand conditions that depart from historical precedents. Therefore, there is no track record as to the consequences, long-term, of such departures from the range of historical conditions.

For example, if we look at wildlife studies done since the '60s, most of them were not done in forests that looked as they did two hundred years ago or so. These studies have been conducted in the forests of today. So as we move from considering wildlife habitats of today as compared to the habitats of yesterday, we can only guess at the consequences for wildlife. If these stands are to be converted to look as they were historically, it will require guessing at consequences. The assumption will have to be if species came through these evolutionary bottlenecks, they will probably be okay in the future. But we will have to admit that, in many cases, we don't know for sure what the consequences of changing forest conditions will be.

HKS: Doug MacCleery, who's got both feet on the ground, writes about areas where lightning is not important where the Indians traditionally used fire. We have fire regimes created by human intervention—Indians used fire—and then we excluded it. Just what do we do? I mean, does Congress care about these kinds of very exotic, academic kinds of discussions? Are Indians part of nature or part of humankind?

JWT: Congress probably doesn't care—if they know anything about it at all. To the extent that Indians were part of nature in North America, it was for a short period of time in geologic or evolutionary terms. We think that two or three or ten or fifteen or twenty thousand years is a long time. But the evolution of plant and animal communities was underway for millions of years before humans arrived in North America. So, Native Americans have been part of the system—at least for a relatively brief period—thousands of years at the outside. But, for millions of years they were not part of the system. At what point did they become a part of the system? Are humans a "natural part" of the ecosystem? If I purposely burn something, then there is human influence in the ecosystem. What if I purposely keep fires from burning? Now, if humans continued current management for another ten thousand years and were

then supplemented by another more powerful set of human beings and values, would we be the historic landmark? This impact of *Homo sapiens* is a long transition line. Certainly I agree with Doug that human beings have had, and do have, a dramatic effect in the system. But that effect is relatively brief. How did evolution of ecosystems work before then? What historical condition is germane—even if we can describe what it was at various times? It is a tricky construct.

HKS: Nancy Langston, who I'm sure you know, writes about how lovely the forests were in the Blue Mountains before European contact. She's a biologist or botanist. I thought it was kind of a strange term to use that the forests were more lovely, that's her term, before we started intervening. That's certainly not a scientific assessment. It may have been a more balanced ecosystem, more in tune with the climate and so forth. It strikes me as pretty hard if you're running an agency to deal with these theoretical abstractions and notions of human intervention.

JWT: I have spent twenty-some odd years of my career as a research scientist in the Blue Mountains. I don't know if the word "lovely" would have come into my head. I think that open ponderosa pine stands are beautiful. A ponderosa pine stand with big single trees sticking up through an overstory of crowded white fir and Doug-fir is, to my mind, not quite so lovely. On the other hand, others prefer the solid canopy—particularly when viewed from afar. I don't know, but "lovely" certainly lies in the eye of the beholder. Given that Nancy is an ecologist it may be that background that forms her vision of what lovely is.

HKS: I suppose some forester's eyes light up in the South with the straight rows of trees in a loblolly plantation.

JWT: I can tell you a story about Nancy. The first time I ever saw her, my old traveling partner Bill Brown and I were camped out down on the Snake River. We had ridden in there with our horses. It was cold and raining. Nancy walked into our camp with her dog. She was looking for nesting colonies of magpies. She wanted to base a doctoral dissertation on communal nesting of magpies. We sat around the fire and talked. She was a combination of historian, social scientist, and ecologist. After we visited for a while I asked why she didn't study something she really had the unique background to deal with. I never saw her again until her book on the effects of forestry and fire protection in the Blue Mountains came out. So she either took my advice or came to a conclusion to focus on broadscale ecological responses on her own.

HKS: Doug MacCleery wrote about this and it got me thinking. There's a guy in the agency, works day-to-day on the problem of the week. Natural stands, how far back you go. He seemed to think that Congress would agree that you go back to European contact as a starting point for a natural stand, a natural stand being more stable. I'm out of my field now. Stable is better than unstable I guess.

JWT: I wrote a paper called "The Instability of Stability." I think that "stability" in the ecological, economic, and social sense is but a dream. We are constantly dealing with consequences of instability. For example, we are one drought, one fire season, one insect and disease outbreak, one banning of a pesticide, one new law, one new court case, one shift in market away from stability. Stability is a dream of managers. The Forest Service has had an unofficial policy of stability of human communities that depend on the national forests. The only objective was to maintain a constant flow of timber to market. We said we would control fire, which we could not. We set out to control insects and then lost the use of chlorinated hydrocarbon sprays. We thought we could control imports and exports, which we couldn't. We set out to control vagaries of market, which we couldn't. We sought to control the political world, related to natural resources, which we could not do. We promised something we simply had no long-term ability to accomplish. One after another factors of those kinds fell prey to recognition that we could not control the natural nor political world. The great years for the Forest Service were those years where we really believed we could ensure those things. Then the real world closed in on us.

HKS: There was a conference at Duke University a half dozen years ago. Its theme was that nature is not in balance. But if you look at most environmental-related statutes, there's an assumption in the

statutes that there's some kind of a balance to maintain or to return to. Should Congress revisit environmental laws, throwing out the balance of nature as its core guide?

JWT: I am absolutely certain that they should revisit the body of law related to the environment and public lands management. That's only one of the reasons that they ought to revisit, but "the balance of nature" focus is indeed one. We need another Public Land Law Review Commission that we talked about earlier. The extant laws simply do not fit together very well. These laws were put together and passed by different Congresses at different times without any real consideration of how they would interact. Now that we know how the laws interact, it is time to go back and review the entire body of such laws. I jokingly tell my policy classes that, given enough time, any federal law will produce the opposite result of that which was intended. I've been told that Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson from the state of Washington, standing on the Senate floor after the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act, responded to criticism that the law would be a sinkhole for money and would spin out of control by saying that he thought that the longest environmental impact statement would be some ten pages. Or Senator Hubert Humphrey standing up on the Senate floor after passage of the NFMA and saying something to the effect that, "Today we've taken the management of the national forests out of the courts and placed it in the hands of the professionals where it belongs."

HKS: My book on the history of the Forest Service published in 1976, a quarter century ago, ends on an optimistic note because of the kind of thing that Humphrey is talking about. We had the Monongahela but we were responding to that, we're clarifying some of the stuff. RPA, make Congress and the Forest Service actually take the long-term view and there would be money for it. Of course, that stuff didn't really work out.

JWT: We produced a three-legged stool of legislation. The Forest Service guided the development of three laws. The Service wanted to get in the game of fish and wildlife and recreation management. The agency wanted to beat off the Park Service's raids on national forest lands and wanted to get wildlife-recreation as part of our bag. The Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act told us what we could do. Then we saw we had to respond to the Monongahela anti-clearcutting legal decisions, etc., so we fostered the National Forest Management Act, which also mandated planning. Then we pushed for and achieved the RPA to assess the status of national resources and to project costs for appropriate management. The Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act told us what we could do; planning under NFMA told us what we were going to do; and RPA was expected to provide the connection between plans and budgets. The naïve assumption was that the agency could actually control Congress and the administration in terms of budget. That assumption did not bear out. None of the plans were ever funded completely. As a result, not one plan was executed precisely as written that I know of. In fact, I was somewhat amazed that the Forest Service was not sued every year that we were not following the plan. Constituencies, upset with the inability of the plans to work as advertised or because of disagreement with the plans, resorted to zoning. The three-legged stool is busted, and it's time for us to sit back and reexamine what we collectively want from the national forests and how we are going to achieve those objectives.

I don't think the proposed Public Land Law Commission should be like the last one. That commission was made up of big names who traveled around the country holding hearings and prepared a final report to stick on your bookshelf. I think the instructions ought to be to come back to Congress and the administration with suggestions for change in law to make the public lands function better. The first commission recognized problems but had few solutions—and that was before the spate of environmental laws of the 1970s. However, some seem pleased that the system functions slowly. If you are a member of the conflict industry and you have got a big bad "boogie man" such as the Forest Service to fight, you do not want this mess clarified. This leads me to another point. Perhaps the Forest Service created its own Achilles heel. The Forest Service drafted all this legislation. The Forest Service, from it's very beginning given its roots in the Progressive Era, said we wanted to preserve maximum flexibility for agency professionals to respond to circumstances of the moment in the best possible way. But flexibility proved to be a two-edged sword. When you can pick and choose outputs in the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act, and not necessarily in the combination that's the most economically rational, you are likely to be attacked by everyone who is not satisfied. We had the discretion to satisfy them and did not do so. Would it be a different thing if clear direction was on the table? For example, Congress could expect

production of six billion board feet from the national forests. Of course, that would be a loss of discretion—but you get my drift. Congress could direct that the Forest Service will do so-and-so related to wilderness and so on. Then, given these bottom lines, managers would work around those edicts. As long as you have the prerogative, at least in theory, to go from zero to as high as thirteen and a half billion board feet per year, that discretion makes the agency subject to attack from all who were not satisfied. As a result, nobody ever gets even close to what they want. So, the agency ends up with no constituents that are truly pleased. It is more profitable for components of the conflict industry (and their congressional allies) to oppose the Forest Service than it is to support it. And, it may be well to remember that assistant secretary of Agriculture during the Reagan administration, John Crowell, was pushing for an allowable cut much higher than 13.5 bbf/year.

HKS: The balance in nature is certainly a concept easy to sell the public. It makes so much sense that it's a good thing to have nature in balance. It's the choice of terms. You don't want to unbalance nature. It just sounds ominous.

JWT: But see, the strange thing is that much of our "progress" as human beings has been made in the course of "unbalancing nature." Everything we've done to feed ourselves, clothe ourselves, has been achieved in the course of unbalancing nature. Now, it is primarily when we come to forestry or the treatment of wildland that we still talk about some "balance of nature." That might be less irrational if we didn't expect to extract anything from those lands—if we didn't expect to graze them, if we didn't expect people to recreate on them, if we didn't expect to cut trees on them—then that might be a slightly more rational concept. What we have done is to semi-domesticate wild lands. We have totally domesticated farmlands. We have left wilderness areas to the devices of nature, more or less, and the "multiple-use" lands from which we still extract goods and services are supposed to achieve that, somehow, while not "unbalancing" nature. "Balancing nature" is an interesting thought, but I can't make the equation work, in my mind.

Leopold Land Ethic

HKS: Somewhere in Forest Service literature I've read about the adoption of the Leopold land ethic. Is that a correct statement, is my observation correct that the Forest Service has acknowledged this as a proper guide or philosophy?

JWT: I don't know.

HKS: Okay.

JWT: Certainly the documents that I wrote when I was chief show I accept it and wanted the Forest Service to accept it. I don't know that I can turn around and say the Forest Service accepts it, but it was certainly involved in what we were doing. The 1995 document *The Forest Service Ethics and Course to the Future* certainly reflected the Leopoldian land ethic.

HKS: This notion of ethics; I took a philosophy course many years ago, and the prof said that anything that affects humans has an ethical dimension. So you learn things in school and you carry that definition around with you. Suddenly we've got into this environmental ethic where obviously humans are involved, but it has to do with the role of humanity in the larger scheme of things. That's certainly on the edge of a lot of the discussions we've been having here. Is it right, is it proper for us to intervene anymore, the balance of nature and all the rest.

JWT: I never took an ethics course, as such. But, oddly enough, I've ended up writing, by invitation, two or three papers about ethics. Traditionally ethics is related to human relations—how humans treat one another. We have different sets of ethics internal to our family, internal to our tribe and then, to a lesser extent, to other human beings. That can be very well seen in war. For example, in the American

Civil War usually prisoners were relatively kindly treated if they were white—at least initially. If they were black, their treatment was not quite so ethical. Though we were having a war between the states, participants still thought themselves to be of the same tribe. But when you fight somebody else (another "race"), you can shoot prisoners or abuse people and not flinch. It is because ethics were not extended outside the tribe. Given television and other communication improvements, I hope that humans—at least some of us—are doing better extending ethics to our entire species.

Aldo Leopold thought that it was appropriate to extend ethics to other things, to animals or, collectively, to the whole organism—the land. He thought we could never really be fully civilized until we made that extension. I have an article somewhere that his son Starker wrote twenty to thirty years ago. Starker talked about his father's wonderful dream. But he could see no evidence at all that anybody had paid attention. He would not say that today. I think that the evolutionary process in the human mind and spirit of including land, as it were, as part of ethical consideration has taken root. I think it is a concept that is spreading and growing rapidly. I think that for many people who work with the land that consideration has always been there. I can remember my grandfather, when we were having a flood, standing there on the creek bank piling sandbags and crying. He wasn't crying because he was taking an economic loss. He cried because this land that was his and for which he was responsible was washing off into the Trinity River. Maybe that was my first connection with the concept of a land ethic. As I think back on it, I do not think the old man was upset by the pain-in-the-ass of a little erosion. But land for which he was responsible for was eroding and he felt responsible for not having kept his part of the bargain.

HKS: The other morning before I turned the recorder on, you recounted your first exposure to *Sand County Almanac* and what you thought about it. It's probably worth putting that on tape right here, because it shows the basic shift of thirty or forty years later how we think about that book.

JWT: *Sand County Almanac* was published in 1949. It was neither an immediate nor a universal best seller. In fact, it was pretty well ignored in the beginning. In 1956 I was taking a senior class in big game management at Texas A&M. My professor was O. C. Wallmo—Charlie Wallmo—who became a prominent wildlife biologist. But, then, Charlie was a graduate student on a teaching assistantship and he was teaching that course. I think he had been at the University of Wisconsin and was one of Leopold's group, or at least he was strongly influenced by the Lepoldian ethic. He had the class review *Sand County Almanac*. As I remember there were eleven or so of us seniors in the class—the biggest class up to that time. As we presented our reviews, it was clear that all of us had serious reservations about *Sand County Almanac*. We thought, collectively, that it was maudlin. We thought it was a bit weird and strange. We viewed ourselves as hardcore young scientists being trained to go forth and fulfill our role in making the world a better place in terms of the application of science and technology to wildlife management. We were very much products of the Progressive Era. It wasn't too many years after that that I had occasion to look up a quote out of *Sand County Almanac* and I sat down and re-read it. I saw things that I had not seen before. Now, I read *Sand County Almanac*–from cover to cover—every year on my birthday—and probably look up passages ten or fifteen times during the year. So people do live and learn and grow.

HKS: The times change a lot, too.

JWT: Lives change.

HKS: When you were in school you no doubt used or had assigned readings in his book on game management, so you're familiar with Leopold, the wildlife scientist. It was the wildlife philosopher that fell short.

JWT: In that same class we used *Game Management* as a textbook. I could use *Game Management* as a textbook today and almost get away with it.

HKS: It's still in print, isn't it?

JWT: I don't know. I think it's been reprinted. We used *Game Management* for a text, and then we had to read *Sand County Almanac*. You know, at the time, I'm not sure I even connected the two books as

being authored by the same man. I still have my original copy of *Sand County Almanac* that I've made marginal notes in for forty years. I dated those marginal notes. It's interesting to me to read those notes now and see how I changed my mind about different things over time. I don't know whether you call that growing, but I suppose we all change as we become more experienced.

HKS: Can you boil down the value of the almanac into a couple of sentences? Is there some basic principal other than some word like "land ethic"? What do you see in it now that really works for you?

JWT: What I see in *Sand County Almanac*, more than the land ethic, is Leopold's evolution in thinking. Leopold is even more fascinating to me because he reached maturity in the Forest Service. He was trained as a forester and went to work for the Forest Service and served the Forest Service for several decades. I've read nearly everything that Leopold wrote and have discerned how he matured as he did his writings. He had a pragmatic side. He was a college professor. He taught ecology. He didn't stand up there and blither to them, I imagine, about ethics in every lecture. He was teaching hardcore botany and forestry and those sorts of subjects. He was a forester. Today, we call him "the father of wildlife management"—but he was a hardcore trained forester. He came to his interest in forestry and wildlife largely as a hunter when he was a young boy. And that connection to hunting is how he maintains that connection with the earth. I'm fascinated that the environmentalists who have made him a deified character would probably be shocked and not at all pleased that he was brought to these interests and insights through his life as a hunter.

HKS: I took a lot of history of science courses when I was in grad school. We studied Darwin, and Darwin went through an evolution where he had to recant his earlier views because of his data from the Galapagos. He was a devout Christian, and evolution was contrary to Christian thought. In some areas of the country, it's still contrary to Christian thought. Few of us ever come up with a new idea. We spend most of our life just trying to keep up with and synthesize knowledge other people are supplying us. What impressed me about Leopold, he went a hundred and eighty degrees on predators, and how many of us would do that on our own. He might persuade us without too much trouble, but for him to have done that himself—the essay where he shot the wolf.

JWT: Are you speaking of the essay "Green Fire"?

HKS: Yes.

JWT: I made an earlier mention about the war on predators that was underway in my youth and the golden eagle talons that hung off my rearview mirror. I rediscovered *Sand County Almanac* about 1959, and after that rediscovery I removed those talons from my rearview mirror and buried them. That was my last big exercise in predator control. I have been told by a former student of his that Leopold almost had to be forced into that essay. As I recall the story, he sent the draft manuscript to Albert Hochbaum to review. Hochbaum was one of his grad students who was not nearly so adoring of Leopold as the others and more apt to speak truth to power. He told him that the draft essay left people with the impression that Leopold had always had this vision of the world—i.e., the role and value of predators—and that, instead, Leopold needed to reveal himself as not the enlightened Buddha, but as an ordinary ecologist who had come to this understanding through a long struggle. As a result I think he wrote that essay about the wolves, and I believe it's called "Green Fire," which was followed by "Thinking Like a Mountain." He revealed that he was quick to kill predators until he shot a female wolf through the spine. She was still alive when he reached her. He watched life leave her eyes and was changed. In doing that change in his essay he reached a number of folks—like me—that had similar experiences and similar feelings.

HKS: Something like that.

Endangered Species Act

HKS: Maybe this leads us into the Endangered Species Act. I'm not sure that it matters, but people who were in the Washington Office when the act came down—George Leonard is one—said the Endangered Species Act comes from Dale Bumpers in Arkansas. He didn't like Weyerhaeuser's clearcuts, what it was doing to the deer supply. I keep thinking about congressional intent. George insists, and I don't think he's anti-Endangered Species Act in that sense, that it was never the intention of the Endangered Species Act to cover everything. It was really to deal with the big game animals, grizzly bears and the eagles and so forth. Obviously it went way beyond that. Judges are very tender to congressional intent when there's litigation. I don't know and maybe you don't know either, has there ever been litigation brought against the Forest Service under the Endangered Species Act itself or has it always been under NFMA or some other NEPA, or forest plans not property constructed?

JWT: No, I don't think so, because what the suits are that are brought under ESA are brought against the Fish and Wildlife Service for refusal to list, etc. But once you have a threatened species, the Forest Service responds to the Fish and Wildlife Service as the lead agency or the National Marine Fisheries Service in the case of anadromous fish. Those agencies are responsible for the required recovery plan and the designation of "critical habitat." So suits filed pursuant to ESA would, I think, be aimed primarily at the Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service. But I think George Leonard may be quite right. I don't think the politicians who passed the Endangered Species Act had any idea of what it was going to turn into in practice or they would not have passed it in that form.

HKS: I have this wild theory that you're probably going to shoot down, and that's fine. One of the reasons there's not that much litigation on the Endangered Species Act specifically is because the environmental attorneys are pretty sharp people, and they don't want that law to go to court too many times. They might find some judge who looks at congressional intent. I'm way out of my field here.

JWT: I don't think you're correct. They quite willingly go to court and do so rather frequently. They will base their case on the law that is likely to yield a desired result, however. One reason they may not go to court against the Forest Service with the Endangered Species Act is that they have a better requirement—the "diversity clause"—in the Forest Service's planning regulations. The diversity clause is more constraining and more precise than the Endangered Species Act. So the attorneys for the environmental side have a handle to take the Forest Service to court on far easier grounds than an ESA violation.

HKS: Are you surprised at all that when Republicans controlled Congress they didn't, in fact, seriously revisit the Endangered Species Act? That would have been the logical time for them to revise it.

JWT: Doctrinaire or not, they can read public opinion polls just as well as the Democrats. There are three kinds of Republicans—Republicans in the West, Republicans in the East, and Republicans that represent a large urban constituency. These guys are really pretty smart politicians. They can count votes. The last time I checked, the ESA remains broadly popular, I think largely with people who have no idea of what really happens in its name. Now, given the ongoing actions of the conflict industry, I think ESA badly needs revision. But can you imagine a sane politician who is going to step forward and take the lead on such revisions? You talk about "holy war" and "jihad"—that would bring money and eco-warriors out of the bushes. ESA needs to be adjusted. In the short term, that won't happen, simply because it's just too popular and not without a long educational process. Any suggested change would emerge as an attack on the Endangered Species Act with the intent of weakening it. In my mind, if revisions were done appropriately and widely publicized, it would not be an attack on the act so much as revision to make the act better, more functional, less onerous, and more equitable.

HKS: What specifically do you think could improve the act?

JWT: If I were to add one thing it would be that a recovery plan would determine both short- and long-term risk. Management agencies usually want to take a little more leeway, a little more risk for a

better result over a longer period of time. The regulatory agency wants to take little or no risk over a very short period of time. If we were to require a long-term risk analysis, I think we would get a very different answer—at least in some cases. It might not be so onerous as the short-term, no-risk preservation strategy that allows no change given that ecosystems are indeed volatile and are changing anyway. Look at some of the short-term management actions, and considering the long term, you would flinch and conclude that this was extinction about to happen. That can occur simply because we are not dealing appropriately with the dynamics of the system.

HKS: My next-door neighbor is a retired Army colonel and a great guy, great neighbor. He was second command in Fort Bragg, and the woodpecker people wanted them to stop shooting off their cannons and having maneuvers because it disturbed the nesting. He just didn't buy off on that. I mean, how can you have a military reservation with silencers on your tanks? I thought now there's an interesting example for an exclusion somehow. I don't know if you want to call it a God squad, but some way you could say it doesn't apply to certain areas. Maybe they need to spend some money to move the populations off or whatever it is. But to say at Fort Bragg you can't fire any weapons before 7:00 A.M. just doesn't go over.

JWT: There's a provision in the ESA for an Endangered Species Committee. The nickname for that committee is "the God squad," as they have the power to knowingly let a species go extinct. There is an opportunity to appeal to the God squad, but the process is so unwieldy, involves people of such high power, and is so expensive that it is almost impossible to use. Another change in the Endangered Species Act could be establishment of some sort of an appeals body (say, of agency heads or something similar) as opposed to a group of cabinet officers who are not going to listen to, say, six weeks of testimony on some such species as a short-nosed sucker. ESA needs to be revisited. Ultimately when you lay down the recovery plan and designate critical habitat for one endangered species over another endangered species over another endangered species, chaos finally ensues. That is why Dale Robertson wanted to move to "ecosystem management" or how do we think of these matters in some broader context. How do we think of threatened habitats or threatened ecosystems as opposed to threatened species that tell you that you have a threatened ecosystem? Is that backwards?

HKS: I haven't really studied the language of the statute, but by all reports it's pretty specific on what you can do and what you can't do. I asked John McGuire about NEPA, which went down on his watch. I said was there any concern about impact statements. He said no, it sounded like a good deal to us because we kind of do that anyway. The Forest Service plans a lot, always has. It's part of our culture. But we thought we'd write an impact statement on wilderness, not a hundred and forty-four impact statements on a hundred and forty-four areas or whatever it is. He said that's what we didn't see.

JWT: You would write one on wilderness and you would write one on trail maintenance, etc., but you wouldn't write them exactly alike.

National Grasslands and Grazing

HKS: You rarely read anything about national grasslands, but I read about them quite a bit in your journals. In your mind was this unusual, that it happened on your watch, or does every chief deal with national grasslands? Was something else going on?

JWT: The reason that you read a lot about national grasslands in my journals was that there were attacks during my watch that came out of the Dakotas from some grazing permittees involved with those grasslands. They didn't think their operations ought to be managed under the same laws and under the same scrutiny that the national forests were. We (I) disagreed with that then, and I disagree with that now. Basically, Senator Bryan Dorgan and some others became rather vociferous that the Forest Service was going to turn over more management authority to these permittees. We were not willing to do that, and did not. So far as I know, we prevailed on that issue.

HKS: Is there any logic at all to perceive the national grasslands as something separate from the national forest? Under the National Forest Management act, for example.

JWT: We thought not. These lands were originally purchased, I believe, by the Soil and Conservation Service because they were eroding badly during the dust bowl days and there was a need to recover them. They looked around for a manager of those lands. Because the Grazing Service was politically powerless, they turned to the Forest Service. The national grasslands were sort of a stepchild that landed at the door of the Forest Service. These lands were not part of the original acquisition or the set asides, and were not related to the Weeks Act acquisitions. So, in lieu of any other direction, the Forest Service decided that we would manage the grasslands under the management authorities given to us in our legislation. The people that were giving us fits wanted to cut a different deal whereby there would be a totally different set of rules and regulations for the national grasslands. The objective was to assign ownership rights and significant authority in the hands of the permittees.

HKS: The grazing bill that you didn't approve of, was that only for the grasslands or was that for grazing in general?

JWT: No, I think that was grazing in general. I'm trying to recall the exact set of circumstances. That one got serious enough that Mike Dombeck, director of BLM, came over to my house, and we spent the whole weekend on our collective response. We didn't staff it out. We did our own staff work with the full intent of thwarting that effort or beating it back. Which, indeed, we did. We looked at that as basically—and this reemerges every once in awhile—an effort to somehow put more ownership "rights" in the hands of the permittees grazing federal lands. That idea keeps coming back like a bad penny. Senator Dorgan was very determined to accomplish that end.

HKS: I was going to say, that's been around for a long time.

JWT: This just happened to be our turn in the barrel. I would claim that Dombeck and I personally thwarted that end run on the public's lands. And, we managed to make some fairly hefty enemies in the process.

HKS: It's interesting to me that range doesn't make the press the way the forest part of the national forests do. I guess it doesn't have the aesthetic quality, doesn't have the clean streams image.

JWT: You know, foresters—and Paul Bunyan—were mythical heroes. They are no longer. But I think the Marlboro man still rides on the western range, that that's part of our culture. The conflict industry really haven't turned their full attention and their hired guns on the public land grazing issue. They decided to focus first on forestry on the public's lands.

HKS: I remember reading somewhere ten years ago about below-cost grazing permits. I thought well, how about that. But I could see it would be the same thing. Administrative costs go up to meet the environmental rules and regulations, and you can't charge more to have the sheep on there.

JWT: The grazing fees are set by a formula that seems sacrosanct. Critics want to make a direct contrast between what grazing in this particular valley would lease for versus a specific federal lands allotment. Such could produce a large differential, say, a buck fifty versus eleven dollars per animal unit month. Well, that's not quite fair. One, the uplands are not nearly as productive for grazing. Two, if I lease land from another private owner the fences are there, the water is there, the roads are there. All of the infrastructure is in place and livestock handling is simplified. If I am a permittee on federal lands, I am responsible for the fencing. I am responsible for the water. I have to handle my livestock the way the feds tell me. Usually this requires a considerable amount more time on the ground. Well, my point is that public land grazing should be cheaper. Then to the extent there is a difference in price between a private and federal lease, you can call that a "subsidy." Subsidies are not necessarily evil. The operative question is whether the subsidy is producing the desired result. One of the things that we may get for our subsidy is keeping ranchers in business whose property is adjacent to the national forests. I suspect many of those ranch operations are a marginal enterprise that would go out of business without their public land

grazing permits. If that happens, what happens to their private land? Likely, the land will be subdivided and, then, we have a real problem. These are the areas where deer and elk winter. So the present arrangement is a *quid pro quo* of sorts. The ranchers don't complain much about damage from deer and elk presence, and the public doesn't say much about the differential prices of the grazing permits on private and federal lands. There is a lot more to this than meets the eye. What would happen if we didn't have "subsidized" grazing? What would happen if we put federal grazing permits up for bid? I don't know for sure, but there are consequences. And before we disturb the *status quo* we need to study those consequences and be very cognizant that we might get a result that we don't much like.

HKS: What you say makes sense, but it strikes me as pretty difficult to sit down with the conflict industry, as you call them, and work out some rational things, to accept tradeoffs. Again, there are no tradeoffs acceptable.

JWT: Well, in dealing with the conflict industry, the best that you can hope for is to isolate them on the edges of the debates and operate somewhere in the middle. If I had a blackboard I would graph public response to Forest Service management issues attained from public hearings and written comments. It would be a U-shaped curve. There would be people on one side that want more exploitation and those on the other side would want no grazing. But if you graph the entirety of public opinion it would look more like a bell-shaped curve. That leads me to believe that there is a "silent majority" in the middle. But our current processes produce a U-shaped curve. That is not very helpful to managers. Then, some say, "Well, I've got all these people on this side and I've got all these people on this side. Low and behold, some porridge is too hot and some is too cold and some is just right." We have used that rationale for a long time.

HKS: If we characterize the forest products industry, it's fairly philosophically conservative people in terms of the proper role of government, but they don't hold a candle to the people who raise cows for a living.

JWT: There are exceptions, but I think if you were looking for a generalized description, I would say the cowboys—or range people—are even more politically conservative than the timber industry. I think the reason is that, by and large, they are not corporate. They are individuals in specific places leading independent lives with unique experiences with the land management bureaucracy. The corporate executives that dominate the timber industry are willing to cut deals that they see to their advantage with millions and millions of dollars in the balance. So they come at federal land management questions from a corporate standpoint. The livestock industry is very personal and individual.

County Rights

HKS: I don't want to make an unfair connection, but there's some linkage here to county rights. Are the county rights people, those who are working the land for a living, by and large as far as we know who they are, the small cattleman who's really upset about what's going on and is going to deal with it? Or is it just some guy who lives in town and drinks Bud Light and just doesn't like government?

JWT: There are resource users that may be anti-government, but I think that is a more general feeling in some places than in others. Anybody that is a politician is interested in power or they would not be politicians. County commissioners are no different than congressmen or governors—they run for office to attain power. As an elected official, how do you feel when 90 percent of your county is federal land and you have little or nothing to say about how that land is managed? The feds are "the elephant in the room." Those agencies are going to do what they're going to do under federal laws and regulations, which trump state and local laws and regulations. State and local officials get frustrated with that state of affairs. State and county officials are constantly dealing with a federal presence that's bigger and more powerful than they. As time has marched on there has been a tendency for the federal land management agencies to be ever more responsive to a national public than to the local constituency. So, I don't think

this alienation is isolated with people on the extractive side of natural resource management on public lands—though they would certainly be among the more vociferous.

HKS: Maybe I'm a victim of the media, but in my mind it's more likely a county rights person who blows up a district ranger office.

JWT: I don't think people who do such things are "county rights" people. I think that, generally, these are people that just hate the "damn government." If they weren't blowing up federal government buildings they might be blowing up the county government offices if they got in their way. I don't think such actions are about county rights. If we look back in history, Gifford Pinchot quickly understood that the Forest Service had to get along with the local people or the new Forest Service would not continue to exist, much less prosper. And, that is reflected in the agency's culture. It has evolved further with more and more federal legislation, etc., to where the federal government is a constant powerful presence in the midst of local affairs. Locals think that if they could make those decisions on a local basis, given local knowledge and local needs and local circumstances, that they could do a better job. I think there are legitimate points there. I think there has been too much concentration of power at higher levels of organization and too much loss of flexibility at local levels. The Forest Service is in the process of trying to correct that. Pendulums of influence swing one way and then swing the other. I would not want the management of my national forest turned over to the tender mercies of the county commissioners, not in a million years. On the other hand, I do applaud the Forest Service's increased efforts to coordinate and adjust and accommodate to the extent they can with what the local people want as expressed through their county government.

HKS: I'd heard that one of the reasons why forest rangers were transferred so often was to be sure they didn't get too attached to the local community. Your kids are in school, you grow up there, and you get elected to the school board, and pretty soon your national obligations get shifted over to local obligations.

JWT: My readings of history indicate that to be true. On the other hand, some people remain in place for a very long time. I didn't buy the philosophy of frequent transfer. If a person is a very good district ranger and wants to remain in place the system should adjust to allow that to occur. If this ranger is in a critical role, it might behoove us to pay him the same money as a forest supervisor and leave him/her in place. Of course, that doesn't fit the civil service hierarchal pay scale concepts. We do that with researchers all of the time—i.e., we pay them on the basis of achievement. However, all of that said, I think you can get too close to a constituency.

On the other hand, I think that it is not productive if transfers take place too frequently. I think the countervailing and stabilizing force is that the whole staff doesn't turn over at the same time so that institutional memory is attained. We used to intentionally hire local people for some jobs on a ranger district, and they would spend their entire career in that community in which they were raised. But such is not as prevalent today, and the current rules related to hiring practices discourage that sort of thing or, at least, make it more difficult. Such "locals" provided a good liaison to the local community.

Timber Salvage Rider

HKS: The timber salvage rider. I'm not so sure how well I understand it. It's hard to know what the authority is. I've heard you talk about it a couple of times, and you wrote about it in your journals. For the record, can you give us a paragraph explanation of what it really was rather than what we've been hearing about it?

JWT: I'm trying to think what year the salvage rider passed Congress. Was that '94?

HKS: Something like that.

JWT: Well, there had been significant insect and disease outbreaks—primarily spruce budworm and mountain pine beetles. We had undergone a big fire season. Charlie Taylor, a congressman from North Carolina, who claimed to be the only registered professional forester in Congress, was taking the lead in pushing for an enhanced salvage program for the national forests. When I talked to him I couldn't detect that he knew a damn thing about forestry or natural resources management. Nonetheless, he had decided that there was a huge amount of potential salvage on the national forests. He essentially said, "We are going to make it easy for you by exempting salvage sales from all the environmental laws. We will exempt you from having to consult with the regulatory agencies. You are simply going to get the salvage job done with no interference." I told him I didn't really think that was a bright idea and would produce a significant backlash. So far as I knew, he had given up on such an idea.

A while later, I was on the way home from work and stopped by Undersecretary Lyons' office to discuss some matter. As I walked in, he was watching CNN [Cable News Network], which was carrying the debate on the floor of the House over the salvage rider to the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. I observed that we didn't really want this to happen, that it would be a political disaster. My protest didn't do much good, and the salvage rider passed overwhelmingly as an amendment. The vote was bipartisan and really lopsided in favor of the rider. The administration, so far as I could tell, was in support. I was never consulted. So we set out to execute the law. We looked at it very carefully and decided that it said we didn't have to comply with the environmental laws. But it didn't say we couldn't, so we issued the order that we would obey all applicable laws. In fact, we did everything we could to obey the environmental laws. We consulted with the regulatory agencies with whom we usually consulted, though we didn't have to. The only thing we could not do is accept appeals. The administration was pushing us hard to get the salvage out. Halfway to the finish line these actions became very unpopular with the environmentalists—and they very astutely seized on it as an opportunity to further their cause. The administration told me that simply we were "the bad guys" and that we had taken the rider and our instructions too seriously and that we were to slow down our activities in this regard. I never thought then—and don't think now—that we did anything wrong. We simply got to be the scapegoat for a stupid decision in which we had no part. The salvage rider had two parts to it. One directed the intensive salvage of insect, disease, damaged, or burned timber. The other released some of the old 318 timber sales in the Northwest to their original buyers under original conditions.

HKS: Now 318 is?

JWT: These sales were named after section 318 of the Appropriations Act of 1990 for Interior and related agencies. I believe the section was added by Senator Hatfield from Oregon and Senator Adams from the state of Washington. The Interagency Scientific Committee team had been formed and was developing a management plan for northern spotted owls. They knew something was coming down that would likely limit cutting of old-growth forests. So, section 318 told the Forest Service to make two old-growth timber sales on every national forest in the range of the northern spotted owl. This was intended to provide some stability in the transition away from reliance on old-growth timber. Of course, some of these 318 sales were now sitting right in the middle of a habitat conservation area for old-growth dependent species. Most of the 318 sales were harvested in short order. But some of them were not cut and went into limbo over time. The sales were bought out or somehow taken off the table. All of a sudden the salvage rider said, by the way, all the old 318 sales that have not been cut will be released to the original buyers under original conditions. These are now old-growth timber sales. Now, some of these sales we were able to trade out of; we maneuvered; we did everything we could to spare these areas—but some of them were cut. So, now, three-log loads were coming down the road to the mills. The enviros yelled, "See what the Forest Service is doing under the guise of salvage—they are cutting old-growth forests!" Salvage and the 318 sales were two very different things, and they damn well knew it. But, boy, they used the circumstance most adroitly as a propaganda tool. The Forest Service was the big loser.

We were told to push hard to meet the intent of the salvage rider, and we were pushing hard. Then, suddenly the administration changed its mind and started pulling back and buying back timber sales. These actions were not ordered as the result of a review but because they got some bad vibes from

someone they chose to believe or wanted to placate and they would issue an order to pull a sale. I invited some of the political appointees to go to the woods with me and look at these sales. I would have them all lined up to go and then they, at the last minute, would decide to cancel. They would rather operate out of ignorance than out of knowledge, I think. In the case of the sales I reviewed, there were some I might have done somewhat differently. But, there was only one of them that I had any real reservations about, and even that sale was not too bad. So, we ended up getting through the year of the salvage rider. We hit the timber salvage targets that we had projected and ended up making both sides mad in the process. Taylor—and industry—didn't get as much salvage volume as he thought. And, the enviros were angry both about "salvaging without laws" and the 318 sales. The salvage rider turned out to be a political disaster and a political fiasco. The Forest Service took the hit from both sides even though I had opposed the rider from the beginning.

HKS: Some of this salvage could be in some of this so-called roadless area, fifty-four million acres now?

JWT: Likely, some of it was. The vast majority was not.

HKS: Under the rules of the game it would have been appropriate to put a road in and to salvage that, if it made any sense to do it?

JWT: If it made sense to do it and there was no conflict with environmental laws. But we did meet the projected salvage targets that we were expected to, initially by both industry and the enviros. But in the process the Forest Service got whacked by both extremes of the issue. I was upset because, as we used to say in Texas, "we got rode hard and put away wet."

HKS: Those in industry who criticized you, what was their position on it?

JWT: That we didn't do more.

HKS: They said you could have done more than you did?

JWT: Yes. If we had taken all the leeway that we were given by the salvage rider we could have done more. I am still happy that we didn't. If we had not consulted with the Fish and Wildlife Service or other agencies, and if we had not done environmental assessments, we could have salvaged more volume. But it wouldn't have been right—ethically or ecologically. We did what we thought we could do in an ecologically sound manner. We projected what we could do and we met that target. By the way, we salvaged about what we were going to salvage without a salvage rider. The hardcore environmentalists should probably erect a statue to honor Congressman Taylor. He brought them back from the dead. Their membership went up. Their resources went up. The salvage rider was the best thing that ever happened to them. Today, I wonder if the enviros have not used the roadless areas debate the same way. The Forest Service is not going to road any roadless areas. But, boy, it can be the focus of a whole jihad. And, "holy wars" produce new recruits and new money.

HKS: I remember one issue that the environmentalists raised that I thought was a pretty phony argument. Since it was a rider it didn't receive full congressional evaluation. You look back at the history of conservation, there are a lot of riders on a lot of things.

JWT: If you have any knowledge of the past, many of the dramatic conservation victories came in the form of riders to other bills. I still think riders are a bad means of making law, because full discussions do not occur in committee. Usually, there is not a full debate on the floor of Congress. If it were up to me, if I could snap my fingers and prohibit Congress from using riders to make law, I would do so. But if we went back in history and removed all of the riders that were conservation friendly, we would see the world to be a far different place from what it is today. If you were to total up "the rider game" related to imports on natural resources, I think the people on the conservation-preservation side have gotten the better of the game.

HKS: The ones I can think of came about mainly because you had a chairman of a committee, say House Public Lands Committee, that just wouldn't allow a bill to be reported out. Well, a rider was a way around that and it probably still is.

JWT: It probably still is today.

PACFISH/Columbia Basin

HKS: This is a major topic that I really don't know anything about, even though I'm pretty familiar with the area, and that's the Columbia basin and PACFISH. I don't know if the Columbia basin and PACFISH are parts of the same story.

JWT: PACFISH was a set of interim directions of how to deal with timber activities and grazing issues in the Pacific Northwest where salmon habitat was of interest. PACFISH came into being several years before the Columbia basin assessment was instituted. PACFISH was directed at the Columbia basin as interim policy until forest plans could be appropriately adjusted. The Columbia basin assessment activities resulted from an order issued by President Clinton after the FEMAT activities finished up in the Northwest and the unfinished environmental issues shifted to the East Side. "East Side" is regional slang for eastern Oregon and Washington.

Dombeck and I both sent back messages to the politicals that because the primary environmental issue was going to be anadromous fish, we needed to extend our efforts that to the entire Columbia basin. And, so, it was done. We thought we would be through with the Columbia basin operation within two years. We had been through similar drills in the Northwest—ISC took six months and, FEMAT took ninety days. The people who had been through those drills—primarily me—thought a better job might ensue if the participants had more time and were not under such incredible time pressures. So, we thought that was a more reasonable time frame. The job is still not done after eight years.

Congress complains about that situation, but powers in Congress are the reason that the process has gone on so long. Those powers looked at what was coming and didn't like it. It was going to force some significant adjustments. So they sent the team back for more study—time after time. So the team would go back and study things some more. Very little changed as a result. But it kept delaying action, which was the intent.

Ultimately, the Columbia basin assessments will force some broadscale management changes. This really gets to be a philosophical argument of whether these changes should be made at such broad scale. There are good reasons to argue about the appropriate scale for decisions. Are large scale assessments and planning that involve the Forest Service and BLM in keeping with the National Forest Management Act? Some believe that such planning should involve local people, local input, and such. Scale is the philosophical difference between those two approaches. But ultimately, someone will have to pay attention to the Columbia basin assessments, because the planning acts require them to heed new information. The new information exists, and if politicians ever allow them through with the process it will be compulsory to respond to that new information. The result will likely be significant management changes in the Columbia basin, largely related to riparian zone grazing, watershed treatments, mine clean-ups, and so on.

HKS: Are the dams primarily Bureau of Reclamation dams?

JWT: I believe most of the dams were built and are managed by the Army Corps of Engineers.

HKS: Okay. So there's another agency now involved sitting at the table that hasn't been for other issues that the Forest Service has been involved in?

JWT: Actually, it's Bonneville Power that sits at the table. But the Corps is involved. Yes, suddenly more players are involved. Salmon are the ultimate driving agent that puts all these players at the table. Included are Bonneville Power, Army Corps of Engineers, National Marine Fisheries Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, BLM. I'm sure there are even more players. There is a large "group grope" that, ostensibly, makes the decisions for the management of the Columbia. It, to me, works very poorly. The salmon are slowly sliding toward extinction because these various government entities simply can't come to grips with the issue. And, if they couldn't come to grips with the issue two years ago, they are having an even worse time coming to grips with it now, because of the power shortages of 2000 and the volume of water required to be dumped over the dams to take salmon smolts to the sea and other demands. The situation is confounded by the fact that the spring runs of salmon are bigger than they have been in a long, long time. The environmentalists have been very cautious to institute legal actions because the consequences might be so dramatic that it would result in significant political backlash.

HKS: That would be the real train wreck.

JWT: That would be the real train wreck. The "train wreck" occurred related to the Northwest Forest Plan would be quite minor related to water policy. In fact, Chief Mike Dombeck is quite right when he says the number one issue that will face the Forest Service in the future will be water—water amounts, water quality. Remember, this is the West. Whiskey's for drinking. Water's for fighting over. New people are coming into the West at twice the national growth rate. Push is going to come to shove over water.

HKS: Are there other basins that have this potential for conflict? In the Columbia basin you have the very arid east feeding into the humid west.

JWT: Yes, but I think it's smaller scale. The development of the power dams gives the Northwest its competitive edge. This has got to be the granddaddy of watershed issues.

HKS: A friend of mine wrote a book on the Columbia River, and it was my introduction to some of the complexities. I lived in Portland for four years so I saw the Columbia and I knew where it was. But I read about barging fish, and I thought Congress has been involved with putting money up to get around the problem. The fish ladders weren't really working. It struck me as a lot of patchwork and piecemeal, and I don't know if they're still doing it.

JWT: We have hatcheries, and we argue about those. We barge fish around the dams, and we argue about that. You know, we've got runs of salmon that are going extinct, runs that are essentially extinct. In response, we are going through what biologists call "displacement behavior." Yelling and screaming and kicking the dog, when you're really mad at your wife, is displacement behavior. In an attempt to address the salmon issue, more and more emphasis is placed on federal lands. Restrictions on grazing on segments of streams that haven't seen a salmon since the '30s is an example. But the regulators look as if they are doing something. If there are real problems in natural resource management in the United States, forestry would come far down the list compared to the Columbia River. We have treaties with the Indians that when they were signed the rivers were full of fish. What are we giving away? Indians took those promises seriously. Now the courts have said that we might have made a stupid deal but it is a done deal. If those runs go extinct, the Indians are going to sue for billions. I think it likely that they will win. They ought to.

HKS: Let's see if our tape is subpoenaed during that litigation. How about agriculture? That's not federal. The farmers up along the Snake, they're involved in this. They're being constrained in certain ways.

JWT: Agriculturists are being constrained, but not nearly so dramatically as federal land managers. Farmers are part of the equation and are entitled to irrigation water in many cases. This is not just an issue in the Columbia basin. Consider the Klamath basin situation where the judges have said, "I'm sorry but ESA says what ESA says." Irrigators are not getting the usual amounts of irrigation water this year. That water is going for the short-nosed sucker. The Marine Corps is about to have training exercises

down at Twentynine Palms. They have people out in front of their tanks looking for desert tortoises—a threatened species.

HKS: My neighbor, the retired colonel from Fort Bragg with the woodpecker. I guess all the bases are running into this.

JWT: I have mixed emotions about this. The ESA has a dramatic effect on military training. You have to sort through these ESA issues very carefully to find out what's b.s. and what's true.

HKS: I read that a wildlife biologist was pointing out a difficulty of the Endangered Species Act with the salmon. He may not have been correctly cited but this is what I read. That what is a species is related to the spawning process. Salmon are genetically attuned to a certain spot, so are there seventy-nine species of salmon or some such number. You can make them extinct in one spawning ground, and that would be a violation of Endangered Species Act if you classify them as a species. I don't know if this is just an intellectual argument.

JWT: For example, there are spring chinook and fall chinook. Morphologically, I believe they are the same species. But obviously they are a species on the way to sub-speciation and then, perhaps, to becoming separate species. Evidently the species developed into spring and fall runs recently enough that they have not separated morphologically. There is no way biologists can tell them apart, but this is probably an example of how species evolve. Biologists argue about what is a species and what is a sub-species. The diversity clause issued under NFMA is stronger than the Endangered Species Act. Those dealing with ESA can, for example, allow extirpation of a listed species in a certain segment of its range. They could have decided to maintain spotted owls in Oregon and not to impinge on timber management in Washington. The Forest Service couldn't do that, as it must deal with spotted owls wherever owls now occur because of the diversity clause in the regulations. One of the reasons the Forest Service is not frequently sued under ESA is because suing the Forest Service is a lot easier under the diversity clause in regulations issued pursuant to the National Forest Management Act. These suits are easier to win because of the protection afforded to every vertebrate species. Every vertebrate species on the national forest is, in essence, a threatened species, because managers must maintain the distribution and viability of each and every native vertebrate species—and even non-native species that are deemed "desirable."

HKS: How about the introduction of species, bringing back the red wolves in North Carolina? How does all of that work into management? Is that an important thing that we're doing?

JWT: It is certainly politically important. You must remember, though, that in the case you're talking about, that's not introduction, that's reintroduction. You are putting a species where it once existed. Our greatest success story in wildlife management in North America has been the return of the elk to places from which it had been extirpated. With wolves, reintroduction will be tricky. We didn't go to all that trouble to eliminate predators just because somebody hated them. You haven't lived until you go out in the morning to look at your twenty sheep and find that you now have only eight alive. Predators kill and eat other animals. Sometimes they don't confine themselves to killing and eating wildlife. They sometimes kill livestock. We went to a great amount of trouble and expense to reduce or even eradicate predator populations. I don't know of anywhere that predators have been reintroduced that there has not been some trouble—and there will be continuing trouble. In other words, we are going to adopt a policy of "live and let live" with predators as related to domestic livestock. It is an interesting extension of human ethics and standards to wild animals. We say, for example, "Okay, bear number sixty-two, you killed a horse. We are going to trap and move you to another location. And you're on probation. Now, understand this, bear number sixty-two. If you kill another domestic animal we will execute you. Now, you got that, bear number sixty-two?" Well, old bear number sixty-two doesn't know what the hell we are talking about. We just hope he doesn't get tangled up with another horse. I like predators. I like having them around. But, I am not naïve enough to believe that fairy tales come with cookies and milk. This is a serious management question. Present approaches are almost a full employment act for wildlife biologists—keeping up with the predators and determining which animal is a "good predator" and which is a "bad predator," who's been a good boy and who's been a bad boy. I think we are probably doing the ecologically and ethically correct thing, but the matter will always be fraught with tension and

controversy. That tension will increase as predator numbers increase and there is ever more human encroachment on the habitat of those predators.

HKS: Are grizzlies endangered?

JWT: I believe they are categorized as “threatened” under the ESA.

HKS: Threatened. So when a grizzly mauls a camper in Glacier Park, what happens? Can they shoot that bear?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: Could they if the grizzly becomes endangered?

JWT: Absolutely.

HKS: So there is some flexibility.

JWT: There is some flexibility. I don’t think anybody expects themselves—or anyone else—to stand there and be mauled. If you kill the bear in the process of attack on a human, you are home free. But you better be able to prove that your life was in danger.

HKS: I mean, after the fact, the Park Service goes out with helicopters to track down the grizzly that killed two campers. It doesn’t happen very often, so I guess it’s not an issue yet.

JWT: Attacks on humans don’t happen often. On the other hand, if you happen to be the guy that gets attacked, it is both serious and personal. I’ve known a couple of biologists that have been mauled by grizzly bears, and they are not a pretty sight. One is missing an eye and all the muscles out of an upper arm. Grizzlies don’t hand out love pats.

HKS: It used to be that Forest Service field people in Alaska were required by regulation to carry a rifle to protect themselves in case they were attacked.

JWT: I think they still are. There are some number of people on the work crew, and one person in the crew has to be armed. The person that is armed has sole responsibility to be on guard against attack. That was true the last time I did field work in southeast Alaska. But, that has been several decades ago.

Political Bosses

HKS: I have a pretty good handle on what the agency does and doesn’t do, but there really is no convenient access to the political bosses that the Forest Service has other than an occasional remark by a chief that the assistant secretary was helpful on this issue or not. I’ve tried for years without any luck at all to find some funding to interview John Crowell, for example, and Rupe Cutler. These people would be good sources on back-to-back shifts in philosophy, how that works, how it affects the Forest Service. But who’s going to fund that? The secretary of Agriculture won’t, and the Forest Service won’t.

JWT: It would be a very good move. The fact is, historians have a twisted view of how the Forest Service works without that understanding.

HKS: I know we do.

JWT: The undersecretaries of Agriculture are the supervisors over the Forest Service who pass down administration policy. “Activist” undersecretaries make significant decisions.

HKS: And that's not well understood.

JWT: Some undersecretaries exert great power and influence, and others don't. John Crowell caused the Forest Service to place lands in the timber base that were not appropriately productive and "squeezed" the system to get the allowable cut up to where he wanted it. Max Peterson did an absolutely masterful job of holding the allowable cut to where it was. That was still too high for public acceptance. I think that first round of planning and the pressure to hold allowable cuts at too high a level was our Vietnam. The result was that the cut was too high to be publicly acceptable to the environmental side and too low to satisfy the timber industry.

HKS: You have to pay transcribers and buy plane tickets and so forth. It's not enormously expensive, four or five thousand dollars per interview, that's what we're talking about, to get this on record and make it accessible. I agree with you, and I've learned more and more as I talk to you guys. The paper trail doesn't flow out of the Forest Service into what the assistant secretaries have been doing.

JWT: It is essentially the way we do things. The political appointees propose and the agencies dispense. With these interviews, it is possible to diffuse mythology. The mythology is that, "Hey, those chiefs, by God, can do what they want to do. They make their own budgets. They direct their own activities." That's not true. I can only speak for myself, but I believe that John Crowell pressed the Forest Service to the point that our plans were too optimistic in terms of timber yield. Doug MacCleery, who was an assistant to Crowell, has told me that they never did anything like that. I have respect for Doug, but I was in the field and the planning teams were getting plans back after review with the impression that an increase in the allowable cut would be desirable. Somebody was squeezing them to bring that cut up. That increase was achieved in two ways. Twenty cubic feet per acre per year of tree growth was defined as potential commercial forest land. That was half of what that benchmark should have been. Probably fifty or sixty would have been more rational. By placing more acreage into the timber base, the potential cut increased. There was almost no entry into such marginal lands. The cut kept coming off the more productive lands. All of a sudden we ran smack into the wall. Suddenly, there wasn't anywhere else to go to make timber sales. When we started into previously unroaded lands of lower productivity, it didn't make any economic, ecological, nor political sense to many people both in and out of the agency. But the doctrinaire belief from political overseers said we could do twenty-five billion board feet per year.

HKS: I have some names here to see if at least we could have a clearer view from the chief's perspective of what these people are up to. I'll start with Jim Lyons for obvious reasons. It would be interesting to interview Jim to see what pressures were on him to do the things that he did that you may not be aware of.

JWT: I know Jim has somewhat similar journals to mine. I would like to compare our two.

HKS: He kept a journal?

JWT: I think so, and he is in the process of writing a book.

HKS: Okay.

JWT: A comparison would be interesting. He knows things that I don't know and that he did not tell me about. There were times when he and I would be in vehement disagreement. But I never held that against him personally because I don't think that, in many cases, he was doing it because it just popped into his head. He had marching orders that he was executing and did not feel it necessary or appropriate to tell me where the orders came from.

HKS: From your journals I have the sense that you had a friendly relationship for a couple of years, but it deteriorated toward the last. Is that an accurate assessment?

JWT: I don't think our friendship deteriorated toward the last. I think the way we worked together began to deteriorate. As time passed, I felt I was being more and more dictated to rather than being a partner. I would do whatever I could to help him today. I consider him a friend. There was some of his operating style I didn't appreciate, but I'm pretty sure he'd tell you there's some of my style he didn't appreciate either. But I've known Jim for nearly thirty years. I consider him a friend. We sometimes disagreed vehemently about one matter or another, though.

HKS: Would it be fair to speculate that the pressure built on him year after year to bring you guys to be a team player, and that's why he became more dictatorial, if that's not too harsh a term?

JWT: I don't know if I would buy that. Some in the administration did not view me and the Forest Service as team players. In fact, some people refer to me as a Forest Service loyalist. They were probably right, to some degree. I did not see, then or now, that we needed to destroy nor demoralize nor denigrate the Forest Service in order to remold the agency to take on a new mission. I think that some in the administration saw it in the other way, that it was essential to destroy the old Forest Service in order to rebuild the agency in the new image that they wanted. We were not in agreement about how change should be brought about. Though they never put it to me in such terms, that is what I felt was going on.

HKS: Brian Burke, he reported directly to Jim Lyons, is that what it is?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: He came about halfway through your tenure?

JWT: Something like that. Adela Backiel was the first occupant of that chair, and then Burke came along.

HKS: They were easy for you to talk to?

JWT: I got along very well, I think, with both Adela and Brian. I remember both of them in a favorable light. I have nothing negative to say about either of them.

HKS: It's always difficult to generalize, but it strikes me when I look at the players of the political appointees, they're all pretty young.

JWT: Exasperatingly young, in some cases. Referring to your previous question, in the professional sense I did better with Adela because of our common educational backgrounds. She understood forestry issues and she was pleasant and easy to deal with, even when we were in disagreement. I liked Burke very much but he had no background in natural resources—none, zero, nada. I think he was sent over from the office of the vice president to help bring the Forest Service into line. I think the vice president, though I don't know this for certain, never viewed us as quite getting the message about what the administration wanted. I think they were probably right. Because I never completely understood what it was they wanted. It changed from one day to the next. It's hard to view your own soul, but I can't believe that they understood what conflicting signals they were giving out. These were times when I didn't think that the right hand knew what the left hand was doing.

HKS: From where you sat Al Gore himself was not very visible? Things didn't have his name on it or his footprints on it as it were?

JWT: I can tell you what my suspicions were, but I could never put my finger on proof of the connection. We felt it was clear that the vice president was in the lead on environmental affairs. Though if you asked me why I believed that, I would have to tell you that was just my impression. I never saw any paperwork that indicated that. I was never in any meeting that indicated that. That was my assumption.

HKS: It was “common knowledge” that President Clinton delegated the environment to Gore. Now that’s just what we read, and it seemed that way to you?

JWT: Yes.

HKS: But you didn’t really see that for sure.

JWT: I had no meetings with the vice president. The only contact I believe I ever had with the vice president was when the president and vice president met with my wife and I in the oval office to welcome us to Washington and at a social event at his house.

HKS: There’s a photograph of you and Al with a glass in his hand. Bruce Babbitt. He seemed to have, from my casual observations when he was in Arizona, pretty good credentials and had the right instincts. He was kind of a thorn in your side from time to time, wasn’t he?

JWT: No, I don’t think of Babbitt as having been a thorn in my side. Oddly, I probably met more frequently with Babbitt than I did with Glickman for varying reasons. I’d be called to a meeting, and he would be there. Sometimes I couldn’t figure out who I was working for. Was I working for Katie McGinty? Was I working for Dan Glickman? Here comes Babbitt in and out periodically. My impression was that Glickman frequently deferred to Babbitt on things to do with the environment and the politics involving the environment. We sometimes felt that to some degree the Forest Service, in terms of policy, was part of his portfolio. Though I never could tell how much of those feelings were justified, he was aggressive. I never could tell how much he was grabbing and how much was delegated to him from above. But I’ll say this, Babbitt always treated me as a professional and even as a colleague. He always treated me with deference and respect and sought advice. He either accepted or rejected that advice gracefully and gratefully. I think he believed me to be my own man, and he appreciated that.

HKS: Katie McGinty, we’ve talked about her a little bit before. Any other thumbnail sketch you’d like to give? Is she a very capable person?

JWT: Katie is an attorney. I think Katie must have been around thirty years of age when I was dealing with her. She was young, bright—exceptionally bright—with an exceptionally pleasing personality. She was relatively patient in listening to what I had to say. She issued direct orders that were executed. It was clear that if she had the lead on something she was the person making the decisions. I liked her. I loved to have her come and visit and talk things over. Sometimes we did not agree, but I liked her. I thought she was extremely capable. I only wish that her experience had matched that intelligence and that capability. And I suspect we will see Katie McGinty in a political role again someday.

HKS: Next time a Democrat’s a president?

JWT: I don’t know when, but it is likely we’re going to see her someday again in a government role. She’s an extremely bright, capable person and has many years in front of her.

HKS: It’s probably what I bring to the reading of your journals, and the flaw in the analysis is my perception, the linkages that I create in my mind. However, if we did a word search on the computer and we did “McGinty” and “group grope” there would be a very high relationship between the two. I don’t see group grope as a complimentary term, and that’s how I sense that she was a problem to you.

JWT: Well, it’s probably based on my impatience with what had to happen to keep everybody in the loop. I would sometimes go to meetings in her office. I would sit there and we’d go through four hours of somewhat disconnected discussions when it seemed to me that within six or seven minutes the answer was obvious. Within twenty minutes everybody had said everything they had to say that amounted to a pinch of salt. Then we would sit there and continue to plow all around it for hours more as individuals came in and out of the meetings and had to be brought up to speed and/or to get their opinions on the table.

HKS: A faculty meeting approach.

JWT: A faculty meeting approach? I like that. We could never get all the players in the room at the same time. I would have this meeting with McGinty and then George Frampton, for example, couldn't be there, so we would regroup. Sometimes we would go through the same discussion several different times. Some people might say that is what you do to come to consensus. Maybe, but that was never my management style. My style was that once I had everything on the table, I would get on to something else. It appeared to me that we lacked full understanding of the problem. We didn't know who was making the decision when everything was finally on the table. There were political appointees in the room that obviously had access to political intelligence that I didn't have—and would never have. It became clear to me, after awhile, that I really wasn't part of the team that was dealing with those sorts of questions. They brought me in to deal with questions of capability and technical response alternatives to various scenarios. It was clear that, in many cases, I was serving in a staff role and not in the decisionmaking role.

HKS: I'm glad we're having this rundown, because it alters my view. We're essentially the same age. We grew up when Eisenhower was president and we graduated from college the same time. I'm sure I would have shared your frustrations. I define an academic as someone that takes a week to make a one-hour decision, and you obviously have some of those same views, too. But I don't want to put my interpretation in and distort the way I edit your journals. You like these people here better than you do in your journals, by my reading.

JWT: I think what we're talking about in this interview is a more mature and calmer and more detached man looking back on an experience that was very tense, chaotic. However, my wife faults me for being too generous to people. I don't have very many enemies. If I do have enemies it is not because I am their enemy, it is because they are my enemy by their choice. I can't stay mad for more than about a day. I have a tendency to forgive people easily. I don't hold grudges. I basically don't have a mean bone in my body. It is not that I cannot be formidable and ferocious under pressure, but I don't carry grudges and I try to think generously of people. I'm certain that I have my faults. I am certain that I presented great aggravations to my bosses from time to time. But we were in this grand adventure together and we were trying hard to do a good job. I think everybody there was trying hard to do a good job. We just sometimes viewed the world differently. But I don't look at any of those people as being mean, bad people.

HKS: They were more political than you. They had an agenda to advance, and that was the overriding factor.

JWT: I think that was the statement the messenger from the administration delivered when she said, "We don't think you are one of us." The recognition was implicit in that statement that they indeed were political and had a political agenda, and I was not marching to the same drummer. I didn't have a political agenda, or, at least when I didn't agree with their political agenda I was not hesitant to say so. I'm not sure that's what people wanted to hear, but I thought that was my job.

HKS: A fellow that gets mixed reviews in your journals is Mark Rey. When you first encounter him he is with the trade association and then he moves over to congressional staffer. You wind up respecting him, and he brings you a bottle of champagne your last day in office.

JWT: I still respect him. When this undersecretary of Agriculture appointment is decided, he's certainly been one of three people that the Republicans might put in that job. He is an honorable man. He is intelligent—razor sharp—and can separate politics from personal relationships. I think highly of Mark. He is one of the smartest people I have ever been around. Not that sometimes we really didn't get into it, but there was nothing personal involved. I'd work with him in a minute—maybe not on natural resources issues. [Laughter]

HKS: I think of him as an industry guy because he comes out of industry, and that might be a very unfair label. Obviously the forest products industry had a lot of influence on how your day evolved. Who are the other key players, or is the industry so diffuse there really is no one person?

JWT: Oh, it is extremely diffuse. The forest industry has trade associations. I dealt with folks from such associations before I became chief, when I was chief, and after I was chief. Most of their representatives I like. They had a job to do and they were doing it. I had a job to do and I was doing my job. I think, on a personal basis, I got along a lot better with people from the industry than I did from the environmental side. The people from industry were a bit more consistent—they wanted timber in the mill. And if we could reach an agreement on one thing or another, I never ever had them disappoint me. They always did what they said they would do, whether they liked it or not. If they agreed to it, they would do it. The environmentalists were all over the place. I still have a strong rapport with some whom I trusted and liked individually, but the inconsistency was probably because their interests were more diverse. Their organizations embraced young kids who were ideologues, who hadn't matured at that point to a state of more advanced understanding. It was hard to deal with them because they were so independent of one another. For example, the Izaac Walton League didn't necessarily agree with the Sierra Club. So, it was very difficult to reach any understanding with "the environmentalists." There was an interesting contrast between dealing with industry and the environmentalists.

John Mumma

HKS: I should more logically have brought it up as a part of the law enforcement issue. It was a very serious episode for both George and Dale, the John Mumma affair, and it reached some kind of closure when you were chief. There was still some fallout going on, the illegalities of horse purchases or whatever they were. Is there something that you can put on the record about that?

JWT: There was a forest supervisor involved, Ernie Nunn, who had retired rather than accept transfer. He later appealed and asked for reinstatement. There was a hearing on his appeal. I was stunned that the Forest Service lost. He was ordered reinstated. I certainly didn't agree with that. But nonetheless, the Forest Service lost that. John is an old friend of mine. We are both wildlife biologists—a couple of "old time" wildlife biologists in the agency. John asked me if I would reinstate him and put him into a regional forester's job. As I remember, John had been offered a job in the Washington Office. I said "no" to his request. I said I had other people in mind for regional forester jobs but that I would honor the offer of the Washington position. John declined to come into the Washington Office, and I don't know much more about it than that.

HKS: it got a lot of press coverage. He wasn't getting the cut out so Dale did this. He was being punished.

JWT: I would say this. John wasn't the only regional forester that wasn't getting the cut out. In fact, he was getting more of the cut out than some others were. There had been a conference of forest supervisors when the supervisors essentially told Dale that the cut was too high. None of those folks were punished. I would defer to Dale and George and John about that decision. I didn't make it and don't know enough about it to say exactly what happened.

Issues After Being Chief

HKS: Some of the issues that you were involved with, a lot of them I suppose, you continued to monitor after you came to Missoula. There was still fallout from the New World Mine. Hal Salwasser was being jerked around because he was regional forester then, at the time of the mine?

JWT: Yes. That was unfortunate because I had inadvertently hurt somebody who was a long-time professional colleague and a very close personal friend—Hal Salwasser. I certainly realize that you are out of the Forest Service when you are out. But there was a get-together to celebrate the buyout of the New World Mine. There were some representatives in Missoula from Glickman's office that I thought of as personal friends. Hal had called me about the release of the review on the EIS on the New World Mine. He gave me a "heads up" because he assumed that I would get press calls related to the matter. I inadvertently said something about Hal's call, and they obviously considered this a treacherous act on Hal's part. He got some serious grief over it, which was extremely unfortunate. And it was my fault. I naively thought that as I had worked with these people I was still part of the group. I quickly decided at that point that I was no longer associated.

HKS: This was after the purchase? The buyout had taken place?

JWT: They were going down to Yellowstone for a celebration of that event or something. We were invited to dinner in Missoula. I still feel awful about that. But I learned a lesson. Once you are out of office, you are out.

HKS: Within a month after the election you're here as Boone & Crockett professor, and you managed to finagle a parking slot ahead of time.

JWT: Parking is an important factor around a university. Actually, I walked in to go to work and asked about "my parking space." The assistant to Dean Perry Brown looked me right in the eye and told me that I was on the waiting list and would come up for a space in a year or two. I though of the proverb "My, how the mighty have fallen."

HKS: That was the main thing. You do a lot, it seems like a lot, of travel, make speeches. You're invited for keynote addresses in the U.S. and Canada. Characterize that. Is that of your choice or you feel an obligation or it's fun, what you want to do with your life?

JWT: I decided at age sixty-two, which was the standard retirement age for chiefs, that it was time for me to leave the Forest Service. I had kept my house in La Grande when I moved to Washington. My intention was to go back there, but I was surprised at the job offers that started pouring in from around the country when the word got out that I was retiring. I thought that if these people thought I could handle teaching at age sixty-two, who am I to argue? I really didn't want to quit. I had never taught school before and thought I had a lot to teach kids. I quickly said okay. Missoula is not far from La Grande, Oregon. I loved it there. I thought I would like Missoula. I love it here. I decided to take up teaching. I was really surprised at how many people were interested in what I had to say. And to be realistic about it, they were willing to pay to hear me say my piece. I had done a lot of public speaking. Now I turn down two invitations for every one that I accept. I thought the further I got away from being chief the less demand there would be for that sort of thing. That hasn't happened. Now, five years later, there are more invitations than ever. I think people are more and more interested in listening to a more middle-of-the-road message. And it is pretty hard for extreme environmentalists to take me on. I have my environmental credentials. I put together the books that environmentalists use. I was a spear point in the Forest Service for more attention to environmental and wildlife concerns and was once thought of as a hero in the environmental community. On the other hand, I have never been thought of as a wild-eyed extremist. I believe that the national forests should produce timber and grazing. I can understand the interactions of politics and money and law and those sorts of things. But I have not ever been one to say, "Let's get back to the good old days and cut thirteen and half billion board feet a year." I am accepted as a middle-of-the-road person that cares deeply about the environment but fully recognizes that we must exploit our environment in order to live. That is not the question. The question is, how do you exploit the environment in a sustainable fashion. So some people remain interested in what I have to say. So, I get out there and say it. One observation I make to begin every speech is, "One thing I found out for certain as an academic is that pontification is much easier than responsibility."

Boone and Crockett Professor

HKS: How many years have you been here now?

JWT: Four and a half.

HKS: Is the enrollment up in wildlife because of you? People are coming here to do their master's degree under Jack Thomas?

JWT: I handle mostly doctoral students. Some come to work with me. I think my students were either attracted to me because they want to address policy issues, or they are more of the old-fashioned kind of wildlife biologist that want to deal with deer or elk or some other hunted species. More and more of the younger faculty deal with super mathematical modeling, remote sensing, pure ecology, etc. That is fine, but it's not my bag.

HKS: So there's a growing gap between the kind of research that goes on and what the people in the field do?

JWT: I would say that's correct.

HKS: I interviewed Dave Smith, the silviculture professor at Yale. He said he's the last person Yale is ever going to hire anywhere that has "practice of" on a book he's written. The practice of silviculture; he says it's no way that anyone does that anymore.

JWT: That's true across the natural resources fields. In reality, when students go to work for agencies, the agencies have to train them to do things that older generations learned how to do in school. The current philosophy is that it is better to have the basic understanding of ecology, etc. You can teach somebody to cruise timber quite quickly on the job.

HKS: Is the job market for wildlife biology good? Do the students graduate and routinely get jobs in their field?

JWT: They do if they have graduate degrees. Bachelor's degrees, not ordinarily.

HKS: Usually these are government jobs?

JWT: They are still the same government jobs, but more and more jobs are to be found in non-governmental organizations. Many graduates go to work for private landowners or corporations. There is no corporation in the United States that has anything to do with land management that does not have its own staff of wildlife people.

HKS: I was surprised when I got to Duke teaching in the School of the Environment by how many of the students wanted to be cops. They wanted to get an MEM and go out and enforce the rules, not to practice the environment but enforce it. Do you have a certain percentage of cop want-to-bes?

JWT: There are some people who'd like to be a game warden, but not in terms of environmental regulators. Those folks interested in becoming regulators more commonly come out of the Department of Environmental Studies. The people in the forestry school in the wildlife biology program are more oriented toward management and research than law enforcement.

HKS: I didn't realize you had a separate environmental program here. Is it really separate?

JWT: Yes, it is totally separate. We hardly talk to one another. Every once in awhile, I have students show up to take my courses that are out of that department. I get the impression they are in my course to view the devil incarnate. I usually change their minds a bit.

HKS: Is that right?

JWT: They don't have that same opinion when we get through with the coursework.

HKS: What's the difference? Are they environmentalists in that sense?

JWT: I think that many are of an opinion that resource extraction is evil, and people who carry it out are evil people. They refer to "timber corporations" or "miners" in a derisive tone and accusatory voice. That is relatively stupid. I, and they, use two-by-fours and drive cars and buy gasoline. They don't stop to think of that. To some, gasoline comes out of the pump, and natural gas comes out of the pipe behind the house, the electricity comes though the wire, and food comes out of the grocery store. They have not thought this out. Such folks as the timber industry and miners are the people that provide for us what we need to live a modern lifestyle. On the other hand, they are in the process of maximizing profit and beating their competitors and, sometimes, are not as careful as they ought to be. But, once such is required by law, they change.

HKS: The students that graduate from this environmental program, do they actually work in that field or is this sort of like a liberal arts education?

JWT: I don't know what the numbers are, but, say, five out of six out of them are not doing what they were trained to do after they have been out of college ten years. Some of these people actually say that they're training "environmental activists."

HKS: This seems to be a good place to end. Thanks very much.

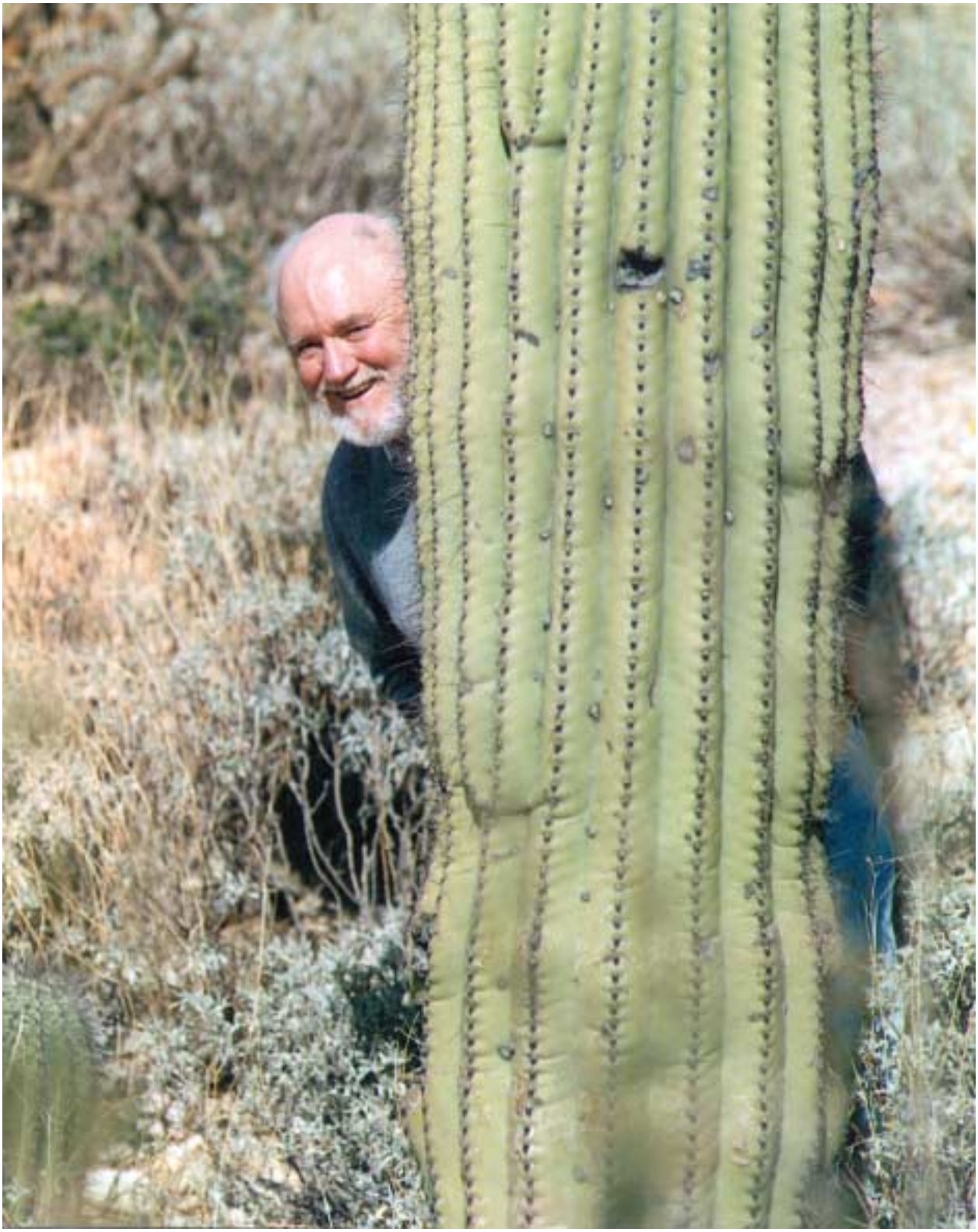

Figure 5: Jack Ward Thomas peeking around a tall cactus; no date.

Jack Ward Thomas

Education

- B.S., Wildlife Management, Texas A&M, 1957.
- M.S., Wildlife Ecology, West Virginia University, 1968.
- Ph.D., Forestry (Land Use Planning Option), University of Massachusetts, 1971.

Professional Experience

- Endowed Chair, Boone and Crockett Professor of Wildlife Conservation, University of Montana, Missoula, MT, 1996-present.
- Chief (SES 6), USDA Forest Service, Washington, DC, 1993-1996.
- Chief Research Wildlife Biologist (GS-14, 15, 16, and 17), USDA Forest Service, La Grande, OR, 1974-1993.
- Principal Research Wildlife Biologist (GS-13), USDA Forest Service, Amherst, MA, 1969-1974.
- Research Wildlife Biologist (GS-12), USDA Forest Service, Morgantown, WV, 1966-1969.
- Research and Management Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Sonora and Llano, TX, 1957-1966.

Professional Societies

- The Wildlife Society (past President).
- Society of American Foresters (elected Fellow).
- American Ornithological Society (elected member).
- Society for Range Management.
- American Society of Mammalogists.
- Wilson Ornithological Society.
- Society for Conservation Biology.
- American Fisheries Society.

Other Organizations

- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (Life Member, Board of Directors).
- Ducks Unlimited.
- National Wild Turkey Federation.
- Boone and Crockett Club (Professional Member).

Academic Appointments (past and present)

- Adjunct Professor of Wildlife Biology at the University of Idaho.
- Adjunct Professor of Wildlife Biology at the University of West Virginia.
- Adjunct Professor of Wildlife Biology at the University of Massachusetts.
- Adjunct Professor of Wildlife Biology at Oregon State University.
- Adjunct Professor of Wildlife Biology at Washington State University.
- Boone and Crockett Professor at the University of Montana

International Work Experience

- India, Pakistan, Israel, Mexico, Canada, and Italy.

Honors (including but not limited to)

- Aldo Leopold Medal.
- The Wildlife Society (three publications awards).
- Gulf Oil Conservation Award.
- Award for Distinguished Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Federal Statesman Award, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.
- Floyd Arms Memorial Award, Oregon Trout.
- Earl A. Chiles Foundation Award.
- Distinguished Alumni Award, University of Massachusetts.
- Conservationist of the Year, Oregon Rivers Council.
- Oregon Wildlife Society Award.
- Chief's Award for Technology Transfer, USDA Forest Service.
- Superior Service Award, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Federal Laboratory Consortium Award for Excellence in Technology Transfer.
- Outstanding Scientist, Northwest Scientific Association.
- Natural Resource Employee of the Year, Oregon Wildlife Federation.
- Honorary Member, Pope and Young Club.
- Honorary Doctorate, Lewis and Clark College.

Special Assignments

- Team Leader for the Interagency Scientific Committee to Address the Conservation of the Northern Spotted Owl.
- Team Leader for the Scientific Assessment Team.
- Team Leader for the Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team.
- Team Member, "Gang of Four".

Special Qualifications for the Committee of Scientists

- Doctoral training in land-use planning.
- Team leader for two of the largest interagency land-use planning efforts in U.S. history.
- Advisor for land-use planning efforts for numerous National Forests.
- Intimate familiarity with attempted revisions of the planning regulations issued pursuant to the National Forest Management Act.
- Advisor to the Government of India (Division of Forestry and Wildlife) on natural resources planning.

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- Marburger, R. C., and J. W. Thomas. "A Die-Off in White-Tailed Deer in the Central Mineral Region of Texas." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 29 (No. 4, 1965): 706-716.
- Thomas, J. W., C. VanHoozer, and R. G. Marburger. "Wintering Concentrations and Seasonal Shifts in Range in the Rio Grande Turkey." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 30 (No. 1, 1965): 34-49.
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- Thomas, J. W., and R. A. Dixon. "Cemetery Ecology." *Natural History* 82 (No. 3, 1973): 60-67.
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Education

- B.S.F., University of Washington, 1957.
- M.F., University of Washington, 1962.
- Ph.D., University of Washington, 1969.

Employment

- Forest History Society, Santa Cruz, CA; Durham, NC, 1969-1997.
- U.S. Forest and Range Experiment Station, Portland, OR, 1962-1965.
- U.S. Forest Service, Snoqualmie National Forest, 1957-1958.

Faculty Appointments

- Adjunct Professor of Forestry/History, Duke University, 1984-1999.
- Lecturer, Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1970-1984.

Major Publications

- *The U.S. Forest Service: A History*, University of Washington Press, 1976, 1977, 1991.
- *History of Sustained Yield Forestry*, Forest History Society, 1983.
- *Changing Tropical Forests: Historical Perspectives on Today's Challenges in Central and South America*, Forest History Society, 1991.
- *The Origins of the National Forests*, Forest History Society, 1992.
- *Plantation Forestry in the Amazon: The Jari Experience*, Forest History Society, 1997.
- *Evolution of Tropical Forestry: Puerto Rico and Beyond*, Forest History Society, 1998.
- *Forest Service Research: Finding Answers to Conservation's Questions*, Forest History Society, 1998.
- *Forest and Wildlife Science in America: A History*, Forest History Society, 1999.
- *The Conservation Diaries of Gifford Pinchot*, Forest History Society/Pinchot Institute for Conservation, 2001.
- *The Forest Service Journals of Jack Ward Thomas*, in progress.

Professional Activities

- Consulting Editor, *Journal of Environmental Education*, 1973-1983.
- Chairman, Forest History Working Group, Society of American Foresters, 1974-1978.
- Chairman, Forest History Group, IUFRO, 1986-1995.
- Expert Witness, Department of Justice, 1976-1999.

Honors and Awards

- Distinguished Service Award, American Forestry Association, 1995.
- Distinguished Achievement Award, University of Washington College of Forest Resources Alumni Association, 1996.
- Distinguished Service Award, IUFRO, 1998.
- Certificate of Appreciation, USDA Forest Service, 1999.
- Special Commendation, U.S. Department of Justice, 1999.
- Sir William Schlich Memorial Award, Society of American Foresters, 2000.